



The Terror Years: From al-Qaeda to the Islamic State

Lawrence Wright

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Ten powerful pieces first published in *The New Yorker* recall the path terror in the Middle East has taken from the rise of al-Qaeda in the 1990s to the recent beheadings of reporters and aid workers by ISIS.

With the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Looming Tower*, Lawrence Wright became generally acknowledged as one of our major journalists writing on terrorism in the Middle East. This collection draws on several articles he wrote while researching that book as well as many that he's written since, following where and how al-Qaeda and its core cultlike beliefs have morphed and spread. They include an indelible impression of Saudi Arabia, a kingdom of silence under the control of the religious police; the Syrian film industry, then compliant at the edges but already exuding a feeling of the barely masked fury that erupted into civil war; the 2006-11 Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Gaza, a study in disparate values of human lives. Others continue to look into al-Qaeda as it forms a master plan for its future, experiences a rebellion from within the organization, and spins off a growing web of terror in the world. The American response is covered in profiles of two FBI agents and a chief of the CIA. It ends with the recent devastating piece about the capture and beheading by ISIS of four American journalists and aid workers, and how our government failed to handle the situation.

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