In *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq*, Benjamin and Karen Foster tell the fascinating story of ancient Mesopotamia from the earliest settlements ten thousand years ago to the Arab conquest in the seventh century. Accessible and concise, this is the most up-to-date and authoritative book on the subject. With illustrations of important works of art and architecture in every chapter, the narrative traces the rise and fall of successive civilizations and peoples in Iraq over the course of millennia—from the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians to the Persians, Seleucids, Parthians, and Sassanians.

Ancient Iraq was home to remarkable achievements. One of the birthplaces of civilization, it saw the world’s earliest cities and empires, writing and literature, science and mathematics, monumental art, and innumerable other innovations. *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* gives special attention to these milestones, as well as to political, social, and economic history. And because archaeology is the source of almost everything we know about ancient Iraq, the book ends with an epilogue on the discovery and fate of its antiquities. Compelling and timely, *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* is an essential guide to understanding Mesopotamia’s central role in the development of human culture.

Benjamin R. Foster is professor of Assyriology and curator of the Babylonian Collection at Yale University. Karen Polinger Foster is lecturer in ancient Near Eastern and Aegean art at Yale.
Lost in the Sacred
Why the Muslim World Stood Still
Dan Diner
Translated by Steven Rendall

Lost in the Sacred poses questions about the Muslim world that no other book by a Western writer has dared to ask. Focusing on the Arab Middle East, Dan Diner asks what caused the Muslim world to lag behind so dramatically. Is Western dominance to blame? Or is the problem even with Islam itself? These questions, however unsettling, need to be asked—and they are being posed all across the Muslim world today. This book provides cautious answers that are no less disturbing than the questions.

The Muslim world is in crisis. Lost in the Sacred explains why.

Dan Diner is professor of modern history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and director of the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at the University of Leipzig.

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Adeed Dawisha

With each day that passed after the 2003 invasion, the United States seemed to sink deeper in the treacherous quicksand of Iraq’s social discord, floundering in the face of deep ethno-sectarian divisions that have impeded the creation of a viable state and the molding of a unified Iraqi identity. Yet as Adeed Dawisha shows in this superb political history, the story of a fragile and socially fractured Iraq did not begin with the invasion—it is as old as Iraq itself.

Dawisha traces the history of the Iraqi state from its inception in 1921 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and up to the present day. He demonstrates how from the very beginning Iraq’s ruling elites sought to unify this ethnically diverse and politically explosive society by developing state governance, fostering democratic institutions, and forging a national identity.

Iraq is required reading for anyone seeking to make sense of what’s going on in Iraq today, and why it has been so difficult to create a viable government there.

Adeed Dawisha is professor of political science at Miami University in Ohio.
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**A Necessary Engagement**
Reinventing America’s Relations with the Muslim World

**Emile Nakhleh**

In *A Necessary Engagement*, the CIA’s former point man on Islam makes a vigorous case for a renewal of American public diplomacy in the Muslim world. Offering a unique balance between in-depth analysis, personal memoir, and foreign policy remedies, the book injects much-needed wisdom into the public discussion of long-term U.S.-Muslim relations.

Intelligence insider Emile Nakhleh argues that an engagement with the Muslim world benefits the national interest of the United States. Therefore, the next administration should discard the terrorism prism through which the country has viewed political Islam since 9/11 and focus instead on the common interests of America and mainstream Muslims. Nakhleh investigates recent U.S. policy toward Islamic nations and offers the new administration a ten-point plan for rebuilding America’s relationship with the Muslim world. The author demonstrates that winning over Arabs and Muslims requires a thorough knowledge of Arab and Muslim cultures and languages within our intelligence community, as well as a long-term American commitment of personnel and resources. While the success of these efforts will be incremental and hard to measure, Nakhleh believes that the current low standing of the United States in most Arab and Muslim countries can be reversed.

Stressing that effective public diplomacy must be a serious, coordinated effort pursued at the highest political levels, *A Necessary Engagement* charts a new course for future ties between the United States and the Islamic world.

Emile Nakhleh was a senior intelligence service officer and director of the Political Islam Strategic Analysis program in the Directorate of Intelligence at the Central Intelligence Agency. He holds a PhD in international relations and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

“On the key foreign policy issue of U.S. relations with the Muslim world, Nakhleh’s conclusions are levelheaded, to the point, and eminently reasonable. The author’s wealth of experience and rich sources make this book an important contribution to the public debate.”

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“A Necessary Engagement reflects a rare expertise in the intelligence community on political Islam and Muslim cultures. Emile Nakhleh has produced a thoughtful and sophisticated analysis on a subject that is more important today than ever. It is a must read for policymakers in a new administration that will need a road map to both understand and engage the Islamic world.”

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Arzoo Osanloo is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology and the Law, Societies, and Justice Program at the University of Washington.

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