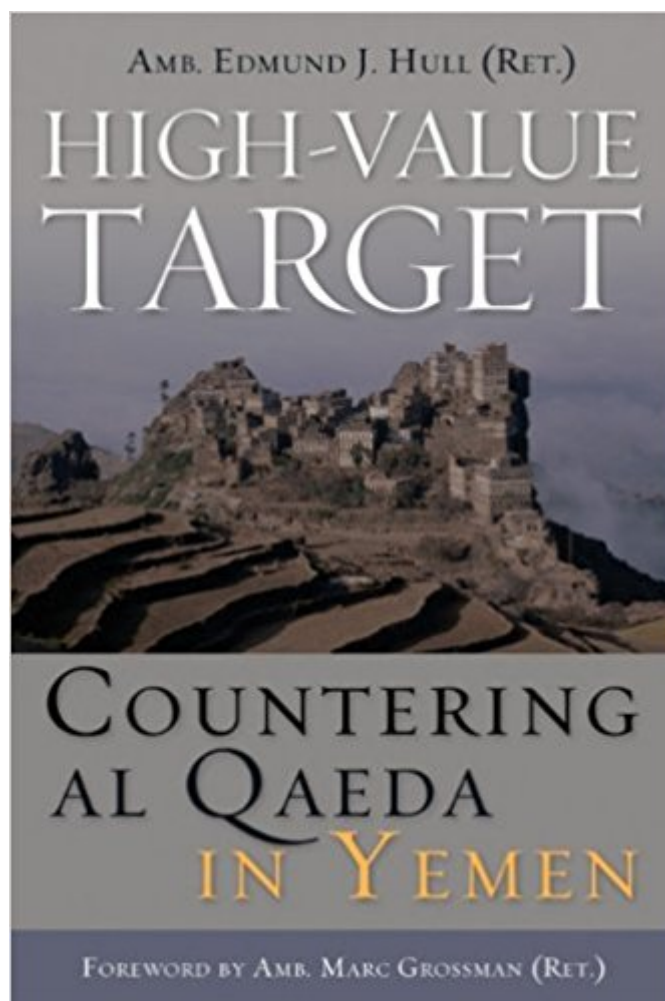


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High-Value Target: Countering Al Qaeda In Yemen



Synopsis

Since its inception, al Qaeda has aspired to create a safe haven in Yemen, where it has operated against U.S. and Yemeni interests. From 2001 to 2004, when Edmund J. Hull was the American ambassador to Yemen, U.S. and Yemeni counterterrorism efforts successfully seized the initiative against al Qaeda, severely degrading its capabilities. During this period, al Qaeda mounted no successful operations against U.S. interests in Yemen and suffered the loss of its top leadership and cadres. *High-Value Target* tells the inside story of how al Qaeda's Yemeni safe haven was disrupted during Hull's tenure. A top counterterrorism official in both the Clinton and Bush administrations, Hull provides a detailed account of a team effort to build a strategic basis for U.S.-Yemeni counterterrorism and to execute a broad strategy aimed at improving not only the security of Yemen but also its economic development. That strategy included launching successful strikes against al Qaeda's leadership; engaging in sustained, personal involvement in Yemen's remote tribal areas; and fostering Yemen's nascent democracy and civil society. Plagued by profound distrust, scarce resources, and constant threats, the U.S. diplomatic team encountered numerous obstacles but ultimately positioned Yemen on a path toward enhanced security and modest political progress.

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Customer Reviews

"Few Americans know more about Yemen than Hull, who served there in the years immediately following 9/11." —Steve Kroft, 60 Minutes (Steve Kroft 60 Minutes

2011-04-17)“High-Value Target is important reading for anyone wishing to understand the complicated nature of Yemen. I witnessed the terrorist threat there firsthand, having served as the FBI case agent for the investigation into the USS Cole bombing and for subsequent threats and attacks after 9/11. I appreciate Ambassador Hull’s efforts to balance very real counterterrorism needs in Yemen with political pressures from Washington that seek to put U.S. counterterrorism emphasis elsewhere.”•Ali Soufan, former FBI supervisory special agent (Ali Soufan 2011-04-16)“Former U.S. Amb. Edmund Hull provides fascinating insights into how al Qaeda in Yemen was crushed between 2001 and 2004 and why it was able to return, with greater virulence, as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in 2009. This book is must reading for those trying to divine what lies ahead for Yemen in a changing Arab world.”•Trudy Rubin, Worldview columnist, Philadelphia Inquirer (Trudy Rubin 2011-04-15)“[High-Value Target] suggests what much of American diplomacy is going to be like for the coming decades, and deserves close attention.”•Amb. Marc Grossman, Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan (Amb. Marc Grossman 2011-04-18)“High-Value Target is not only a fascinating firsthand account by the ambassador who helped defeat al Qaeda in Yemen the first time but also a playbook for defeating them the second time.”•Gregory Johnsen, an expert on Yemen based at Princeton University and author of the Wag al-Waq blog on Yemen (Gregory Johnsen 2011-04-14) --This text refers to an alternate Hardcover edition.

Amb. Edmund J. Hull is a retired Foreign Service officer and fluent Arabic speaker whose service includes Jerusalem, Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. He earned the CIA’s George H. W. Bush Award for Excellence in Counterterrorism for service in Washington (1999–2001) and a Presidential Meritorious Service Award for service in Yemen (2001–04). Following his retirement, he has taught at Princeton University and he currently consults for the U.S. military. He enjoys offshore sailing and resides in Washington, D.C., when not at sea.

Some readers of this review may have flunked 9th grade Latin and their knowledge of the Middle East is/was similar to that of Alan Jackson’s “Where were you...” following the 9/11 attack. Other readers may be their high school valedictorian, on their way to speaking five languages and looking forward to attending Princeton. The latter group may even plan to take courses from the author of the reviewed book such as The Middle East Peace Process, Democratization in the Middle East and National Intelligence. Whichever group one may belong or tend you can be assured that the detail and clarity of thought that is High Value Target will propel you forward in your understanding

of our Foreign Service efforts and in particular their counterterrorism methods. The detail, 217 very informative footnotes, is unlike anything that can be gleaned from reading news columns or books by journalists. This is not a dry recitation of events by Ambassador Hull of his three years plus in Yemen. It is rather a highly readable effort to share his reasoning and interactions with a foreign government that was on the United States Target vs. Partner bubble at the time of his appointment. Ambassador Hull is no talking head. He is a live, flesh and blood, albeit gifted human being who references siblings, his father and his wife Amal in his writing. We all, Yemen and US citizens alike, have benefited from his time in Yemen. There is a debt of gratitude to the people in our foreign service that unfortunately in most cases goes unpaid. This work will be appreciated by professionals and professional wanna be's, but, as written above by, Marguerite Wilson, this is also a "stimulating read for those of us who watch from the sidelines, but still care deeply." As of this morning President Ali Abdllah Saleh has returned to Yemen and the story continues.

While reading Ambassador Hull's account of his experience in Yemen I was impressed with his ability to recall the many details of his tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Yemen. I felt like I was permitted access to the top secret rooms of diplomacy at a critical time in our nation's history. Hull not only shared his professional experiences in this political hotbed, but also offered sage observations for the current and future diplomatic leaders who will follow him. As Hull wrote, "Yemen's government and the United States are challenged to understand what has gone before and adapt..." This book is required reading for anyone in a position to combat the effects of Al Qaeda in Yemen and beyond. It is also a stimulating read for those of us who watch from the sidelines, but still care deeply.

Very quality book. Gives a great description of Yemeni history and a glimpse of US major interests in the country and region. Amb. Hull does not shy away from blaming a somewhat confusing and, often contradictory, US foreign policy apparatus including State, DoD, CIA, FBI, Dept. of Agriculture, USAID and more. Interestingly, Hull singles out NDI as a "do-gooder" in the larger scheme of things. Read the book, you won't regret it. Only complaint is that, at times, it reads a bit redundantly, as if the editing process was done chapter by chapter in a non-integrated fashion. Also, the author is bit self-congratulatory... Typical of most Ambassadors, though.

Edmund Hull writing style is very to point, yet at the same time helps purvey the sense & emotions going on during each situation. I really enjoyed reading this book after reading the Johnsen book on

Yemen. I will continue to read books from this publishing line.

From an Ambassador's perspective, a very enjoyable read. It is a shame the limited progress Ambassador managed to see, seems to be heading the other direction now. Let us hope President Hadi gets help; he's going to need.

After reading High Value Target I have a new appreciation for US diplomats serving abroad in difficult areas of the world. Amb. Hull's account of his time in Yemen is an eye opener and leaves me so impressed with how much he and his co-workers did with limited resources. Not often do ordinary US citizens have the opportunity to read of the behind the scenes activity involved in the decision making of our government. It was fascinating reading! I applaud all the foreign service representatives of our country and thank them for their service. Today we are so conscious of thanking members of our military and we need to also thank the hard working people from all departments of the US government who serve overseas. They and their families sacrifice so much to help promote peace and cooperation in the world.

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