



Islam Through the Looking Glass, Vol. 3

J. B. Kelly

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The resurgence of Islam is a constant theme in the writings of J.B. Kelly from the 1980s to his death in 2009, and it is appropriate, therefore, that it should be reflected in the title of this third, and final, volume of his collected essays and reviews. The title was, in fact, originally a phrase which he gave to a lecture he delivered to the Heritage Foundation in Washington D.C. in 1980. It captures the surreal, Alice in Wonderland, nature of Middle Eastern politics. He intended that the lecture, given to promote his new book on *Arabia, the Gulf and the West* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson/Basic Books,1980), should enable his American audience to peer through the looking glass of the Middle East and to understand how to navigate the political labyrinth of the Persian Gulf and the wider region. His subsequent essays and reviews written while he was in Washington D.C. were intended to serve the same purpose. The introduction by the editor gives readers a guide to the political context of his writings, especially his involvement in the struggle over the sale of F 15 enhancements and AWACS to Saudi Arabia. The later writings in this volume are the fruits of his retirement in France, from whence he tried to counter the received wisdom about Western policy towards Iraq and other matters.

Reading the essays in this volume one is struck by their relevance to our understanding of the causes of the revolts in the Middle East in 2011 and after against the last generation of oriental despots, and the resurgence of militant Islam. This volume, like the earlier ones, should be required reading for policy-makers in the West.

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