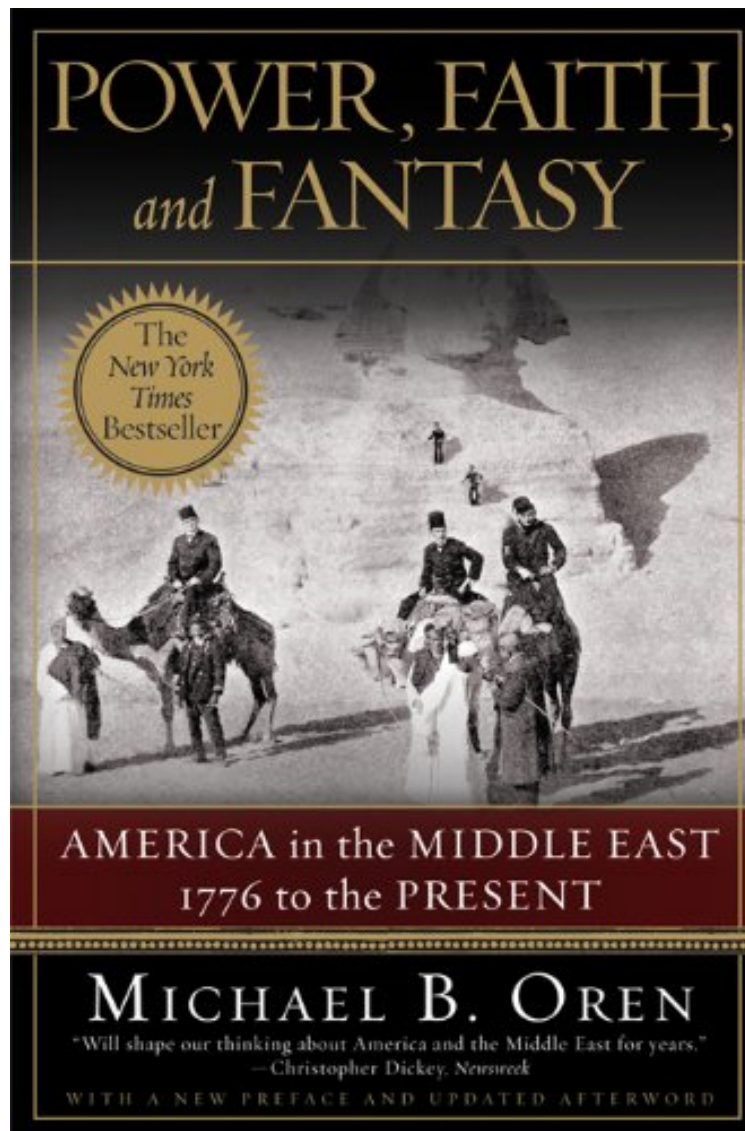


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Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East: 1776 to the Present: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present

Von Michael B. Oren

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Kundenrezensionen
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1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Uncle Sam im Morgenland
Von J. Rupp
Der israelische Historiker und Diplomat Michael Oren, der mit *Six Days of War* ein Standardwerk über den Sechstagekrieg verfasst hat, legt mit diesem Buch eine Gesamtdarstellung über die vielfältigen Beziehungen der Vereinigten Staaten mit dem Orient vor. Von der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts reicht der zeitliche Rahmen, den der Autor dabei abdeckt. Um die Komplexität dieser Beziehungen in ihrer Gesamtheit erfassen zu können, gliedert Oren seinen Ansatz in drei Dimensionen auf, die sich sowohl wechselseitig ergänzen als auch in einem Spannungsverhältnis zueinander stehen. Die "Macht, der Glaube und die Phantasie bilden einen dreidimensionalen Raum, in welchem sich die Geschichte entfaltet. Oren behandelt in diesem historischen Raum eine Vielzahl von Gestalten und Persönlichkeiten. Zu ihnen gehören beispielsweise Abenteurer, Entdecker, Missionare, Diplomaten, Politiker, Schriftsteller oder auch ganz normale Touristen. Die erste machtpolitische Auseinandersetzung ergab sich hierbei am Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts, als die gerade entstandene U.S. Navy gegen nordafrikanische Piraten und deren staatliche Unterstützer vorging. Der militärische Erfolg in den Barbarenkriegen förderte das Selbstbewusstsein der noch jungen Nation. Zudem wurde der Orient für amerikanische Missionare zu einem gelobten Land. Die Missionierungsversuche blieben zwar weitgehend erfolglos, was die christlichen Kirchenvertreter allerdings nicht daran hinderte, zahlreiche Schulen und Hospitäler zu errichten. Außer dem Wort Gottes verbreiteten sie Grundzüge der amerikanischen Zivilreligion, zu denen Freiheit, Unabhängigkeit, Demokratie und eine nationale Identität zählten. Die Phantasie der Amerikaner am sagenumwobenen Morgenland wurde durch die Lektüre von ganz unterschiedlichen Texten angeregt. So sorgten die Bibel, Märchen, Romane oder Reiseberichte für eine romantische Verklärung des Orients in der "Neuen Welt. Entsprechend groß war für viele Amerikaner die Enttäuschung, wenn sie direkt mit der harten Wirklichkeit in der Region konfrontiert wurden. Der Konflikt zwischen Phantasie und Realität akzentuierte sich im Verlauf des 20. Jahrhunderts noch deutlicher. Während die USA versuchten, sich gegenüber dem Osmanischen Reich neutral zu verhalten, geriet der Orient immer stärker in den machtpolitischen Strudel der europäischen Großmächte. Die geopolitische und geökonomische Bedeutung der Region, für die sich nun der von Konteradmiral Alfred Mahan geschaffene Begriff des "Mittleren Ostens" durchzusetzen begann, nahm stetig zu. Die Neutralität der Vereinigten Staaten geriet immer stärker unter Druck, bis sie schließlich während des Zweiten Weltkrieges aufgegeben werden musste. Im Folgenden gerieten die USA zwischen alle Fronten. Der jüdische Zionismus, der arabische Nationalismus und später ein sich rasch radikalisierender islamischer Fundamentalismus stellten eine ernste Herausforderung für die amerikanische Außenpolitik dar. Gleichzeitig musste sich diese auch noch mit der Eindämmung der Sowjetunion im Mittleren Osten beschäftigen und das alles, ohne die idealistischen Traditionen und Zielsetzungen der USA aus den Augen zu verlieren. In einem solchen Hexenkessel konnte dies lediglich teilweise gelingen. Selbst die amerikanische Filmindustrie, welche die ungebrochene Phantasie der Amerikaner jetzt am meisten beeinflusste, schwankte in ihren Produktionen zwischen Romantik und Terror hin und her. Der letzte Abschnitt seiner Arbeit, der zeitlich nach der Staatsgründung Israels einsetzt, wird von Oren nur noch oberflächlich ausgeführt. Diesen Abschnitt hätte der Autor ausführlicher behandeln müssen, ohne in ein Zeitraffertempo zu verfallen. Auch wäre es gelegentlich wünschenswert gewesen, wenn Oren das Verhältnis der Vereinigten Staaten zum Mittleren Osten weniger idealistisch dargestellt hätte. Eine vertiefte realpolitische Analyse wäre durchaus angebracht gewesen. Diese beiden Kritikpunkte können den positiven Gesamteindruck aber kaum relativieren. Michael Oren ist es gelungen, dem Leser einen guten Überblick über das komplexe Verhältnis der USA zum Mittleren Osten zu geben. Sein Buch vermeidet vereinfachende Erklärungsansätze, wie den der "Israel-Lobby" oder den der "Saudi-Lobby", und ermöglicht einen besseren Einblick in die Materie. Schon aus diesem Grund ist es absolut empfehlenswert. Jürgen Rupp
1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Deeply researched, well written, essential history reading for all
Von Larry Ketchersid
Michael Oren's *POWER, FAITH and FANTASY* is an immensely researched (80 pages of notes and a 50 page bibliography) and cohesively written account of American impact in the middle east from the beginnings of America until the present. The background research and anecdotes provide a firm footing for any interested party who wants to know how the United States and the Middle East arrived to the situations they are in today. Most notably, Oren describes the personalities of the people involved, and reminds us through evidence and quotes, that the policies of countries (whether democracy, autocracy or other) are shaped by the sentiments, education and background of their leaders. Mr. Oren runs through not only the leaders of the Middle Eastern countries in each phase, but goes in depth on the upbringing and cultural leanings of each U.S. President (i.e., most of them) who had influence to bear on the events in the Middle East. The book is crafted into seven sections, roughly paralleling developments in US History: independence, before the Civil War, during the Civil War, as America becomes a power, WWI, oil and WWII, and a brief skim over the years since WWII. In each section are weaved the three themes of Faith (religious influences, including Zionist, pro-Arab, anti-Semite, etc.), Power (US ideas of democracy vs. European Imperialism, Soviet Communism, Arab self-rule) and Fantasy (films, impressions). I enjoyed this book because Mr. Oren presented facts, not judgements, difficult to do in history as you can make the facts say what you want. But he convincingly presents as many perspectives to each issue as he can. His last section on the years from WWII to present was brief, but he acknowledged that it would be a fly-by because of so much material and interest that had already been written on the subject. A long read at 600+ pages, but well worth it. I learned many new things and was reminded of some I had

forgotten. Highly recommended.0 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. It Didn't Begin with Gaddafi Von James Gallen Most Americans probably think that the American involvement in the Middle East began in the last forty years or so. A few might remember that it goes back to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In fact, as detailed on the pages of "Power, Faith, Fantasy", The Middle East has been an important theatre of American foreign policy since the foundation of the Republic. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson had to deal with Barbary Pirates who molested the shipping of Christian countries in the 18th and 19th centuries. Whereas Adams followed the pattern of European countries in trying to buy protection by paying tribute, Jefferson chose a military response to free American hostages and put an end to the Mediterranean piracy. It was Jefferson's policy that compelled the re-establishment of the U.S. Navy. Author Michael Oren does an excellent job of illustrating the various motivations that have driven American policy in the Middle East over the centuries. After the defeat of the Barbary States American interest in the Middle East was defined by Faith-based initiatives intending to restore the Jews to the Holy Land. Others established education institutions that transformed Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries. By the administration of Theodore Roosevelt, kidnapping was again the cause of contention as Roosevelt demanded that "This government wants Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead." As Roosevelt's projection of American power gave way to Wilsonian idealism, this minister's son was again driven by ideals of Faith and an unwillingness to jeopardize American citizens working in the schools previously established. This unwillingness prevented a U.S. declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire during World War I. The lack of involvement kept the U.S. out of the post-war decisions regarding the Middle East. Nazi conquest of North Africa drew the United States into the region in 1942 with the Operation Torch landings in Morocco and Algeria. After the war the U.S. would be involved in the establishment of Israel and, with the retreat of the European powers, would become the dominant outside force in the region. From 1948 on the Middle East was never far from the minds of American policy makers, whether concerned with the survival of Israel, the supply of oil, Soviet rivalry, kidnappings or terrorism. Through all of this the American public had to discern fact from fantasy, the world of flying carpets and 1,001 Arabian Nights from the one of oil wells and terrorist bombings. This book brings the long history of American involvement into perspective. It helps the reader understand that it did not begin with anything that we can remember while tying together themes that have intertwined the centuries. It helps us see how the Middle East has changed us and how we have changed that region. Given the importance of the Middle East in America's future this is a book for all to read.

Kurzbeschreibung Will shape our thinking about America and the Middle East for years. Christopher Dickey, Newsweek Power, Faith, and Fantasy tells the remarkable story of America's 230-year relationship with the Middle East. Drawing on a vast range of government documents, personal correspondence, and the memoirs of merchants, missionaries, and travelers, Michael B. Oren narrates the unknown story of how the United States has interacted with this vibrant and turbulent region. From Publishers Weekly In this engaging if unbalanced survey, the author of the acclaimed Six Days of War finds continuity in U.S. relations with the Middle East from the early 19th-century war against the Barbary pirates to today's Iraq war. As America's power grew, he contends, strategic considerations became complicated by the region's religious significance, especially to the Protestant missionaries whose interests drove U.S. policy in the 19th century and who championed a Jewish state in Palestine long before the Zionist movement took up that cause. Meanwhile, Oren notes, Americans' romantic fantasies about the Muslim world (as expressed in Mideast-themed movies) have repeatedly run aground on stubborn, squalid realities, most recently in the Iraq fiasco. Oren dwells on the pre-WWII era, when U.S.-Mideast relations were of little significance. The postwar period, when these relations were central to world affairs, gets shoehorned into 127 hasty pages, and the emphasis on continuity gives short shrift to the new and crucial role of oil in U.S. policy making. Oren's treatment views this history almost entirely through American eyes; the U.S. comes off as usually well intentioned and idealistic, if often confused and confounded by regional complexities. Oren's is a fluent, comprehensive narrative of two centuries of entanglement, but it's analytically disappointing. Photos. (Jan. 15) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist This engrossing, informative, and frequently surprising survey of U.S. involvement in the Middle East over the past 230 years is particularly timely. Oren, a frequent contributor to the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and New Republic, illustrates that American interests have frequently combined elements of romanticism, religious fervency, and hardheaded power politics. In the early nineteenth century, President Jefferson, perhaps acting against his own instincts to remain aloof from the affairs of the Old World, sent the infant American navy to confront the Barbary pirates off the coast of North Africa. Like many of our future endeavors in the region, the results were a mixture of success, failure, and farce. Other episodes covered here that are particularly interesting include previously obscure American efforts to locate the source of the Nile and the efforts by American missionaries to convert vast numbers of Ottoman subjects. But Oren is at his best when describing American involvement in the twentieth century as the U.S. replaced Britain as the dominant "imperial" power in the area. Appealing to both scholars and general readers. Jay Freeman Copyright American Library Association. All rights

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