

interpreters of *On War* escape criticism. But for this very reason the book is unlikely to appeal to a broader audience. Few will have the in-depth knowledge of *On War* and the Clausewitz literature required to follow the detailed textual analysis and the various academic debates laid out in *Clausewitz's Puzzle*, a task made far more difficult by the often tortuous reasoning and language. Moreover, Herberg-Rothe makes no effort to draw out the implications of his research beyond claiming that Clausewitz scholars, as a group, have done a poor job understanding him. In the prologue, for example, he notes that there has been a shift away from Clausewitz towards Sun Tzu since the Gulf War (1991) and asserts that this is unwarranted. Yet he gives no reason for his judgment and does nothing to lay out Clausewitz's contribution to our understanding of war in the past two decades. Similarly, although Clausewitz's reflections about the relationship between politics and war can presumably be applied to the current conflict in Iraq, Herberg-Rothe makes no attempt to do so. In other words, all but a small handful of readers will come away from this book with the feeling that they have a lot to learn from Clausewitz without knowing what lessons they should be learning.

—Sebastian Rosato

### POLICY BY REFLEX

Stephen Holmes: *The Matador's Cape: America's Reckless Response to Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. x, 267. \$30.00.)

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Holmes casts Osama bin Laden as the matador and America as the clumsy, enraged bull. According to Holmes, the United States responded in a "prerational" way to September 11, the matador's swirling cape, by embarking on the ill-conceived and disastrous invasion of Iraq. This error was the result of a cognitive bias—a psychological tendency of an injured person (or government or state) to retaliate against an identifiable person (or government or state) not responsible for the injury, using the most convenient tools at hand, when the actual source of injury is diffuse, complex, and not susceptible to easy remedies.

The book contains many provocative and interesting arguments, and its energy and flair carry the reader along, but, cobbled together from book reviews and disparate essays, it lacks focus. Part 1 argues that "religious extremism" did not cause September 11 but that the perpetrators had complex motives and purposes. Part 2 argues that the Bush administration has overly relied on military force because "capabilities create intentions" (73), and America's greatest capability is its military reach. The occupation

failed in part because of Rumsfeld's preference for speed over mass and in part because Cheney and Rumsfeld did not think that anarchy in Iraq would harm American interests. America invaded Iraq in the first place for numerous reasons, many of them inconsistent—including the desire to solace traumatized American voters, to increase the power of the executive branch, to avenge the attempted assassination of George H.W. Bush, to destroy a threat to Israel, to protect access to oil, and so on (126).

Part 3 contains a sparkling review of Samuel Huntington's book on the clash of civilizations; reviews the debates between liberals about the merits of humanitarian military intervention; and criticizes the argument that the United States should advance democracy by force in places like Iraq. Part 4 argues that the Bush administration's violation of civil liberties is not as serious as its obsession with secrecy; that the Bush administration's unilateralism or opportunistic multilateralism is not as serious as its excessive reliance on the military; that although "in some rare cases, harsh interrogation may actually be necessary" (257), the Bush administration has been excessively dismissive toward the "rule of law." This section also asserts that John Yoo is wrong to argue that the president has the power to go to war without congressional authorization. The conclusion reverts to a recurrent theme, namely, that the Bush people (Cheney and Rumsfeld above all others) went to war in Iraq because a tangible enemy, a nation-state, is easier, psychologically and politically, to address than an intangible enemy. Furthermore, capabilities (the military) drive intentions. The U.S. government should have focused on nuclear nonproliferation, so as to deprive terrorists of the most destructive of all weapons.

It gradually becomes clear to the reader who is led by the subtitle to expect an overall evaluation of the American war-on-terror strategy that Holmes really has only one target in mind: the war in Iraq. He barely mentions the military response to Afghanistan but appears to approve of it. He barely mentions, or mentions not at all, the criminal prosecutions of terrorists; electronic interception; money-tracing; intelligence-sharing with foreign governments; and the U.S. government's diplomatic efforts to coordinate the response to international terrorism. Holmes does repeat the familiar complaint that the Bush administration has violated the "rule of law," but he understands that all "rule of law" constraints involve tradeoffs, and he ends up going easy on the Bush administration for many civil liberties violations. Because he does not describe the policies or their consequences in any detail, their costs or their justifications, the reader has no reason to accept either the criticisms or Holmes's claim that Bush has been no worse than his wartime predecessors. Holmes thinks that the Bush administration has acted with excessive secrecy, but he does not provide an empirical account to back up this complaint. Surely he understands that publicity has costs as well as benefits, and so he cannot fall back on an analytic or universalistic claim that secrecy is always bad. An especially strange omission in Holmes's account is Congress. He blames Iraq on the administration's penchant for

secrecy and its belief in virtually unlimited executive power during emergencies. But the Iraq invasion was debated publicly for months; the administration laid out its case, badly but publicly; and, crucially, it received enthusiastic congressional authorization. Thus, the chapter criticizing John Yoo's idiosyncratic argument that the framers gave the executive the power to start a war without congressional consent is off the point. The administration did not rely on this argument, and did not need to, because Congress gave it what it wanted. Indeed, Holmes never mentions the Patriot Act and its renewal, the Detainee Treatment Act, the Military Commissions Act, the post September 11 Authorization to Use Force, and the bureaucratic reorganization that produced the Department of Homeland Security.

The most distinctive claim of the book is that the invasion of Iraq was a "prerational" response to September 11, that it reflected a "cognitive bias" that causes people with hammers to treat all problems as nails. The hammer here is military force. However, Holmes admits that there were many causes for the Iraq invasion, even that September was just a pretext for an invasion sought for other reasons, in which case the invasion could not possibly have been a response to September 11, let alone a response driven by a cognitive bias. If the hammer-nail bias really interfered with decision making, then how was the Bush administration able to put so much effort into domestic and international law enforcement? Curiously, the cognitive-bias theory absolves the Bush people of much of their culpability. If they were gripped by prerational biases, then their response was not fully within their conscious control. Presumably, the never mentioned members of Congress shared the same biases, as did the public, and the invasion's many supporters among the pundits. All of this suggests skepticism about Holmes's claim that a President Gore would have avoided Bush's errors. He, too, would have been armed with the hammer of American military might and would have been looking for nails. It might be true that outrage about September 11 made Americans more willing to lash out at imagined enemies — this claim does have resonance and may explain the administration's efforts to link September 11 and Iraq—but this seems more like a constraint on elected officials than a basis for condemning them, a problem for Gore even if an opportunity for Bush. Probably more important, the cheap, astounding victory (as it then seemed) in Afghanistan, the graveyard of empires, gave the Bush administration a sense of military invincibility that threw it off course.

The tone of the book is of continuous indignation, even rage, at the Bush administration, but Holmes is too intellectually honest to state as fact conjectures that he cannot prove; these concededly speculative conjectures plus his final judgment that the Bush officials were gripped by a prerational bias hardly justify the overheated rhetoric. His obsessive focus on Cheney, Rumsfeld, and (to a lesser degree) Bush illustrates well his claim that there is a psychological tendency to blame identifiable persons for complex

problems, and to ignore the intangibles—such as how a vast, creaking bureaucracy, electoral politics, and the fog of international relations, might prevent well-meaning officials from taking optimal actions. Holmes is raging at human fallibility.

–Eric A. Posner

### A DISPASSIONATE INSIDE ACCOUNT

Ali A. Allawi: *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007. Pp. xxiv, 518. \$28.00.)

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For too much of its history, Iraq has been an unwilling host to the whims and ambitions of foreign forces, the brutalities of sectarian loyalties and murderous self-promotion. With some notable exceptions, the recent literature on the conflict there has tended to be equally self-serving, frequently reflecting the poorly informed pronouncements from afar. Into this field comes Allawi's recent book.

Ali A. Allawi is particularly well qualified to write about the continuing experiment that is the invasion and occupation of Iraq. A prominent Shi'a whose father was a minister of health, his cousin is Ayad Allawi and his uncle Ahmad Chalabi, he returned to the post-Saddam Iraq where he served as minister of defence and minister of finance. The success of *The Occupation of Iraq* lies in Allawi's ability to combine the rare insight of an insider in the world of recent Iraqi politics with as close to a dispassionate analysis as is possible.

Spanning almost 500 pages and covering a multitude of topics, any summary of this work must omit more than it includes. The following are three areas I felt merited honorable mentions. It is to the immense credit of this work that others may have chosen quite differently.

The first topic is the ideological underpinnings of the invasion. The reasons for the invasion of Iraq remain elusive—not helped by the altering claims of its advocates and architects. Allawi focuses on its ideological underpinnings, particularly the arguments of Bernard Lewis and Leo Strauss that intertwined to inform an influential range of people that, in the post-September 11 world, the foreign policy of the United States should have the alteration of the politics of Iraq at its core. He is, of course, not the first to point to the importance of such thinkers on the decision makers and their advisors in the White House, although he notes their appeal beyond the much cited neoconservatives. What he adds to the analysis are two scholars whose views, if afforded the prominence due to them, might have avoided the catastrophic consequences of the invasion.