MICHAEL MACDONALD, *Overreach: Delusions of Regime Change in Iraq* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014). Pp. 336. $29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780674729100.

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MacDonald's *Overreach* provides a comprehensive explanation of not only the failures of regime change in Iraq, but also of the marred logic that ultimately drove the United States to attempt such a goal in 2003. In arguing that US foreign policy conflated strategic interests with American idealism, MacDonald offers an original thesis explaining why the United States invaded Iraq and how Bush achieved a broad base of domestic support that enabled regime change. MacDonald thus attempts to bridge a theoretical divide within International Relations between realists' emphases on geopolitical and material incentives and the liberal impulse to keep any violator of rule of law in check. More importantly, *Overreach* illuminates a pervasive flaw in US foreign policy in Iraq that, if applied to other cases, would likely have similarly disastrous outcomes.

MacDonald begins by exposing the shortcomings of common explanations for the failures of the Iraq War. While President George W. Bush's incompetency, Republican Party hawkishness, and oil interests are not negligible, none provides a complete answer as to why there was so much support within both parties for this decision. The increasingly common trend of attributing the debacle in Iraq to poor policy planning and military strategy assumes that a better orchestrated occupation and greater numbers of troops would have brought success. Yet this overlooks the crucial question as to why the United States chose to invade Iraq in the first place. If the United States had truly been driven by humanitarian ideals, it would have prioritized aid and military assistance in the Congo, where 5.4 million people have died from war and starvation in its ongoing conflict. By merging its geopolitical interests in the Arab world with ideals of liberalism and capitalism, the United States chose to invade what it saw as the last major bastion of Arab nationalism.

MacDonald first explains the initial neoconservative push for regime change in Iraq: the all-encompassing, Straussian overhaul of every element of Iraqi life. Led by Paul Wolfowitz, neoconservatives argued that Saddam Hussein's regime embodied everything wrong with the world since the end of the Cold War, namely Arab nationalism, Marxism, and Islam. They were thus aligned in theory and practice with cultural essentialists, who saw religion and culture as the underlying problem. However, liberal complicity also aided this endeavor. Within the group of liberal hawks, MacDonald includes various figures affiliated with the Democratic Party, such as Hillary Clinton, Madeleine Albright, Richard Holbrooke, and academics such as Ann Marie Slaughter. Their Kantian logic held that any bad apple in the bunch will spoil it for all, and therefore one illiberal regime violating international norms represented an existential threat. MacDonald also portrays them as colluding with neoconservatives in hailing the superiority of free market capitalism alongside democracy, and of hailing history on their side.

Stripped of their ideological façade, however, these varied constituencies and advocates of war shared one novel trait in common. As MacDonald argues, they merged geopolitical interests in the Middle East with American ideals of democracy and capitalism. While neoconservatives saw invasion as necessary to maintain American military supremacy and economic hegemony in the region, liberals emphasized the preservation of international order as well as the universality of Western liberalism and free markets. The logical conclusion of both was chilling: Saddam Hussein's regime needed to be completely destroyed. There was no other option.

Implicit to MacDonald's argument is the significance of specific regime type to possibilities of regime change. He shows how patrimonialism characterized Saddam Hussein's rule and this is why regime change in Iraq required a complete dismantling of all institutions. Neoconservatives were correct in the sense that regime change would inevitably involve, as Tom Friedman put it, "smashing the vase and molding a new one from scratch" (p. 123). However, US policymakers deeply misunderstood the reality of state and society within such a personalistic autocracy. If regime power was as pervasive throughout Iraq as neoconservative accounts argue, then (re)building institutions and inserting democracy would be far from the inevitable success neoconservatives and liberal hawks alike assumed.

Though most of his analysis shines, MacDonald does not answer a broader theoretical question that many readers might invoke. Does externally imposed regime change lead to similarly catastrophic situations across all types of authoritarian regimes, or did the personalistic nature of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in its last stages present peculiar problems for nation-building? As MacDonald notes with his brief comparison of Iraq to Libya, Muammar el Qaddafi's regime likewise concentrated power in a patrimonial leader. The outcome of regime change in both of these cases have been similar in their absence of cohesive institutions and a lack of state monopoly of violence, culminating in competition among rival militias to fill this security void. MacDonald might have strengthened his argument further by clarifying that Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan are not exceptions to developing states in their lack of fully functional and independent institutions. They may be extreme cases, but externally imposed forceful democratization is itself troublesome, regardless of the nature of the regime. MacDonald could have expressed this part of his argument more clearly, or noted that weak and illegitimate institutions are very common in the developing world.

This uncertainty is troubling. By implicitly suggesting that Saddam Hussein's regime was exceptionally problematic, MacDonald risks undermining his own theory. Nonetheless, this book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Iraq War. MacDonald's exploration of Iraqi history, identity, and political structure, mirrored by his methodical look within the policy establishment of Washington, provides a nuanced picture of an invasion and occupation gone awry. This makes it valuable not only for Iraqi specialists, but also for anyone interested in US foreign policy and nation building.

YAEL ARONOFF, *The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Minsters: When Hardliners Opt for Peace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Pp. 248. $80.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781107669802.

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This book surveys and analyzes how the political psychology of six of the seven most recent Israeli Prime Ministers made them more or less likely to opt for peace. Each leader's approach is measured across five dimensions: ideology, time horizon, cognitive flexibility, risk propensity, and emotional intelligence. The book provides a wonderful portrait of the psychological and ideological make-up of each of the prime ministers and an excellent mapping of the development in their attitudes and policies. It is written in a very clear and structured manner and it is based on an extremely impressive array of sources in English and Hebrew, including a large number of interviews with key people. There are many biographies of these leaders and several academic works that seek to elucidate