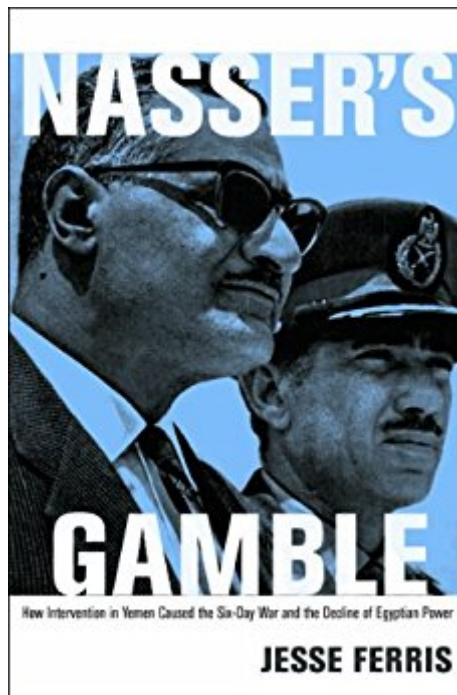


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Nasser's Gamble: How Intervention In Yemen Caused The Six-Day War And The Decline Of Egyptian Power



Synopsis

Nasser's Gamble draws on declassified documents from six countries and original material in Arabic, German, Hebrew, and Russian to present a new understanding of Egypt's disastrous five-year intervention in Yemen, which Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser later referred to as "my Vietnam." Jesse Ferris argues that Nasser's attempt to export the Egyptian revolution to Yemen played a decisive role in destabilizing Egypt's relations with the Cold War powers, tarnishing its image in the Arab world, ruining its economy, and driving its rulers to instigate the fatal series of missteps that led to war with Israel in 1967. Viewing the Six Day War as an unintended consequence of the Saudi-Egyptian struggle over Yemen, Ferris demonstrates that the most important Cold War conflict in the Middle East was not the clash between Israel and its neighbors. It was the inter-Arab struggle between monarchies and republics over power and legitimacy. Egypt's defeat in the "Arab Cold War" set the stage for the rise of Saudi Arabia and political Islam. Bold and provocative, Nasser's Gamble brings to life a critical phase in the modern history of the Middle East. Its compelling analysis of Egypt's fall from power in the 1960s offers new insights into the decline of Arab nationalism, exposing the deep historical roots of the Arab Spring of 2011.

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Customer Reviews

At the end of September, 1962 with the United States focussing on Cuban missile crisis and 8 days after the royal succession the traditional tribal government of Yemen was overthrown. Almost immediately, and with near instantaneous Soviet support, Nasser seized the opportunity to tweak the Saudis by exporting the Egyptian revolution across the Strait of Tiran by sending first advisors and then troops to fortify the new regime. It was a bold power play to extend Egypt and Nasser's prestige as leader of the Arab world and promote revolutionary opposition to Middle Eastern monarchies from Rabat to Tehran. For the Soviets it presented an opportunity to diminish American dominance of the Mediterranean and the Arabian Seas by gaining long desired maintenance ports on both. Sadly it turned into Egypt's Vietnam, a war that few talk about even to this day. The Yemeni revolutionaries were socialists in name only as was Nasser. Though both countries had the same religion and language, the Egyptians didn't understand or know the country nor its people. Egypt's centralized political mindset grew out of the agricultural demands of the Nile valley, whereas governing Yemen required a distributed model capable of juggling tribal rivalries - a caution which also applies widely in other regions of the Levant. And whereas the Egyptians had or were able to beg for the necessary military equipment from the Kremlin, they hadn't the training to use it. This led to the uncomfortable situation where Soviet "volunteers" were acting pilots for bombing sorties of Saudi supply lines to the loyalists, even across the border into the Kingdom, risking a confrontation with the US. The Soviets were saddled with a client state of dubious intrinsic value they could ill afford.

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