

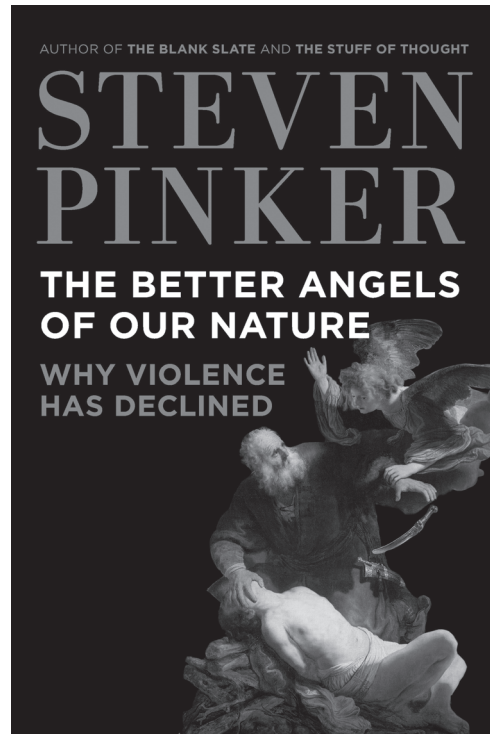
## Brief Reviews

**The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined.** By Steven Pinker. New York: Viking, 2011. 832 pp. \$40. **Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict.** By Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. New York: Columbia Press, 2011. 320 pp. \$29.50.

The world these days hardly seems like a peaceful place. But recent scholarship offers room for optimism.

First, Pinker offers mountains of historical evidence that the world is actually less violent today than ever before and that this trend shows no signs of reversing. With over a hundred graphs and charts, he documents how violence is at its nadir globally in terms of rape, infanticide, genocide, wife-beating, slavery, torture, war, homicide rates, and even animal cruelty. His data show that life in pre-state societies was comparatively Hobbesian—nasty, brutish, and short. For instance, prehistoric graves from hunter-gatherers reveal violent deaths five to ten times that of modern Europe. And from 1300 C.E. to today, the odds of being murdered has plummeted by up to fifty times. Violence of all stripes began to decline markedly during the Enlightenment and has fallen off precipitously since World War II.

Pinker does not sugarcoat the horrors of the twentieth century, especially the ravages of World War II, which killed 55 million people, an unprecedented figure in absolute terms. He notes, however, that this highly lethal event relative to the worldwide population did not break historical records. In relative terms, World War II ranks as only the ninth most deadly event over the past 1,200 years. In eighth-century C.E. China, the An Lushan civil war killed an estimated thirty-six million people, equivalent to 429 million deaths in the mid-twentieth century. The second most lethal event in relative terms was the thirteenth century Mongol conquest of Asia, which killed forty million people, the equivalent of 278 million around the time of Hitler and Stalin. And the third most



lethal was the Middle East slave trade.

Muslim governments summarily execute criminals, treat adultery as a capital offense, and permit female genital mutilation; but, like the rest of the world, violence in Muslim countries is on the decline. Pinker attributes the reduction of international violence to a host of historical factors that expand the circle of empathy beyond family, tribe, nation, or even species; these include the development of agriculture, state structure, international commerce, literacy, and democracy.

Second, Chenoweth and Stephan provide an alternative causal mechanism, demonstrating statistically that nonviolent protest outperforms violent resistance. They compare the political outcomes of over 300 campaigns between 1900 and 2006 in which non-state actors demanded that governments accommodate their demands. All

else being equal, the use of violence in these campaigns lowered the odds of government compliance. If research, particularly by this author, suggests that terrorist violence impedes government concessions, Chenoweth and Stephan broaden the argument by showing how all forms of non-state violence may be politically counterproductive.

If so, then aggrieved groups have a powerful incentive to avoid violent escalation, which may account for its growing scarcity. Indeed, the Arab upheavals are as much a repudiation of al-Qaeda's extreme means as its extreme ends.

Max Abrahms  
Johns Hopkins University

**Bin Laden's Legacy: Why We're Still Losing the War on Terror.** By Daveed Gartenstein-Ross. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2012. 266 pp. \$25.95.

On the demise of Osama bin Laden, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has announced that victory over al-Qaeda is now within reach. But Gartenstein-Ross of the Foundation for the De-

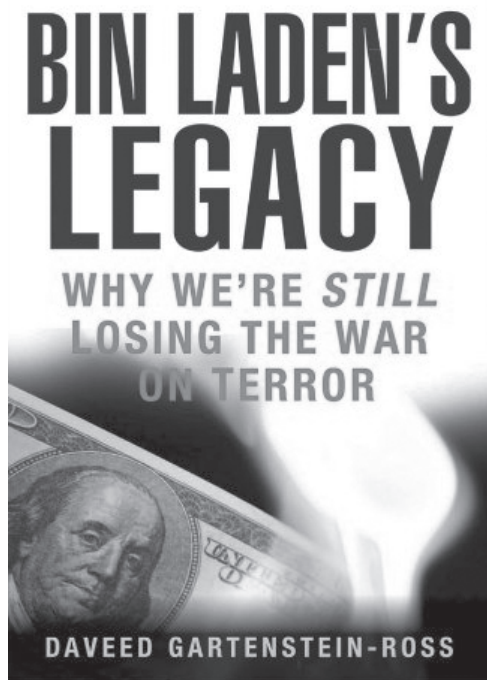
fense of Democracies argues that the U.S. government is in a far weaker position relative to al-Qaeda now than prior to 9/11 due to its failure to grasp al-Qaeda's grand strategy.

One of the foundational beliefs of al-Qaeda is that the cost of prosecuting the Soviet-Afghan war contributed to the collapse of the Soviet economy. Gartenstein-Ross contends that al-Qaeda's current strategy toward the United States is of a piece with that approach: Escalating the conflict with the United States in as many arenas as possible will drive up the costs of defense measures, bleeding the U.S. economy.

Gartenstein-Ross finds that U.S. policymakers have not adapted well to al-Qaeda's strategy. Duplication of efforts and the politicization of the issue have both driven up budgets and soured the citizenry on the task at hand. By broadening the focus on the war on terrorism through the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration diverted critical resources from Afghanistan, allowing the Taliban and al-Qaeda to rebuild their organizations, and simultaneously presented Islamists with a stage from which they could mobilize Muslims around the world for a "defensive" jihad. With U.S. attention focused elsewhere, al-Qaeda expanded its operations into more theaters, including Yemen and the Horn of Africa. Nor have the Arab upheavals of 2011 been a major setback for al-Qaeda; the author argues that the terrorist group is well positioned to take advantage of the turmoil. If the new governments cannot fulfill the rising expectations of the Arab people, then extremist ideologies offering simple solutions could flourish.

In order to defeat al-Qaeda and the jihadist threat, Gartenstein-Ross calls for depoliticizing the war on terror. To be sustainable over the long haul, the expense of national security must be reduced, and to that end, he offers a series of policy recommendations and reforms in intelligence and similar areas. To help Americans survive terrorist attacks, efforts should be made to build community resilience. Finally, he calls for lessening U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

Cogently argued and well-written, Gartenstein-Ross' study will be of great interest to those who want a better understanding of the strategic



dimensions of the global war on terror as well as those seeking solid policy recommendations for U.S. national security.

George Michael  
U.S. Air Force Counterproliferation Center

**The Fertile Soil of Jihad: Terrorism’s Prison Connection.** By Patrick T. Dunleavy. Dulles, Va.: Potomac, 2011. 192 pp. \$27.50.

Islamist terror networks have made recruitment of disenfranchised individuals such as prison inmates a top priority, former New York State corrections official Dunleavy writes in his powerful new book. A 26-year veteran of the New York State Department of Correctional Services, he played a major role in Operation Hades, an investigation into radical Islamic recruiting activities involving New York prisons, a process going on for decades and, in some respects, abetted by government actions.

Dunleavy focuses on the case of Abdel Nasser Zaben, a West Bank native and Hamas member. Zaben illegally entered the United States in 1990, moved to Brooklyn and attended the al-Farouq mosque, home to Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, now serving a life sentence for his role in a 1995 terror plot. Zaben and an Islamist accomplice robbed people at gunpoint until Zaben was arrested in 1993 and sentenced to eighteen years in prison. Throughout his twelve years behind bars—he was paroled in 2005, deported to the West Bank and has subsequently disappeared—he worked tirelessly to recruit his fellow inmates for jihad. Zaben had a huge pool of potential terrorists to work with—some of them already radicalized Muslims.

According to Dunleavy, radical prison networks were already in place, established by ex-convicts like Warith Deen Umar, who served as director of Ministerial Services for the state corrections department, and Cyril Rashid, appointed by Umar as imam at a maximum-security prison in upstate New York. Inmates like Zaben became clerks for prison imams around the state, further cementing the radicalization process. Efforts to do background checks on Islamic clergy were hampered by the fact that the only certifying bodies seem to be run by Umar and like-minded individuals.

Despite the recent campaign of demonization launched against Rep. Peter King for his hearings on domestic radicalization in and outside prisons, *The Fertile Soil of Jihad* makes evident the clear and present danger.

Joel Himelfarb  
Investigative Project on Terrorism



**The Green Movement in Iran.** By Hamid Dabashi. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011. 174 pp. \$34.95.

On June 12, 2009, Iranians went to the polls to choose a president from among a handful of candidates approved by clerics who are not elected but rather appointed. As voters moved to toss out incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the government intervened to award the unpopular president a second term. The blatant fraud proved too much for ordinary Iranians who poured into the streets in a protest that rocked the Islamic Republic to its core. From this outrage was born the so-called “Green Movement,” an amorphous

group with nearly as many goals as leaders.

Dabashi, an Iranian studies and comparative literature professor at Columbia University, purports to analyze the Green Movement in this short book, which, in actuality, is mainly a compilation of op-eds and online essays he wrote as events unfolded.

Readers seeking to understand recent Iranian politics will be disappointed. Dabashi fails to illuminate the makeup of the Green Movement or its goals. Nor does he differentiate between ordinary Iranians who seek a freer Iran and the career politicians who cloak themselves in the movement but remain loyal to a theocratic system.

Rather than seriously analyze events, Dabashi indulges in potshots at authors whose books have received greater critical and public acclaim than his. He calls Azar Nafisi, the best-selling author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, a “charlatan,” and he accuses Stanford University’s Abbas Milani of purveying “Neocon chicanery.”

And if the Islamic Republic, among the world’s worst violators of human rights, is Dabashi’s ostensible topic, Israel is his obsession. He decries Israel as “a racist apartheid state,” and labels Israel’s claim to be the region’s only democracy a “ludicrous joke.” Dabashi’s obsession leads him down curious byways. He accuses Israelis and “American Zionists” of being disappointed by the Green Movement, a simple falsehood. Indeed, while Dabashi was shilling for the Islamic Republic, many of those he vents against sought U.S. policies to empower the Iranian people at the expense of the regime.

Dabashi is not just best known for his embrace of former colleague Edward Said and his own over-the-top condemnations of U.S. policy but he is also a wretched writer, unable to escape the jargon of academic theory to communicate a point. He substitutes polemic for research; his book is more rant than scholarship.

On many levels, then, *The Green Movement in Iran* is a terrible book. If it has any silver lining, it spectacularly illustrates why few outside the academy take Iranian studies professors seriously.

Michael Rubin

**Political Islam, Citizenship, and Minorities: The Future of Arab Christians in the Islamic Middle East.** By Andrea Zaki Stephanous. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2010. 243 pp. \$37.50, paper.

As the Middle East smolders under the threat of an Islamist resurgence, too little has been written about the plight of Arab Christians and other native minorities. Stephanous’s *Political Islam, Citizenship, and Minorities* would be a welcome addition to this meager repertoire—except for its excessive and largely irrelevant theorizing.

Stephanous, a Coptic Evangelical Protestant based in Cairo, sets out by surveying the region’s political trends in the twentieth century, including the Arab Christian contribution to the formulation of Arab nationalism. He focuses mainly on the Copts of Egypt and the Maronites of Lebanon, recognizing clear differences in their respective historical experiences. Unfortunately, he fails to articulate these differences as starkly as necessary where the *dhimmitude* (second-class but protected status) of the Copts contrasts with the relative freedom of the Maronites. Further, he repeats the hackneyed accusation leveled against the Maronites by their 1970s leftist Palestine Liberation Organization and Islamist opponents that they initiated the 1975 Lebanese civil war to protect their political privileges. This narrative is false; Maronites defended the last remaining free Christian community in the Middle East from vicious attack.

Stephanous strains to find answers to how Arab Christians can integrate into a Middle East influenced by political Islam. After wandering through a maze of conceptual abstractions like “advocacy,” “networking,” “civil society organizations,” and “institutionalizations of identity,” he lands on his favorite panacea—“dynamic citizenship”—defined ambiguously as “an inclusive process that reaches beyond equality to justice by relating political rights to economic, social, and cultural realities.” The author seems to be in favor of a deliberate distancing of Arab Christians from the ever-colonial West, in favor of some sort of revival of authentic local affiliations. Somehow, a resurrected secular Arab nationalism coupled with a new understanding of citizenship

will alleviate the multiple perils facing the region's Christians emanating from Salafism, the stifling state, and *dhimmi* marginalization. The recipe is unconvincing, and the presumed end result is incoherent.

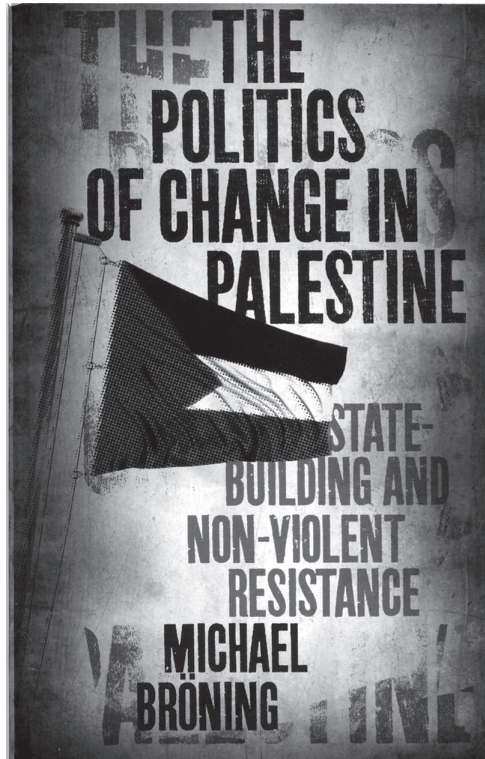
The book does offer interesting details on Islamist groups plus useful tabulated statistics about issues such as infant mortality, life expectancy, arms expenditures, minority populations, and more. The overall treatment, however, misses the many complexities and nuances of a place like Lebanon while inflating optimism regarding the prospects for inclusion for the Copts of Egypt. Sadly, the book represents an essentially *dhimmi*—and therefore highly inadequate—response to the grave dangers besetting Arab Christians.

Habib C. Malik  
Lebanese American University

**The Politics of Change in Palestine: State-Building and Non-Violent Resistance.** By Michael Bröning. New York and London: Pluto Press, 2011. 247 pp. \$30, paper.

Regurgitating the Palestinian meme that Israeli intransigence has made a two-state solution increasingly difficult, Bröning of the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation lays down cover for unilateral efforts by the Palestinians to gain statehood without negotiating final status issues with Israel. Simply stated, his thesis is that Palestinians have experienced a “general shift away from violent struggle to strategies of nonviolent resistance” while simultaneously building institutions that qualify it for statehood.

Bröning erroneously asserts that the violent Hamas faction has undertaken this nonviolent transformation in cooperation with its rival Fatah, stating that we are now witnessing “ Hamas 2.0.” He further claims that “ Hamas leaders have refrained from publicly embracing the charter” of the organization that openly calls for Israel’s annihilation. However, as recently as February 2012, Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas leader based in Gaza, called again for Israel’s destruction. “ The resistance will continue until all the Palestinian land, including al-Quds, is liberated and all the refugees return,” he said.<sup>1</sup>



The author correctly observes that Fatah’s corruption brought about its own political demise but insists that the new party program “ demonstrates a fundamental shift away from decades of armed struggle” toward nonviolent resistance. He claims its terror squad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, was “ disbanded,” despite its May 2011 official proclamation that the death of Osama bin Laden was a “ catastrophe.”<sup>2</sup> More recently, in February 2012, the group fired rockets into Israel from the Gaza Strip.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the group appears to be experiencing a resurgence.

A chapter titled “ PNA State-Building: Putting Palestine on the Map” is informative but fawning. While describing the process by which Palestinian leaders have laid the foundation for their 2011 statehood drive, particularly the activities of Salam Fayyad, Bröning can barely contain his

1 *Al-Manar* website (Lebanon), Feb. 11, 2012.

2 *The Jerusalem Post*, May 3, 2011.

3 Maan News Agency, Feb. 28, 2012.

giddiness. Similarly, in “Beyond Terror: Politicizing Non-Violent Resistance,” the author conveniently ignores the continuing torrent of rockets out of Gaza while all but openly endorsing the boycott, divest and sanctions movement against Israel.

Despite its many flaws, *The Politics of Change in Palestine* offers a glimpse into current Palestinian attempts to achieve statehood by undermining Israel’s right to exist. As importantly, the book provides insight into the minds of European supporters of this effort.

Jonathan Schanzer  
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

**Power and Politics in the Persian Gulf Monarchies.** Edited by Christopher Davidson. London: Hurst and Co., 2012. 203 pp. £17.99, paper.

Recent Middle Eastern upheavals have centered on the Mediterranean littoral, not the Persian Gulf—and with them the bulk of attention. *Power and Politics in the Persian Gulf Monarchies* remedies that deficit with a concise and in-

formative volume about the six countries that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The gulf states share a number of similar tendencies and challenges but operate in different contexts, thereby producing different results. Saudi Arabia—the powerhouse of the group—must necessarily adopt different approaches when accommodating the needs of its nearly thirty million subjects than neighboring Bahrain which hosts a population of under one million.

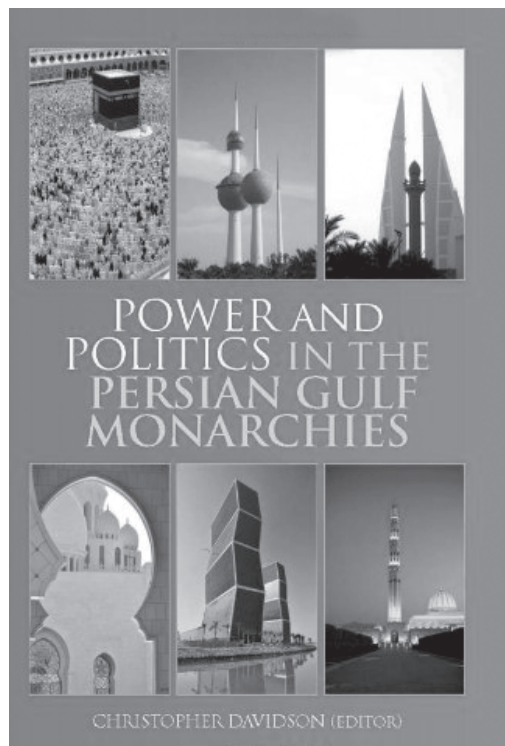
These differences notwithstanding, certain themes recur in all six essays: a reliance on hydrocarbon rents and imported labor and a concentration of power in the hands of hereditary monarchies. The issue of political succession presents uncertainties; though most states have designated heirs, formal systems scarcely exist to determine the procedure by which these successors are decided. While this affords an incumbent ruler flexibility, it also generates its own problems: in Saudi Arabia, none of the candidates are under sixty-five.

None of the states are stagnant, however, and all have repeatedly announced reforms to their systems in recent years. Yet as Jane Kinninmont notes in her essay on Bahrain, even the reformists present their changes as gifts bestowed upon subjects rather than rights earned or due a citizenry.

Bahrain did witness a significant rise in political tensions during 2011. The Sunni monarchy—with the assistance of other GCC states—crushed a nascent mobilization of the Shiite majority population. However, whereas the uprisings around the Mediterranean were characterized by the participation of forces that did not constitute the countries’ traditional opposition currents, the same cannot not be said in Bahrain where the protests were led by the long-standing Shiite opposition.

Qatar is another anomaly: The country’s natural gas stocks are abundant and enable the regime to placate its small domestic population, making it an unlikely candidate for domestic unrest. Yet in light of its adventurous foreign policy, Davidson boldly states that Qatar is the most likely to experience a coup or an invasion.

Unlike the republics now experiencing vola-



tility—where earlier political and social change had been introduced quickly—the GCC states have become increasingly adept at resisting being confronted by instability. This is not to say that they do not face challenges, but that they have a longer time frame to respond to them and to head them off.

Richard Phelps  
Quilliam Foundation, London

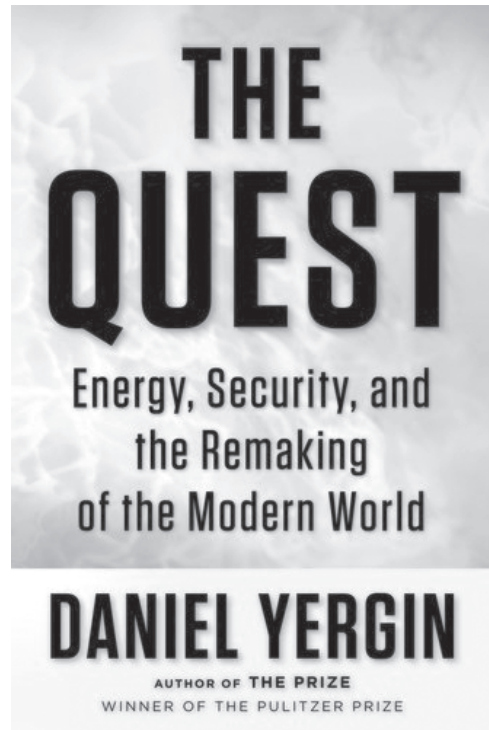
**The Quest: Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World.** By Daniel Yergin. New York: Penguin Press, 2011. 816 pp. \$37.95.

No other public policy issue is so critical yet as nuanced and poorly understood as energy. This makes Yergin’s attempt in *The Quest* to guide nonexpert readers through the energy maze a worthy one.

Yergin examines how global energy demand will be met in an era which, despite the current slowdown, promises unprecedented economic growth. In a hype-free manner, he covers almost every form of energy. He describes the fundamentals of supply and demand, the challenges facing the oil industry and the electric power sector, and the dilemmas they face in light of the changing geopolitical landscape and the growing political pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Yergin’s outlook on energy echoes the mainstream thinking of the petroleum industry. He is not worried the world is running out of oil and has great faith in nonconventional oil and natural gas, particularly the promising but controversial shale gas. His treatment of potential competitors to oil in the transportation fuel market (whether liquid, gaseous, or electric) as well as of renewable sources of electricity ranges between cautious optimism and gentle skepticism.

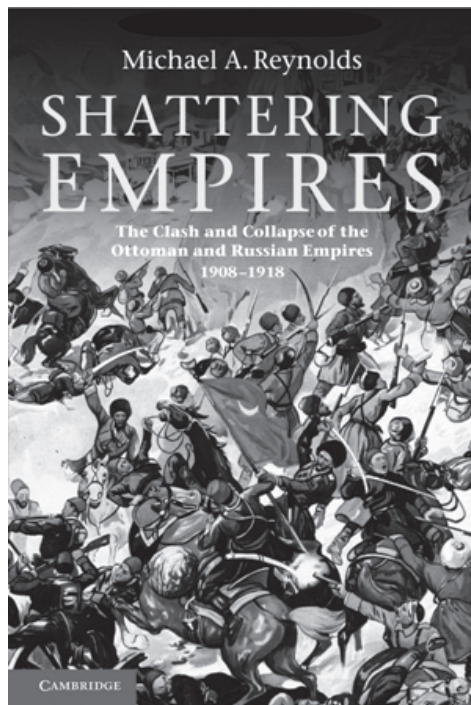
Oil’s status as a strategic commodity derives from its virtual monopoly as fuel for transportation. Policies that either increase oil supply or curb demand will not reduce oil’s strategic importance and are easy for the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to counteract by throttling down their own supply. The fivefold rise in oil prices of the past decade is, according to Yergin, mainly a result of



demand shock emanating from developing Asia. At the same time, OPEC, which controls 79 percent of the world’s conventional oil reserves, has barely increased its production capacity compared to what it produced thirty years ago and is oddly exempted from responsibility by Yergin.

But despite this omission, Yergin’s panoramic book is one of great importance. The global energy landscape is evolving rapidly. Very few could have predicted a few years ago that the state of North Dakota would become America’s fourth largest oil producer, that China would become the world’s largest energy consumer, or that the discovery of vast hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean would turn energy-poor countries like Israel and Cyprus into important players in the world’s natural gas market. All of these unpredictable changes demonstrate the importance of books such as Yergin’s and that the quest for new energy resources will continue to be one of humanity’s prime preoccupations.

Gal Luft  
Institute for the Analysis  
of Global Security



**Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908-1918.** By Michael A. Reynolds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 324 pp. \$90 (\$31.99, paper).

*Shattering Empires* traces the course of foreign relations between the Ottoman and Russian empires from the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 to the end of World War I. Reynolds of Princeton University examines Russia's policies toward eastern Anatolia and highlights the way interstate competition shaped local identities and politics through the introduction of the concept of the national state.

Reynolds aims to show how the confrontation between the Ottoman and Russian states contributed to the collapse of both empires and to the birth of a new kind of politics in the region. He recounts the rivalry between the two empires and their downfall between 1908-18. The book is thematically rather than chronologically arranged; about one-third concerns the prewar years, and the rest is evenly divided between the period of 1914-16 and the remaining war years.

The author argues that "geopolitical compe-

titution and emergence of a new global interstate order provide the key to understanding the course of history in the Ottoman-Russian borderlands in the twentieth century." He illustrates the influence of nationalism on interstate politics in the Middle East and Eurasia and explores the ways in which states create and impose ethno-nationalist categories and identities.

However, the study has one significant problem. Although Reynolds does not categorize the Armenian events of 1915 as genocide, he mentions "the whole destruction of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War" and refers to "the effective eradication of the presence in Anatolia of [Armenians]." In fact, 1,295,000 Armenians lived in the Ottoman empire in 1914; 702,900 of these were subject to relocations in 1915-16, and very large numbers of the displaced persons survived their displacement, according to official documents of the Ottoman court.

Still the book remains highly original and insightful, and the author manifests not only a command of the subject matter but a profound understanding of the Ottoman and Russian positions. His objectivity and balanced judgment in most matters places this book at the top among works on Ottoman-Russian relations during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Yücel Güçlü  
Kavaklıdere/Ankara

**Undercover Muslim: A Journey into Yemen.** By Theo Padnos. London: Bodley Head, 2011. 293 pp. £12.99.

Every year, hundreds of Westerners abandon life in affluent societies in favor of a sojourn in austere piety in Yemen. *Undercover Muslim* examines those who journey to the country in search of a lifestyle deemed as a better way to fulfill Islamic orthodoxy.

Padnos travelled to Yemen to learn Arabic, and after a stint working as a journalist, converted to Islam. He assumed an Arabic name, pursued Qur'anic study, and immersed himself among those who came to do the same. The chronicle of his experiences in *Undercover Muslim* prompts far more questions than it answers. Did he, as the "undercover" in the title suggests, assume this



lifestyle with an exposé in mind from the very start? The author presents his conversion and adopted lifestyle as genuine, yet he repeatedly appears skeptical of the intellectual tunnel-vision he witnesses.

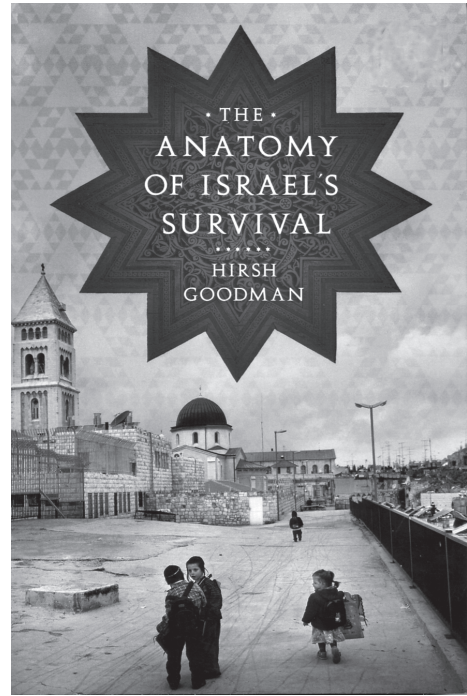
Alternatively, is Padnos himself a drifter, like those about whom he writes? In his telling, travelers to Yemen are as much wastrels as pilgrims. Padnos quotes one: “I’ve had a difficult childhood for sure,” then adds, “He had been thrown out of schools, beaten by his stepfather, and arrested by police.” Many he encounters are fleeing something as much as pursuing something, and the community he lives among is one of suspicion and anonymity. Enquiries into the men’s backgrounds are strictly off limits: “‘Why are you so curious?’ he wondered when I asked about his [French] father’s view of his career. ‘Why aren’t we discussing the unity of God?’” Padnos, too, comes under scrutiny: “The good news is that we don’t think that you’re working for the CIA any more. . . . The bad news is that we’ve been watching you. In fact, everyone has remarked about you, and everyone is wondering what you’re really up to.” The latter point is valid.

*Undercover Muslim* is not a whistle blowing revelation of extremism or militancy. Instead, Padnos quotes one religious student as saying that “it’s just a boring life here” while offering snapshots of a lifestyle distant from the book’s readership. While the work contains some interesting moments of reflection, amusement, and tension, it fails to place the experiences in a framework that examines or illuminates larger issues.

Richard Phelps

**The Unmaking of Israel.** By Gershom Gorenberg. New York: HarperCollins, 2011. 336 pp. \$25.99 (\$14.99, paper). **The Anatomy of Israel’s Survival.** By Hirsh Goodman. New York: Public Affairs, 2011. 288 pp. \$26.99.

These two books offer well-written examples of a deep schism in Israeli thought, especially among its intellectual, academic, and literary elites, who view Israel’s survival as dependent upon a Palestinian state, the “two-state solution,” and diminishing the power and influence of religious Zionism and the Orthodox, or the “ultra-Orthodox” (*haredim*).



The main threat to Israel, these authors believe, is not the Arabs, but Jews, “settlers,” and the “ultra-Orthodox.” This perspective reflects a breakdown of the old secular, cultural social order that defined the State of Israel during its first three decades. Following a fault line that divides Israeli society and perhaps much of recent Jewish history, it is the context for all debate about the future of Israel.

For Israelis, this change began in the wake of two watershed events: the peace treaty with Egypt (1979) and the war against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon (1982)—which grew into the first *intifada* (1987-92)—and the Oslo accords (1993). Under constant attack by Arab terrorists, Israeli consciousness developed a bi-polarism, an inner turmoil that was the product of the need for self-defense and guilt for winning; constantly at war, or under threat of attack, Israelis craved peace, or anything that promised that illusion. Like the authors, many became true believers of the hype about “land for peace.” Although few may remain convinced that such a solution is possible, the struggle over the nature of Israeli society between the secular and

religious is ongoing and contentious.

Highly intelligent and articulate Jews, Israelis, and Zionists, these authors represent a stratum of influential media people and public opinion and discourse shapers who oppose what they call “the occupation,” those Jewish communities built beyond the 1949 armistice lines, and the growing attraction—which translates into social and political power—of religious Jews, especially.

Gorenberg and Goodman share a sense of *über*-morality based on two principles: (1) thou shalt not rule over the other and (2) the primacy of egalitarianism, secularism, and pluralism. Opposing the right of Jews to live in Judea and Samaria and ending “the occupation” assumes a form of sanctity. Goodman proposes total withdrawal “unilaterally with all the lessons of the painful pullout of the Jewish settlements from Gaza learned” or by a peace agreement that would leave Jews “in Palestine as Israeli citizens, voting in Israeli elections but paying their local taxes to the Palestinian Authority, which would in turn guarantee [their] safety and security.” Gorenberg covers much the same ground, advocating unilateral withdrawal, leaving Jews where they are or “evacuating them immediately [from the territories] without waiting for a signature on a peace agreement.” Both seem utterly oblivious of the risks and probable consequences.

Gorenberg’s recurring theme is the radical, post-Zionist vision that “the state is merely a state, a political means of achieving practical results and not a sacred institution,” adding that the “best definition of a Jewish state [is] the place where Jews can argue with the least inhibition, in the most public way, about what it means to be Jews.” Like New York City? The notion that Israel’s identity as a Jewish state is embedded in a unique

historical and spiritual connection with the Land of Israel, the national homeland of the Jewish people, seems to elude him.

Turning to the religious divide, there are certainly deep disagreements in Israel over the role of the ultra-Orthodox in a modern society. But these are by no means the only societal fissures. Both authors neglect even a superficial discussion of the economic system in which a few families control financial and business empires, monopolies, and cartels. Neither do they deal with any of the socioeconomic issues that were the focus of mass demonstrations throughout the country during the summer of 2011.

With an almost exclusive focus on settlements, occupation, and *haredim*, the two authors have created a tunnel vision that demonizes half the population and dumbs-down most of the rest. Denying reality as well as demonstrable failures—the Oslo accords, the Wye agreements, the withdrawal and expulsion of Jews from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria—the authors instead offer facile arguments that have become unrealistic and irrelevant.

Both books make a fundamental error in not understanding the purpose and place of Zionism as the rebuilding of a Jewish homeland and that the State of Israel is the expression of Jewish sovereignty in that homeland. Although both authors are concerned about the future of the Israel, neither deals with the Jewish nature of the state and its central role in shaping the future of the Jewish people and the third Jewish commonwealth.

Moshe Dann  
Jerusalem

