

Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate

By Abdel-Bari Atwan

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Islamic State stunned the world when it overran an area the size of Britain on both sides of the Iraq-Syria border in a matter of weeks and proclaimed the birth of a new Caliphate. In this timely and important book, Abdel Bari Atwan draws on his unrivalled knowledge of the global jihadi movement and Middle Eastern geopolitics to reveal the origins and modus operandi of Islamic State. Based on extensive field research and exclusive interviews with IS insiders, Atwan outlines the group's leadership structure, as well as its strategies, tactics and diverse methods of recruitment. He traces the Salafi-jihadi lineage of IS, its ideological differences with al-Qa'ida and the deadly rivalry that has emerged between their leaders. Atwan also shows how the group's rapid growth has been facilitated by its masterful command of social media platforms, the 'dark web', Hollywood 'blockbuster'-style videos, and even jihadi computer games, producing a powerful paradox where the ambitions of the Middle Ages have re-emerged in cyber-space.As Islamic State continues to dominate the world's media headlines with horrific acts of ruthless violence, Atwan considers the movement's chances of survival and expansion, and offers indispensable insights on potential government responses to contain the IS threat.

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Review
'This is a brave and important book. It lifts the lid on how Islamic State combines an ideology of 1,000 years ago with the use of 21st century information technology to spread its messages. If you want to understand what motivates those prepared to behead hostages and post the results on the internet, then this book is a must-read.' Gavin Esler; 'Abdel Bari Atwan is one of the leading analysts in the world on the modern Middle East. In his new book on ISIS he delivers a uniquely informed, crisply argued and excellent account of the world's most powerful terrorist organization.' Peter Bergen, author of Manhunt: The Ten-Year Search for bin Laden from 9/11 to Abbottabad; 'Thank heavens we have writers such as Atwan - who knew the real Bin Laden better than any other journalist' Robert Fisk, Independent; 'An extraordinarily gifted, experienced and knowledgeable analyst of Arab affairs' Ann Leslie, Daily Mail; 'In this comprehensive and well-researched book, Abdel Bari Atwan, perhaps one of the Arab world's most distinguished commentators, has thrown considerable light on the IS phenomenon, explaining its origins, leadership and organisation ... Atwan's unique contribution is the detail he provides relating to the use of digital technology ... This outstanding book tells us how it all started.' Business Standard; 'Middle East expert Abdel Bari Atwan explains exactly how IS propagandists and recruiters use the necromancy of the "dark web" to overcome our attempts to stop them.' Hugh Prysor-Jones, The Tablet

About the Author
Abdel Bari Atwan is a Palestinian writer and journalist. He was the editor-in-chief at the London-based daily al-Quds al-Arabi for twenty-five years and now edits the Rai al-Youm news website - the Arab world's first Huffington Post-style outlet. He is a regular contributor to a number of publications, including the Guardian and Scottish Herald, and is a frequent guest on radio and television, including regular stints on the BBC's Dateline London. Atwan interviewed Osama bin Laden twice in the late 1990s and has cultivated uniquely well-placed sources from within the various branches of al-Qa'ida and other jihadi groups, including IS, over the last twenty years. His other books include The Secret History of al-Qa'ida and After bin Laden: Al-Qa'ida, The Next Generation, as well as a memoir, A Country of Words: A Palestinian Journey from the Refugee Camp to the Front Page. www.bariatwan.com

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