

## Brief Reviews

**The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America's Interests in the Middle East.** By Mitchell Bard. New York: Harper, 2010. 432 pp. \$27.99 (\$14.99, paper).

An "Israel lobby" in the United States has been the subject of at least eight books in recent years with the 2007 *Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*<sup>1</sup> by Harvard's Stephen Walt and the University of Chicago's John Mearsheimer perhaps best known. Reminiscent in part of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other examples of anti-Semitism, these books argue that Western, and especially U.S., foreign policy is at the mercy of this small but super-powerful lobby. While some, like Abraham Foxman and Alan Dershowitz, have attacked these works by exposing manipulated facts (and in some cases outright lies), Bard, executive director of the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, offers another, and perhaps more effective, approach.

Bard turns the tables on the conspiracy theorists and compellingly dissects the arguably more powerful Arab lobby. He demonstrates convincingly that an Arab lobby exists and is comprised of two main clusters. Members of the first group are agents of the oil exporting states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), especially Saudi Arabia. They have powerful allies in the United States in the form of multinational oil companies and exporters of defense industrial goods, alongside Arabists within the State Department.

The second group is composed of ethnic lobbies of Arab and Muslim-Americans, in alliance with non-evangelical Christian groups and the campus-based academic left. The first group is interested mainly in energy policy and the

geopolitics of the Persian Gulf region, and, in the case of the GCC, the export of Salafist versions of Islam; the second group is focused mainly on the Palestinian question.

In contradistinction to pro-Israel groups, the Arab lobby does not exist primarily to foster close relations between the United States and the Arab world. More of its energy is expended on vilifying and opposing Israel and striving to weaken the alliance between Jerusalem and Washington. While the Arab lobby has lots of money, it garners little support from the American people.

Despite repeated exertions, Americans of Arab origin have not rushed to join in a crusade against Israel. More than half of all Arab Americans come from Lebanese and Syrian Christian backgrounds, and many remember the damage done to their coreligionists by extremist Arab nationalist and Muslim groups in their home countries. While the major successes of the Arab lobby have not, up until now, been on the Palestinian question, it has not been completely ineffective. In areas such as energy policy, arms exports, and the spread of Islam, there have been notable successes.

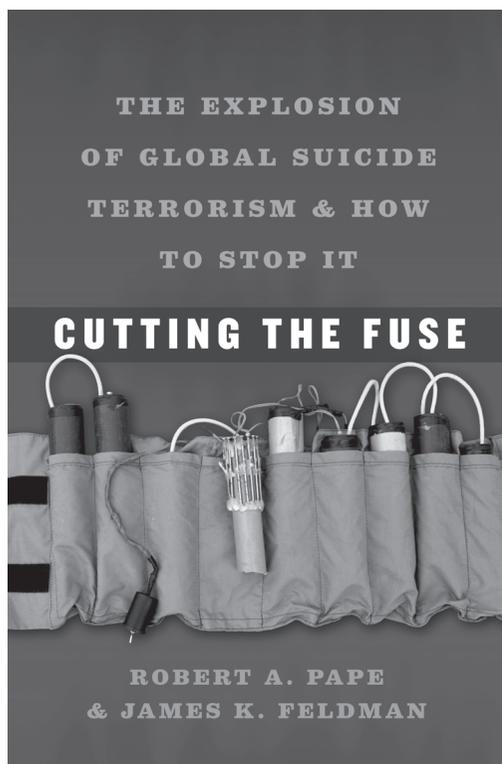
Bard presents data never before assembled on all the elements of the Arab lobby. He leaves no doubt that, measured by level of effort, if not results, the Arab lobby is equal, or superior to, anything done by the friends of Israel.

Steven Rosen  
Washington Project

**Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It.** By Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 349 pp. \$30.

Ever since the attacks of 9/11, Western scholars have struggled to understand what

1 Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.



motivates suicide terrorists to take their own lives in paroxysms of violence against civilians. In *Cutting the Fuse*, University of Chicago political scientist Pape and Feldman, formerly of the Air Force Institute of Technology, analyze new data, extending Pape's earlier research on suicide terrorism in *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*.<sup>2</sup> This enhanced data set now includes the universe of suicide attacks from 1980 to 2009. According to the authors, the original argument is robust and still stands.

Pape originally claimed that occupation is the taproot of suicide terrorism. In the new book, the authors emphasize that since 2006, use of this tactic has spiked in Afghanistan and Pakistan following U.S. interventions. Although the Afghan case supports Pape's thesis, the notion that Pakistan is occupied makes one wonder about the authors' grip on reality. Consequently, it is unclear why suicide attacks there have spiked

in recent years. More broadly, the explicit rejection of a religious explanation in favor of a secular, strategic logic does not hold, as Max Boot has convincingly demonstrated in *The Weekly Standard*.<sup>3</sup>

The nature of this supposed strategic logic is also murkier here than in the first book. No longer does Pape claim that people turn to suicide terrorism because of its effectiveness in coercing government concessions. Rather, he and his coauthor acknowledge terrorism's political limitations: Groups such as al-Qaeda stand no chance of achieving their expansive demands to establish a caliphate.

This tension throughout the book raises unresolved questions about the motives of suicide terrorists. Why would an al-Qaeda member blow himself up to achieve nothing tangible politically? And how is such costly behavior strategic in the absence of attaining any meaningful political concessions? To square the circle, Pape and Feldman downplay government concessions as the foremost objective of suicide terrorists, emphasizing instead their hatred toward occupiers and the desire to make them suffer, perhaps as an end in itself.

Such defensive, ad hoc shifts in reasoning and logic on the part of Pape and Feldman point to evidence of a degenerating research effort.

Max Abrahms  
Johns Hopkins University

**Egypt: A Short History.** By Robert L. Tignor. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. 363 pp. \$29.95.

Appearing just before the uprising that overthrew Hosni Mubarak, *Egypt: A Short History* offers a timely reminder of the wild vicissitudes and mass upheavals which have been integral to Egypt's history.

Tignor, emeritus history professor at Princeton University, begins 5,000 years ago with Egypt's Old Kingdom and ends with the last year

2 Random House, 2005.

3 Max Boot, "Suicide by Bomb," *The Weekly Standard*, Aug 1, 2011.

of Mubarak’s reign. The overview of Egypt’s many different epochs—pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Christian, medieval Islamic, European imperialist, pan-Arab—offers a look at the totality of Egypt’s history.

Because of this, otherwise important epochs receive a few pages of bare bone summary; likewise, the book follows traditional narratives and offers few unique insights or controversial interpretations. Worse, Tignor’s history is marred by apologetics for Islam: suggesting that in the decades preceding Pope Urban’s 1095 call for the Crusades, “Christians [under Muslim rule] no longer lived in danger of their lives or their livelihoods,” is demonstrably false, as evinced by the Turkish advance into Anatolia following the Battle of Manzikert (1071) and the Egyptian Fatimid caliph’s persecution of Christians and desecration of the Church of the Sepulcher.

The book offers no footnotes, even for the many quotes, which frustrates the specialist. In contrast, the general reader, for whom the book is mainly geared, will benefit from the fast-paced, readable narrative.

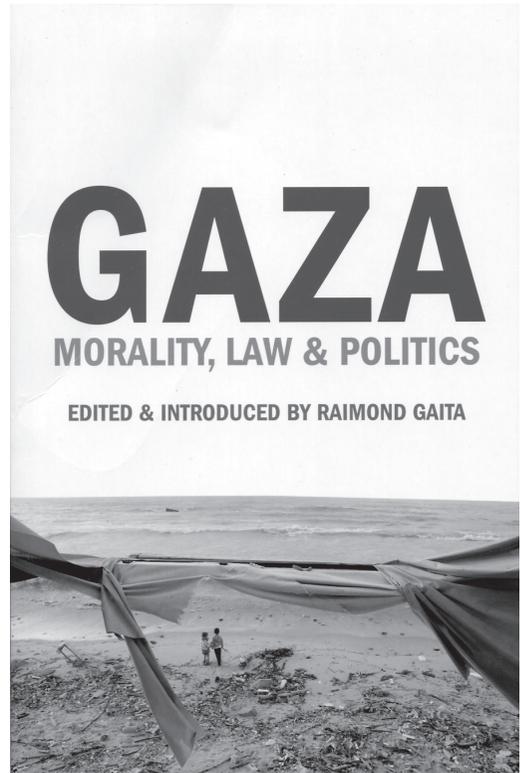
One comes away from this broad sweep with the insight that no civilization endures forever. Egypt experienced nearly three millennia of the pharaonic, nearly one millennium of the Greco-Roman, and 500 years of the Christian, so why assume that Arabic/Muslim civilization, now 1,400 years old, is the final and ultimate destiny of Egypt?

Raymond Ibrahim

**Gaza: Morality, Law and Politics.** Edited by Raimond Gaita. Crawley, Aus.: UWA Publishing, 2010. 222 pp. \$29.95.

After years of indiscriminate rocket attacks, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip in late 2008 and early 2009. While Israel made its case for self-defense, the United Nations established a fact-finding mission in April 2009 to investigate alleged violations of international law. The flawed report, issued under the auspices of South African jurist Richard Goldstone, accused Israel of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity.

Gaita, professor of philosophy at Austra-



lian Catholic University and professor of moral philosophy at King’s College London, assembles the generally feeble and rambling thoughts of seven academics (none Middle East specialists) on this incident. With some exceptions, the scholars express disdain for Israel’s actions and treat the Goldstone report as gospel.

Gaita himself argues stridently that the “case against Israel is serious and strong. Too many reports from reliable sources concur.” Geoffrey Brahm Levey of the University of New South Wales argues that both Hamas and Israel should “be hauled before the International Criminal Court to answer the charges.” He calls Jerusalem’s actions “state terror” and alleges that Israeli “indifference” to civilian life “may have been deliberate.”

It might be too much to hope that Gaita, Levey, and the other contributors to this volume would now question their own judgment. Goldstone does. In April 2010, the jurist wrote in *The Washington Post* that he no longer believed Israel had intentionally targeted civilians in

Gaza.<sup>4</sup> With one brief op-ed, Goldstone rendered half this book obsolete.

Another problem with *Gaza: Morality, Law and Politics* is its overuse of academic jargon. For example, Mark Baker of Monash University examines “Jewish and Palestinian nationalism from an ethnographic perspective” to “expose the way Israel and Palestine have come to function as cultural codes for a wider set of assumptions and attitudes whose roots lie in the structures of victim identities.” Then there is Hilary Charlesworthy, who applies feminist theories to the conflict claiming “it is possible to have the biological sex of a woman, but to adopt a masculine gender and vice versa . . . concepts of masculinity and femininity alter across time and cultures, but are typically defined as opposite to one another.” Such verbiage makes the book a tough slog.

To be sure, there are some insights to glean. The University of Melbourne’s Gerry Simpson penned a thoughtful essay and rightly notes that “Israelis kill Palestinian civilians because this is the only way to attack Palestinian fighters, and Palestinians kill Israeli civilians because this is the only way to attack the Israeli state.”

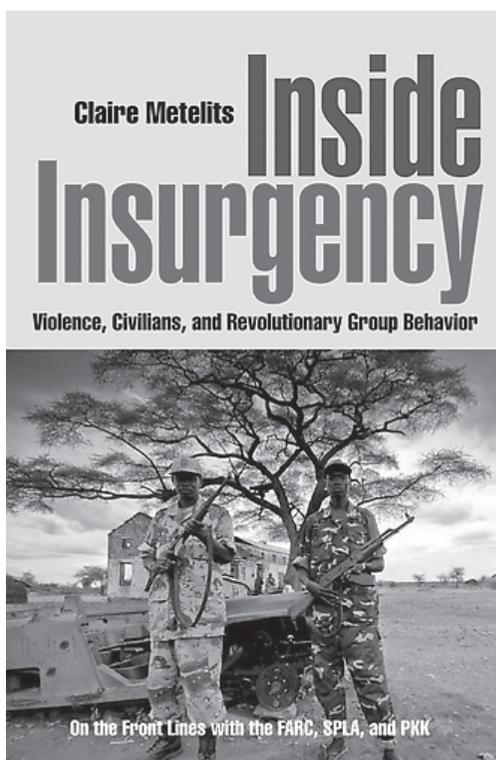
Unfortunately, such clear-eyed analysis is in the minority in this book, rendering it unworthy of scholarly attention.

Jonathan Schanzer  
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

**Inside Insurgency: Violence, Civilians, and Revolutionary Group Behavior.** By Claire Metelits. New York: New York University Press, 2010. 242 pp. \$70 (\$23, paper).

*Inside Insurgency* addresses a question important to both academics and policymakers: How does one explain the variation in the types and level of victimization of civilian populations by insurgent groups. Some groups brutalize the local population while others do not. Some insurgent groups attack civilians but only some of the time.

4 Richard Goldstone, “Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and War Crimes,” *The Washington Post*, Apr. 1, 2010.



Metelits, assistant professor of political science at Washington State University, has conducted extensive field research in Colombia, Iraq, Kenya, Sudan, and Turkey since 2001. Braving insurgent hot-spots, she interviewed more than a hundred insurgent leaders, military commanders, government officials, and civilians. Her research focuses on three insurgent groups in particular: the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). Although each organization has preyed on the local population, Metelits explores the variations in their victimization of civilians. The PKK targeted Turkish civilians for some time before moderating this practice. FARC evolved in the opposite way, from protecting Colombian civilians to killing, kidnapping, and extorting them. The SPLA’s trajectory was akin to that of FARC, committing widespread human-rights violations against the southern Sudanese people before winning over their allegiance.

Her explanation for this variation is intu-

itively plausible and well-argued. Metelits demonstrates empirically that the key explanatory variable is “active rivalry.” She writes: “When an insurgent group does not face competition over resources, the level of violence is low. In contrast, when an insurgent group faces competition—a threat to control of resources—the level of violence is likely to rise.” That is, when an insurgent group faces competition from either state or non-state entities over strategic resources essential to organizational survival (e.g. food, guns, or money), violence against civilian populations can be expected to increase. Accordingly then, insurgents can be viewed as “rational” actors who tend to harm the population in response to their own organizational concerns.

This scholarship dovetails with research on terrorist groups by Mia Bloom, Jonathan Schanzer, and others who have shown that terror groups’ violence against civilians is sometimes a function of inter-organizational squabbles rather than broader, ideological reasons. This observation has potential implications in the war on terrorism. Post-bin Laden, al-Qaeda affiliated groups are less unified than ever and may, therefore, ramp up their violence against civilians if the Metelits thesis can be generalized to this critical case.

Max Abrahms

**Militarism and Israeli Society.** Edited by Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010. 386 pp. \$70 (\$26.95, paper).

This volume is a perfect illustration of how far the tenured Left will go to suppress real diversity and balance in academic discourse while misrepresenting one-sided advocacy as scholarship. *Militarism and Israeli Society* is a collection of articles that were presented at a conference sponsored by Israel’s semi-Marxist Van Leer Institute and edited by two Hebrew University professors, Sheffer and Barak, noted for their vocal attacks on the Jewish state.

Alongside these ideological biases is a sloppy use of terminology at the heart of the book. For the writers, the terms “militaristic” and

## Militarism and Israeli Society

Edited by Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak



“having a large army” are generally used interchangeably. Granted, Israel does have a sizable military, understandable in the face of the multiple threats it continually faces. But the absence of militarism (and the reality of civilian control over the Israeli military) was dramatically illustrated in recent months when Israeli civilian politicians repeatedly considered and then ruled out generals for the position of chief of staff.<sup>5</sup>

Israel’s army interacts with other parts of society in interesting ways. Military officers retire and often become politicians. Social networking is often based on one’s old army buddies. These would be interesting issues to analyze. But *Militarism and Israeli Society* has little interest in such things. With only a few exceptions, the writers in the volume simply bash Israel rather than examine it seriously.

Thus a chapter by Kobi Michael opines at

<sup>5</sup> *Asia Times* (Hong Kong), Feb. 11, 2011; Reuters, Feb. 13, 2011.

length (and with painful polysyllabic inventions like “epistemic authority” or “Type A Discourse Space”) that civilian control over the Israeli military is weak without offering any evidence that this is true. Yoram Peri complains that the Israeli media is subservient to and coddles the army but never mentions the ideological Left’s hegemony over most news outlets. A shrill chapter denouncing Israel’s security barrier by Yuval Feinstein and Uri Ben-Eliezer dismisses the initiative as a “Method of a New War” by Israel against Palestinians; the authors never mention that the fence was built to keep out terrorists or that it was constructed as a civilian project to protect both Jewish and Arab citizens who were being blown up with tragic regularity. There has been debate as to how much the drop in terrorist atrocities in recent years was due to the partial completion of this fence. Perhaps the only chapters in the book not seeking to grind an ideological axe are the ones on Israel’s defense budget by Zalman F. Shiffer and one on the role of the religiously observant in the military by Stuart A. Cohen.

The word “analysis” may be the most overused term, showing up on almost every page of the book. Yet, there is virtually none to be found in this collection of rhetoric posing as scholarship.

Steven Plaut  
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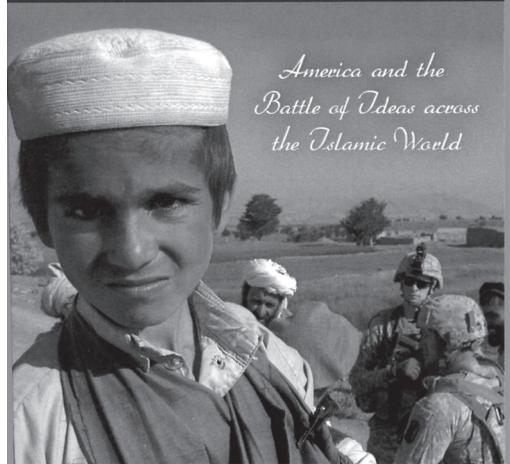
**My Brother, My Enemy: America and the Battle of Ideas across the Islamic World.** By Philip Smucker. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2010. 364 pp. \$26.

*My Brother, My Enemy*, being true to its namesake, takes a fraternal, even emotional, approach to understanding the conflict between the United States and the Muslim world, based on the author’s travels and interviews in the Middle East

While Smucker, a foreign journalist for publications including *U.S. News and World Report* and *Time*, appears sincere in his search for peaceful solutions, he is ultimately too ideologically driven for this book to have much value. All the classic leftist bromides appear here: The notion

PHILIP SMUCKER

## MY BROTHER, MY ENEMY



of an “Islamofascist” movement is “a mirage, a false specter created out of our own fears”; with proper cooperation, Hamas might “morph into something far more peaceful in the future”; a two-state solution will not only solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, it will destroy al-Qaeda and radicalism; Fort Hood killer Nidal Hasan is misunderstood and was primarily motivated by a sense of moral outrage.

Smucker’s biases are sometimes more subtle: In a paragraph describing the worship of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Jerusalem, the last are portrayed straightforwardly while less-than-dignified depictions are reserved for Christian pilgrims “huffing and perspiring fanatically” and Jews who “bob up and down” at the Western Wall. The author’s apologies for Islam lead him amateurishly to quote and comment on the Qur’an and Islamic history, portraying, for instance, Muslim-dominated Spain in the medieval era as nearly as tolerant as modern-day America.

Smucker appears to be motivated by noble sentiments: “Indeed, my work on *My Brother, My Enemy* has reaffirmed a basic principle I al-

ways knew to be true: ‘Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great and you will be sons of the most high’ [Luke 6:35].” While such counsel may be noble for an individual’s conscience, it is disastrous as state policy.

In the end, Smucker’s “brotherly” advice is being preached to the wrong audience. Much of the Muslim world scoffs at the notion that the infidel is a “brother” and sees him only as a misguided enemy. Surely it is in greater need of such advice than the West.

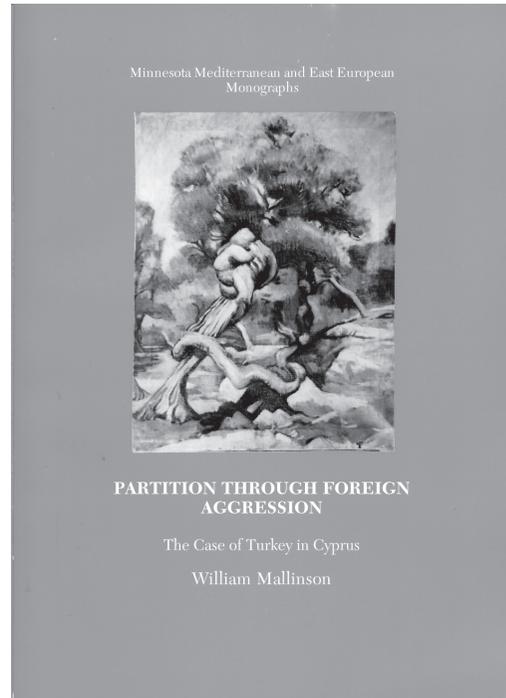
Raymond Ibrahim

**Partition through Foreign Aggression. The Case of Turkey in Cyprus.** By William Mallinson. Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs. No. 20 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010). 126 pp. \$30, paper.

While Hesiod identified Cyprus as the first home of the goddess Aphrodite, the island has been inhabited by many who are not lovers. Already a bone of contention between ancient Greeks and Persians, later Venetians and Ottomans, Cyprus has maintained a strategic significance in the struggle between East and West, and therefore has attracted the attention of modern powers, such as Britain, the United States, and, of course, Greece and Turkey.

Mallinson, a former British diplomat now teaching history at a Greek university, has written a monograph lamenting the partition of Cyprus as a largely unjust and cynical machination of great power politics. At the same time, he acknowledges that the island is populated by two ethno-religious communities hardly in love with each other—Greeks and Turks—but then proceeds to ignore his own findings.

In an era where nationalism and religion still play an important role in international politics, it is foolhardy to assign blame simply to outsiders who have sought to dominate the isle. For example, the author suggests that Cyprus should be treated in a post-nationalist “European spirit,” allowing for a reunification that obfuscates the ethno-religious differences. While the jury is still out on the success of the European project, ignoring the political potency



of these factors leads to a shallow understanding of politics everywhere, including Cyprus.

The disdain and aggressive tone throughout the monograph toward the realpolitik paradigm does not befit an academic work. Similarly, the contempt for social science theory is extremely problematic. The preaching tone, the simplistic insistence on legality in the international system (despite the fact that use of force is allowed by that system), an adoration of such a morally bankrupt institution as the U.N., and naive idealism turns the work into a polemical tirade rather than a respectable, intellectual exercise.

The author makes a far-reaching claim that partitions in international relations are ineffective and immoral. This particular crusade against partitions, advocating tacitly multi-ethnic states, lacks intellectual rigor and depth. The author could have marshaled better arguments had he read the rich literature on partitions.

Efraim Inbar

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# THE THIRD CHOICE

Islam, Dhimmitude and Freedom



MARK DURIE  
FOREWORD BY BAT YE'OR

**The Third Choice: Islam, Dhimmitude, and Freedom.** By Mark Durie. Melbourne, Aus.: Deror Books, 2010. 270 pp. \$38 (\$19.95 paper).

Durie, an Anglican pastor and an accomplished scholar of issues involving Christianity and Islam, has produced a reasoned, comprehensive, and well-written book that is particularly apt for readers lacking an extensive background in Islam.

His title comes from the three choices that the classic religious texts of Islam offer “peoples of the book”: Convert to Islam, perish by the sword, or accept a second-class status, which modern analysts call *dhimmitude*. This last choice renders Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians subject to heavy social, legal, and economic discrimination enforced by the ruling Muslims and implying a status of perpetual humiliation.

The book’s first half clarifies the theological underpinnings of *dhimmitude*. Durie debunks some myths about Islam, such as the idea that jihad does not mean war but rather spirituality. He discusses the concept of abrogation in the

Qur’an, used by Muslim exegetes to explain away seeming contradictions within the text. Durie shows how the more conciliatory verses of the Qur’an, quoted by contemporary Islamic apologists to underscore the peaceful nature of Islam, were written earlier in Muhammad’s career when his position was tenuous. However, the more militant, less-forgiving phrases that tradition claims were revealed to Muhammad in the winter of his life abrogate many of these earlier peace-oriented verses.

Durie gives many examples of *dhimmitude*, both historical and contemporary, which clarify the misery, fear, poverty, and degradation that framed the world of the pre-modern *dhimmi*. And what of *dhimmitude* today? Durie gives examples of Islamic-driven discriminatory practices in Muslim states. He also explores the self-inflicted behaviors in Western states, which mirror *dhimmitude*, that are driven by political correctness and fears of being labeled a bigot.

*The Third Choice* is a good first choice for those concerned about *dhimmitude* today.

Mark Silinsky

U.S. Department of the Army

**A Vulcan’s Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan.** By Dov S. Zakheim. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2011. 335 pp. \$32.95.

The oft-repeated maxim attributed to Gustave Flaubert, “God is in the details,” has a variant: “Governing is in the details,” as Zakheim’s memoir, a firsthand postmortem of the Bush administration’s Afghanistan and Iraq policies, makes clear. The volume provides an insider’s view not only on strategy but also on an underappreciated aspect of the history—the “practicalities of implementation.”

Zakheim was one of the first advisors in 1998 to join the Bush campaign’s foreign policy team, dubbed by Condoleezza Rice, the “Vulcans.” He joined other, better-known names including Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz, to help brief Bush on international issues and then moved on to the Department of Defense after the election.

The author demonstrates that problems

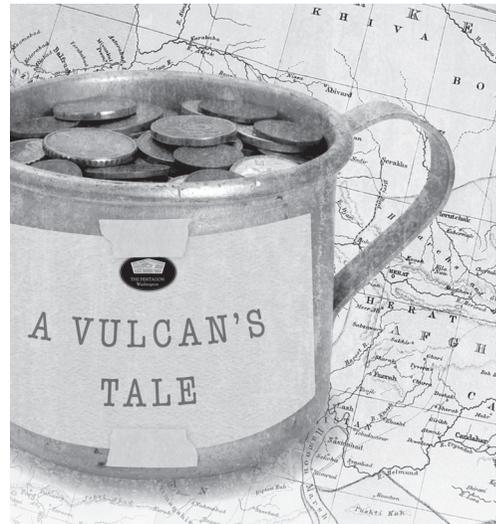
with postwar reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq resulted from factors incidental to the Bush administration's initial aversion to "nation-building." He stresses another crucial reason for the mismanaged reconstruction initiatives: mid-level bureaucratic disputes over appropriations between Congress, the Defense Department, and the Office of Management and Budget.

In his capacities as the Pentagon's comptroller, chief financial officer, and coordinator for Afghan civilian reconstruction, Zakheim negotiated with coalition partners to raise and disburse funds for the Afghanistan and Iraq missions. Describing these negotiations, Zakheim provides insights into the unfortunate realities of dealing with authoritarian Middle Eastern regimes. Notwithstanding the ostensible confluence of interest between these states and Washington, corruption, haggling, secrecy, double-talk, and false promises were a fact of life.

Zakheim illustrates the point with numbers. After the first Afghan donors' conference, for example, the government of Saudi Arabia pledged \$220 million but disbursed \$27 million; Kuwait disbursed \$2 million of its \$30 million pledge; and Qatar simply did not bother to follow up on its \$12 million pledge. Zakheim's failed 2003 negotiations with Syrian charge d'affaires, Imad Moustapha, over frozen Iraqi assets—the highest-level Pentagon talks with Syria in years—reveal the futility of the Bush administration's attempted rapprochement with Damascus.

Zakheim unintentionally reveals a major shortcoming in the White House's Afghanistan strategy: By repeatedly defending the Bush record vis-à-vis Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf, he highlights the administration's inability to recognize and deal with Pakistan's double-game of cooperating with Washington while inciting instability across its borders.

*A Vulcan's Tale* is weaker in its strategic analysis. Zakheim advances the oft-repeated charge that the "rush to war with Iraq" detracted



How the Bush Administration  
 Mismanaged the Reconstruction  
 of Afghanistan

*Dov S. Zakheim*

from the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Especially given his intimate involvement with the issue, Zakheim's discussion is simplistic and ultimately unconvincing, relying too much on anecdotes about administration officials' supposed inattention to Afghanistan. He downplays, for example, the fact that almost immediately after the start of the 2003 Iraq war, the Bush administration doubled funding for Afghanistan reconstruction and greatly increased the size of the country's national army and police.

Overall, Zakheim's memoir remains useful in explaining the impact that U.S. decisions after 9/11 had on subsequent outcomes in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Pratik Chougule  
 former State Department official

