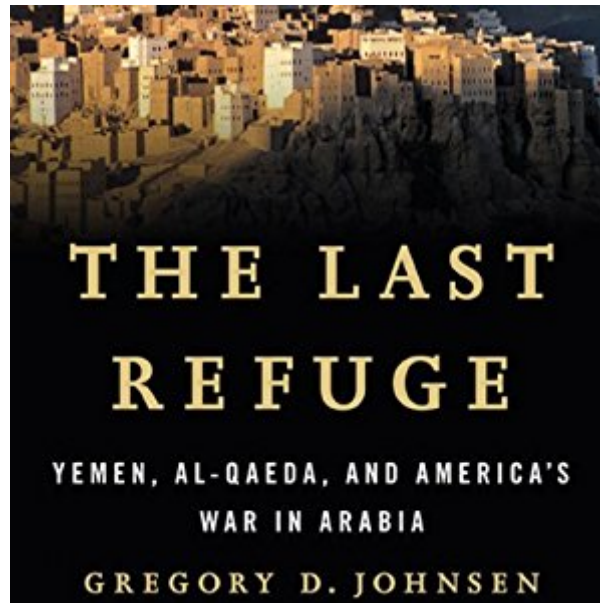


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The Last Refuge: Yemen, Al-Qaeda, And America's War In Arabia



Synopsis

A gripping account of how al-Qaeda in Yemen rebounded from an initial defeat to once again threaten the United States. Far from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States and al-Qaeda are fighting a clandestine war of drones and suicide bombers in an unforgiving corner of Arabia. The Last Refuge charts the rise, fall, and resurrection of al-Qaeda in Yemen over the last 30 years, detailing how a group that the United States once defeated has now become one of the world's most dangerous threats. An expert on Yemen who has spent years on the ground there, Gregory D. Johnsen uses al-Qaeda's Arabic battle notes to reconstruct their world as they take aim at the United States and its allies. Johnsen brings listeners inside al-Qaeda's training camps and safe houses as the terrorists plot poison attacks and debate how to bring down an airliner on Christmas Day. The Last Refuge is an eye-opening look at the successes and failures of fighting a new type of war in one of the most turbulent countries in the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The history of terrorism in Yemen and the limits of U.S. foreign policy in distant, unfriendly lands are the twin subjects of Gregory Johnsen's excellent book. He is one of the most knowledgeable people in the West on Yemen, having lived, studied and worked there for years and is currently finishing his Ph.D. in Near East Studies at Princeton. Johnsen wears his learning lightly—he seems to know the history and current affiliation of every tribe, ethnic group and political operation in the desert nation but *The Last Refuge* is written for the general reader. Johnsen is a careful stylist but his language is exciting and he paints a vivid picture of how Al Qaeda has affected Yemen

and how the people, culture and landscape of Yemen have affected Al Qaeda. Ali Abdullah Salih ruled (or tried to rule) for over 30 years although the government of Yemen never controlled the entire country and often only held sway over Sana'a and the area immediately around the capital. He thought it would be a good idea to send young men to Afghanistan for jihad and then begin using them against his only real opposition, the Socialist Party. He realized too late that while setting a process in motion may seem easy, controlling it or even influencing its direction can become impossible. Many young men left as idealistic defenders of Islam against invasion from infidels and returned as hardened Al Qaeda operatives, experienced in combat and unwilling to live under Salih's kleptocratic regime. And so these returning veterans created Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Salih was happy to allow U. S. counterinsurgency operations against AQAP but since they consisted solely using drones to kill those suspected of being ranking members of AQAP.

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