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Book reviews

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women continue to be prominent in the broader Palestinian struggle, Hamas maintains strict gender segregation. Despite its promotion of education for women, Hamas expects them to remain in the home and maintain 'a role in raising fighters ready for sacrifice for the homeland' (206). Single women are considered particularly susceptible to moral exploitation, and those not conforming to Islamic dress codes are vilified and attacked. At least 30 women have been the victims of so-called honour killings by Hamas's feared morality police.

The final chapters of the book relate more recent developments. Having previously rejected all democratic processes, Hamas changed tactics and, in January 2006, contested the Palestinian Authority (PA) elections. Standing against a moribund and corrupt Fatah and demonstrating considerable electioneering finesse that drew on the extensive goodwill established through its charity work, Hamas was surprisingly swept to victory. However, the Western world refused to recognise a Hamas-led regime until it unequivocally renounced violence, and other parties within the PA would not, or could not, work with the Islamists. A civil war soon erupted, resulting in Palestinian territory—already split geographically—being divided politically, as Fatah was driven out of Gaza. From there, Hamas continued its resistance by launching daily rocket attacks into Israel, which provoked the major Israeli assault in 2008–9.

This work would certainly benefit from closer editing since the structure—historical accounts interspersed with topical chapters—has lent itself to repetition. The maps (xi, xii, xiii) are barely relevant to the text, particularly as the legends for those of Gaza are deficient. The extensive use of subheadings detracts from the narrative flow and statements of the obvious—'Israel is backed by a powerful ally, the United States' (308)—are simply disrespectful to readers' intelligence. In the account of 1930s Palestinian Islamism, parallels are drawn with current politics that are simply untenable, as is the claim that in 1948, 'Jerusalem, the third most holy site in Islam [fell] into the hands of the Jewish nationalists' (33). The authors note that Hamas is run by a consultative council, yet they shed little light on the council's functions or structure, and it remains a mystery how Khaled Meshaal—in exile since 1967, some 20 years before the movement's founding—became its leader. Overall, the reportage in this book is well balanced, but Hamas members' statements are often taken at face value and, although the authors pull no punches in exposing Hamas violence, one senses an implicit Fanonesque sympathy for its resistance struggle.

These criticisms aside, this volume is commended as a valuable resource for students of the Middle East.

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Christopher Coker, *War in an Age of Risk*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, pp. 188, ISBN 978 0 7456 4288 8.

Sociologists such as Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck have for decades argued that society has become organised by the concept of risk. Giddens reasons that risk manifests from either external (i.e. the impact of natural forces) or manufactured (i.e. involving a high degree of human agency) sources, and that it is the complexity inherent in these latter risks that is most difficult to predict and manage, whilst Beck emphasises that uncertainty over hazards and insecurity is perpetuated to a large extent by modern society itself. This 'risk society' is complex to navigate since uncertainty involving the actions of humans renders it unlikely to ever experience anything close to 'order'.

Pursuing these ideas in his book *War in an Age of Risk*, Christopher Coker contends that Clausewitz's conceptualisation of war is dialectical, in that if war is indeed the 'continuation of politics by other means', it must also *change* politics. As a result, we are told, 'wars ...

have become an instrument of risk management' (10), and thus the risks, rewards and costs involved must continually and relentlessly be categorised, regulated and monitored. That is not to say that we live in more dangerous (or risky) times, but that '[i]n the risk age', according to Coker, 'life is too complex to be reordered, and ... war is too imperfect an instrument to do the reordering' (171).

Coker refers to the end of the cold war as a catalyst in ushering in this new age, and cites the diminished utility of material forces and the rise of other, non-state threats as probable causes. Indeed, for the United States, strategic policies of deterrence and containment are of questionable effectiveness when the flow of capital, money and people is fluid, and non-state threats such as the anti-globalisation movement and al-Qaeda render the protection of US citizens by these traditional strategies difficult. This asymmetry results in states such as the United States endlessly pursuing tactical strategies to reduce risk, whilst their rivals are 'willing to hazard all in battle' (183). But the issue is not just that of evolving military strategies to meet a vast array of debounded risks; the tools of war available to states are ever more limited by pressures such as international norms and public commitment, and by the world news media. And so, when up against an enemy who is not readily identifiable or deterred, 'no one knows how much is enough' (76). As a result, Coker reasons that states are limited not just by their ability to go to war against other states, but also by their capacity to protect their own citizenry—ours is an '*existential state*' (80).

Central to Coker's analysis is George Gaskell's 'duality of risk' paradox, which, used here, would imply that risk predominates not only how wars are conceived, but also *how* they are fought. As such, rapid advances in technology and communication systems are used not only to increase precision, but also to avoid unnecessary risks to human life. As a consequence, combatants are not only responsible for their own safety, but for how the enemy is killed, the safety of civilians, as well as the protection of the natural environment. Altogether, Coker's risk age gives rise to any number of additional ethical dilemmas, which make war a very anxious and nervous enterprise for those who choose to take the risk of conducting it.

Coker's thesis is supported by an empirical engagement with events within the 'arc of extremism'—that mass of land which stretches as far west as the Middle East laterally to the tip of North-East Asia—which some leaders in the West have identified as consisting of a number of destabilising 'wild zones' in need of management (35). He does this by progressing through six chapters: 'The Risk Society at War', 'Complexity and War', 'War in an Age of Risk', 'Consequence Management', 'The Geopolitics of Risk Management' and 'The Risk Age and Its Discontents'. Starting with the first Gulf War—which Coker views as the first conflict of the risk age—he revisits other indecisive conflicts, including the War on Terrorism and Afghanistan, in an effort to reaffirm his thesis that, even in war, risk has now become 'the definitive theme of the age' (viii).

Noticeably favouring the pessimism of Beck over Giddens when examining the implications of a 'risk society', Coker calls upon a diverse cast of commentators on risk—from fields as diverse as sociology, economics, philosophy, strategic studies and pop culture. Thus it is Coker's engagement with literature that illuminates his argument most effectively; for risks are not real but imagined, and are therefore subjectively embedded in culture—that is to say, they are constructed. For instance, Coker takes much from the postmodern novelist Don DeLillo who, according to his *Harper's* essay *In the Ruins of the Future*, contends that for novelists in the post-terrorist age, 'the narrative ends in the rubble and it is left to us to create the counternarrative'. Coker thus evokes DeLillo repeatedly since his oeuvre—both before and after September 11—directly speaks to whether terrorists, like greenies and anti-globalists, are in fact at war not with 'us', but with the risk society itself.

It is fitting, then, that it is another turn to literature that has Coker at his most precise. Recalling the short story by H.G. Wells about an anarchist intent on spreading the bubonic plague, Coker concludes: 'it is not the virus which is the danger, it is human behaviour' (87). This may be so, but the management of 'disorder at levels of insecurity' (151) will surely be replaced by another epoch, at least someday, when a more rational fear of reality supplants the endless and, at times, irrational anxiety of the unknown.

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Charles A. Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, pp. 442, ISBN 978 0 691 14265 4.

Charles Kupchan's latest book, *How Enemies Become Friends*, is an important and timely contribution to the literature on the establishment of stable interstate peace, with significant implications for researchers and foreign policy makers internationally. Challenging the prominent understanding of the trajectory of stable peace, Kupchan argues that political reconciliation precedes and makes possible economic interdependence, not vice versa. Essentially, he posits that diplomacy is more important in building trust between conflicting states than economic and societal integration.

Kupchan's book centres on two questions: How, and under what circumstances, do stable zones of peace form? He defines stable peace as stemming from a 'level of interstate comity that effectively eliminates the prospect of armed conflict' (2), which means that the states involved trust in each other's commitment to the non-violent resolution of disputes. This book does not intend to present a theory of when and why states move from conflict along the continuum to stable peace, but rather offers an account of the process by which they do so, and the conditions that facilitate it. Through his judicious use of case studies, Kupchan gives his analysis a clear grounding in both historical and contemporary examples, and allows for significant nuance in the path to stable peace that he traces.

Kupchan does not challenge the basic assumption that anarchy is a central characteristic of the international state system, but argues that states can escape from a state of anarchic competition by recognising one another as non-threatening and pursuing policies of mutual accommodation—and, in so doing, suspend the security dilemma. He also highlights the possibility of this process happening in reverse, with an initial unilateral act of accommodation or concession leading to ongoing instances of mutual accommodation, which in turn result in states recognising each other as non-threatening, setting them on the path to friendship and, eventually, stable peace.

The book is structured around three types of stable peace identified by the author: rapprochement, security community and union. These can be understood as different stages in the evolution of stable peace, through which the peace becomes increasingly deeply embedded amongst member states due to growing political, social and economic links. He also provides an insightful account of the phases that bring about the onset of stable peace, which begin with unilateral accommodation (essentially confidence-building measures) and lead to reciprocal restraint, societal integration and the generation of new and common narratives.

Underpinning these stages, however, are a number of permissive conditions that must exist within the individual states in question, and form the basis of Kupchan's case-study analysis. These are institutionalised restraint, compatible social orders and cultural commonality. Interestingly, these are shown not to be dependent on regime type and, in this way, Kupchan distances himself from the body of literature that emphasises the importance of common regime type, and particularly democracy, in facilitating the establishment of durable zones of peace. More important than regime type is the practice of strategic restraint, which is shown