

INTERVIEW WITH JOEL C. ROSENBERG ABOUT *THE FIRST HOSTAGE*
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Full transcript
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Robertson: Well, Joel Rosenberg is here with us. He is a Middle East expert, best-selling author, and the latest book is a fascinating read. It's called *The First Hostage*. I read it through cover to cover, and to try and figure out how it finally ended, and it did end well -- thank the Lord -- because we would not want our President to be murdered. Anyhow, Joel, it's a good read. This is the second in a series?

Rosenberg: That's right -- the first was called *The Third Target*. It's about a *New York Times* foreign correspondent who hears a rumor that ISIS -- the Islamic State -- has captured chemical weapons in Syria and is planning a genocidal attack, as well as it turns out, the reporter finds himself uncovering a plot to capture and eventually behead the President of the United States.

Robertson: Well, you don't want to tell anymore because it's fiction and people want to be able to read it. Unfortunately, with a book like this I can't tell too much about what's in it, or I'll give away the story. You did it on Syria -- how come?

Rosenberg: Syria is in a total meltdown. We are watching the implosion of a modern Arab state, and an absolute human catastrophe. The state of the Middle East is a catastrophe. President Obama's policies in the Middle East have been an utter failure because he has chosen ideologically to withdraw all U.S. forces and influence from the region. Now, there are some forces he has sent back, because the region is on fire. So I decided if you look at the stated goals of the Islamic state and you say, "What if they began to come true? What if their version of history began to play out? What would that look like in its worst case scenario?" -- that's what this series is about.

Robertson: Well, you know the whole thing you got the Sunnis and the Shias now they start fighting. I noticed Pakistanis came in yesterday -- I was in

Pakistan -- met with the President over there some years ago, and they then had their capital was named Faisalabad after King Faisal and then they changed it back to Islamabad -- but they were really sucking up the Saudis because they wanted their money. But now they've come in very strong on the side of Saudi Arabia against Iran -- we will obliterate Iran if they come after our buddies, the Saudis. What do you make of that?

Rosenberg: Well, what you've got is a huge split -- but it's not just Shias and Sunnis. It's also Sunni Arabs against the Islamic State, which is Sunni. Why? Because the leaders of Iran and the leaders of the Islamic State are not just Radical Islam. This is what I call "Apocalyptic Islam." The leaders of both movements -- Iran and ISIS -- believe that the End of Days has come, that their Islamic Messiah has come, known as the Mahdi, that's he's coming at any moment, and that they need to create genocide in order to create the Caliphate, this global Islamic kingdom. Now, the Saudis feel threatened. The Jordanians feel threatened. The Egyptians. The Gulf Sunni Arab Emirates. And what is our President doing? Not my fictional president in *The First Hostage*. The President of the United States today is refusing to meet with Jordan's King Abdullah, who is in Washington this week. Too busy? Too busy for our most faithful Sunni Arab ally? The Saudis feel like the President of the United States has cut and run. The Jordanians feel this way. The Egyptians. The Israelis have the worst relationship with this President in the history of this country. So the region feels scared by two existential threats -- Iran and ISIS and this apocalyptic Islam.

Robertson: The whole Imam thing. You remember when the head of Iran made that statement in front of the United Nations -- he said he could feel the presence of this being [the Twelfth Imam]. But they feel that he's alive and that there has to be a disaster in the world and that he will come and fix it. But the Sunnis don't believe it. Do they believe in the Mahdi at all?

Rosenberg: They do believe in the Mahdi. They don't believe that the Mahdi -- their messiah -- is the Twelfth Imam. That's a Shia spin on it, because the split originally from -- Are Muslims following the family of Muhammad after Muhammad's death? That's the Shias' [belief]. Or [are Muslims to follow] the disciples of Muhammad? That's the Sunnis' [belief]. Coming back to the Pakistanis, the Saudis are talking openly about buying nuclear weapons from the Paks. Why? Because they fear that President Obama has given Iran's Apocalyptic Muslims two pathways to nuclear weapons in 2015. One, if Iran cheats on the deal. But the other if the Iranians keep the deal and in ten years the restrictions are removed and Iran can build as many nuclear weapons as possible. This has been a catastrophic year in U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. If the President of the United States comes out tonight and says the state of the union is strong and the state of our foreign policy is strong, nobody in the region -- much less in this country -- believes this. And we've got one more year to go. It's a little scary.

Robertson: Even here domestically, if somebody comes -- that guy who shot that policeman. The mayor said, "I'm not about to call this anything about Islamic terror." Well, the man was talking about Allah Akbar...

Rosenberg: He vowed allegiance to the Islamic State.

Robertson: And yet the mayor said, "No, no, no, I'm not going to do that." And the President will not name it. What's wrong with him?

Rosenberg: You cannot defeat an enemy you refuse to define. And I'm saying the President still won't call Radical Islam by its name. But Apocalyptic Islam is much worse. Why? Because Radical Islam wants to attack us to drive us out of the Holy Lands and the holy places. But Apocalyptic Islam not only wants to attack us, it wants to annihilate us, and bring about genocide in order to usher in the coming of their messiah. The novel, *The Third Target*, and now *The First Hostage* takes you through the eyes of a reporter inside this story to understand what might happen -- worst case scenarios -- if our leaders don't understand the threats that we face. The President doesn't understand it, but I'm also concerned that the two front-runners in the presidential campaign -- Secretary Clinton and Mr. Trump -- neither of them understand Apocalyptic Islam and they're not prepared to deal with it.

Robertson: It's too spiritual, its too complicated, for them to grasp, don't you think?

Rosenberg: I don't think so. But I think there is a willing blindness, a refusal to consider [the facts] -- like the Mayor of Philadelphia. The guy must be a smart person, but to choose not to study and understand the intent of your enemy -- even if you think the ideology or the religion is crazy -- you still have to understand your enemy lest you be blindsided by an evil you don't understand and aren't prepared for. And that's the theme of these novels.

Robertson: This apocalyptic thing and the Iranians -- at least Ahmadinejad was saying that if we lose half of our population, So what? We'll destroy Israel we'll wipe them off the map and the Mahdi will come anyhow. So they don't mind sacrificing millions of people.

Rosenberg: That's right and that's the difference. To have an eschatology, a belief that the messiah is coming that he's bringing a kingdom, I believe this, you believe this, Orthodox Christians believe that Christ is coming to set up a kingdom. The difference with Apocalyptic Islam is they want genocide. They believe that you have to destroy all of Israel, all of the Jews and all of the United States and all of Christendom and then their messiah will come. This genocidal objective is horrific. And, again, one of the themes of these novels is this: "To misunderstand the nature and threat of evil is to risk being blindsided by it."

Robertson: Well, that's the frightening thing. Can you name many people in our government in higher positions who share your point of view -- or our point of view -- about Apocalyptic Islam?

Rosenberg: No, but I've been working my way through the Presidential candidates. I've been spending time with them, meeting with them, e-mailing them, because this is significantly, substantively different. Radical Islam is still a threat -- this is Al Qaeda, this is Hamas, the Taliban, the Muslim Brotherhood. But we are at the first moment in human history, Pat, where not just one nation state but two -- Iran and the Islamic State -- their leaders are driven by ancient Islamic prophecies that require genocide to bring them about. This is the

photographic opposite, the photographic negative of Biblical eschatology, where Jesus says, “This Gospel of the Kingdom, this Good News, shall be preached in the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall come.” [Matthew 24:14] In other words, our mission is to try and save the entire world by preaching The Gospel in the power of The Holy Spirit and giving people a chance to choose. Whereas their vision of the end is: kill every infidel and then the messiah comes. This is so dangerous and it’s doubly dangerous when you have a president, a national security system, and front-runners to replace him that neither understand it, don’t care, aren’t studying it.

Robertson: Joel, I hope this book will do well. I know it’s a great read. Ladies and gentlemen, it’s called *The First Hostage*, and it’s now number thirteen on the Publishers Weekly [best-seller list]. May go to number one. It’s a great book and it’ll be a fast read...poor Terry didn’t get any sleep last night she was up reading, and I was watching football! I’d already read your book! Joel, thanks for being here. It’s called, *The First Hostage*. Joel Rosenberg, thanks buddy (*shake hands*) -- God bless you.