

It would also be well suited to advanced undergraduate and graduate courses in transnational history, as well as courses on the late Ottoman and interwar Middle East period. ✂

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KRISTIAN COATES ULRICHSEN, ED. *The Changing Security Dynamics of the Persian Gulf* (London: Hurst, 2017). Pp. 271. \$34.95 paper. ISBN 9781849048422.

This is a magisterial collection edited by one of the most productive and insightful experts of the international relations of the Gulf. The contributors are among the best historians and political scientists working on the Middle East today and the resulting work is mandatory reading for academics, practitioners, and indeed members of the general public who are interested in gaining a thoughtful, incisive overview of Gulf politics.

In fact, while the title mentions security dynamics, the book provides the reader with much more than that, tackling the history and the international politics of the Gulf in a holistic and comprehensive way. The definition of security itself is, appropriately, a comprehensive one. As the editor puts it: the discipline “has moved far beyond a ‘traditional’ military and state-centric focus” (10). When it comes to the dynamics of Gulf security they are equally neatly summarized by the editor: “One of the greatest changes in Persian Gulf security since 2003 has been the shift from interstate war towards violent conflict within states driven primarily by non-state groups that nevertheless operate in a rigorously transnational sphere” (8). Ulrichsen has done a fine job in assembling a group of authors who can analyze this changed reality on both shores of the Gulf with attention to detail in a breezy and lucid prose.

A seminal introduction, which ought to be required reading for anyone with an interest in the Gulf, is followed by ten chapters by some of the leading experts in Gulf history and politics. The topics range from the excellent chapter on Gulf states’ foreign policy towards North Africa by Toby Matthiesen to the politics of succession in Saudi Arabia by the veteran insider Joseph Kéchichian, one of the few who can tackle such a crucial aspect of Gulf politics in a clear and authoritative manner. The chapter by Marc Valeri on the evolution of the oligarchic pact between ruling families and business elites in Abu Dhabi, Oman, and Bahrain is excellent and indicative of the *lato sensu* approach towards the concept of

security that suffuses the entire volume. Valeri considers whether the growing involvement of ruling family members in business, common to the three Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, will “raise divisions between the royals invested in power politics and those motivated by more entrepreneurial interests” (98). The answer to this question will definitely have an impact on future political dynamics and therefore influence regime security in the three states.

Even more traditional security aspects are examined in an engaging and detailed manner. The rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, one of the main axes in the contemporary international relations of the Middle East is deftly analyzed by Nader Entessar. Dionysis Markakis raises the question of the future role of India in the Gulf and concludes that, while the commercial, cultural, and people-to-people ties are certainly very deep and increasing, India “ultimately remains deferent to the United States’ leadership of the regional security architecture” (111). The same, one could add, is true of China, which has been “the next big thing” in Gulf security for more than a decade now without a strategic role materializing for the simple reason that there is no incentive for China to lend its support clearly to either Saudi Arabia or Iran. In his chapter Nussaibah Younis explains how the common threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) temporarily recalibrated threat perceptions of GCC states but this unity quickly faltered as it became clear that ISIS had been severely downgraded as a potential territorial threat. Gawdat Bahgat cogently tackles the topic of energy security and the effect that the changing global market for energy will have on the security of all Gulf states both domestically and internationally. Finally, the transformation of Emirati foreign policy since 2011 and its more pro-active stance is neatly illustrated by Khalid Almezaini, whereas the effects of demographic changes in the GCC states are carefully illustrated by Alanoud Alsharek with a wealth of data. Alsharek concludes that “the struggle between the continued isolation and the successful assimilation of the national youth population into both the labour markets and political systems is a double blind that the GCC states find themselves facing on a more urgent basis” (186).

While all the chapters are of exceptional quality one could have hoped for one or two contributions on Iranian foreign policy making and security policies. The lack of a chapter devoted specifically to Iran is the only drawback of what is otherwise a superb volume. Overall, this book is required reading for anyone interested in the international relations of the Middle East, not only of the Gulf. It significantly advances the state of the

field and ought to find a place in graduate syllabi and, arguably, in advanced undergraduate classes as well. ✂

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BRIAN GLYN WILLIAMS. *Counter Jihad: America's Military Experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). Pp. 400. \$65.00 cloth. ISBN 9780812248678.

The most powerful effects of non-state terrorist violence are those which such violence prompts from other actors. In particular, state responses to terrorism have far more decisively changed history than have terrorist atrocities themselves. The long and complex consequences of the September 11 terrorist attacks are still far from finally evolved. But one of the many values of Bryan Glyn Williams's *Counter Jihad* is to set out meticulously and honestly the jagged journey from the Al Qaeda assault of 2001 to U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. Many scholars, including Daniel Byman, Fawaz Gerges, and Louise Richardson, have persuasively covered some of this territory in important books already. But, Williams's careful study provides an impressively full case regarding the contingent foreign policy journey that was taken by the world's most powerful state in response to that appalling 2001 attack.

Professor Williams is clear that, whatever scholars themselves might think they know, there remains a frustrating lack of U.S. popular understanding of the roots of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS): "There is no sense of historical awareness or context to the bold beheadings of Americans by ISIS terrorists or to America's new aerial war on this terrorist group in Syria and Iraq known as Operation Inherent Resolve" (xi). Historians have been less present in the post-9/11 effusion of academic work on terrorism than one would prefer, and Williams (a Professor of Islamic History at the University of Massachusetts) offers in this book a valuable antidote to the historical amnesia which has allowed ISIS to be read in much popular and political debate as a group without an explanatory past. His aim "is to shine a retrospective light on the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria in order to 'historicize' the disparate events once collectively known as the War on Terror" (xii).

This is a vitally important goal, and it is admirably pursued here in a readable and compelling study. Williams offers a pre-history of American