what it attempts, but it falls somewhat short of the goal, laid out in the preface, of consistently presenting readers with both sides of key issues (p. ix).

Ritchie Ovendale, who is a reader in international politics at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, does not lay out in advance what his objectives are in his *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*. But the reader soon discovers that he has written a diplomatic history of the Arab-Israeli conflict that is quite good at what it attempts. Neither Palestinian society nor Israeli society enters into this account. Instead, except for the final three chapters, it is based largely on extensive research in British and U.S. archives and in collections of private papers. As such, it deals primarily with the British and the American relationship to the conflict. The author’s bibliography of primary sources is extensive and useful.

Ovendale, arguing that the background to the Arab-Israeli wars forms an episode in imperial history, sets out to tell how Britain attempted to exercise paramountcy over both Arabs and Zionists. After struggling with France and eliminating Germany from the competition, Britain gained a paramountcy over the Middle East that lasted until the end of World War II, when it was thwarted by Zionist terrorism, by an exploding sense of Arab nationalism, and especially by an American president bent upon reelection. Britain’s attempt to reassert itself in 1956 was thwarted by another American president. After this, it was the superpower confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union that produced the principal variables in the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Viewing the twentieth-century evolution of Palestine through telescopes planted in London and Washington clearly has its limitations, and I would not recommend *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars* as an introductory text. Nevertheless, there is something refreshing and basically honest in the author’s openly Anglocentric approach. His re-reading of negotiations behind the Balfour commitment, of the Anglo-American confrontation of the 1940s, and of Britain’s 1956 debacle at Suez shed fresh new light on old questions, as does his treatment of half a dozen other key issues.

One could disagree with Ovendale on a number of points, of course. One area where I disagreed with his interpretation was on the McMahon commitments to Sharif Husayn. After going over the old issue regarding the meaning of the term *vilayet*, the author concludes that because Palestine was not men-

tioned in McMahon’s 24 October 1915 letter excluding certain areas from the zones dedicated to Arab independence, Palestine “does not appear to have been uppermost in the minds of either the British or Arab negotiators” (p. 25). With this language he glosses over the fact that the Sharif’s letter to which McMahon was replying had laid claim to all Arabic-speaking lands in Asia from the 37th parallel to the Indian Ocean with the exception of Aden. What Britain did not specifically exclude was, therefore, included, whether or not Palestine was mentioned anywhere and whether or not Palestine was “uppermost” in the negotiators’ minds.

The second edition of this book includes new chapters on Camp David, the war in Lebanon, and the Palestinian uprising. These are competently written and serve to bring the narrative up to date. Nevertheless, the real heart of *Arab-Israeli Wars* is in document-based chapters one through ten. They are a good read, filled with fresh and sometimes controversial insights. For these reasons I strongly recommend the book.

**OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES**


Reviewed by Thomas Mattair

In this volume, American, Israeli, Arab, and other analysts examine the obstacles to Arab-Israeli peace and possible ways of overcoming them. The essays, which emphasize the geopolitical and diplomatic situation after the Gulf war, were completed during the early rounds of the peace talks and before the election of the Labor government in Israel and its recent agreements with the PLO. Consequently, the volume is already somewhat dated, as for example when various authors speculate about the possible outcomes of the Israeli election and when they state the early diplomatic positions of the various parties. Nevertheless, there are valuable observations here, as when Shibley Telhami provides a look at Likud’s intention to use the peace pro-

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**Thomas Mattair**, the resident policy analyst at the Middle East Policy Council, is the author of the Council’s monograph *Achieving Peace: Recommendations for U.S. Arab-Israeli Policy*. 
cess and any transitional Palestinian autonomy as a route to asserting Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza. Given the uncertainties of that period, these authors are cautious in recommending the terms of bilateral agreements, although M.Z. Diab is bold, imaginative, intelligent, and specific, as are many of the authors who tackle regional problems. Furthermore, each essay stands alone, so that a wide range of ideas are presented without any consensus reached.

Among the essays devoted to bilateral issues, those by Ziad Abu-Amr and Galia Golan stand out. Abu-Amr explains that Palestinian suffering motivates Palestinians to negotiate; that the asymmetry of power in Israel's favor led the Palestinians to make numerous procedural and substantive concessions; and that failure by the Palestinians to achieve substantive results would undermine their legitimacy, strengthen opposition forces both nationalist and Islamic, and perhaps lead the Palestinians to withdraw from the negotiations. In particular, he explains that "If the Palestinians cannot get any commitment during the negotiations on the interim period regarding self-determination or statehood, they will try to make sure that their right to determine their future after the end of the interim period will not be prejudiced by the terms of the interim period itself" (p. 32). He also argues that "It is unlikely that actual normalization of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors would take place before agreement is reached between Israel and the Palestinians on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza" (p. 33).

The Israeli scholar Galia Golan acknowledges that the Palestinian movement has been a "war of national liberation." She lists four main substantive issues to be resolved in an interim Israeli-Palestinian agreement: the source of authority for Palestinian interim self-rule, the presence of the Israeli army and arrangements for internal security in the occupied territories, the geographical scope of self-rule, and the jurisdiction over state lands in the occupied territories and the question of Israeli settlement activity on these lands. She does not, however, make recommendations as to how to resolve these issues. Acknowledging the linkage between the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian negotiations, she suggests that progress on these fronts might be made in stages that are linked to each other, but argues that the Arab parties will not agree to stages "unless the principles of an eventual, final accord were clarified or conceded in advance" (p. 40). Notably, Golan stresses the need for U.S. pressure and for the U.S. to provide both procedural and substantive solutions, particularly when she finds trust and the will to peace lacking among the regional parties.

While regional cooperation will depend upon success in bilateral talks, as most of these authors note, more than half of this volume is devoted to regional issues. Patrick Clawson argues that political mistrust and bureaucratic regulation make a regional common market unlikely, while Gideon Fishelson stresses the mutual benefits to and opportunities for building region-wide economic integration. But even Clawson argues that economic cooperation between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip is possible, adding that such cooperation would benefit the Palestinian territories more than Israel. In his view, Israel should lift restrictions on Palestinian exports to Israel—paving the way for the eventual establishment of a customs union for Israel, Palestine, and Jordan—as well as on foreign investment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; lifting of the indirect Arab boycott against Israel would permit greater foreign investment in Israel. He argues for a higher price for water to reduce demand, particularly for inappropriate water-intensive crops; the construction of the Unity Dam on the Yarmuk river to increase the amount of water available for sharing; and perhaps even diversion of the Yarmuk water into the Sea of Galilee, from which it could be pumped into the irrigation systems of Israel and Jordan. He does not suggest what equitable water sharing arrangements would be, although he does acknowledge Israel's disproportionate use of the water available to Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians. After acknowledging this, however, he makes the claim that Israel and Jordan both adhere to terms of the Johnson Plan, whereas in fact Israel takes far more of the Jordan waters than is allocated under that plan, leaving Jordan with far less. He also supports Israeli-imposed central controls on the West Bank's aquifer so that it is not depleted, not mentioning that Israel and Israeli settlers already take about 80 percent of it.

Mark Heller argues that "reduced Israeli control of important geomilitary assets in the West Bank and Golan Heights" would entail "asymmetrical security risks for Israel" that must be addressed in "asymmetrical arms control measures." Thus, "[A]ny territories relinquished by Israel . . . must be governed by some combination of Israeli military presence, maintenance of early-warning facilities, and exclusion of Arab forces" (p. 132). He also suggests that Arab chemical weapons ca-
pabilities should be restricted while Israeli nuclear weapons capabilities should not be. (Not surprisingly, Abdel Monem Said Aly and M.Z. Diab seek a nuclear weapons-free zone in the region that would require Israel to give up its nuclear weapons as Arab states give up their chemical and biological capabilities.) Heller also suggests an across-the-board arms embargo to the regional parties. But inasmuch as Israel has a sophisticated indigenous military industry, this would clearly be advantageous to Israel.

Alan Platt concentrates on the possibilities for arms control prior to resolution of the larger issues, arguing that "progress . . . , however modest, might well have a positive impact on efforts to achieve peace . . . ." (p. 141). In addition to controlling the flow of conventional and non-conventional weapons, he recommends confidence and security building measures, for example, announcing certain military exercises in advance, installing hotlines, agreeing on aerial inspections, etc. M.Z. Diab, however, argues that these measures are realistic only if undertaken simultaneously with the implementation of a comprehensive political settlement.

Steven Spiegel and David Pervin assert in their concluding note that "U.S. officials must confront regional parties tempted to play for a draw and hope that the United States will grow tired of the Middle Eastern game and in fatigue turn to its own concerns" (p. 184). This was true of Likud, but it is certainly not true of the Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese, all of whom want meaningful U.S. intervention. Even the Labor government seeks U.S. involvement. Spiegel and Pervin further argue that "The [procedural] haggling [of the early bilateral rounds] demonstrated that U.S. influence is limited and can only be employed once the regional parties genuinely seek a settlement" (p. 184). The haggling demonstrated no such thing: the United States has not been willing to use its enormous influence, particularly with Israel. The repeated emphasis by Spiegel and Pervin, in both the introduction and conclusion, that the United States can exert limited influence at best is consistent with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's October 1992 report, Pursuing Peace: An American Strategy for the Arab-Israeli Peace Process, a report that brought analysts such as Spiegel together with Martin Indyk to recommend that the United States not pressure Israel.

**DIARY OF A PEACENIK**


Reviewed by Mouin Rabbani

If the opinion polls are to be believed, opposition to the continued military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip among the Israeli Jewish public periodically reaches sizeable proportions. Yet, being of a conditional nature and easily influenced by political developments, it has generally proved to be transitory and of little practical significance.

For a much smaller minority of Israeli Jews the occupation is not something to be evaluated in terms of its fluctuating costs and benefits or the latest news report, but rather to be resisted on the basis of universal moral and political truths. The greatest challenge for this group has been, and remains, to harness that crucial segment of public opinion that is not ideologically committed to the retention of Nablus, Kiryat Arba, Jabalya, and Gush Katif to their cause and thus directly influence the debate on Israel's future.

Lacking a popular constituency and effectively marginalized by Israeli society, such individuals have few means of making a significant impact upon the Israeli public. One of these, however, is draft resistance, which, as the American experience demonstrates, can have profound political repercussions if exercised in large numbers. It would seem that given Israel's small and relatively intimate society and practices of its universal conscription and regular reserve duty, this method of resistance is particularly well suited to the Israeli environment. This was partially borne out during the Lebanon war.

Nevertheless, since the popular uprising in the occupied territories erupted in December 1987, draft resistance has proved to be a much less potent issue than first appeared to be the case. First and foremost, an embarrassingly small proportion of prospective soldiers have been willing to confront a military establishment whose centrality to Israeli life endows it with powers to destroy normal life and livelihoods on a scale unparalleled in

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