

NEW BOOK



Prof. Efraim Karsh

The Tail Wags the Dog *International Politics and the Middle East* by Prof. Efraim Karsh

In this important new book (published by Bloomsbury), BESA Center senior research associate Prof. Efraim Karsh debunks the Edward Said-ist “Orientalist” notion that the agonies of the Middle East are traceable to the rough handling of the region by Western powers – first European colonialists, then American cold warriors.

Karsh propounds a radically different interpretation. He argues that the view of Moslems and Arabs as victims – a view that underlies US President Barack Obama’s outreach to Iran – is misguided. Middle Eastern history has in fact been the culmination of long existing indigenous trends, passions and patterns of behavior.

“External influences, however potent, have played a secondary role,” Karsh argues, “constituting neither the primary force behind the region’s political development nor the main cause of its notorious volatility.” During the Cold War, however self-servingly the rival superpowers may have treated the Middle East, they found themselves “time and again ...powerless to contain undesirable developments.” And today, “the

region is sprinting ‘Back to the Future’ [i.e., Islamism, salafism] and there is absolutely nothing the Western nations can do to reverse it.”

Karsh says that only when Middle Eastern people take responsibility for their own actions, and when Western champions drop their condescending approach, that the region can at last look forward to a real “Arab Spring.”

Prof. Karsh is the author of over 100 scholarly articles and fifteen books. He is also editor of the *Middle East Quarterly* and *Israel Affairs* academic journals. For 25 years, he was a professor of Middle East and Mediterranean Studies at King’s College London. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard and Columbia universities, the Sorbonne, and the London School of Economics, and a research associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Wilson Center’s Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. He now teaches at Bar-Ilan University.

