

Despite these minor caveats, *America's Dream Palace* is an important contribution to the histories of Middle East studies and of US relations with the region. It is the best existing starting point for scholars interested in the connections between these fields, as well as for the general reader, who will be grateful for frequent appearance of sections that provide contextualizing summaries of US Middle East policy of the era.

CHARLES D. FREILICH, *Israeli National Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Pp. 493. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780190602932

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Charles Freilich's *Israeli National Security* offers a comprehensive study of Israel's security concerns and its responses. In this book, readers will find more than a satisfactory account of Israel's national security policymaking whether they are new to studying Israel or are experts. For the former, Freilich presents a volume of necessary background and contextual information, as well as references to relevant key literature; for the latter, the author successfully blends these with critical discussions about Israeli national security. Freilich's book will also appeal to policy makers and analysts as he directly tackles policy making: processes (or, lack thereof) and recommendations.

Freilich shares his central argument in the introduction: all components of Israel's national security strategy have significantly changed and hence "a revision. . . is called for" (p. 4). These components include Israel's external environment, the nature of the military threats it faces, and Israeli society. The Israeli case matters, Freilich argues, because Israel has successfully adapted to and implemented changes in response to its security environment. The author also reminds readers that "Israel does not have a formal national security strategy" (p. 6). In *Israeli National Security*, readers should note these disclaimers (pp. 10–11): first, Freilich self-identifies as "an ardent lifelong Zionist" and recognizes that this informs his writing. The author also shares that, because of his former roles in Israeli government, this volume went through the author's self-censorship as well as some formal "security review." Lastly, Freilich clarifies that this book is not about the peace process or the settlements issue.

The first chapter begins by establishing readers' familiarity with an understanding of commonly used phrases in Israel's defense matters. Freilich then provides an effective, concise account of changes in Israel's security issues that occurred due to the 1967 war, Israel's peace with Egypt, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the peace process with the Palestinians as well as neighboring Arab states, and the emergence of non-state actors (most notably, Hezbollah and Hamas). For him, significant threats to Israel's national security continue to exist. The author marks that while Israel "is unlikely to face existential [threats] again," the only development that would change this is an adversary's acquisition of nuclear weapons (p. 38). One of the key changes that Freilich observes is that now Israel fights wars "by choice." The author claims that Israel is "fundamentally a status quo actor" (p. 46), and identifies its "desire to avoid land acquisition" as a major deficiency to Israel's security policy (p. 42). Most notably, he loudly criticizes Israel's reliance on the United States in its security matters; it is evident early on and most

clearly in the chapter devoted to this discussion (Chapter 10) that, to Freilich, Israel has little room to maneuver without consulting the United States.

From the point of Israeli national security, Freilich takes on an impressive array of contemporary issues. For instance, he notes that for Israel, “Arab weakness is more of a threat than Arab strength” (p. 55). Then, he argues that whichever way the Syrian conflict may be resolved, it “will likely have adverse consequences” for Israel (p. 52). Lastly, Freilich identifies nuclear terrorism as the “truly nightmare scenario” for Israeli security (p. 79).

Freilich aims for a comprehensive account to include societal factors as relevant to national security doctrine. In Chapter 5, the author covers changes in Israeli society, including weakening in Israeli national security consensus and a domestic demographic crisis in Israel (i.e., the emergence of “the other Israel” in the rising populations of the ultra-orthodox and Israeli-Arabs). Herein, the discussion about “societal willingness to bear defense burden” offers interesting insights into Israeli society’s approach to compulsory military service (p. 128). Ultimately, Freilich predicts that Israel’s “inflexible defense. . . may be put to a greater test in coming years” (p. 189). One success in Israel’s deterrence policy, the author identifies, is its nuclear ambiguity policy. The associated chapter is an exception to the rest of the book in that it is entirely based on publicly available sources (p. 234). Freilich presents this issue, much like the rest of the book, from multiple perspectives.

The author’s discussion of Israel’s foreign policy response is in the context of the country’s national security matters, and as such does not offer a foreign policy analysis emphasis. Those who seek this may read the author’s earlier *Zion’s Dilemmas* (Cornell University Press, 2012). “To understand Israel’s foreign policy is to comprehend a historic mindset,” argues Freilich (p. 258). Then, he adds that the common portrayals of Israeli “national psyche with a fundamental sense of insecurity” have an effect of an “exaggerated reaction to any sign of friendship or estrangement from other” (p. 259). The author illustrates this in Israeli “obsession” with the US and in its “all-out embrace of Turkey in the 1990s” (p. 259). In this chapter, Freilich reiterates the argument that “the defense establishment, especially IDF, remains the most influential bureaucratic player” in Israeli foreign policy (p. 266). This chapter is also most helpful in outlining two key components of Israel’s foreign policy response to national security dilemmas: Israel seeks to develop with its periphery and to exploit Arab divisions.

This work will undoubtedly appear controversial to some readers irrespective of the author’s success in presenting an objective discussion. For instance, his statement, “During the second intifada, all of Israel became part of the terrorist war” (p. 82), may frustrate some. Similarly, the author’s claim that “Israel’s settlement policy in the West Bank is hurting its international standing” may not be a welcome position for others (p. 92). Still, the volume is a welcome addition to scholarship about Israeli security policy. Together with the author’s earlier *Zion’s Dilemmas*, Freilich offers the most comprehensive work on Israel’s foreign and security policymaking. Those studying the broader security dynamics of the Middle East will immensely benefit.