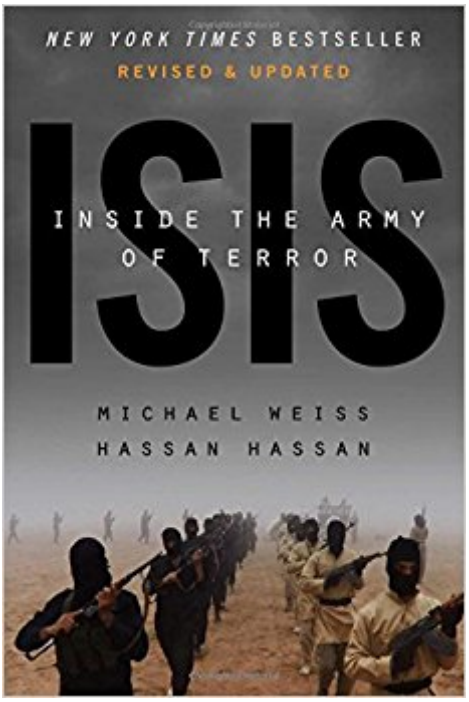
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ISIS: Inside The Army Of Terror (Updated Edition)



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Synopsis

Fully Revised & Updated Edition of theÃ Â New York TimesÃ Â Bestselling and Highly Praised Book on ISIS With newly added material and breaking news including: Ã¢â ¬â •Interview with a former ISIS spymaster Ã¢â ¬â •Why ISIS is targeting Europe and the US Ã¢â ¬â •What Russia wants in Syria Ã¢â ¬â •Revelations on the brutal ideology of ISISWith brutal attacks inÃ Â last year across the globeÃ¢â ¬â •Brussels,Ã Â Paris, Beirut,Ã Â Egypt, TurkeyÃ¢â ¬â •the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)Ã Â has proved itself the greatest terrorist threat in the world today.Ã Â They have conquered massive territories in Syria andÃ Â Iraq in a bid to create a new Muslim caliphate under theÃ Â strict dictates of Sharia law.Ã Â In this fully revised and updated edition of ISIS: InsideÃ Â the Army of Terror, American journalist Michael Weiss andÃ Â Syrian analyst Hassan Hassan explain how these violentÃ Â extremists evolved from a nearly defeated Iraqi insurgentÃ Â group into a jihadi army of international volunteers who,Ã Â with slickly produced murder videos, are spreading violenceÃ Â and mayhem across the globe. Beginning with theÃ Â early days of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of ISISÃ¢â ¬â„¢sÃ Â first incarnation, Weiss and Hassan explain who the keyÃ Â players areÃ¢â ¬â •from their leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to theÃ Â former Saddam Baathists in their ranksÃ¢â ¬â •where they comeÃ Â from, how they have attracted both local and global support,Ã Â and how they operateÃ¢â ¬â •from their social media strategy toÃ Â their illicit oil revenues. As money and matÃƒÂ©riel continue toÃ Â flow into the region to combat the ISISÃ¢â ¬â„¢s spreading terror,Ã Â other forcesÃ¢â ¬â •AssadÃ¢â ¬â„¢s regime, Russian planes, Iranian QudsÃ Â Forces, and other Shiite militiasÃ¢â ¬â •are gaining power and usingÃ Â the fight against ISIS as a means to leverage theirÃ Â agenda in the region. Political and military maneuvering by the United States,Ã Â Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Russia have fueled ISISÃ¢â ¬â„¢s explosive expansion.Ã Â In five new chapters, the authors delve further intoÃ Â the inner workings of the Army of Terror and what it is like toÃ Â live under their ever-tightening rule. With invaluable and exclusiveÃ Â insider information, the authors explore the IslamicÃ Â StateÃ¢â ¬â„¢s enigmatic recruitment and training methods, the impactÃ Â of their military successes and failures, and how theyÃ Â structure and empower home-grown cells worldwide toÃ Â carry out their terror. Drawing on original interviews withÃ Â former US military officials and current ISIS fightersÃ¢â ¬â •andÃ Â brand-new interviews with a former ISIS spy, as well asÃ Â Kurdish and Yazidi survivors of the ISISÃ¢â ¬â„¢s assault on northernÃ Â IraqÃ¢â ¬â •the authors reveal the internecine struggles withinÃ Â the movement itself, as well as ISISÃ¢â ¬â„¢s bloody hatred of ShiiteÃ Â Muslims, which is generating another sectarian war inÃ Â the region. A new generation of terror has dawned in theÃ Â world and to

understand how to stop it, we must understandÃ Â who they are.

Book Information

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> Best Books of 2015> Top 10 Books on Terrorism "A remarkable book." Ã¢â ¬â •Ã Â Anderson Cooper"Weiss and Hassan provide a detailed explanation of how the Islamic State 'manages savagery'Ã Â on the ground . . .Ã Â this account of the Islamic State in Iraq is a valuable summation and the most serious book-length study of the Islamic State to be published so far." Ã¢â ¬â •Ã Â New York Times Book ReviewÃ Â Editors' ChoiceÃ Â "Weiss and Hassan capture the complexity of the . . . imbroglios that gave rise to the Islamic State . . . in this thorough and accessible book." Ã¢â ¬â •Foreign Affairs"The first book to fully explain what ISIS is seeking and why they are such a threat to the world. An absolute must-read for anyone who wants to understand the risk we all face from radical Islam." Ã¢â ¬â •Douglas E. Schoen,Ã Â political analyst, author ofÃ Â The Russia-China Axis: The New Cold War and America's Crisis of Leadership"A . . . detailed and nuanced story." Ã¢â ¬â • James Traub,Ã Â Wall Street Journal"Easily the best history I've read of the evolution of the terror group." Ã¢â ¬â •Ã Â Kareem Shaheen,Ã Â The Guardian"Weiss and Hassan have produced a detailed and readable book. Their informants include American and regional military officials and intelligence operatives, defected Syrian spies and diplomats, and Ã¢â ¬â œ most fascinating of all Ã¢â ¬â œ Syrians who work for Isis (these are divided into categories such as politickers, pragmatists, opportunists and fence-sitters). The authors provide useful insights into Isis governance Ã¢â ¬â œ a combination of divide-and-rule, indoctrination and fear Ã¢â ¬â œ and are well placed for the task.

Hassan, an expert on tribal and jihadist dynamics, is from SyriaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s east. Weiss reported from liberated al-Bab, outside Aleppo, before Isis took it over." Ã¢â ¬â •Robin Yassin-Kassab, author of The Road from Damascus, is writing (with Leila al-Shami) a book on the civil activists of the Syrian revolution, (The Guardian)Ã¢â ¬Å“Recounted in painstaking detail . . .Ã Â the book presents a granular analysis of the ISÃ¢â ¬â„¢s organization, ideology, funding and recruitment.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Muhammad Idrees Ahmad,Ã Â author ofÃ Â The Road to Iraq: the Making of a Neoconservative WarÃ Â (In These Times)Ã¢â ¬Â•ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror, by Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, does a first-rate job of describing the Islamic StateÃ¢â ¬â„¢s layers . . .Ã Â in Syria and in Iraq.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â • Paul Berman,Ã Â author ofÃ Â A Tale of Two Utopias, Terror and Liberalism, Power and the Idealists,Ã Â andÃ Â The Flight of the IntellectualsÃ Â (Tablet)Ã¢â ¬Å“Concise, valuable, and a compelling read for anyoneÃ¢â ¬â •general reader or specialistÃ¢â ¬â •interested in ISIS.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â • Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi,Ã Â Syria CommentÃ¢â ¬Å“Incredibly rich and valuable for the specialist and non-specialist alike . . .Ã Â it is a rich and nuanced piece touching on all the points that the arrival of ISIS has raised in Syria and Iraq.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â • Tam Hussein,Ã Â The Huffington PostÃ¢â ¬Å“Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan provide a comprehensive account of how the Islamic State came to be, who is to blame for its emergence, and why world leaders should be worried about its expansion.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Kevin Sullivan,Ã Â editor ofÃ Â Real Clear World"ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror is brilliantly easy to read . . .Ã Â concise yet thorough, it will surprise and shatter the beliefs of many.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Kyle Orton, Middle East analyst,Ã Â Left Foot Forward"[A] superb piece of journalism, unsparing in its analysis of the folly of the Obama administration." Ã¢â ¬â • Nick Cohen,Ã Â The Spectator (UK)Ã¢â ¬Å“Weiss and Hassan give a concise yet detailed account of the rise of the terror movement, anybody who wants to work out where they stand on Iraq and Syria will find this book invaluableÃ¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â • Daniel Finkelstein,Ã Â The TimesÃ Â Best Books of 2015

MICHAEL WEISSÃ Â is a senior editor atÃ Â The Daily Beast,Ã Â a CNN contributor,Ã Â and the editor-in-chief ofÃ Â The Interpreter. He has written forÃ Â Foreign Policy,Ã Â The Guardian,Ã Â Foreign Affairs, Politico,Ã Â and a host of other publications. HASSAN HASSANÃ Â is a resident fellow at the Tahrir InstituteÃ Â for Middle East Policy and associate fellow at ChathamÃ Â House. He is also a columnist for The National in Abu Dhabi.Ã Â His writing has frequently appeared in The Guardian, ForeignÃ Â Policy, Foreign Affairs and the New York Times.

I agree with the other reviewers that this is very a interesting history of how ISIS developed and the role it has played in the Iraqi and Syrian wars. (The section on the Syrian war is downright Byzantine.) The reason I dropped one star is that this is really a piece of journalism, such as a multi-part New Yorker article, published separately with covers and rushed to print to meet a current need.The book is filled with names of people and organizations which unless you are a Middle East specialist don’t easily register with Americans. Most organizations are given a set of initials on first mention; after that they are referred to by those initials. As there is neither a table of these abbreviations nor an index, reading this can be a struggle. Because of this problem, I recommend the Kindle version with its search function over the paperback I read.At least one general map of the region would have been very helpful in following the text. I chose not to carry around an atlas as I read this book.And finally, I would have liked more information on the actual structure of the organization and how it operates. But, perhaps that is beyond our current state of knowledge. As it is, the book is very useful in dispelling the idea that ISIS is run by Jihadi John and his ilk--or least, so I hope.

In ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan provide important and fascinating insights into the development of ISIS, many of its leaders, and its mass appeal to certain Sunni population groups. The book also raises some hard to substantiate issues about the potential roles of the Iranian and Syrian governments in assisting Sunni Islamic extremists combating U. S. forces in the period soon after the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq.The authors note from the outset that Egyptian Ayman Al-Zawahiri of Al-Qaeda emphasized attacking the United States and other powerful non-Islamic states that opposed Islamic fundamentalist extremists and provided underlying support for what he viewed as corrupt governments in Islamic countries. Weiss and Hassan point out that in contrast Jordanian born Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who played a major role in organizing Al Qaeda in Iraq (which eventually evolved into ISIS), believed that his targets should include those he considered proximate unbelievers including the Shia and non-fundamentalist Sunni political leaders and their supporters backed by the U.S. Weiss and Hassan suggest that multiple factors contributed to the creation and growth of ISIS including the Bush administrationÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s invasion of Iraq in 2003, the anti-Baathist campaign and the dissolution of the Iraqi armed forces that resulted in mass unemployment of skilled military personnel many of whom later joined ISIS, the partisan Shia Maliki governmentÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s policies that enraged and alienated many Iraqi Sunnis, and the lack of an effective military deterrent

to the rise of ISIS. The authors suggest that in some areas plagued by lawlessness and corrupt local leaders, many people welcomed or at least tolerated ISIS because of its re-establishment of a type of stability and order, even if accompanied by brutal methods.As noted above, one of the areas that may be less satisfying in the book is the implication that the Syrian government and the Iranian government both at least temporarily supported Sunni extremistsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ activities in Iraq following the March 2003 invasion. It seems more plausible that in Syria in particular certain persons believed to be attempting to resist foreign occupation were allowed to cross into Iraq. The authorsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ sources in some cases may have imputed knowledge of the nature of the Sunni extremist threat to Syrian and Iranian government officials back in the first few years after the U.S. led invasion of Iraq that Western intelligence agencies have only recently come to grasp. In other words, Syrians or Iranians in the chaotic period right after the invasion may have believed they were assisting Baathist resistance to the invasion rather than Sunni Salafists who would later turn on them as well as Western forces.Another element that might have been developed further in the book would have been an analysis of how the overall network of elite political, wealth and security interests in the Middle East and North Africa have inhibited democratic forces and provided an opening for a fanatical movement like ISIS. With popular perception that there is no other feasible way to counter what many see as a corrupt multinational system, ISIS has likely had some appeal as at least one option to in some way challenge the status quo. The international context may also help explain ISIS's staying power.

With the recent announcement by Russia that they will be performing airstrikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the world is seeing the newest combatant in a struggle that has its origins in events from decades prior. While the Islamic State first burst onto the scene in 2014 from seemingly nowhere, the terror group actually has its origins in a shifting coalition of Islamic militants who have been waiting all their lives for this moment. For the first time since the fall of AfghanistanÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Taliban regime in late 2001, an Islamic terrorist group has such control over a region that it could be regarded as a government. Borrowing heavily from prior journalism efforts, this book by Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan performs an excellent job chronicling the rise of the Islamic State.Although he probably now seems like a distant memory, the closest thing the Islamic State has to a direct ancestor was the terrorist network of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. al-Zarqawi was a Jordanian who arrived too late to fight against the Soviets in the late 1980s, so he instead sought to overthrow those regimes throughout the Arab world that he viewed as apostates. His opportunity to shine came with the American invasion of Iraq. Although the

motivations behind what drove the invasion have been part of an emotional debate, virtually no one contests that the dissolution of the Iraqi military and removal from office of most BaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢athist civil servants was a mistake. With these decisions, hundreds of thousands of men were suddenly unemployed and very angry. These men would become an important group once the Islamic State began to make its name. Before Islamic State, however, al-Zarqawi sought to establish a reign of terror with suicide bombings and beheadings throughout the country. Although he and Osama bin Laden had always kept one another at armÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s length, al-Zarqawi pursued the policy of many other terrorist groups and nominally kept his organization under al-QaedaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s banner. By the time al-Zarqawi was killed in 2006, his terror network, despite going through a number of name changes, was well-enough established to survive past the American withdrawal at the end of 2011.Across the border in Syria, President Bashar al-Assad had lent some support to insurgents attacking American military personnel throughout the occupation. However, like most Middle Eastern tyrants, he had an ambiguous relationship with Islamic militants. Fearful of them causing unrest at home, he pursued an alternating policy of throwing them in jail and exporting them to cause mischief in other countries. Once people began to protest against his regime, he turned against the protestors. These protestors, previously peaceful, turned to arms and the book posits that Bashar al-Assad may have released Islamic militants from jail, knowing they would join the opposition and thereby delegitimize it.As a result, these militants from both Syria and Iraq slowly coalesced into the organization now known as the Islamic State. The main goal of this group is to establish a return to the glories of the Islamic caliphate from a thousand years ago, and to rule over the whole of the Middle East and eventually the world. It was born from an unusual set of alliances and divisions. At the beginning of the Syrian civil war, the Islamic State sought to ally with more secular groups like the Free Syrian Army. Their radicalism and tendency to behead anyone who disagreed with them, however, quickly led to a rupture in the alliance. Added to that was Islamic StateÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s simultaneous feud with the official al-Qaeda militia in the Levant, al-Nusra Front. Despite being outnumbered and attacked on multiple sides, the Islamic State in mid-2014 gained ground in Syria and overwhelmed the Iraqi military in cities, such as Fallujah, Mosul, and Tikrit. Part of their success came from the experience of former members of Saddam HusseinÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s military. While SaddamÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s BaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ath party may have been largely secular, its adherents decided that allying with an Islamic group and being in power was better than having no power at all.What confuses many Western readers is how an organization so brutal could gain such widespread appeal. I personally do not find it surprising at all. Civil wars have a tendency to

escalate in brutality over time and many of this conflictÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s commanders have been at war in one place or another for thirty years. More importantly, many of its fighters are young men and, although it would be an overstatement to say that this applies to most, many youth are dumb, unconcerned with death, and with an appetite for destruction. To the Middle East, though, their strongest appeal is claiming to have erased the borders established by the Sykes-Picot Agreement that were imposed in the aftermath of World War One. Although few people in the Western world have probably even heard of it, in the Middle East the history of oneÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s people is still a living presence. However, while many think that the Islamic State controls a solid block of territory, their control depends on the proximity of enemy troops and is often fluid.Overall, I found this to be an extremely educating book. In a region where it is frequently difficult to remember the names, let alone remember their political stance, this creates a clear narrative. One surprising aspect is the bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s depiction of the Islamic StateÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s current leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, as more of a bureaucrat than a fighter. Although he was known to intelligence operatives for years, he rose through the ranks as much through his superiors being killed as any particular talent or charisma. Its portrait for the Middle East is bleak, though. Realistically, the Free Syrian Army is not strong enough to defeat both the Islamic State and Bashar al-Assad, especially when the latter has the full-throated support of Iran and Russia. The United States, on the other hand, has been unwilling to put boots on the ground and instead has limited itself to airstrikes. Although airstrikes may be able to destroy many valuable targets, ultimately a group like the Islamic State has managed to survive the prior deaths of its leaders and is becoming increasingly adept at concealing its forces from aerial surveillance. Although this book covers the history of the Islamic State and its wars up to the beginning of this year, I believe a full history of the organization will have to cover many years to come.

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