Of the 363 pages of the book, the text ends at page 275, the rest of the pages are annexures. In the main body thus, no less than 195 pages contain wholly or partially quotes and reproduction of letters and reports. Around 30 are the endnotes. Of the remaining few, most are unrelated tables and lists. For instance, while telling that 17 lawyers were licensed in 1941, the list of names of all of them was not called for (p. 80). More preposterous was the list of names of all 48 pupils who passed the matriculation exam the same year. Equally out of place would have been the list of names of officers, down to the Sergeant-Major level, of each formation of the Arab Legion in the Appendices, let alone in the main body of the book, as the author has done.

Saad S. Khan


*The Empire and the Crescent: Global Implications for a New American Century* presents itself as a “timely and authoritative perspective on the relations between the West and Islamic societies” (jacket flap). Indeed, the book does just that through the compilation of fifteen articles by renowned scholars in the fields of religion, politics, and economics. *The Empire and the Crescent* enlightens the readers to the danger of, and destruction caused by, the attitude of leaving global affairs, especially of the Muslim world, in the hands of the hegemonic United States. The book could almost be considered a warning from the scholarly left to the tenuous and volatile nature of the world situation today and the urgent need for change.

The articles in the work are divided into two sections, “The Empire” and “The Crescent”. As the section titles suggest, the first half of *The Empire and the Crescent* deals with the actions and actors of American foreign policy. The second section, “The Crescent”, is slightly less unified in theme but broader in scope. The main purpose of “The Crescent” seems to be to place the ramifications of U.S. foreign policy introduced in “The Empire” in the context of the Islamic world. These divisions serve the work well, providing a sort of cause-and-effect study of America as a world empire.
The Empire and the Crescent is a much needed work, a sort of remedy to the insularity of the American people that is caused by a lack of true and honest information about America’s role in global affairs. The Empire and the Crescent should be used as a reader in college classrooms and disseminated among those wishing to know the truth about the actions and actors of United States’ politics and economics. The layout of the book is particularly beneficial to these causes, for it enables the reader to choose a few essays from each section, examine one section in its entirety, or (in order to gain maximum understanding) read the work as a whole. Furthermore, despite dealing principally with complex economic and political events, the work is by no means difficult to understand. The articles contained within The Empire and the Crescent provide the necessary information while remaining intellectually accessible to people with all levels of education.

Although The Empire and the Crescent is a well-compiled work, it does have a few shortcomings. Despite discussing at length the effect America’s hegemony has on the politics, economics, and society of the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, the Muslim world as a whole, the articles in the work give scant attention to the environmental ramifications of America’s unlimited quest for power. Oil and the United States’ thirst for this commodity is discussed in several of the articles without any mention of the dangers of the over-drilling of reserves and the rampant consumption of refined oil. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, many of the authors fail to separate America’s power-hungry elite from the masses. As The Empire and the Crescent is targeted in part at Muslim leaders, activists, thinkers, and speakers, this omission seems to be a dangerous oversight. When the United States acts as an empire, it is at the cost of American education, social welfare, economics and value system. It must be understood that the government in America is acting as an elitist clique and dirtying the reputation of the United States without the consent (or at least without the enlightened consent, as those who agree to the actions do so only because they are being spoon-fed lies through the biased media) of the citizens of the United States.

As the work is divided into two units each consisting of several smaller articles by different authors, it seems fitting to discuss each unit as a whole and then analyze the individual articles which lie therein. Part one “The Empire”, provides an in-depth look at the individuals involved in shaping America’s global policy, their motivations, and their actions. Through the descriptions and analyses of U.S. foreign affairs, it becomes clear that America is indeed acting as an empire and this action is one of pure greed. Some attention is paid in this section to the global implications of America’s dominance, although much more detail is paid to this subject in the second section.
Each work contained within “The Empire” is monumental in its veracity and brutal honesty. Most of the authors of the articles in section one support their contentions with well-documented and uncontested evidence and avoid the allegations that are dissembled as facts in many works of this nature (both conservative and liberal). Taken on their own, each article opens one’s eyes to the reality that America is a hegemonic state bent on power and domination. It is unfortunate that these essays or similar ones are not published in newspapers or magazines available to, or read by, the general public, both in America and elsewhere, for the message they convey is an important one.

This section fails, however, in the variety of the articles. Of the nine articles in “The Empire”, all but the last seem to convey the same message supported by the same or similar facts. This is not to say that each article is exactly the same or that all authors assert the same contentions, but simply that each essay conveys a similar argument and that each author draws upon the same sources. If read in one or two sittings, section one becomes onerous and repetitious to the reader and each article seems to melt into the next. However, through this repetition certain key arguments become apparent and, with each author’s slightly different supporting facts, these arguments increase in cogency.

To begin with, the power to shape America’s foreign policy and make decisions which affect not only the United States but the world as a whole rests with only a few individuals, both inside and outside of government. These individuals are not concerned with the morality of their actions or with the detrimental effects they have on the rest of the world. Furthermore, this elite group seeks only to serve their own self-interests, principally those of increasing their wealth and power. Secondly, the media protects these elites and produces biased stories which in turn speciously increase the legitimacy of the elites. Finally, the elites actively seek to increase their wealth and power through the creation of foreign policy. Through the aid of the media, they employ fallacious reasoning which enables them to gain marginal legitimacy from the ignorant masses in order to carry out their policies. These policies in turn are detrimental to almost everything and everyone except the elites and those associated with them.

Despite these similar arguments, each article in section one does vary slightly in focus. The first essay, “A Day that Changed America: Did It?”, centres on the idea that the tragedies of September 11 could have led to a discussion of why the events occurred and what could be done to eliminate the factors that led to the occurrences of that day. The author, M. Shahid Alam, contends that American politicians and the American intelligenzia could have helped to spur a thoughtful and honest discussion of the negative effects of
American policy, particularly on the Muslim world. Instead, the opposite occurred and the elite were able to exploit the events of September 11 to dupe the American public and further assert their hegemony in the Middle East and South Asia.

In the second article, “The American Empire”, William Blum uses direct quotes from governmental officials and federal documents as well as historical evidence to argue that the American empire is increasing in power and greed to the detriment of the world. For the most part, Blum’s article is well-argued and well-supported. However, at times it seems that Blum gives up facts for coloured language, particularly in his section entitled “The Imperial Mafia”. Although many of his contentions contained within these sections are undoubtedly true and are proven by other authors in “The Empire”, his use of witty rhetoric ends up undermining the legitimacy of his argument.

Pepe Escobar’s article entitled “The Project for The New American Century” centres on the elite depicted in the above summary of “The Empire”. Through the investigation of the think tank Project for the New American Century Escobar shows how small and interrelated the elite are and the selfishness that pervades their decision making. The extent to which these elite control political and economic decisions is also discussed. Escobar’s article is well-written and he uses supporting facts in a manner that makes his argument quite cogent. The degree to which the elite are economically, politically, and socially connected is shocking to the reader who has heard of Haliburton but is not aware of the extent to which companies such as this have a say in decision-making.

In contrast to Escobar’s focus on the elite, Edward S. Herman examines the dangers of rule by this elite. Although short in length “Global Rogue State” makes an important and controversial contention. Herman argues that America is the most dangerous rogue state in the world, principally because of the danger it poses to the security of the world. Although Herman supports his thesis well, a statement of this magnitude, however, would be better suited to a longer article containing more research and supporting facts.

In his article “The Thirty Year Itch” Robert Dreyfuss leads the reader to the three conclusions about the elite, the media, and the ramifications of an American empire discussed in the analytical summary of section one. However, he does so through a chronological investigation of the events of the last couple of decades. As his analysis is geopolitical in focus, his main contention is that America’s current foreign policy is undertaken in order to increase both the size and power of its empire. It would be difficult to argue with Dreyfuss for he utilizes uncontested historical facts to support his thesis leaving no room for debate, and for this he should commended.
In the sixth article, “Post Saddam Iraq: Linchpin of a New World Order”, Michael Renner presents a similar analysis of the elite to that of Pepe Escobar’s “Project for the New American Century”. However, rather than looking at it from the perspective of conservative think tanks, Renner examines the links between big business and politicians. Furthermore, Renner’s thesis is more specific; through the examination of the tight relationship between those with power in government and those with power in oil companies he dispels the idea that the war in Iraq was fought over terrorism, hidden weapons, and the protection of democratic values. Instead, he contends, the war was fought because of thirst for oil (along with a few other hidden motives). Renner’s article is possibly the most compelling in the section, as his arguments are not only well-documented but presented in a manner that is both clear and concise.

Anthony Arnove’s article “Iraq and the Course of Empire” can almost be seen as a continuation of “Post Saddam Iraq: Linchpin for a New World Order”, for his article also focuses on the intersection between war and oil. For one familiar with Arnove’s writings, the content and manner of address come as no surprise. His article is teeming with facts and figures which he is able to manipulate in such a way that “Iraq and the Course of Empire” reads almost like a textbook on the subject of why U.S. troops are really in Iraq. He is detailed without being verbose and states his beliefs and contentions without seeming opinionated.

Frida Berrigan’s “The War Profiteers” would be a decent and informative article if it was read in isolation. However, section one of this volume contains article after article which either focus on or mention the elites which rule America’s foreign policy and the links between big business and government. In this short article, Berrigan focuses on companies that deal with or produce arms. She should be praised for her in-depth examination of specific companies. The numerical data she employs as evidence in her argument is truly amazing and horrifying. The goal of her article, and the Arms Trade Resource Center (the organization she works for) itself, is well served, for “The War Profiteers” most definitely educates the reader as to the actions and ramifications of U.S. arms trade.

The last article of section one is quite different from the preceding ones, for it discusses the disparity between the human rights and democracy that America boasts about and the human rights and democracy it practices. Louise Christian’s “Lest We Forget” is a compelling article and is much more humanistic in scope than the other articles contained within “The Empire”. This is not to say that she does not use historical or numerical facts, but instead integrates them with concepts of decency and human rights. “Lest We
Forget” provides a nice conclusion to “The Empire” and good segue into “The Crescent”.

There are fewer articles in section two “The Crescent” (six instead of nine) but they are far broader in scope. Although it is hard to identify a theme common to all of them, they complement each other well and create a nice compendium on the ramifications of America’s hegemony felt by the Muslim world.

The first article in this section (the tenth article in the book) is Hamza Yusuf’s “Seeing With Muslim Eyes”. Yusuf’s brief article discusses the anger and resentment felt in the Muslim world due to America’s foreign policy. Although his point is indeed valid, his argument is somewhat off. He begins with a discussion of the origins and definitions of the words ‘anger’, ‘sorrow’, and ‘grief’ in order to provide some insight as to why Muslims feel this way. However, a belief common to both scholars of linguistics and cultural anthropology is that although human emotions are universal, their expression, definition, and understanding are relative to the language of the individual (or in the case of bilingual individuals, the language in which the individual thinks or the language in which the individual was socialized). It seems unfortunate, then, to define English words for emotions, as English is not the first language of most Muslims. Secondly, Yusuf’s argument peaks with a comparison with September 11 as a type of road rage. Again, he is erroneous in some of his statements. While road rage seems to be a nice analogy, many psychologists believe that road rage has more to do with immediate aggravations and the pressure felt while driving in a society that puts too much pressure on individuals than with factors related to experiences outside of driving (not to mention the fact that the events of September 11 were orchestrated in advance). Although these points may seem small and picky, it is Yusuf’s small errors which prevent “Seeing with Muslim Eyes” from being the incredible article that it could be.

“Islam and the West after September 11: Civilizational Dialogue or Conflict” is a change of pace and content. This article by John L. Esposito focuses on intercultural and interreligious dialogue between Islam and the West. Esposito debunks the myth that “today we see but the latest iteration of a centuries old confrontation between Islam and Christianity, the Muslim World and the West” (p. 112). He invokes history to show that interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue has occurred between the Muslim and the non-Muslim worlds for centuries and that, contrary to beliefs such as those of Samuel Huntington’s, the problems facing the world today were not inevitable but are instead a direct result of American foreign policy.
Zaid Shakir’s article “Jihad as Perpetual War” presents theological arguments against some of the interpretations of Qur’anic texts, namely the idea that *jihad* is equivalent to perpetual war. It is these misinterpretations which foster negative images of Islam in the West, making Shakir’s article a very important one.

Abdul Hakim Murad’s article entitled “Tradition or Extradition? The Threat to Muslim Americans” is absolutely amazing, both in content and writing style. He writes candidly and honestly and approaches the issue of Muslim immigration to the United States from both sides. For those familiar with scholarly works on immigration this seems to be a very unique and monumental piece. Murad asserts that mistreatment of Muslim immigrants in the United States today stems at least partially from a widespread xenophobia that has been present in the United States for several centuries. He goes on to write that this insularity is made worse by the pervading neoconservative attitude present in government today. Murad also contends, however, that the Muslim community must increase its level of citizenship and examine the role Muslim immigrants have in American society today with a greater deal of scrutiny. It seems in this work that Abdul Hakim Murad has found some sort of middle ground, and hopefully “Tradition or Extradition? The Threat to Muslim Americans” can serve to pave the way for improved relations between Muslim immigrants and mainstream American government and society.

In “Piety, Persuasion, and Politics: Deoband’s Model of Social Activism” Barbara Metcalf seeks to separate the terms of ‘ fanatic’ and ‘fundamentalist’ which are often erroneously used interchangeably in the West. She cites the examples of the Deoband’s model of social activism. Although fundamentalist in nature, Deoband was by no means a fanatical group. However, Deoband did pave the way for the Taliban who were fanatics in both beliefs and actions. Unfortunately, Metcalf’s article is somewhat convoluted and rooted too much in history. She never quite comes back to her original point, and instead ends her essay with a summary of the historic Tablighi Jama’at.

The last essay in the section (and in the book as well) is M. Hashim Kamali’s “Fanaticism and its Manifestations in Muslim Societies”. This article is similar to Metcalf’s in that it discusses fanaticism in the Muslim world. However, Kamali’s article is more psychological than historical. The contentions in “Fanaticism and its Manifestations in Muslim Societies” are well-documented and the separate sections serve to make the article easier to understand. The section on the causes of fundamentalism is worth noting for Kamali presents some very enlightening ideas and overall this seems to be a very useful article.
As is clear from the previous pages, *The Empire and The Crescent* is a truly amazing compilation. Each article is able to stand alone, but taken as a whole the work enlightens readers to the danger of and destruction caused by leaving global affairs, specifically within the context of the Muslim world, in the hands of the hegemonic United States.

Jennifer Regan

★★★★


Robert Spencer’s *Islam Unveiled* is one of the numerous works that have emerged during the past quarter century on the world’s fastest growing faith. However, unlike the emotionally charged and poorly researched works of several pseudo scholars of Islam and the Middle East like Robert Morey’s *The Islamic Invasion* and Daniel Pipes’ *Militant Islam Reaches America*, Spencer’s book is eloquently written, judiciously edited, and tactfully presented. Nonetheless, while Daniel Ali, founder of the Christian-Islamic Forum Inc., considers the book to be the “first successful attempt at revealing (the evilness of) Islam”, it would be more appropriate to label it the first serious rather than successful attempt due to its flagrant and innumerable errors in its greater part.

It is difficult to overlook and ignore the book’s seductive and fear-inspiring cover. Spencer’s tabloidial choice to publish close-up facial portraits of dreadful looking Muhammad Atta [Muhammad ‘Atâ’] (one of masterminds of the 9/11 attack), along with the picture of an attractive-looking young woman with mesmerizing Arab eyes wearing the *hijab*, is an open invitation for people to form already negative images of the Islamic faith altogether. This prelude sets the stage for the rest of the play: Islam, the religion of hate and violence *par excellence*, promotes terrorism and suppresses human rights. His claim is further solidified by a foreword by an Arab-abhorrer, pro-Zionist and senior editor of the conservative *National Review*, David Pryce-Jones, along with a back-cover feedback by renowned Islam-basher, Dr Anis Shorrosh.

The entire book revolves around one basic premise: the evil actions, unethical practices, intolerant behaviour and promiscuous conduct that Muslims commit and believe in, are not the works of a few zealots falsely