



# Martyred but Not Tamed: The Politics of Resistance in the Middle East

*Ram Narayan Kumar*

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Part historical chronicle, part socio-political treatise, *Martyred but Not Tamed* is devoted to the Middle East and focuses on the four most combustible countries at the heart of this supremely volatile area-Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. Based on a series of extensive interviews with local actors, it also draws on the author's extensive scholarship. Attentive throughout to the viewpoints of the victims, it stands as a refreshing corrective to the distortions or downright lies which all too often inform the 'authoritative' discourse on the modern Middle East.

Along the way, in a systematic, thorough, yet vivid and highly readable manner, the book revisits several 'well-known' episodes of recent history, but with an unsparing gaze, untainted by the softening lenses which tend to distort the self-serving Western narrative. It highlights the role played by Britain and the other colonial powers, which for pure expediency did not hesitate to carve up the body politic of the region; to exacerbate and exploit existing divides; to create new divisions where none existed; and to draw borders that defied all ethnic and historical logic, thereby sowing the seed of intractable conflicts such as the one between Israel and the Palestinians.

Lastly, in a long, densely informative chapter on "oil politics", the book lays bare the naked economic and strategic interests which prompted nearly all the moves of the imperial powers in the region, from the days of overt colonial occupation down to the present age of indirect control and disguised hegemony.

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