

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace**, by Aaron David Miller. Bantam Books, 2008. 407 pages. \$26.00, hardcover.

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During the past four decades, the United States has been seriously involved in diplomatic efforts to help resolve the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. In this timely volume, Aaron David Miller sets out to explain why America occasionally succeeded and more frequently failed in its attempts to bring about an Arab-Israeli peace. Miller is especially qualified to review, analyze, and evaluate the diverse approaches of recent administrations to Middle East peacemaking. He served as an adviser on Arab-Israeli issues to six secretaries of state over a 20-year period and was a member of a State Department negotiating team under the last three presidents. To supplement his personal observations, Miller interviewed 165 officials, including former American presidents, secretaries of state and national-security advisers, as well as several Israeli, Palestinian and Arab politicians and diplomats.

In the first part of the book, "America's Promise Challenged," Miller examines several obstacles to successful Middle East diplomacy emanating from both Arab and Israeli politics as well as the American domestic political arena. He attributes the huge gap between America's status as a superpower and its very rare success on the ground to the determination of Israelis and Palestinians to reject American peace proposals whenever they are perceived to pose threats to their survival as political entities.

Miller identifies four different types of responses and strategies that Israelis and Arabs have used when they were not interested in American ideas and initiatives. In some instances, the parties responded with an explicit and unqualified "No." Israel rejected outright the Rogers peace initiative in December 1969 and President Reagan's proposals in September 1982. Likewise, Arafat ultimately rejected President Clinton's proposals at Camp David in July 2000. More frequently, one or both sides avoid a clear-cut negative response in order to buy time or bargain for better terms. Miller notes that, while Arafat did not want to come to the Camp David summit in 2000, he was reluctant to say "No" to Clinton's invitation. Thus, "eager to get the best possible terms he could, Arafat did what Arafat did best — he prevaricated, warning us of the cost of a failed summit but never issuing an outright refusal to attend."

From time to time, one or both parties deliberately drag it out until the American initiative dies. In early 1989, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir proposed a four-point initiative calling inter alia for Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza. After that plan was modified by Secretary of State James Baker to meet some of the Palestinian objections, Shamir eventually led the "Nay" votes in the Israeli cabinet, thereby killing the entire plan. "Yes, but..." has been resorted to when neither side likes the proposal but

one party answers with a conditional acceptance in order to avoid the appearance of outright rejection or to maneuver the other into first refusal. For instance, when the Palestinian Authority accepted President Bush's so-called Roadmap in April 2003, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon responded favorably to the plan but with numerous reservations because he strongly suspected that Arafat had no intention of implementing the plan. According to Miller, the Roadmap eventually died because neither the White House, the Israelis nor the Palestinians were serious about implementing it.

With respect to challenges originating in the domestic political arena, Miller dismisses the controversial views about the alleged potency of the pro-Israeli lobby, most recently articulated by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt in *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. The notion that "a small bunch of Jews and conservative Christians compels an entire domestic and foreign-policy establishment to support Israel against its collective will" flies in the face of considerable empirical evidence to the contrary. While acknowledging that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) does exert influence over Congress, particularly with respect to levels of American assistance to Israel, Miller admits, "I cannot remember a single major decision on Arab-Israeli peace in which AIPAC, either directly or indirectly, prevented us from moving in the direction we wanted."

Miller further challenges Mearsheimer and Walt's thesis that the Israeli lobby has helped to produce policies that are profoundly damaging to America's national interest. To the contrary, he maintains that America's special relationship with Israel, dating back to 1948, "is rooted in the broadest conception of the American national interest: support for like-minded societies that, correctly or not, are perceived by Americans to be more or less 'like us.'" Miller concludes that without the close ties between Jerusalem and Washington, deeply rooted in a mix of shared values and common enemies, the United States would not be able to exercise much influence on Arab-Israeli peace making. When all is said and done, it is the special American friendship with the Jewish state that has enabled the United States to exert at least some diplomatic pressure on Israel while encouraging moderate Arab leaders to rely on Washington as a mediator.

The middle section of the book, titled "America's Promise Kept," consists of three chapters devoted to Miller's choices as the most successful Americans at Middle East peacemaking: Henry Kissinger, Jimmy Carter and James Baker. This is the least illuminating part of the volume because it covers already familiar ground. As will become evident below, Miller's treatment of each of these actors is problematic, and his choice of Baker as a successful negotiator remains especially puzzling.

Miller identifies several reasons for Kissinger's, Carter's and Baker's success. Each placed the Arab-Israeli issue on the top of his priority list; each was sufficiently tough to push back when facing opposition from either or both sides; each was remarkably tenacious and persistent; each was able to garner trust from both parties; and each was blessed with an astute sense of timing. Kissinger's impressive accomplishments included the first Sinai disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt in January 1974, the Israeli-Syrian disengagement agreement in June 1974, and the second Sinai disengagement accord in September 1975. Miller attributes Kissinger's success to his intense personal involvement and perseverance, his penchant for risk taking, an acute ability to

manipulate American carrots and sticks, and intellectual skills in formulating and then implementing a strategy designed to wean Egypt and Syria away from the USSR and to persuade them to rely instead on Washington as the key to peace.

Curiously, Miller has only one sentence on Kissinger's inability to secure an Israeli-Jordanian disengagement accord. He lays the blame for this failure on the Arab states that had taken Jordan out of the picture by designating the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians at Rabat in October 1974. Kissinger himself placed the blame on Prime Minister Rabin, who had tied his own hands by promising to submit any military disengagement from the West Bank to a referendum. Miller also says absolutely nothing about Kissinger's inability to help secure a second Israeli-Syrian disengagement in 1975 and 1976. According to Avi Shlaim in *The Iron Wall* (p. 349), Kissinger had promised Sadat that he would seek such an accord after Sinai II. At the same time, Kissinger assured Israel in writing that the United States would not insist on a follow-up to Sinai II. Kissinger "was therefore obliged to defer to Israel's opinion on the possibility of an agreement with Syria." In short, Kissinger's record as a Middle East peace maker is less sterling than Miller would have us believe.

The same criticism can be applied to Miller's treatment of Jimmy Carter's peacemaking record. With the 1978 Camp David Accords and the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, Carter amassed diplomatic coups unequaled by any other American official. Miller notes that, unlike Kissinger and Baker, Carter was on a personal Arab-Israeli peace-making mission from the beginning of his presidency. He succeeded because he managed to earn Anwar Sadat's trust, was able to establish a working relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and treated both sides equitably while being persistent and tough.

Miller correctly notes that, although Carter believed that no comprehensive peace could be attained without resolving the Palestinian issue, he was unable to entice the Jordanians and Palestinians to join the negotiations. He also understood that he could not wring from Begin any meaningful concessions regarding the West Bank and Gaza. Hence, Carter ended with a framework agreement on Palestinian self-rule that provided Sadat with the necessary cover on the Palestinian issue. Here, Miller would have done well to emphasize the insurmountable problems rooted in Carter's approach. Because he failed to secure a tight linkage between the two components of the Camp David Accords, Carter made it possible for Sadat to regain the Sinai and for Israel to remain embedded in the occupied territories. In addition, Carter failed to exert meaningful pressure to prevent, or at least decelerate, the rapid pace of Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank and Gaza under Begin's Likud regime.

Perhaps because he served on the core team at the State Department that provided staff support to the secretary of state during the administration of the senior Bush, Miller heaps unlimited adulation on James Baker, whom he depicts as the paragon of pragmatism, persistence, evenhandedness, and toughness when it came to Middle East diplomacy. Given Baker's extremely modest record of success, particularly when contrasted with the more impressive achievements of Kissinger and Carter, Miller's praise of his former boss remains curious.

Baker's sole contribution to Arab-Israeli peacemaking was the convening of the Madrid Conference in October 1991. While Madrid was indeed significant because it

provided, for the very first time, a collective forum for Israelis, Syrians, Jordanians, and Palestinians, the sad fact remains that Madrid simply raised hopes and expectations that were never fulfilled. The conference, it will be recalled, was followed by ten subsequent rounds of talks in Washington that dragged on aimlessly until December 1992 without producing a single formal agreement.

There are at least three additional reasons why Miller's paean to Baker is undeserved. First, as Miller himself acknowledges, Baker utterly failed to put together an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue throughout 1989 and 1990. Second, despite resorting to tough rhetoric and threats, including the eventual freeze of \$10 billion in bank-loan guarantees, neither Baker nor the senior Bush was able to persuade the Israeli government to stop construction of additional Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Lastly, Miller provides neither evidence nor explanation for his and Baker's claim that "there would have been no Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty" in 1994 without the prior Madrid Conference.

In the third and final part of this volume, "America's Promise Frustrated," readers are treated to a keen and thought-provoking analysis of the disappointing performances of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush as Middle East peacemakers. Miller, who stayed on as deputy Middle East coordinator under Dennis Ross, notes that "Bill Clinton cared more about and invested more time and energy in Arab-Israeli peace over a longer period of time than any of his predecessors." Yet, despite his indefatigable efforts and ability to gain the trust of the parties, Clinton ultimately failed in his diplomatic efforts because he "lacked Kissinger's deviousness, Carter's missionary focus, and Baker's unsentimental toughness."

Miller identifies several additional reasons for Clinton's lack of success as peace maker. Unlike Kissinger, Carter and Baker, Clinton and his top Middle East advisors, including Dennis Ross, Miller and Martin Indyk, tended to view issues from an Israeli perspective. Miller attributes this lack of balance to Clinton's desire to heal the rift with Israel and the American Jewish community left over from the Bush-Baker years. Clinton's tilt toward Israel was further reinforced by his intensely personal friendship with and admiration for Yitzhak Rabin. Complicating matters further, the office of the Special Middle East Coordinator failed to brief the State Department's Bureau of Near East Affairs and American ambassadors in the region about conversations that administration officials were holding with Israeli and Arab leaders.

In marked contrast to Ross, who in his *The Missing Peace* lays most of the blame for the failure of the July 2000 Camp David summit on Yasser Arafat, Miller spreads responsibility for the failed effort among all the participants. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak allegedly arrived at Camp David anxious to reach a comprehensive settlement, yet without a realistic understanding of the kinds of concessions he needed to offer Arafat in order to strike a deal. Arafat, on the other hand, arrived at the summit "with no real strategy, little flexibility, and a suitcase full of complexes, including fear of an Israeli-American trap and a desire to get even with Barak for chasing Syria." Determined not to settle for anything less than had been achieved by Sadat (an Israeli withdrawal from Sinai back to the international line) and apparently offered by Barak to Syrian President Hafez Asad (an almost total withdrawal from the Golan), Arafat was determined to reject anything short of an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank to the June 4, 1967, lines.

Miller holds Clinton responsible for numerous errors of omission and commission that doomed the summit to failure. Clinton allegedly “never developed or asked for either a strategy to maximize the chance for success or a backup plan to minimize the impact of failure.” Like Barak, Clinton mistakenly believed that Arafat would accept something short of an Israeli retreat to the June 4, 1967, lines. Clinton was also poorly served by his advisors: In truth, “not a single senior-level official involved in the negotiations was willing or able to present, let alone fight for, the Arab or Palestinian perspective.” At the same time, Clinton failed to be tough on Arafat on a number of serious concerns, including widespread violence, anti-Israeli incitement, terror and mismanagement of Palestinian governmental institutions.

In addition to all these shortcomings, Clinton and his top advisers overlooked the need to mobilize support for American proposals regarding the status of Jerusalem from several moderate Arab states prior to the summit. Miller also laments the failure to maintain comprehensive negotiating records during the summit. Lastly, following the end of the conference, Clinton joined Barak in castigating Arafat for the summit’s failure. In retrospect, Miller “can’t help thinking our behavior in blaming the Palestinians and facilitating Barak’s campaign to delegitimize Arafat as a partner was immature and counterproductive.”

Miller reserves his harshest criticism for the present occupant of the White House. He argues that President Bush was inclined to disengage the United States from Arab-Israeli peacemaking even before 9/11, primarily because he did not see the issue as an important component of America’s interest in the volatile Middle East region. Not surprisingly, the Office of the Special Middle East Coordinator was dismantled. Unfortunately, the tragic events of 9/11 “intensified the tendency to see the Middle East problem as a clash of values rather than as a contest of interests over occupied territory, Jerusalem, water or settlements.” Viewing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a Manichean contest between democracy and authoritarianism, moderates and extremists, terrorists and antiterrorists, Bush was clearly determined to avoid dealing with Arafat and disinclined to impose any significant pressure on Israel.

Bush’s regrettable disengagement from Middle East peace making came to an end in late November 2007, when officials from more than 40 countries assembled in Annapolis, Maryland, in an effort to give impetus to the resumption of permanent-status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. At the urging of the Bush administration, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed to resume negotiations with the goal of concluding a peace treaty by the end of 2008. Miller sees little chance that such a goal can be attained by the deadline, let alone that a Palestinian state may emerge soon, for two major reasons: the absence of a unified Palestinian leadership and the failure of both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to understand what is necessary to meet the other side’s fundamental needs.

Whoever enters the White House next January ought to read this book carefully in order to draw important lessons from both past failures and successes of American peace-making efforts in the Middle East. He would do well to heed Miller’s call for a more active and balanced American approach and his warning to avoid two futile extremes: diplomatic disengagement and the pursuit of comprehensive solutions. He should

also be persuaded by Miller's reminder that there are two modest goals that the United States ought to pursue: a framework that articulates principles for resolving the issues of Jerusalem, borders and refugees, and a concurrent effort to end violence and Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank.

**Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East**, by Daniel C. Kurtzer and Scott B. Lasensky. United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008. 191 pages. \$13.00.

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In *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace*, Daniel C. Kurtzer and Scott B. Lasensky provide a peerless example of sound public-policy analysis, in which American national interests are the paramount value pursued. Practitioners, scholars and students are unlikely to see anything like it in literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The indictment of America's failures jumps off every page. The author's hard-hitting, no-nonsense descriptions of U.S. failures in exploiting opportunities, of U.S. inability to create openings for peace, and of U.S. neglect of the terrible costs to the people of the region who suffer from a lack of peace, are a reminder that America's impotence has significantly eroded our national interests in the region. This is not a patient, soft-spoken, diplomatic treatise on the niceties of how to negotiate peace treaties. Rather, it is closer to an indictment of how a great country like the United States, with all its resources and strengths, cannot match its power with sophisticated leadership necessary to bring all parties of the Arab-Israeli conflict to an agreement. To make sure the reader does not miss the point, the authors use the word "failure" and its synonyms over 172 times throughout the text.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, U.S. leadership successfully promoted peace between Arabs and Israelis, creating the possibility of a comprehensive agreement. The 1970 Rogers Plan, the ceasefire ending the Yom Kippur War, the 1978 Camp David Accords, and the 1991 Madrid agreements are examples of this effort. The record indicates that the momentum of earlier successes was squandered, leaving both parties in conflict and U.S. interests eroded.

Kurtzer, a 30-year veteran of the Foreign Service and former ambassador to Egypt and Israel, and Lasensky, a Ph.D. from Brandeis University and acting vice president of the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention at the U.S. Institute of Peace, led a study group of distinguished scholars, diplomats, public-policy professionals and political officials to gather the recommendations of the highest-level experts in the field. The group's roster included: William Quandt, Steven L. Spiegel and Shibley Telhami, all renowned analysts of U.S. Middle East policy. In addition to this qualified study group, Kurtzer and Lasensky consulted with a prestigious list of 39 leaders, that included Madeleine Albright, Herbert Kelman, Robert Pelletreau, Thomas Pickering, Colin Powell and Brent Scowcroft. The interviews and consultations laboriously collected by Kurtzer and Lasensky culminated in one of the best summaries of facts, methods and conclusions on this subject to date.

The 84 pages of narrative, including 10 critical lessons that are the heart of the book, together with 37 pages of chronology and 57 pages of documents and sources, present the reader with an understanding of the requirements for conducting negotiations between the parties. This is not a book about what is needed to get the parties to agreement, but rather a “how to” on structuring negotiations

and nurturing a process toward a final agreement that meets the needs of the Arabs and Israelis and satisfies U.S. interests.

The book is unique in the literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict because it lacks villains, other than the the failure of American leadership. The authors avoid blaming the parties in a one-sided fashion. They identify mistakes and point the way forward, not with optimism but with realistic methods. The book points out on page after page how American leaders missed crucial opportunities because they were not adept at recognizing the difference between tactics that could lead to peace and those used to stall for time. For example,

[Prime Minister] Rabin secretly told Secretary of State Warren Christopher and envoy Dennis Ross in the summer of 1993 that Israel was willing to negotiate a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for full peace and [to] start security arrangements with Syria. With Rabin's hypothetical offer in hand, the United States did not mount a sustained diplomatic shuttle effort, as had been done in the past. The so-called Rabin deposit was ultimately squandered (p. 18).

Additionally, there were serious gaps in staffing:

Clinton’s secretaries of state, Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright, assigned day-to-day responsibility for the peace process to a special Middle East coordinator. The peace team assembled during much of the administration had superior expertise regarding Israel, but far less expertise and experience in dealing with the Arabs. Assistant secretaries and ambassadors in the field often felt cut off from policy formulation and, at key junctures, did not participate in important diplomatic talks (p. 52).

Further, the peace team

failed to monitor performance and enforce commitments the parties made to each other and to Washington; this failure was highlighted more than any other issue throughout the study group’s consultations. Former policymakers widely acknowledged that the lack of accountability was corrosive, eroding confidence among the parties, undermining U.S. standing, and allowing destructive developments to proceed unchecked (Lesson 5) (p. 43).

Lesson 5 further elaborates on how obsessed the negotiators were with keeping the talks going. They failed to notice or acknowledge that nothing had changed appreciably on the ground to give the public in both Israel and Palestine any hope that the talks would lessen their hardships or anxieties. The need to “keep the process alive,” which became the mantra throughout the Oslo years, was deemed more important than having the United States

take strong positions when the parties did not comply with commitments and agreements.

This is the second book that the U.S. Institute of Peace has published on the subject. In 1991, Kenneth Stein and Samuel Lewis authored *Making Peace among Arabs and Israelis*, in which they presented 26 recommendations or “General Propositions.” Kurtzer and Lasensky offer 10 “Lessons Learned and Relearned,” which are broken down into four categories: The Strategic Context, Style and Substance, The Foreign Policy Process and U.S. Domestic Politics, and The Negotiator’s Tool Kit:

1. Arab-Israeli peacemaking is in the U.S. national interest.
2. U.S. policy must exclusively be formulated in Washington.
3. The United States must exploit and create opportunities for peacemaking.
4. The peace process needs final objectives in mind, not just incremental achievements.
5. Commitments and agreements made by the parties must be respected and implemented.
6. Direct intervention of the president is vital but should be employed selectively.
7. The negotiating team should be diversified.
8. Broad and bipartisan domestic support should be built, using political capital before it expires.
9. Envoys should have unambiguous support from the White House, credibility with all parties and a broad mandate.
10. The diplomatic toolbox should be used judiciously.

The parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot reach peace without a third-party mediator. No self-respecting Israeli prime minister will concede anything unless incentives are provided and supported by the United States with the president’s involvement. The Palestinians also believe that Israel is not likely to move toward peace without heavy U.S. involvement. “The eventual collapse of the Oslo process — which was initiated and defined by the parties without U.S. intervention — best exemplifies the general rule that, left on their own, the parties cannot address the deep, structural impediments to peace” (p. 9).

If the lessons in this clear-eyed analysis are followed, perhaps there will be no need for another book on how to make peace in the Middle East.

**The Arab-Israeli Conflict — A History**, by David W. Lesch. Oxford University Press, 2008. 495 pages. \$38.95, paperback.

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Professor Lesch has tried, in his words, “to create a vehicle through which college students can more readily learn about this immensely important topic...[with] a smoother and more comfortable ride than the other ones in the literature” (p. ix). It is indeed about 100

pages shorter than its principal competitor, Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, sixth edition (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006), about the same price, and slightly more up to date. Lesch genuinely tries to be "as objective as possible" (p. ix) and offers interesting perspectives, especially on relations between Israel and Syria, with whose young leader, Beshar al-Asad, he benefited from many hours of exclusive interviews.

Concerning the discussions between Syria and Israel mediated by the Clinton administration, Lesch offers a succinct and balanced analysis. He leaves it up to the reader to decide which explanation of the breakdown of the Syrian-Israeli track was more accurate, that of Beshar or that of Dennis Ross, Clinton's principal negotiator. The track finally collapsed in March 2000, when President Hafiz al-Asad met President Clinton in Geneva. At the meeting Clinton conveyed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's proposal to return most of the Golan Heights to Syria. Beshar, who by then was fully integrated into the Syrian leadership as the presumed successor to his ailing father, explained to Lesch in 2004 that Clinton had been misinformed about Asad's willingness to accept a compromise that did not recognize the Syrian claim to the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee, at least to the lines of June 4, 1967, the day before the Six-Day War in which Syria lost the Golan Heights. Ross claims instead that Asad, embarrassed by leaks of earlier negotiations, was posturing to shore up support for his son's succession (p. 367).

Lesch's account of the failure of Camp David II is equally nuanced and balanced. He does not fall for the simplistic rightwing Israeli view, supported by President Clinton and Dennis Ross but not by others such as Robert Malley, a Clinton aide who also attended the meetings, that Arafat was to blame for the failure. His critical treatment of the failure of the George W. Bush administration to pursue Clinton's version of the peace process, not to mention the impressive legacy of his father and James A. Baker III, also seems balanced and objective. He could have been a bit tougher, however, in criticizing the U.S. stance with respect to the massive Israeli retaliation against Lebanon provoked by Hezbollah's attack on Israeli border guards in July 2006. He correctly observed that Hezbollah's kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers may have been an effort to relieve Palestinians under attack in Gaza rather than some Iranian master plan. But he did not point out that the Bush administration not only reversed the traditional U.S. policy of actively supporting peacekeeping along Israel's northern border, respecting the territorial integrity of Lebanon, but actually encouraged the weak Israeli government to pursue its destruction of the southern suburbs of Lebanon. The Olmert administration viewed the Israeli mopping up of Hezbollah — alas, unsuccessful! — as an opening gambit in an eventual military confrontation with Iran over its nuclear-weapons potential.

The trouble with trying to be objective is that one may tend to marginalize facts that might disturb readers on either side of the Arab-Israeli conflict, not to mention the American audience of college students. Does one serve them best by offering a gentle ride that circumvents the passionately divisive issues? Perhaps, but certain facts need to be recognized. Objectivity becomes a matter of selecting those that are most worthy of emphasis. As one who came into teaching this history by accident as a result of becoming involved in the Algerian independence movement in the 1950s, I might be more sensitive to the concerns of the victims than to those of the colonizers, whether of Israelis in Palestine or Americans in Iraq, just as my

colleague may have somewhat different priorities. We evidently have some disagreements about what deserves emphasis and even sometimes about the facts as well.

Lesch dismisses the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States with a text box of a page and a half, inserted in the context of Truman's decision to lobby for the partition of Palestine in the United Nations (pp. 131-32). Although his book includes information as late as March 2007, there is no mention of the very important article by John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," published a year earlier, in March 2006 ([http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=891198](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=891198)). The article, originally commissioned for the *Atlantic Monthly* but then rejected as too controversial, was published by the *London Review of Books* (see the complete version, with notes, at [www.mepc.org](http://www.mepc.org) and in *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIII No. 3, Fall 2006), and the ensuing 500-page book under the same title carries much new information that ought to be recommended for any college course concerning the United States and the Middle East. More significant than the content of the article, most of which was familiar to academics who follow the Washington policy-making process, was the fact that the two authors were distinguished "realists" in international relations, professors at the University of Chicago and Harvard University's Kennedy School, respectively, not area specialists who might more easily be dismissed in policy-making circles as "going native" or being biased.

Lesch also dismissed the growing water scarcity in the occupied territories with another box inserted in the context of the 1992-93 Oslo negotiations. While mentioning that underground West Bank aquifers supply roughly 50 percent of Israel's total water consumption, the three paragraphs deal with the problem of water in the Middle East and North Africa in very general terms. They do not mention the discrimination in favor of illegal Israeli settlements, much less the forbidding of Palestinians to drill wells in areas under Israeli occupation. Nor is there any appreciation of how water flowing into Israel and the West Bank gets distributed: six times as much to Israel as to the West Bank and Gaza, although Israel's populations are less than double those living in the occupied territories.

Israel's remapping of the occupied territories is also underplayed. The "security fence" not only catches "less than 10,000 of the 2 million Palestinians in the West Bank" (p. 415) on the wrong side but will also keep many more from their land (overlying strategic aquifers) grabbed ostensibly for security reasons. While referring to the "thickening" of the Maale Adumin settlement (p. 416), Lesch does not spell out its implications for any Palestinian claims to Jerusalem. His most recent maps (p. 336) do not show how the "security barrier," ostensibly designed to protect this settlement well to the east of Jerusalem, also envelops East Jerusalem and the ever-more-fragmented Palestinian neighborhoods threatened by Israeli developers (see maps on [finep.org](http://finep.org)). The future capital of Palestine in any acceptable two-state solution, in short, is hostage to the Wall, as others name this concrete barrier that rises in the Jerusalem area to heights of twenty feet ("tall concrete sections placed side by side," p. 415).

Israel's nuclear capability, coupled with its position of strategic ambiguity, gets confined to a box. There is no mention of Mordechai Vanunu, who blew the whistle but was then kidnapped and imprisoned for many years by the Israelis. Also absent is Jonathan

Jay Pollard, the U.S. naval intelligence officer who provided Israel with many classified documents in the mid-1980s after the U.S. government had closed off Israeli access to the satellite imagery that Israel had used to bomb Iraq's nuclear facility in 1981.

While another box highlights the killing of the Israeli athletes in Munich in 1972, the "cleaning" and "emptying" of Palestinians from their lands in 1948 is only barely mentioned by Lesch, citing Ben-Gurion concerning the Galilee (p. 144). He lets Benny Morris have the last word concerning Plan Dalet and the expulsion of Palestinians: "Nothing that I have seen in Israeli archives... indicates the existence before 1948 of a Zionist master plan to expel the Arabs of Palestine" (p. 146). Although Lesch presumably did not have access to Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, first published in December 2006, he might have cited his earlier *History of Modern Palestine* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 129-31, even at the risk of giving students a bumpier ride.

Lesch's effort to be objective may be sincere but he finesses hard facts concerning the USS *Liberty*, the American intelligence vessel attacked by Israel during the fourth day, June 8, of the 1967 war. He introduces the subject on the opening page of his book to interest the reader in historical controversy. "Suffice it to say that the position one adopts on this controversial issue often reflects more upon one's viewpoint on the Arab-Israeli conflict and U.S.-Israeli relations in general than on the specific incident itself" (p. 2). Lesch at least added the website of the USS *Liberty* to a footnote (fn. 28, p. 218, from p. 213), but he has tried to transform the fact of a deliberate Israeli attack, after no less than eight reconnaissance flights above the ship, into a matter of controversy, a litmus test for one's belief in a special Israeli-American relationship. Is belief in the special relationship supposed to trump the truth?

**A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance**, by Mary Elizabeth King. Nation Books, 2007. 464 pages. \$16.95, paperback.

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In *A Quiet Revolution: The First Palestinian Intifada and Nonviolent Resistance*, Mary King, a leading scholar of civil resistance, offers a meticulously researched account of a remarkable, albeit often misinterpreted, period of Palestinian political struggle. Dr. King's book, the product of years of field research and hundreds of interviews conducted on both sides of the Green Line, highlights the propulsive, dynamic nature of a popular uprising that transformed Palestinian society and challenged the Israeli occupation in unprecedented ways. She analyzes the achievements and shortcomings of the first Intifada, a "shaking off" led by Palestinians living under occupation who had grown disillusioned with the armed struggle of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the empty promises of Arab leaders. The insights revealed are as relevant today (particularly after a new round of peace talks launched in Annapolis late in 2007) as during any time in the Palestinian self-determination struggle.

King starts by offering a brief overview of the historical applications of nonviolent

resistance in the Middle East and beyond. She debunks the erroneous conflation of this form of struggle with pacifism and challenges the notion that nonviolent resistance is somehow not part of Arab or Muslim culture. King describes the “logic of non-cooperation” at the heart of nonviolent resistance, and how the collective application of nonviolent sanctions — boycotts, strikes, protests, civil disobedience — can produce power shifts in grossly asymmetric conflicts. In different parts of the book, King weaves in examples of nonviolent campaigns from other parts of the world, providing the reader with a helpful comparative perspective.

King shows how acts of defiance, including the construction of alternative institutions by Palestinians living inside the Occupied Territories during the 1970s and 1980s, paved the way for the popular uprising that erupted spontaneously on December 7, 1987, after four Gazans were killed by an Israeli military vehicle. The shift from spontaneity to organized resistance and the primacy placed on Palestinian self-reliance are what gave the Intifada its strength and dynamism. King chose to focus on key Palestinian constituencies that shaped the popular uprising, including intellectual activists, women, students, prisoners and workers. She shows how the writings of key scholars of nonviolent resistance, including Palestinian intellectual activists, found their way into the instructional leaflets printed and distributed secretly during the Intifada.

The creation of the United National Command of the Uprising (UNC), which included representatives from the PLO’s four main factions inside the Occupied Territories, was a significant achievement during the first Intifada. King offers fascinating details about how the UNC came into being, how it developed strategies and tactics, and how it interacted (sometimes uneasily) with representatives from Hamas and PLO officials in Tunis. (One might ask whether the recreation of such a command, possibly with greater Islamist participation, is possible today.) By 1988, the vocabulary of armed struggle had disappeared from the leaflets being written and distributed by the local leaders of the uprising. However, King notes that support for an exclusively nonviolent strategy was not universal, and there were disagreements — particularly between the outside and inside PLO leadership and between the different Palestinian factions — about the role of nonviolent resistance in their overall political strategy.

King describes the split in Israeli public opinion that occurred during the early period of the Intifada, when Israel’s violent “iron fist” response to the popular uprising, captured by print and television media, showed the occupation in a negative light. The growth of Jewish solidarity groups, the surge of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) “Refuseniks,” and the growth of the land-for-peace movement inside Israel were direct consequences of the mass uprising and its relatively nonviolent character. Although King is critical of the lack of strong U.S. government support for Palestinians leading the nonviolent resistance, she does note the shifts in U.S. policy during the uprising, including public criticisms of Israel’s deportation and settlement policies. (One question King does not address directly: Has the PLO ever made it a priority to develop strategies to influence U.S. public opinion or to put pressure on members of Congress?) The restrictions that the Israeli government later placed on local and international media coverage inside the territories, combined with the increased use of violence by Palestinians as the Intifada wore on, helped mute the effects of backfire resulting from Israel’s violent response to the uprising.

King argues that the greatest accomplishments of the first Intifada overlap with its most nonviolent phase, which is also when the greatest number of Palestinians were active in the resistance: building semi-autonomous institutions throughout the Occupied Territories, refusing to pay taxes to Israeli occupation authorities, quitting jobs in the civil administration, boycotting Israeli products, organizing joint demonstrations with Israeli and international sympathizers, and engaging in countless other nonviolent campaigns. The popular pressure generated through the Intifada forced the PLO to moderate its political platform, “increased the price of military occupation to Israel” (p. 298) and eventually led to direct negotiations between the PLO and Israel.

The mass pressure and civic empowerment generated during the first year and a half of the first Intifada were not sustained, however, and the popular uprising was eventually taken over by outside PLO leaders who did not really understand the mechanics of nonviolent struggle. Factionalism, sectarianism and increased Palestinian violence (particularly internecine strife) undermined the force of the popular uprising. King calls this period a “missed historical opportunity.” It was missed particularly by Israeli and U.S. leaders, who failed to embrace the local leaders of the popular uprising. Instead, the leading Palestinian voices of moderation and advocates of nonviolent resistance (including Mubarak Awad, but also countless UNC leaders) were either deported, imprisoned or killed. The Israeli government’s material support of Hamas starting in the late 1970s, in hopes that it would be a counterforce to the nationalist PLO, ultimately backfired. The leadership vacuum that was created inside the territories was filled by those who had never supported a strategy of nonviolent resistance.

King goes on to describe the negotiations that began with Madrid and ended with Oslo. After the local Palestinian leaders of the uprising were sidelined during the Madrid and Washington talks, talks between Israeli and outside PLO leaders culminated in the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993. Ironically, the Palestinian Authority (PA) came to power promising to end the Intifada (which had rescued the Tunis-based PLO from obscurity). The mushrooming of Israeli settlements, checkpoints and by-pass roads (paid for, indirectly, by U.S. taxpayers) coincided with the rise of Hamas. King shows how the eruption of the second Intifada in September 2000, which began nonviolently, was the consequence of worsening conditions inside the Occupied Territories and the PA’s loss of legitimacy.

King concludes her book with a set of crucial questions. Given the cataclysmic violence that has driven Israeli-Palestinian relations to an all-time low since 2000, the continued land confiscations and the separation barrier being built by Israel in the West Bank, the divisions and internecine violence between Hamas and Fatah inside the Occupied Territories, the continuation of strategically ineffectual armed attacks by some Palestinian militant groups, and the one-sided U.S. policy towards the conflict, does nonviolent resistance have a chance today? The small but important successes resulting from sustained nonviolent resistance against the separation barrier in the West Bank villages of Budrus and Bilin could be harbingers of a national Palestinian strategy of nonviolent resistance. Participation in these campaigns has included Palestinians from different political and ideological forces — including members of Hamas — along with a small number of Israeli and international solidarity activists. The PA released a new

policy platform during the past year calling for “popular struggle against the Israeli occupation.” This is a positive sign, though it is hard to imagine a leadership that has lost so much legitimacy over the past few years driving a new national strategy of popular anti-occupation resistance. In all likelihood, the impetus will need to come from the grass roots and transcend the current Fatah-Hamas divide. Forming strategic alliances with groups inside Israel — including Palestinian citizens of Israel and residents of East Jerusalem — and coordinating targeted campaigns of civil resistance with Israelis who have more direct access to Israeli institutions, could pressure and alienate factions inside Israel that oppose the peace process in ways that firing rockets from inside the Occupied Territories cannot. Groups that continue to advocate armed resistance will be silenced when they see an alternative method of struggle yielding results. At a time when the peace process remains fundamentally stalled, King’s book offers crucial insight into how negotiations, backed by the constructively disruptive force of popular Palestinian nonviolent resistance, could bring a dignified peace to the Holy Land.

**Hezbollah: A Short History**, by Augustus Richard Norton. Princeton University Press, 2007. 187 pages. \$ 16.95, hardcover.

*Kristian P. Alexander, Ph.D. candidate, political science, University of Utah*

Several years ago, the U.S. deputy secretary of state at the time, Richard L. Armitage claimed that “Hezbollah may be the A team of terrorists,” while “maybe al-Qaeda is actually the B team.” In March 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning Hezbollah (Party of God) for its terrorist activities and encouraging the European Union to classify it as a terrorist organization. In March 2008, the U.S. administration was quick to accuse Hezbollah of attempting to stage an armed coup against the Western-backed Sinoira government of Lebanon, which had tried to shut down Hezbollah’s private telecommunications network and had removed the pro-Hezbollah head of the Beirut airport. After an 18-month stand-off between pro-government and opposition politicians, an agreement was reached in Doha, Qatar, on May 21, 2008, that ended Lebanon’s crisis. The brokered deal has been characterized as a major victory for Hezbollah, since it was granted an effective veto over policy with a so-called “blocking third” of cabinet seats.

Is this party-cum-militia as dangerous as it is made out to be? And why have U.S. officials sounded alarmist tones about the supposed threat it poses? Is it rhetoric, deep-seated suspicion or a lack of understanding? August Richard Norton interprets these and other relevant matters in this comprehensive primer about Hezbollah. While there are a number of informative studies on Hezbollah, this stands out as the most authoritative, up-to-date analysis of this enigmatic group.

Norton is a professor in the department of International Relations and Anthropology at Boston University. He is a member of the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations and a frequent visitor to the region. He is also the author of the seminal study *Amal and the Struggle for the Shia in Lebanon*, which traces the formation and evolution of Lebanese

Shia politicization through the vehicle of the Hakarat Amal (Movement of Hope), the southern Lebanese Shia movement formed by Imam Musa al-Sadr. Norton's firsthand experience in southern Lebanon as a military observer for the United Nations and his familiarity with the political scene provide the reader with unique insights into the ongoing development of the country.

Norton's primary objective is to counter the "simplistic stereotypes" about Hezbollah with a "more balanced, nuanced account of this complex organization" (p. 8). According to Norton, Hezbollah has managed to combine a Shia identity with elements of Lebanese nationalism, expanding its popularity beyond its sectarian base. An enduring theme of the book is the pragmatic nature of Hezbollah. Indeed, its leadership has been quite adept at emphasizing whatever role is most useful at a given political juncture. Its intimate involvement in supporting its community in the absence of a viable government does not, in his view, qualify the organization as a terrorist group defined by the crude criteria put forward by the United States and Israel.

Norton sketches not only the long and checkered history of Hezbollah but also its cultural, social and political features. Much of the historical terrain covered here has been well traversed by others (Fouad Ajami, Joseph Alagha, Graham Fuller, Majed Halawi, Magnus Ranstorp), and Norton himself. Yet scholarly novelty is not the volume's primary aim. In the first two chapters, the author delves into a detailed historical evolution of Hezbollah. One of the most important factors leading to its rise is that its power base, the Shia Muslims, had long been excluded from positions of decision making in Lebanon. This political disenfranchisement led to significant discontent within the Shia community. Although the emergence of Hezbollah needs to be situated within the context of the Lebanese civil war, it was the Israeli invasion and subsequent occupation in 1982 that led to its bursting onto the scene. Even Ehud Barak, the former prime minister of Israel, admitted, "When we entered Lebanon, . . . there was no Hezbollah. We were accepted with perfumed rice and flowers by Shia in the south. It was our presence there that created Hezbollah" (p. 33).

It is true that the Lebanese Shia were not fond of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and originally welcomed the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). This view changed in response to Israeli brutality and the fact that the IDF chose to remain in Lebanon. Notwithstanding the growing Hezbollah antipathy towards Israel and vice-versa, the two sides reached a strategic understanding. Under the so-called "rules of the game," the Israelis "would not attack civilian targets in Lebanon, and the resistance (Hezbollah) would focus its actions on the 'Security Zone'" (pp. 83-84). Although these rules clearly broke down in the July 2006 war, and while there had been some periodic breaches in the past, both sides abided by this tacit agreement, especially during 1996-2000, when UN International Forces in Lebanon troops stationed in Naqura had acted as a reinforcement mechanism.

At the same time, Iran has played a critical role in the establishment and financing of Hezbollah. Despite the Iranian support, Norton points out that, over time, more pragmatic considerations have also influenced the evolution of Hezbollah, from just being a "cat's paw of Iran" in the 1980s to becoming a more complex, "Janus-faced organization" capable of confronting the "shifting political landscape of regional politics, as well as the changing terrain of Lebanese politics" (p. 45).

In chapter four, Norton addresses the heavily contested question of whether Hezbollah should be labeled a terrorist group or, as he describes it, a “bona fide group.” He tries to provide a balanced view of why, on the one hand, Hezbollah can indeed be accused of committing terrorist acts while, on the other hand, it can also be considered a political guerrilla force. Norton leans towards the view that Hezbollah has rarely engaged in terrorism, although he has no qualms about pointing out the few incidents in which Hezbollah blatantly participated in such acts. One was the 1985 skyjacking of TWA flight 847 and the ensuing death of one of its passengers, a U.S. sailor on leave. Another was the 1998 kidnapping of Lieutenant Colonel Williams R. Higgins of the U.S. Marines, an unarmed UN observer working in Lebanon (p. 77). For the most part, Hezbollah has restricted its armed activities to fighting Israeli occupation forces, initially in southern Lebanon and then in the disputed border region with Syria, known as the Shebaa Farms.

In the next chapter Norton highlights the internal debate surrounding Hezbollah’s decision to take part in elections following the Taif Accords of 1989. In a moral quandary, leaders bickered over whether to participate. Norton argues that Hezbollah had “proved responsive to the attitudes and aspirations of its domestic constituency” (p. 45), but that now it would gain “official recognition as a political institution [via] a public podium” and the ability to “influence the budget to its constituents’ advantage” (p. 101). As such, Hezbollah has solidified its popularity through successful parliamentary participation and governance while continuing to win seats in national and the municipal elections (pp. 101-05).

Another aspect of Hezbollah’s effectiveness as a popular movement rests on the its social-welfare services. While Norton acknowledges that “the present abundance of associations in the Shia community is an essential part of the construction of a modern, confident notion of identity, and a spirit of activism and voluntarism,” (p. 108), we are not clearly told what has driven the provision of such services. What ulterior motives might Hezbollah have? Why has Hezbollah been so successful in providing social welfare?

In the latter chapters of the book, Norton covers the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel. As it turns out, each side underestimated the other. According to Norton, Hezbollah wanted once again to highlight its instrumental role as a resistance movement by capturing Israeli soldiers to use as bargaining chips. Israel reacted much more strongly than anticipated, bombing not only Hezbollah strongholds but the country’s infrastructure, hoping to turn Lebanese popular opinion against the group. Israeli failures in strategy have been well documented in the findings of the Winograd Commission report, which the Israeli government of Ehud Olmert set up to examine the conduct of the war. Although the hostilities ended with the UN Security Council passing a cease-fire resolution (UNSCR 1702) on August 11, 2006, there are at least two unintended consequences of the brief war. First, as Norton correctly points out, the fighting may have triggered an internal power struggle in Lebanon that could make Hezbollah a dominant force in Lebanese politics or trigger a new round of confessional power struggles. Hezbollah emerged from this conflict with a significant boost in popularity albeit with mixed reviews from the Lebanese population. It soon became bogged down in a standoff with the Lebanese government, seeking to gain increased representation in the cabinet. The other development Norton alludes to is the increasing influence that Syria and Iran have garnered in

Lebanon, while raising growing concern among some conservative Sunni regimes in the region, such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which fear “that it might inspire copycat dissent movements in their own societies” (p. 148).

Norton has written a clear, concise history of Hezbollah with specific reference to its relevant sociopolitical context. Piquant anecdotes and richly textured details make the book enjoyable reading. It is somewhat regrettable, however, that Norton does not provide brief biographical sketches of significant personalities such as Imad Mughniyah, Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, and Naim Qassem, to name a few. Another topic not explored in detail is the vexing issue of disarmament. Although Norton makes a few references to the issue, he avoids in-depth analysis of justifications by Hezbollah representatives for the fact that it has successfully maintained its status as the sole armed Lebanese militia.

**Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century**, by Marc Sageman.

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. 178 pages. \$24.95.

*Christopher Boucek, Middle East Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

Careful analysis and well-articulated research is rare amid the onslaught of recent books devoted to terrorism and violent Islamist extremism. Marc Sageman’s new book, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, is one of those rare contributions. Sageman seeks to examine the evolution in the global jihadi movement since the destruction of al-Qaeda’s sanctuary in Afghanistan and the transformation of the organization into a diffuse, loose-knit, informal network. As a forensic psychiatrist and a former CIA case officer working with the Afghan resistance during the Soviet occupation, Sageman offers keen insights in a well-crafted and thoroughly documented assessment of the rise of al-Qaeda-inspired and al-Qaeda-aspirant terrorism. This violence is a break with the historical precedent of terrorism directed by what has come to be known as al-Qaeda central.

Picking up on his earlier study (*Understanding Terror Networks*, 2004) Sageman argues that terror networks are built through ties of kinship and friendship. These connections, he asserts, often precede radicalization. Who you know plays a large part in the collective recruitment process. Kinship and friendship linkages are increasingly recognized, thanks in large part to Sageman’s work, as a critical component in how networks form and expand. Moreover, there is a growing body of specialists who focus on the application of social movement studies to extremist Islamism. Evidence of the potency of kinship and friendship ties can be seen in the strong tendency among jihadis from Morocco to Yemen for radicalization to run in families and among close childhood associates. Sageman’s thesis is now perhaps best known as the “bunch of guys” or the so-called “halal” theory of terrorism, suggesting that individuals go through the radicalization process collectively, amid friends and comrades sharing common interests.

One of the book’s greatest contributions comes in chapter three, where Sageman debunks a series of commonly held misperceptions about the origins of terrorism. Based

on an analysis of some 500 individual cases that he has collected through open-source research (up from the 172 used in *Understanding Terror Networks*), he is able to systematically refute a number of prevailing assumptions about what drives an individual to terrorism. Economic deprivation, brainwashing, naïveté, ignorance, lack of family responsibility and sexual frustration are all in turn dismissed as primary factors. Sageman also demonstrates that psychological abnormality and prior criminality do not play a significant role in his sample. The intersection of terrorism and criminality deserves further study; early assessments suggest that, in some cases, it is more pronounced than in Sageman's sample. In discussing educational levels, Sageman observes the high prevalence of individuals pursuing technical studies such as engineering and medicine among jihadis. Why are so many jihadis engineers? This is the topic of an important recent Oxford study, *Engineers of Jihad*, by Diego Gambetta and Steffen Hertog (2007).

Another major contribution of *Leaderless Jihad* is the identification of a four-pronged radicalization process. Sageman is careful to note that this is not a linear process, nor is it a progression with easily definable boundaries. He identifies the four aspects as moral outrage, a perception of Islam under siege, the resonance of moral outrage with personal experience, and mobilization by networks. Sageman uses this framework to contextualize the rise of so-called self-starters, the leaderless jihad. This process helps us understand the radicalization process; however, as others have noted, another important factor is the role of radical ideology. Exposure to radical ideology and extremist recruiters and materials plays an important role in radicalization. To be fair, Sageman does not dismiss ideology; rather *Leaderless Jihad* focuses on understanding the bottom-up social mobilization that has become increasingly more common today.

The last chapter focuses on a series of policy recommendations designed to combat terrorism. While including calls to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups and action to eliminate terrorist networks, Sageman also calls for other policies, such as greater funding for serious scholarship on terrorism. We are beginning to see implementation of the latter. Perhaps more important, he identifies important policies that will no doubt do much to short-circuit the radicalization process: reducing discrimination against Muslims, countering the appeal of radicalism and avoiding incidents that lead to moral outrage within the Muslim world. Recognition that there is no security solution to the struggle against violent, radical Islamism is vital, and many of Sageman's recommendations are spot-on.

*Leaderless Jihad* at times reads like a primer for the 100 or so government policy makers and senior planners concerned with terrorism. Nonetheless, this important book offers much to researchers and analysts, as it is tightly focused on two essential questions: who gets radicalized and why.

What separates this book from the bulk of material produced in recent years is its cogent analysis, direct assessments, and accessibility. Sageman's use of his own unique data set is impressive. Coupled with the insights he brings to the analysis garnered through his personal experiences, this results in a very nuanced assessment. As a fellow researcher, I would have liked to see more detail about the cases he tracks, especially as his data set represents a potentially invaluable resource for other academics. *Leaderless Jihad* is a timely study that should be read by researchers, analysts and policy makers alike.

**Freedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy**, by Tamara Coffman Wittes. Brookings Institution Press, 2008. 176 pages with notes and index. \$26.95.

*Robert Springborg, professor, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*

This compact, readable work of policy advocacy argues that, despite widespread skepticism about democracy promotion resulting from the Bush administration's botched "Freedom Agenda," Arab democratization should become an even more central objective of U.S. policy. Countering the spread of Islamist terrorism remains an important justification for Tamara Coffman Wittes, but she makes the more ambitious case that Arab democracy is vital to avert looming political disasters and, most controversially, would be supportive of other American interests. Dismissing fears that democratization will bring to power America's enemies in the region, she contends that the United States approach of propping up Arab dictators has had the side effect of bolstering Islamists, the only oppositionists who flourish in non-democratic, Muslim polities. Before these authoritarian systems finally crumble, it is imperative that the United States support reforms so as to empower other opposition elements to stand up to both Islamists and authoritarian governments. These elements, presumably secular liberals, will ultimately found stronger political orders based on popular participation and consensus. According to Wittes, these post-authoritarian political orders would be more capable of and maybe even more willing to forge mutually beneficial relations with the United States, a controversial conclusion that is not systematically supported with evidence or argumentation.

The component of this optimistic assessment easiest to sustain is that the United States has yet to engage in full-bore democracy promotion in the region. Despite its ambitious rhetoric, the Bush administration's Freedom Agenda has been disappointingly passive in the face of Arab authoritarianism. Noting the negative consequences of identifying Iraqi regime change with democratization, an identification she contends was made more by opponents of Bush's policy in Iraq than by the administration itself, she moves on to two more fundamental causes of timidity. The first is the fear that democracy will bring anti-Western Islamists to power, which she dubs the "Algerian problem." The second, the "conflicts-of-interests" problem, is essentially that other U.S. strategic objectives invariably have taken precedence over democracy promotion.

Under Bush, those objectives have been "counterterrorism cooperation, assistance in stabilizing Iraq, and support for the Middle East peace process" (p. 79). The Bush administration evaded rather than resolved this contradiction by concentrating pressure either on those too weak to resist (Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine) or perceived enemies (Syria); by eschewing diplomatic activism in support of basic political rights; and by directing assistance to "blunt-edged programs that had little potential to change Arab politics over time" (p. 79). The shortcomings of those programs, including the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) and the Middle East Free Trade Agreements (MEFTA), are analyzed in detail. A useful case

study of Egypt's 2005 parliamentary elections is included to illustrate weak-kneed U.S. responses in reaction to provocations by a regime riding roughshod, not only over the conduct of elections, but over political rights more generally. An insightful analysis is offered of why support for elections in weak states, including Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine, can harden divisions between sectarian or kin-based communities and extend democratic legitimacy to militant, anti-democratic organizations.

As for the "Algerian nightmare," Wittes contends that excessive fear of Islamist takeovers through ballot boxes may be a self-fulfilling prophecy if that fear continues to impede energetic democracy promotion. Since authoritarian government, in her view, necessarily tilts opposition playing fields in favour of Islamists, political reform is vital, not only to leveling that field so that secularists can compete, but to fostering differentiation within the ranks of Islamists themselves. Islamist movements already consist of three different types: jihadi/takfiri (al-Qaeda), local/nationalist militants (Hezbollah, Hamas) and political moderates (Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Action Front, Justice and Development, Islah). The United States needs specific, appropriate policies for each. Takfiris should be countered with the tools of the War on Terror, since compromise with these Islamist revolutionary nihilists is impossible. Nationalist militants must first be contained by bolstering the weak states within which they have flourished, especially their executive branches, before efforts at broadening political participation are undertaken. Wittes downplays the potential importance of this recommendation of a difficult, two-stage approach by noting that, fortunately, "little of the Arab world . . . is composed of weak states that host armed, nonstate movements" (p. 132). Finally, the moderates need to be scrutinized with regard to their attitudes toward violence, minorities/women, political pluralism and religious authority as well as their internal transparency and the political environment within which they operate. These five criteria will help the United States predict how those movements will respond to political liberalizations, but, Wittes cautions, "in the final analysis, an Islamist movement's commitment to the democratic process cannot be tested until there is a meaningful political process in which it can choose to engage" (p. 139). In the meantime, the United States can employ these criteria to determine with which moderates it should engage as it is pressuring governments to reform.

A real strength of the book is the convincing case it makes for "the vanishing status quo" and thus the need for democratization. Summing up the pillars of support for incumbent Arab authoritarians as rents, rhetoric and repression, she argues that each is increasingly wobbly. Rents are declining outside the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and even there they are not reaching substantial proportions of the population, especially youths. The old Arab-nationalist slogans long ago lost their ability to mobilize populations behind regimes, and the growth of media and the world's attentiveness renders crude repression ever more costly to those who utilize it. The foundation on which these pillars have heretofore rested, which is the ability of the state to control the flow of material resources to its citizens, is also cracking, as Wittes' few, but well-chosen, statistics indicate.

As Arab political stability inevitably declines, the need increases for more direct pressure on the very rulers who are under threat. Evading the hard choices is no longer a viable strategy for U.S. democracy promotion, if indeed it ever was. The belief that

economic reform will lead to political liberalization has been proven wrong, essentially because economic and political power are inextricably intertwined in the Arab world. Fear of losing the latter thus prevents incumbent elites from embarking upon thoroughgoing economic liberalization. Diverting resources from democracy promotion to support economic reform is thus not justifiable. Support for civil society in the hope that it will be the decisive battering ram against incumbent authoritarians is also a fruitless diversion. It substantially overestimates the willingness and capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose members fear retribution from security services. Protracted, gradual liberalization, supported by indirect democracy promotion, “is unlikely to lead to sufficient economic, political and social progress to stabilize Arab regimes in the face of the pressures they currently confront” (p. 71). Thus, much more robust direct measures are needed.

It is at this juncture between diagnosis and remedy that the book begins to lose its crispness. Chapter Six, “Overcoming Ambivalence,” is intended to address the issue of reconciling democracy promotion with other U.S. strategic objectives. Its central tenet is that the U.S. reform strategy “must be centered on its most significant regional relationships: those with regimes now in power” (p. 103). The United States is urged to make leaders uncomfortable with and fearful of the status quo while rewarding them for liberalizing; to concentrate on stronger rather than weaker governments; and to “put freedom first” — democratization programs should prioritize the expansion of basic political freedoms, including expression, assembly and association. It should relegate to second place procedural improvements, such as voting or administration of justice.

Fine so far, but when it comes to how to do this, the inherent difficulties of democracy promotion become more apparent. Wittes, for example, endorses the limited use of conditionality and then only for new bilateral assistance programs. Most important, she rejects the use of conditionality for military assistance, frequently the really vital component of U.S. assistance both in size and recipient. Many Egyptian and other Arab reformers and even some members of the U.S. Congress think otherwise, believing that, instead of providing confidence to incumbent elites so that they might undertake reform, military assistance reinforces authoritarianism. In this critically important area, Wittes chooses to elevate the importance of Arab armies’ “high-value cooperation with American strategic goals” (p. 119) over pressure to democratize. This concession to coercion seems to call into question the value of U.S. diplomats and politicians talking tough with Arab leaders while American military officers conduct business as usual with the very institution upon which Arab regimes are based.

Wittes pays little more than lip service to the importance of multilateral and regional approaches to democracy promotion. The role of the EU is noted in passing. The UN Development Program is not mentioned. The underlying and questionable assumption seems to be that the United States is leading the way and will continue to do so, despite the fact that Europe provides more democratization assistance than the United States, although it is fair to say it is no more effective. But what is clearly required for both political and economic reasons is very much greater coordination and cooperation among those seeking to democratize the Arab world, a subject that should, therefore, have been prioritized instead of being treated in passing.

One could raise other issues with Chapter Six’s recipes for democracy promotion,

including that more jaw-boning will do the trick without real argumentation or evidence in support of that assertion. Eschewing conditionality and providing no clear guidelines to determine the types of pressure that should be used to promote the “unsteady march to freedom,” Wittes’ clear and compelling indictment of the authoritarian status quo leaves us without a map to guide the escape from it.

Yet more problematic than this shortcoming, which is easily forgivable given the difficulty of the task, is the complete lack of engagement with the central issue of regional politics and how it impacts U.S. democracy promotion. That issue is of course the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has so eroded U.S. credibility that even the finest democratization cookbook will not produce the desired results as long as Arabs perceive the cook to be an Israel-supporting United States. The single greatest contribution to the capacity of the United States to support democracy in the region would be a correction of its unbalanced, pro-Israeli policy, an issue totally ignored in this volume. Without such a change, even secular Arab liberals empowered by democratization would remain hesitant to cooperate with the United States.

Moreover, Wittes’ treatment of those Islamist organizations that have been effective in challenging Israel — Hezbollah and Hamas — is entirely negative. Quoting Martin Kramer to the effect that these organizations “have a strong sense of entitlement,” she argues that their use of violence puts them at odds with U.S. foreign policy and democratization (pp. 129-130). She recommends against their inclusion through elections or engagement. Hamas is attributed with using its “violent capability” to take over Gaza. No mention is made of the well-documented efforts of U.S.- and Israel-backed Fatah to liquidate Hamas. Indeed, the policy recommendation for democracy promotion in Lebanon and Palestine is to strengthen the executive branch in the hopes that it will deal with these forces. This is precisely the Bush administration policy that has failed so miserably in both cases. In addition, this recommendation short-circuits the problem of America’s unconditional support for Israel tarnishing its credentials for democracy promotion not only in Palestine, but in the Arab world more generally.

It is a pity that this one-eyed view has marred a book with much to recommend it.

**An Iraq of Its Regions: Cornerstones of a Federal Democracy?** Reidar Vissar and Gareth Stansfield, eds. Columbia University Press, 2008. 274 pages. \$27.50.

*Wayne E. White, U.S. Department of State, ret.; adjunct scholar, Middle East Institute*

Amidst the gains of the surge and the Sunni Arab “Awakening” since mid-2007, some readers might tend to be dismissive of the issues discussed in this comprehensive anthology, focused on the dangers of excessive reliance on ethno-sectarian considerations in fashioning an Iraqi federal system. Yet, as noted by co-author Gareth Stansfield, this publication concentrates on perhaps the most “critical” challenge standing in the way of enduring stability in Iraq today.

Of late, these fundamental political and societal concerns have received insufficient attention from many observers and players alike, some even seduced by the vision of a so-called “victory” in Iraq. Such individuals, unlike the authors, usually lack appreciation for the underlying complexities involved in hammering out political compromises related to governance. Indeed, recent military gains on the ground in Iraq might prove transient if not followed up with great care on the political front. Problems related to these very issues could even lead to what Stansfield correctly warns could be a Lebanon-style paradigm among hostile groups who simply recognize they cannot overwhelm their rivals. And, although contributors to this book thoroughly explore regionalism as a factor that might dilute Iraq’s profound ethno-sectarian differences (as it has in a few cases elsewhere), they do not offer excessive encouragement in that respect.

Considering how dangerous ethno-sectarian challenges in Iraq already have proven to be, co-editor Reidar Vissar and two other authors assign too much blame to parties such as “Western researchers,” Sunni Arab leaders outside Iraq, the United States, Iraqi exiles and even the “international media” for overemphasizing this angle and, implicitly, increasing the overall impact of that divisive dynamic. Iraqi leaders have made similar accusations since 2003, only to revert to being Kurds, Sunni Arabs or Shia (rather than “Iraqis”) when tough issues are on the table. Yet, as contributors to this book reiterate, too many non-Iraqis do, in fact, view the practicalities of stabilizing Iraq in one-dimensional and ethno-sectarian context. Also, Vissar points out correctly that the Transitional Administrative Law’s approach to representation did magnify the overall ethno-sectarian character of post-war Iraqi politics. Nonetheless, the basic problem has been and remains inherently Iraqi.

Even the once relatively “cosmopolitan” and demographically mixed greater Baghdad area, as Stanfield correctly notes, has taken on a far harsher sectarian character in a mainly Shia drive for greater control. And, while Vissar blames mostly foreign “Sunni Islamists” for initiating the sectarian violence that created such a Baghdad, by late 2005 (when al-Qaeda in Iraq’s anti-Shia campaign got into full swing), many experts within the U.S. intelligence community (like myself) had concluded that the majority of al-Qaeda in Iraq’s cadres had long been indigenous Sunni Arab militants.

The intense and dangerous ethno-sectarian character of Iraqi internal politics today should have been anticipated in a country ruled for 25 years by a brutal regime that had strayed far from the original Baathist ideal of inclusiveness. Saddam Hussein had relied so heavily on one group and engaged in such ruthless behavior, aimed largely against Iraq’s two other major ethno-sectarian communities, that a polarization along ethno-sectarian lines had taken place well before 2003.

Nonetheless, there are those who still view a division consistent with ethno-sectarian divides as a reasonable option for Iraqi governance, along the lines of what was called initially the “Biden Plan.” Liam Anderson cautions them in his superb (and sobering) chapter that there is a “high failure rate for ethnic federations” since such a course is so often “an option of last resort.” Those who have supported such a basis for governance in Iraq largely concede that it is driven by the desire to find some way to minimize potentially violent ethno-sectarian contact. Yet, as Anderson argues convincingly, failure occurs

precisely because some of these ethno-sectarian federative arrangements are “invariably a response to pre-existing ethnic (or sectarian) tensions.”

In all too many cases, Anderson observes, “moderate parties tend to disappear in an escalating process of ‘ethnic outbidding.’” Consistent with this point, a damaging political and intercommunal phenomenon has manifested itself in the post-2003 Iraqi scene. Maximalist positions have been assumed by the three main ethno-sectarian groupings, which have squared off in a manner that has rendered some important issues effectively zero-sum.

It is to be hoped that the rather limited sampling of Baghdadis upon which Fanar Hadad and Sajjad Rizvi base their contribution will not detract from some important observations. The possibility of progressive “federal chaos” in Iraq is very real, since the current constitution imposes only a one-year waiting period for referenda on the creation of regions after a prior effort has failed. As is also pointed out, large numbers of Iraqis still do not fully understand federalism or its legal underpinnings in current Iraqi law. Yet an Iraqi central government that is somewhat isolated, dysfunctional, corrupt and inclined toward ethno-sectarian agendas will likely generate still further devolution of power to governorates, regions and ethno-sectarian constituencies, regardless of whether it wishes to do so. And, of course, the uneven distribution of natural resources makes this situation all the more difficult to resolve to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Conflict over issues related to Iraq’s Kurdish north may already have become the first test of how ethno-sectarian issues are likely to play out. Liam Anderson suggests that an “asymmetric federation” in which regions could negotiate various levels of autonomy vis-à-vis Baghdad might reduce potentially negative consequences stemming from the robust regional powers already assumed by Iraq’s Kurds. However, such an approach could prove explosive in a highly traumatized society already hyper-sensitive to territorial and other inequities, especially in the context of the Kurds’ aggressive agenda.

To their credit, as Stansfield and Hashem Ahmadzadeh point out, Kurdish leaders like Jalal Talabani have attempted to resist popular Kurdish pressures related to hot-button issues like independence and a tougher stance on Kirkuk. They have even tried to advance the concept of a “Kurdistani” entity with equality for not only Kurds, but other northerners such as Turkmen and Christians. These two authors note, however, that the allure of a thoroughly Kurdish-dominated entity, even a “greater Kurdistan,” has proven far more attractive to the broader Kurdish populace and has cost these leaders some popularity. The looming showdown over the status of Kirkuk, already a major source of contention within the past year, is a potential flashpoint in two respects. It is a possible “tripwire” that might lend greater legitimacy to more heavy-handed Turkish intervention, should Turkmen claim mistreatment, as well as a trigger for Kurdish-Arab strife resulting from the intended displacement of significant numbers of Arabs to allow for the settlement of more Kurds.

Although in the Iraq context he uses the inaccurate term “ethnicity” or “ethnic” instead of “ethno-sectarian,” Anderson makes a valuable contribution to this anthology. He lays out a number of important warnings and demonstrates how contradictory various potential solutions could turn out to be.

He underscores Irish political scientist John McGarry's contention that, with the sole exception of India, federations in the developing world employing mainly ethnicity to define component polities have an "abysmal track record." He therefore concludes that such a federation would further aggravate already frayed ethno-sectarian relations in Iraq. Although a veto on federal action for weaker groups might be helpful, such a palliative could lead to political paralysis at the center. And where, as in Iraq, there already has been ethno-sectarian strife, separation along ethno-sectarian lines may be the only way to prevent further violence (a method already, of course, employed in Iraq, especially with the unsightly and much-resented walling off of entire neighborhoods in Baghdad). Bearing in mind the difficulties noted above and the large areas of mixed population in Iraq, Anderson posits a somewhat more flexible model mixing both ethno-sectarian and regional considerations for crafting federal sub-divisions. Still, he points out that establishing regional definitions and boundaries could well be a daunting challenge. This is especially the case in light of the ebb and flow of the geography of regional administration in Iraq laid out so well in Richard Schofield's article. Furthermore, dominant groups might well be reluctant to break up their respective power bases in any significant way.

As can readily be seen, these articles serve up more questions, albeit some very good ones, than viable solutions. Nonetheless, Vissar and Stansfield illustrate why those focusing on tactical military successes must look far deeper in search of a balanced formula for federal governance that offers a chance for long-term stability. There is no clear choice that by itself promises to greatly reduce Iraq's ominous and persistent ethno-sectarian and other tensions. Even though representatives of different ethno-sectarian groups in the Baghdad government have been able to work together on certain issues, it is difficult to know whether that tendency can be extended to the broader mass of Iraqis beyond the Green Zone.

Until some of the historical baggage, daunting challenges, potential solutions and contradictions laid out so well in this volume have been explored more thoroughly, observers should continue to heed General David Petraeus's repeated warnings (at least through April 2008) that, despite recent security gains on the ground, the overall situation in Iraq remains "fragile."

**A Political Economy of the Middle East**, Third Edition, by Alan Richards and John Waterbury. Westview Press, 2008. 474 pages. \$50.00.

*Robert Looney, professor, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California*

Alan Richards and John Waterbury's *A Political Economy of the Middle East* has always been a bit hard to characterize. It is clearly intended to be used in serious university courses about the socioeconomic problems facing the region, but it is much more than a textbook. Starting with the first edition in 1990, the volume has exposed several generations of policy makers and concerned observers to the complexity and interdependence of the economic, social, political, religious and historical forces shaping events in the region. Yet, much to

the dismay of some Middle East experts, Richards and Waterbury do not subscribe to the notion that the problems confronting this part of the world are fundamentally different than those found elsewhere.

The strength of their approach is their application of a unique set of premises centering on three universal elements: strategies of economic transformation, the state agencies and actors that seek to implement them, and the social actors such as interest groups that react to and are shaped by them. "Each of the three vertices entails questions about the nature of the state, the emergence of economic interests, and the effects of development strategies." More precisely (p. 8),

- Economic growth and structural transformation have unintended outcomes to which state actors must respond.
- The state structure and fiscal, monetary and trade policy affect the rate and form of economic growth.
- Social actors mold state policy. Interest and pressure groups and, most broadly, proprietary classes seek to protect and promote their own interests through the state. In some cases, the influence of a particular social actor may be so strong that the state becomes its "instrument."
- The state shapes, even creates, social actors, including classes.
- Economic growth and structural transformation shape social actors.
- Social actors affect the rate and form of economic growth, not only indirectly through their impact on state policy, but also directly.

Drawing on this framework, the authors proceed to diagnose the many underlying causes of the stream of events that have focused increased international attention on the region. From the various chapter titles one can gain a quick appreciation of the book's ambitious scope: Economic Growth and Structural Change, The Impact of Demographic Change, Human Capital, Water and Food Security, The Emergence of the Public Sector, Contradictions of State-led Growth, The Uncertain Career of the Washington Consensus, Urban Political Economy, Political Regimes, Solidarism and its Enemies, The Military and the State, and Is Islam the Solution? A final chapter examines regional economic integration and labor migration.

The chapters do not focus on isolated issues, but rather form the basis of a dynamic mosaic that allows them to infer significant trends that might be missed by more superficial assessments:

Between the publication of the first edition of this book in 1990 and today, currents that we identified in two previous editions have commingled and become more powerful. What was politically sustainable, albeit at the cost of heavy policing and repression, is no longer so. All regimes have begun to grapple with this reality, but, because the great majority have been in power for many years, the grappling is tentative and inconsistent. It has begun, typically, with passes at

economic reform and, less frequently, at political liberalization. The turn toward the market has been partial and hesitant — and, even where embraced enthusiastically, has not greatly reduced unemployment (p. 408).

Their framework also provides immediate insights into emerging problems and offers policy guidance that, if heeded, could avoid countless failures and the loss of goodwill throughout the region. The response to 9/11 provides a classic example. As Richards noted in a previous issue of *Middle East Policy* (Fall 2003, p. 72):

If we have learned anything about improving development policy, we know that institutions matter greatly and that institutions can only be crafted from within a society. Outsiders can do little to reform legal systems, enhance accountability and (above all) improve the chances of success of a pacted transition to democracy [i.e., a transition agreed upon by reformers within the government and moderates within the opposition].

Despite their many insights, the authors are not afraid to admit that at times their assumptions have perhaps led them astray. Richards, who is solely responsible for the revisions in the third edition, has changed his views on economic reform over the years, following a growing body of knowledge suggesting that the naïve free market and free-trade versions of the Washington Consensus are not the panacea he and many economists in the early 1990s thought them to be:

Although the problems and contradictions of state-led growth were (and are) real enough, there was (and is) no simple, much less universal, set of institutional changes that can overcome them. The problems of economic growth and structural change are intractable, complex, murky and deeply, inescapably political. Sweeping “reform packages” were always suspect, if for no other reason than it is political folly to offend everyone at once — which is what the economic logic of the Washington Consensus often implied. Further, the benefits of reform are always uncertain, and losers may be better placed to act. As it has turned out, the benefits have often been mixed, unequally distributed, and potentially destabilizing.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that regimes implemented economic-policy changes gradually and selectively. Regimes fear, with reason, that the full-scale embrace of the Washington Consensus entails a high risk of political destabilization... Whether due to the inherent difficulties of implementing economic policy or to the unevenness of reform, the results of economic reform have been relatively disappointing. Although in some countries economic performance in the mid-to-late 1990s was considerably better than in the previous ten years, in no country has growth been strong enough to lower unemployment or significantly raise real wages and living standards, as has happened in East

Asia.... Nor is there strong evidence that countries that embraced much of the Washington Consensus performed markedly better than those who eschewed many of the recommended changes (pp. 260-61).

While the Bush administration is not taken directly to task, the message is there. From the start, U.S. economic policies in Iraq were based exclusively on the failed Washington Consensus. The economy collapsed, unemployment quickly rose to over 40 percent, and the country descended into chaos with no institutions or governmental safety nets in place to buffer the average Iraqi. Richards and Waterbury would probably note as above that "it was political folly that offended everyone at once." How different things might have been if officials in Washington had only taken the time to draw on the historical record so ably laid out in this book.

What does the future hold? Wisely, the authors do not make any sweeping speculations other than simply to warn that the forces are at work to move the region toward greater instability:

It is a much more difficult time than 40 years ago, not merely because resources are so severely stretched against growing populations (recent upticks in oil prices notwithstanding), but also because so many experiments undertaken with confidence and enthusiasm have failed and an entire political generation is burdened with fatigue and self-doubt. Tragically, political actors from both inside and outside the region have been increasingly lured by the siren song of militancy and violence as a solution to these deeply rooted problems. History strongly suggests that such a turn will only steer the ship onto the rocks. Part of the problem is the absence of clear, credible alternatives. State-led growth, the Washington Consensus and (in Iran, Sudan and Saudi Arabia) political Islamism have all been tried, and all have produced decidedly mixed results.

Thus, without tested models, without long-term strategies, and amid rising political violence, the Middle East has entered a period of uncertainty. In part, the successes of recent decades, especially the establishment of a diverse, better-educated middle class with growing expectations, will make the immediate future particularly challenging. (pp. 412-13).

If the book has a shortcoming, it might be the limited space devoted to globalization. The Middle East stands out as the least globalized area in the world. Arab intellectuals in particular are increasingly stressing the threat posed by globalization to their societies and ways of life. In recent years, a new wave of Arab writings on globalization have put forth the argument that Islamic nationalism, even in its most militant form, should be seen as a direct response to the cultural side effects of economic globalization. Why is globalization commonly viewed within the region as an American phenomenon? To some extent, the perceived failures of globalization throughout the region have fanned anti-Americanism and helped spawn a wave of new recruits to extremist causes. While

bits and pieces of this theme are touched on, given its contemporary importance, it would have been nice to see a new chapter devoted to this topic in the third edition.

A brief review can never convey the richness and depth of works like *A Political Economy of the Middle East*. Those looking for quick, easy answers to many of the leading issues of the day will be disappointed. There are no one-page action plans or sets of bullet points that lend themselves to solving difficult challenges. However, those wishing a deep understanding of the complexities of the region will find *A Political Economy of the Middle East* invaluable in understanding the fundamental causes of the policy failures of the United States (and the West) over the years. Perhaps the tragedy of our time is that key policymakers in the West have unfortunately been largely oblivious to the wisdom and insights provided by this masterwork.

**Arguing the Just War in Islam**, by John Kelsay. Harvard University Press, 2007. 263 pages. including index, \$24.95, hardcover.

*Sherifa Zuhur, research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College*

In a review of *Arguing the Just War in Islam*, Irshad Manji praised what she considers to be John Kelsay's attack on Islam (*New York Times*, Jan. 6, 2008), and, while I found the sensationalist assertions of the review off-putting and Manji's knowledge of Islamic doctrine limited, one must admit that lines are being drawn in the sand. Some academics are jumping on the bandwagon for the neo-Orientalist proposition of a "good Islam." While there are advantages and ambiguities in Kelsay's approach to Islamic thought here, his opening statement — that Islam is a contested notion (p. 9) — properly sets the stage for his discussion.

Kelsay takes on several projects in this book. First, it is a well-written introduction to Islamic thought and certain current issues that will appeal to general readers interested in understanding the rules and context of arguments about jihad. The book also aims to explain the processes, though not the detailed methodology, of shariah thinking or reasoning, which is the basis of *fiqh*, or jurisprudence, the making of Islamic law. Another goal is to consider the possibilities for "Muslim democrats" (all of them residents of the United States, whom Kelsay identifies as Abdulaziz Sachedina of the University of Virginia; Abdullahi al-Na'im, a former Republican Brother and legal expert from the Sudan; and Khaled Aboul Fadl, an Egyptian legal expert). Kelsay highlights their divergence from militancy, including that of al-Qaeda. Overall, Kelsay's book presents a linear intellectual history of Islam, explaining the Muslim "understanding" of its legacy of war and presenting short portraits of particular figures who are crucial to the debates about Islam and politics, Islam and the West and the ideological bent of activists from the Prophet Muhammad to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran.

Texts like Ahmadinejad's letter to President George W. Bush can be read in different ways, and my reading is not Kelsay's. But his approach is useful in expressing particular arguments about the role of religion in society. The posing of Muslim democrats against

traditionalists or militants, or what many of us consider moderate Islamists, is the most ambitious and troubling theme in the book. I believe the idea of Muslim democratic “springs” is an ephemeral consideration, if not a flavor *du jour* from 2004-5, because U.S. post-9/11 foreign policy in the Muslim world has been headed by “Mr. Magoo” (as Chas. Freeman put it to the Washington Affairs Council in June 2007). American efforts have been criticized as arrogant, neocolonialist and poorly implemented by many Muslims outside of the West. Kelsay could probably have gone beyond these few American-based thinkers, for there is a long-standing discussion of democracy and Islam within and beyond the Arab world, for instance, by Abdolkarim Soroush and others. Perhaps he does not because that would muddy the distinction between “militants” and “democrats.”

While Kelsay effectively draws ideas to map a course towards dissension over the proper form of the Islamic state, politics and jihad, the simplification of certain figures and their historical context — Ibn Hanbal, Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad ibn abd al-Wahhab, and even Abdullahi al-Naim — necessarily excludes many important counterdiscussions, caveats and nuances. Characterizing Hamas solely by discussion of its now-defunct charter is a mistake. It does not permit readers to see the evolution of that group’s approach to resistance, jihad and democracy. Kelsay portrays Hamas as falling clearly into the militants’ camp.

The core of this book is the three chapters on war, resistance and Islamic ethics, and political traditions. Kelsay has previously produced excellent work within this “just war” conceptual framework, and his coverage here traverses the same ground as that of some others: Majid Khadduri, Sohail Hashmi, Youssef Aboul-Enein and myself, and, on the ethical principle of the *hisba*, Michael Cook. He rather closely replicates R. Peter’s *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* in his discussion of jihad in Abd al-Salam Farag’s *Forgotten Duty* and Shaykh al-Azhar’s defense of Sadat. Kelsay also covers the legal approach to renegades or sedition, as presented by Khaled Abou El Fadl, admitting that the doctrine does not quite fit the contemporary militants.

The most important window onto the jihad controversy that Kelsay offers is that the rules and arguments that should constrain it emanate from within the Islamic intellectual tradition. If the desired end is an Islamic state or society, then wanton attacks on civilians either are not justified by, or cannot achieve, this end. This is the most compelling argument against the violence of groups like al-Qaeda and the strongest one in current de-radicalization efforts in Saudi Arabia and in the recantations of jihad written by incarcerated leaders of the Egyptian extremist groups.

One debatable line of argument that Manji inflates in her review is this: “Kelsay points out that the thugs [who killed President Sadat] resorted to ‘emergency reasoning.’” In other words, when jihad is an individual duty, as when Muslims and their faith are under direct attack, it is not as justified as jihad as a collective duty, which must be invoked and led by a designated Muslim authority. This is a fault line between Kelsay and Islamic clerics who see this defensive Islam as legitimately arising when a Muslim authority does not or cannot wage jihad. Then, individuals must do so instead of the authority, and Bin Ladin’s 1998 fatwa evokes this principle. Rather than “emergency” reasoning, it is a longstanding principle and not unreasonable that war-fighting could be

either expansionary or a Muslim response to invasion or state terror. Because jihad is a response to state terror in the Palestinian case, Shaykh Qaradawi — arguably one of the most popular figures in the Muslim world today — argues that this form of jihad in the Palestinian case is defensible, while he strongly condemned the attacks of 9/11. Kelsay leads the reader to disapprove of this longstanding justification for jihad. What is worse, he may bolster those who condemn both conditions for jihad, and the possibility of unjust rule.

**Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party**, Edited

by -mit Cizre. Routledge, 2008. 238 pages. \$130, hardcover.

*Marlies Casier, Ph.D. candidate, political science, Ghent University (funded by the Foundation for Scientific Research, Flanders)*

Writing on the eve of Abdullah Gül’s presidential election, -mit Cizre observed that “The courts have been at the forefront of the secular campaign to expose the JDP’s (Justice and Development Party’s) Islamic aspirations, warn the public about the possible consequences and adopt an exclusionary conception of ‘identity’, sharpening up the existing political polarization” (p. 11). Less than a year later, the state prosecutor, Abdurrahman Yalcinkaya asked Turkey’s Constitutional Court to close down the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) on the grounds that the party had become a focal point of anti-secular activities. Not only did the AKP, Turkey’s ruling party since 2002, fear the threat of being closed down; the state prosecutor wanted senior party members, including Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gül to be banned from politics. The so-called “closure case” ended on July 30, when the Constitutional Court found the AKP guilty of anti-secular activities. However, due to continuous pressure coming from the European Union and the United States, as well as internal criticism concerning the high economic and political costs of closing down the party, the AKP merely suffered the loss of half its budget. Despite the national and international support in this case, intellectuals and columnists in Turkey, as well as leading European politicians who used to be supportive of AKP’s democratization policies, have, nevertheless, lost their initial enthusiasm and complain about the lack of meaningful change since the opening of the EU-Turkey accession negotiations. Given the significance of these developments, the in-depth exploration of AKP’s political identity and its interactions with internal and external political powers that this book provides will be of great interest to observers of both democratization and political Islam in the Middle East and Turkish politics.

The contributors to *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* explore the relationship between religion and politics in Turkey. Instead of merely being an introduction to the political identity of the ruling Islamist party, however, the book makes the case that the AKP has lost its potential to democratize Turkish politics. The internal and external catalysts that could have contrib-

uted to the transformation of Turkey's political system, as well as the developments and constraints that brought the process of reform to a standstill, are subjects of discussion. It is the contributors' belief that, at present, the AKP is no longer either able or willing to engage in transforming, let alone questioning, the fundamental characteristics of Turkish politics. Instead, it is securing its own power base by preserving the status quo with the army and engaging in increasingly nationalist rhetoric.

How did the AKP come to this point? Before investigating the reasons for the present pessimism, the contributors to this book demonstrate that the AKP in the beginning had the potential to profoundly change the Turkish political system. Erdogan's party was a breakaway from its predecessors under Erbakan's leadership, as explained in the chapter by Ahmet Yildiz. The AKP is not, as the Turkish secular establishment believes, an Islamist party that aims to install an Islamic political order. What the party endeavours to do is improve the political, sociocultural and economic opportunities of Muslims through the democratization of the state apparatus. Not only has the AKP sought to reconfigure the political system, it has sought to reconfigure political Islam as well. Menderes Cinar and Burhanettin Duran explore more specifically the different trajectories of Islamism. Comparing Turkey with Egypt and Indonesia, they point out the particularities of Turkish Islamism. Kenan Cayir then attempts to answer the question of how Islamic actors reassess their position regarding fundamental issues and practices, in interaction with modern, democratic and secular values. He argues that the emergence of the AKP and its new discourse is to be understood within the wider context of Islamic revival and transformation of the last 30 years in Turkey. The AKP is not a product of the 1970-'80s period of "collective Islamism," where "Islam" was repositioned as an action and belief system in opposition to Western capitalism and socialism. It is the outcome of a "self-critical Islamism" that developed from the late 1990s to the present and which criticized the ideology of political Islam as unrealistic and utopian.

The reasons for AKP's rapid ascent are further to be found in its use of the "opportunity spaces" within the international and European political arena. Their pro-European foreign policy was an instrument that increased the legitimacy of the AKP in the eyes of the Turkish state elite and the international system. The AKP turned the EU accession process into an "amplifier for its political program" (p. 87). This enabled it to transform, to some extent, the Kemalist state structure. The AKP implemented reforms in order to reduce the influence of the military over politics, abolished the death penalty and the State Security Courts, broadened freedom of the press, and established the supremacy of international agreements over internal legislation in the areas of fundamental freedoms. As a consequence of these reforms, EU accession negotiations were opened in October 2005. The AKP presented the process of Europeanization as a way to enhance the influence of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East and the Muslim world over issues of human rights and the promotion of democracy.

It is here, however, that we start to see the impediments to sustained reform. The EU accession process currently seems to be weakening the AKP government's early transformative dynamism by bringing tension-creating issues onto the Turkish political agenda. The conservative nationalist wing of the AKP has won over the party's democratic and

transformative aspirations. Burhanettin Duran argues that the relations with the United States and the EU accession process can no longer strengthen the AKP's position and policies, a point that will definitely spark discussion among scholars and international observers. The EU accession process introduced issues into domestic politics that caused sharp debates, and the AKP did not succeed in opposing the criticism from nationalist and secularist circles. Duran thus argues: "The dilemma the JDP faces is that it can only reform the system by solving the deeply rooted political tensions emanating from the undemocratic management of identity claims in Turkey without upsetting the status quo. This dilemma necessitates consensus-building between the JDP, the Republican People's Party (CHP or RPP) and the secularist establishment, which is not happening" (p. 91). Duran demonstrates this dilemma by looking more closely at the debate over the definition of secularism and over the Kurdish question. The secularist elite considers any demands for changes in the strict interpretation of secularism as a security threat. As to the Kurdish question, while initially its cultural and identity dimensions could be discussed, the AKP has now shifted back to its economic and security dimensions.

In addition to Duran, Ali Resul Usul highlights politically sensitive issues that still form major impediments to Turkey's acceptance as an EU member, such as the Cyprus problem, the shortcomings of the Copenhagen criteria, the Kurdish issue and the recognition of the religious minority of Alevites. These problems, taken together with a rising Euro-scepticism within Turkey and in Europe in general, and among the AKP's own conservative circles, are endangering the AKP policy of positioning EU membership at the heart of its agenda.

The obstructions for the AKP put in place by the Kemalist establishment are explained in more depth by Menderes Cinar. The Kemalist establishment has adopted two strategies to deal with the AKP government. First, it has persistently warned the public about the Islamist identity of the AKP; second, it has tried to impose institutional limits on the political sphere. The president of the Republic (Ahmet Necdet Sezer when this book was written), the judiciary and the upper echelons of university administrations carry out their functions with constant reference to protecting secularism. Cinar defines this as "secular populism," which "communitizes" the state, since it tolerates no ideology within the bureaucracy other than secular Kemalism (p. 113). This ideology curtails the AKP and perceives political debate as a redundant activity that can be harmful to the interests of society. The AKP thus has to prove its loyalty to the secular republic on a daily basis. As a result, constitutionalism is more and more replacing parliamentary sovereignty, since the Constitutional Court is governing by means of verdicts. The politicization of the judiciary obstructs further democratization.

However, the AKP has a flawed understanding of democracy as well. It does not recognize the need for changed relations between state and society and between different groups within society and thus actively reproduces the establishment's fear of a "politicization" of society. Moreover, the leadership of the party has problems with being criticized publicly and uses the language of pluralism only in a very selective way. Finally, just as the secular establishment tries to close off positions within the bureaucracy for devout Muslims, the AKP is promoting them. It reciprocates the same strategy of

community-creating and personalizing politics: it does not trust individuals outside of its own community. Cinar concludes: "Turkish society is thereby increasingly divided into two parallel power-oriented sectors that are mutually exclusive of each other in the sense of linking their own survival to the perpetuation of the state as a community and/or the party-in-office as the community rather than to the establishment of the rule of law" (p. 126). He considers it to be most likely that under AKP rule the state will develop towards an "AKP-friendly community" instead of undergoing liberal transformation (p. 126).

Elaborating further on the tense relationship between the AKP and the secular establishment, Cizre analyzes the interactions between the AKP and the military. Since the 1990s, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) have redefined their mission ridding public life of Islamic and Kurdish dangers. The fact that the AKP, at the beginning of its term in office, managed to instigate reforms to curtail the political power of the military thus came as a surprise. This was made possible by EU backing and the support of the international community. In light of the events of September 11 and the War on Terror, Turkey (under AKP's rule) had come to be seen as an important security partner in the region and promised the possibility of a reconciliation between Islam and democracy. However, after the opening of the accession negotiations in October 2005, the TAF increased its voice in politics. General Büyükanit, a hardline opponent of the AKP government promoted to chief of the General Staff, has defended political interference as the military's "duty." The political autonomy of the TAF is presented as necessary to protect secularism. The question is, how did the TAF manage to keep its political influence in spite of the reforms that were put into place? Cizre answers this by pointing at new strategies the TAF is using in order to sustain its traditional functions, such as press briefings on political developments in the country and activities intended to increase popular support, by reaching out to sectors of society and the media. As a consequence, the AKP finds itself in a defensive position and is careful to avoid any confrontation with the army. This, together with the failure of the party's discourse on democratization, its engagement in popular nationalism and its following of the military bureaucracy's approach on security matters, has led the AKP to neglect the building up of democratic civil-military relations in order to further democratization.

This book is thus not so much about "the making of the AKP," as about the party's promises and pitfalls as an actor in democratization. A weakness of the book is the way the authors use the concept of the "Kemalist establishment." Only two contributors make an effort to define the term more concretely, and nowhere in the volume is there an exploration of possible divisions and alliances within this "establishment." This flawed image stands in contrast to the authors' valuable and nuanced picture of Turkey's ruling party. Nevertheless, the volume does add significantly to an understanding of how the AKP has become what it is today. The interactive approach of the authors makes it possible to explore how the AKP has developed in relation to other Islamist movements, parts of the establishment, the military and the European Union, and how its project of reform became entangled with longstanding institutional conflicts.

**REVIEW ESSAY: Kurdish Scholarship Comes of Age**

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Until recently, most books about the Kurds have simply stressed how they have been exploited victims and historic losers. Recently, however, Kurdish fortunes have begun to ascend. Turkey's candidacy for membership in the European Union (EU) has elicited a host of necessary democratic reforms that contain the admittedly tenuous promise of new political, social and cultural rights for more than 50 percent of the ethnic Kurds in the world. What is more, the two wars against Saddam Hussein have resulted in a Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) that has granted the Iraqi Kurds an autonomy bordering on virtual independence. Finally, the Kurds in Iraq have at last found their long-sought great-power protector in the United States. In *The Kurds Ascending: The Evolving Solution to the Kurdish Problem in Iraq and Turkey* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), I analyze this evolving situation.

These positive developments for the Kurds are reflected in the maturity and sophistication of Kurdish studies. For example, Denise Natali's *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran* (Syracuse University Press, 2005) is a nuanced analysis of state-building policies and their consequences for national-identity formation. Having lived in various parts of Kurdistan for many years and taught at Salahaddin University in the KRG capital city Irbil, Natali has been able to amass an impressive array of facts, which she has integrated into various interpretative explanations for the development of *Kurdayeti*, Kurdish national identity. As Natali notes, whether *Kurdayeti* "is directed by urban or tribal leadership, highly organized or weak, ethnicized or Islamized, or compromising or violent, [it] is determined by the political boundaries and opportunity structures that emerge in each state over time" (p. xviii).

David Romano's *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) is also a refined theoretical attempt to explain why such ethnic minorities as the Kurds are mobilizing to demand recognition and rights from the states within which they reside. Well-versed in the complexities of social-movement theory, Romano proceeds to analyze the Kurdish national movement in terms of three approaches: opportunity structures, resource mobilization and rational choice, and cultural framing. He explains that "with mainstream political parties unwilling or unable to address the Kurdish issue [in Turkey] in anything but repressive terms, and with civil society crushed under the [1980] coup, the only form of dissent left was that which the PKK [Kurdistan Workers Party] adopted: violent subversion and guerrilla war" (p. 52). His bibliography illustrates that he has been able to place research on Kurdish nationalist resurgence into the larger context of comparative politics.

Based on living and working in Iraqi Kurdistan from 1997 to 2000 and frequent return visits since then, Gareth Stansfield in *Iraqi Kurdistan: Political Development and Emergent Democracy* (Routledge Curzon, 2003) provides a wealth of factual data and insightful interpretations. Indeed, Stansfield seems to know practically everybody of importance in the KRG, enabling him to speak with an authority that others lack. As such, his work is the best available in English on this de facto state and government and how "Kurdish politicians and civil servants at a variety of levels perceive their system to work" (p. 25). Recently, he built on these accomplishments by becoming possibly the youngest professor in the UK and the head of the only Kurdish-studies program in the Western world, at Exeter University. His book *Iraq: People, History, Politics* (Polity Press, 2007)

integrates the Kurdish situation into a unique and meticulous piece of research on contemporary Iraq, packing an enormous amount of information into a heuristic four-part framework that encourages alternative interpretations of the facts. Now Stansfield's latest study, *The Kurds and Iraq* (Routledge, 2008), hones his analysis with new insights into the history, society and political development of Iraqi Kurdistan from the early twentieth century to the present, as well as into the Kurds' relationship with Iraq and their role in its future.

Abbas Vali, editor of *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* (Mazda Publishers, 2003), has assembled an important collection of pioneering theoretical pieces on the origins and development of Kurdish nationalism by such leading Kurdish authorities as Hamit Bozarslan, Martin van Bruinessen, Amir Hassanpour and Nelida Fuccaro. Each essayist employs different methodological and theoretical approaches and thus presents opposing interpretations regarding the antiquity (primordial interpretation) or modernity (constructivist interpretation) of the Kurdish nation and its nationalism. Vali himself maintains that "Kurdish nationalist historical discourse is a product of modernity, following the emergence of centralized territorial states in Turkey, Iran and Iraq" (p. 97).

Recent Kurdish scholarship owes a double debt of gratitude here to Robert Olson, who has not only served for many years as Mazda's Kurdish series editor, but has also written a large number of books himself, including such recent works from Mazda Publishers as *The Goat and the Butcher: Nationalism and State Formation in Kurdistan: Iraq since the Iraqi War* (2005); *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups and Geopolitics* (2004); *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel, and Russia, 1991-2000: The Kurdish and Islamist Questions* (2001); and *The Kurdish Question and Turkish-Iranian Relations: From World War I to 1998* (1998). At a recent conference, "The Kurds in International Affairs," held at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London on December 19, 2007, Olson was introduced to the audience as the author of must-reading for any study of the Kurdish question.

Martin Strohmeier's *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity: Heroes and Patriots, Traitors and Foes* (E.J. Brill, 2003) offers a wealth of material previously available only in scattered pieces analyzing the failed antecedents (approximately to 1938) of contemporary Kurdish nationalism as it played out in what became modern Turkey. He illustrates how early would-be Kurdish nationalists grappled with overwhelming problems, including the nature of the Kurdish relationship with the Turks and the primitive state of affairs in Kurdistan, as well as with the Kurdish language: "All Kurds were deeply if variously enmeshed in social, ideological, economic and personal relations with the Turks. . . . These bonds hampered the development of a self-assertive, robust and distinct Kurdish identity" (p. 54). Then, following World War I and the subsequent rush to create nation-states in the Middle East, the Kurds had no one to counter the appeal Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) made to Muslim loyalty.

Hakan Ozoglu's *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (State University of New York Press, 2004) not only proves a useful analysis of the emergence of Kurdish nationalism, but also places this process within the larger context of nationalism studies in general. The author

argues that, as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated following World War I, Kurdish notables had to seek a new identity. “Kurdish nationalism appeared to be the only viable choice for Kurds in the absence of a functioning ideology such as Ottomanism. It was a result of a desperate search for identity after Ottomanism failed” (p. 117). Thus, “Kurdish nationalism emerged as a full blown political movement [only] immediately after . . . World War I, when the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist,” and “was not a cause of [the] empire’s disintegration, but rather the result of it” (p. 18).

Christopher Houston in *Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State* (Berg, 2001) examines theoretically whether Islamism can unite Muslim Turks and Kurds in a discourse that transcends ethnicity. Based on two years of field work, the author argues that an Islamic synthesis depends on its flexibility. Already, however, the rise of Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AK Party) since November 2002 and its victory in July 2007 have added important new dimensions to the possibilities of an Islamic solution.

Three recent studies of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey and its imprisoned leader Abdullah (Apo) Ocalan offer different types of analyses. Paul White, in *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers? The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey* (Zed Books, 2000) presents a very readable study of the origins of the PKK and its future, based in part on interviews with Ocalan himself and many of his associates. The author examines the transformation of peasants from what he terms social rebels into modern Kurdish nationalists and concludes that the PKK represents a qualitatively different sort of leadership than did its historical predecessors.

Ali Kemal Ozcan’s *Turkey’s Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan* (Routledge, 2006) is a sophisticated theoretical analysis based on prolonged observations, an unstructured interview with Ocalan, and an illegal questionnaire from Kurdish respondents in several Kurdish-populated cities in Turkey. The author was even permitted to join the PKK’s education program at its Central School in Syria in summer 1994. All this enables Ali Ozcan to elucidate what he terms “the PKK’s massification — its sources and dimensions among the people of Kurdistan” (p. 18). On the other hand, he argues repeatedly that, given the PKK’s total abandonment of all its national liberation objectives since Ocalan’s capture in 1999, its policies should now be defined as an “identity liberation movement, rather than a national liberation movement” (p. 233).

Aliza Marcus’s *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York University Press, 2007) is an excellent journalistic analysis of the PKK based on the author’s lengthy and detailed interviews with very knowledgeable former PKK members now mostly living in European exile. A weakness is that she apparently did not interview current PKK members and is also very sketchy about the current situation. At times, Marcus’s major theme appears to be Ocalan’s “cult of personality” (p. 210), “narcissism” (p. 266), and sheer “paranoia” (p. 135). He [Ocalan] “always was concerned about challenges to his authority and to the unity of the PKK under his authority” (p. 90). On the other hand, Marcus explains that Ocalan “also could be politically savvy and reasonable” (p. 211). In the end, however, Ocalan proved unable to parlay his initial

successes into permanent military gains. Nevertheless, “Ocalan in captivity became a symbol of the Kurdish nation — oppressed, imprisoned, used and then discarded by nations with other interests at heart” (p. 280). Marcus concludes that “the Kurdish problem will remain because the answer lies in Turkey opening a real dialogue with Kurds, and taking it from there” (p. 304).

Asa Lundgren’s *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey’s Kurdish Policy* (I. B. Tauris, 2007) is a concise jargon-free analysis of how Turkey’s foundational rationale for its own existence as a supposedly non-ethnic state explains its adamant opposition to an Iraqi Kurdish state: “Kurdish self-rule in northern Iraq is a challenge to the ideological foundation of the Turkish state, that is, to the idea of the unitary nation-state in which ethnicity is an irrelevant phenomenon in the public and political sphere” (p. 120). Indeed, “Ankara’s . . . strong objections to Kurdish self-rule and the insistence that Iraq remains intact is not primarily based on concern about the unity and sovereignty of Iraq but ultimately on concern about the unity and sovereignty of Turkey” (p. 124).

Metin Heper in *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) rejects what he terms “the present paradigm of the assimilation-resistance-assimilation model in respect to ethnic conflict” (p. 2) to explain the Kurdish problem in Turkey. Instead he takes on practically all the authors reviewed here as well as some important Turkish scholars, such as Kemal Kirisci and M. Hakan Yavuz, and maintains: “The [Turkish] state has not resorted to forceful assimilation of the Kurds, because the founders of the state had been of the opinion that for long centuries, both Turks and Kurds in Turkey, particularly the latter, had gone through a process of acculturation, or steady disappearance of cultural distinctiveness as a consequence of a process of voluntary, or rather unconscious, assimilation” (p. 6). Therefore, the Turkish state is simply “trying to hinder the de-acculturation of the already acculturated” (p. 7).

Joost Jongerden’s *The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds: An Analysis of Spatial Policies, Modernity and War* (E.J. Brill, 2007) presents a sociological study of the “return to the villages and rehabilitation of the war-torn region” (p. xxii) in Turkey following what seemed like the end of the PKK uprising after the capture of Ocalan in February 1999. He traveled extensively in the region and interviewed refugees in the west of Turkey. His analysis places these events in the broader historical context of other population displacements in the region and Turkey’s earlier resettlement policies.

Brendan O’Leary, John McGarry and Khaled Salih (eds.) in *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005) offer a very able collection of articles dealing with the rise of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. The collection is particularly strong in its analysis of federalism and how it might be applied successfully to the Iraqi Kurds. The Canadian model presents some of the most interesting insights. A chapter by Gareth Stansfield illustrates how, in effect, the KRG itself has attributes of a quasi-federal system between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Massoud Barzani and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) of Jalal Talabani.

Faleh A. Jabar and Hosham Dawod (eds.) in *The Kurds: Nationalism and Politics* (Saqi, 2006) provide another worthy collection of articles and attempts to rethink the concept of ethnicity from a theoretical perspective. Two other useful collections edited by

Mohammed M. A. Ahmed and myself and published by Mazda Publishers in 2005 and 2007, respectively, are *The Kurdish Question and the 2003 Iraqi War*, and *The Evolution of Kurdish Nationalism*. Mohammed M. A. Ahmed also has contributed importantly to recent Kurdish studies as the founder and president of the Ahmed Foundation for Kurdish Studies, a non-profit, non-partisan organization promoting Kurdish studies. In addition, one should mention the Institut Kurde de Paris, which was established in February 1983 and has long been headed by Kendal Nezan. This institute is arguably the oldest and most important such organization in existence. In 1996, Najmaldin O. Karim (a prominent neurosurgeon and formerly the personal physician of the legendary Mulla Mustafa Barzani) established a Washington Kurdish Institute in Washington, D.C., and is possibly the best-informed U.S. citizen on events in the KRG.

Kerim Yildiz has played an important role as the executive director of the Kurdish Human Rights Project (KHRP) in London. The KHRP has successfully argued many cases concerning human-rights violations against ethnic Kurds in Turkey before the European Court of Human Rights. Recently, Yildiz also published, with Pluto Press in London, four pithy studies of the Kurdish situation: *The Kurds in Iraq: The Past, Present and Future* (2004); *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights* (2005); *The Kurds in Syria: The Forgotten People* (2005); and (with Tanyel B. Taysi) *The Kurds in Iran: The Past, Present and Future* (2007).

Among a number of journalistic accounts, Quil Lawrence's *Invisible Nation: How the Kurds' Quest for Statehood Is Shaping Iraq and the Middle East* (Walker and Company, 2008) and Kevin McKiernan's *The Kurds: A People in Search of Their Homeland* (St. Martin's Press, 2006) are the best. Lawrence deals only with the Iraqi Kurds, while McKiernan covers both the Turkish and Iraqi Kurds. Both authors have spent a considerable amount of time on the ground and communicate their experiences and insights engagingly.

Lokman Meho has published with Greenwood Press two useful bibliographies *The Kurds and Kurdistan: A Selective and Annotated Bibliography* (1997) and (with Kelly L. Maglaughlin) *Kurdish Culture and Society: An Annotated Bibliography* (2001). Recently, Michael L. Chyet published the most impressive *Kurdish Dictionary: Kurmanji-English* (Yale University Press, 2002). In my *Historical Dictionary of the Kurds* (Scarecrow Press, 2004) I made an initial attempt to compile an encyclopedia of entries dealing with the Kurds and Kurdistan. It is the first such work for a non-state nation in a lengthy series of such dictionaries published for many years for independent states.

Despite this impressive recent scholarship, some would still argue that Martin van Bruinessen's *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (Zed Books, 1992) and David McDowall's *A Modern History of the Kurds* (I. B. Tauris, 1996) remain the two leading studies in the field. Finally, of course, I recognize that I have probably inadvertently omitted other recent works that deserve mention. In addition, numerous studies of Kurds have been published in other languages as well as by the Kurds themselves. Taken together, all of these works amply demonstrate that recent Kurdish scholarship has come of age.