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## Covering Islam

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show that we cannot reasonably expect world oil production to keep pace with demand for very many more years. Clearly, adequate substitutes must be found, or severe economic disruptions, social upheavals and wars will result.

Bucknell surveys the various means of alleviating dependence on oil and gas. He points out that the "Energy Crisis" is really an oil and gas crisis, and that ample supplies of other forms of energy exist and can be developed. He discusses in some detail the political and economic conditions which bear on America's ability to effectively utilize these other sources. He advances forceful argument that a diversity of sources including nuclear power, solar energy (in all its forms) and coal must be developed; that no one or two of these will suffice, but all are needed in applications suited to their natures; and that fuel conservation is essential during this transition period. He further argues that because of the real urgency of the situation and the concurrent failure of the general public to recognize this urgency, free market forces will probably not bring about the needed developments soon enough to avert serious and perhaps calamitous consequences. He considers strong government action necessary to stimulate technological advance, to provide incentives for energy development, and to focus public attention. He also points out that the adversary relationship which has arisen between advocates of the various energy alternatives is quite destructive, since all these alternative sources are needed to support our increasingly industrialized world society.

Concerned citizens and national policymakers alike would do well to read this book. Howard Bucknell has succeeded in establishing an orderly framework for considering the complex information on energy matters. His views are clearly stated and well supported, and should be of great help in solving the energy problem. The problem is real and the

need for solution is urgent. Failure to deal adequately with the energy problem will have disastrous consequences.

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Commander, U.S. Navy

Said, Edward W. *Covering Islam*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980. 186pp. \$10.95

Edward Said's book is about how the "coverage" of Islam has actually led to the "covering" of what Islam is all about. Said's aim is to defend Islam from the unattractive image offered by TV and the press, especially during the hostage crisis in Iran.

Islam has been misrepresented by the press, says Said, and he attempts to show how our biases have shaped the American view of Islamic culture. In light of the reports coming out of Iran since the taking of the U.S. Embassy late in 1979, Said's view is keenly divergent from the most common presentations. He believes that reporters and commentators, attempting to understand a culture of which they knew little, and whose language they could not read, found themselves without a framework for understanding the contemporary Islamic world. Convenient sources of information were scarce, so often the reporters and commentators had to make do with the information and attitudes they started with. As a result, the accepted view of the culture became a hostile one. Islam was equated with anti-Americanism. This Western image foreclosed any examination of the deeper meanings of Islam as a religion.

At the outset of the book, the author traces the opposing viewpoints of Occidental and Orientalist thought. (Said has expounded on the concept of Orientalist thought in his book *Orientalism*.) To the Muslim, the West represents the great evil, so the ordinary American, ill-informed though he was, was not all that wrong. To the West, Islam is the culture that dares to

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threaten the world of superpowers. Said contrasts the distorted treatment of Islam as a fanatical religious sect with the favorable treatment Israel receives. He maintains that television and the press merely reflects their interests:

This is the point. The media can do all sorts of things that are eccentric, unexpectedly original, even aberrant. But in the end, because they are corporations serving and promoting a corporate identity—"America" and even "the West"—they all have the same central consciousness in mind.

(p. 48)

According to Said, a similar problem exists within academia. Supported by both the U.S. Government and U.S. corporations the intelligentsia "responds to what it construes as national and corporate needs." (p. 142) Thus scholars frequently deal with the current events or analyses deemed important by their supporters and not with the issues of Islam itself. The author does concede, however, that some scholars are breaking away from this mold and are beginning to look at events in the Islamic world with the objective of determining the interpretations of Islam which helped bring about these developments.

*Covering Islam* presents a view of Islam that take the reader beyond the walls of the American Embassy in Teheran. It provides insights into Islam and illustrates how the newspapers and TV may have misrepresented it. In a particularly interesting chapter dealing with the Iranian crisis, Said offers a view of the crisis through the eyes of a David confronting Goliath, a frame of reference rarely addressed in the United States.

*Covering Islam* attacks the reader's frame of reference and challenges his assumptions about Islam, forcing him to confront his comfortably held opinions. Thus, it challenges the image of Islam that has been adopted by America itself

and dares the American to see Islam as something besides a political force. While many readers will not accept all (or most) of Said's conclusions, and many others will be put off by his style, it is not possible to read the book without at least a modest reconsideration of one's views.

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Ferencz, Benjamin B. *An International Court: A Step Towards World Peace—A Documentary History and Analysis*, Vols. I and II. Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana. 1980, 538, 674pp. \$37.50 each

The enormous growth during the past decade of terror-violence, narcotics dissemination, genocide, torture, and alleged war criminality, along with revived historical interest in the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals (and their progeny), have provoked a vigorous public policy debate over the feasibility of an international criminal court. The argument is one of long standing, dating back to the Second Hague Conference of 1907, and resumed at great length during the interwar period. Although the German Kaiser escaped trial as an international criminal after World War I, through asylum granted by The Netherlands, a dozen lesser accused offenders were subject to legal process, but only half were convicted and their punishment was mild.

A dual assassination of Yugoslavian King Alexander and French Foreign Minister Lois Barthou in 1934, plus the murder of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss that same year, resulted in the convening of a League of Nations conference at Geneva in 1937 to deal with the dilemma of international terrorism. Two conventions were promulgated, one on the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism, and another on the Creation of an International Criminal Court. But like the