

The Sword Is Not Enough: Arabs, Israelis, and the Limits of Military Force. Jeremy Pressman (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2020). Pp. 290. £25.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781526146175

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Several days after footage emerged of Israeli police storming the al-Aqsa mosque, scattering Palestinian worshippers with stun grenades and tear gas, *The Sword Is Not Enough*, Jeremy Pressman's critique of force as the predominant approach in the Arab-Israeli conflict, arrived in my mailbox. Hamas, in response to events in East Jerusalem, issued Israel an ultimatum to remove its forces from the mosque compound and the threatened Palestinian neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. When Israel ignored the demand, rockets began to barrage Israeli towns, ultimately claiming at least 12 lives inside Israel and a number of casualties in the Gaza Strip from misfires. The subsequent Israeli air assault on Gaza killed approximately 260 Palestinians, including 66 children, injured over 1,900, reduced high-rises to heaps of rubble, and rendered thousands homeless.

Pressman is deeply concerned with such egregious episodes of violence; his argument in *The Sword Is Not Enough* is powerful in its simplicity. First, for Israel, Arab states, and Palestinian nationalist organizations, he contends that one idea—namely, that military force is the best way to achieve one's goals—has prevailed over others. This belief has been hard to dislodge, despite, Pressman claims, its limited track record of success. Second, Pressman argues, force may achieve certain goals, but it is not sufficient to lead to a peace agreement nor does it facilitate warm relations in the future. Finally, the reliance on force can be counterproductive. Pressman holds that it often generates greater insecurity for the actors pursuing force, and, further, it can cause those actors to miss opportunities that may otherwise advance a peaceful settlement.

The book skillfully draws on scholarly research, statements made by Israeli, Palestinian, and other Arab leaders, news reports, and additional primary and secondary sources. Written in a clear and accessible style, *The Sword Is Not Enough* is a smooth read for those well-versed in the political history of the region, and it is also appropriate for students with basic, but limited, background knowledge of the conflict. Case studies—including Israel's 1955 Gaza raid, the failed Israel-Syria talks of the 1990s and 2000s, the Arab Peace Initiative, and many more—balance historical detail with a parsimonious narrative style, thus appealing to a broad readership.

The primary unit of analysis for this text is the state or, in the case of the Palestinians, non-state national organizations. This follows in the tradition of a preponderance of literature in international relations, but, because his is ultimately a theory about ideas and beliefs, Pressman dedicates substantial attention to the role of individual policymakers. Importantly, this is not a book about mass movements, nor does it directly seek to explain the beliefs of the Israeli, Arab, or Palestinian publics at large.

For policymakers, what would an alternative set of beliefs look like? Here, Pressman describes the school of thought that most clearly opposes the force-driven approach as “the idea that negotiations and concessions will lead to the achievement of core national objectives” (10). States and non-state actors have sometimes behaved consistently with one set of beliefs, and sometimes the other. At other times, they might have simultaneously relied on both force and diplomacy. Pressman acknowledges these categories are not always mutually exclusive.

Pressman does not claim that force is always counterproductive; sometimes, it may merely be insufficient. For example, the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt seemingly brought a decisive end to belligerent conflict between the two countries. Here, Pressman argues that the preceding wars in 1967 and 1973 “created the conditions under which both Egypt and Israel were ready to negotiate” (71), but the postwar environment was not enough to convince the parties to sign a deal. “After 1973, peace was possible not guaranteed,” he notes. Instead, U.S. mediation, first by Henry Kissinger and later by the Carter administration, and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's 1977 visit to Jerusalem, Pressman argues, were

requisite pieces of the puzzle. However, “Israel’s military superiority could not make Egypt trade with Israel. It could not make Egyptians visit Israel. It could not compel a change in attitudes or automatically generate a hunger for cultural or economic exchange,” (95). Pressman concludes, therefore, that a past history of armed conflict was insufficient to secure a “warm peace.” However, the elite-driven deals between Israel and Arab countries—now including not just Egypt and Jordan, but also the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Morocco—also appear to demonstrate that formal, negotiated settlements do not automatically produce warm relations, either. This may be particularly so when mediators, such as the United States, tacitly encourage the parties to engage in militarized violence at home and elsewhere in the region. Military aid, whether in the form of subsidizing occupation or billions of dollars of F-35 sales, is often a by-product of such deals. State strategies of negotiations, on one hand, and violence, on the other, may have a more intimate relationship than Pressman acknowledges.

When applying the argument to Palestinian tactics, Pressman is careful to acknowledge that non-state actors face different, and disproportionately more difficult, conditions. While many Palestinians credited armed resistance during the Second Intifada with pushing Israel to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza, Pressman argues that the medium- to long-term effects of the uprising were not beneficial to Palestinians. However, here the reader is confronted with the troubling question of whether the beliefs and subsequent strategies used by Palestinians have really mattered at all, as Israel’s gradual, forceful annexation of the West Bank has proceeded unabated and Gaza continues to be controlled and sealed off from the world. In recent research, Devorah Manekin and Tamar Mitts find that, for marginalized or minority ethnic groups, the adoption of non-violent versus violent strategies does not influence the probability of movement success.¹ The theory’s mechanisms are tested using survey experiments—a considerably different context than those faced by Middle East policymakers—but the logic may resonate with those who have observed Palestinian leadership try nearly every strategy, including diplomacy, to advance their national aims. If the sword is not enough and neither are negotiations, where does that leave the Palestinian nationalist movement and its leaders?

Pressman begins by assuming that actors have “the standard array of ends and national interests such as the desire for security, for maintaining independence, for ensuring state survival, and for protecting the integrity of their borders and territory” (2). However, in the last chapter, Pressman grapples with what it would mean to relax this assumption, particularly with regard to the more immediate objectives of Israel’s leadership. What if political leaders themselves do not prioritize national interests, but instead their own political survival? For many years, it has appeared that the violent institutions of occupation have largely worked for Israel, its leaders, and its public. The caveats, Pressman notes, have been continual challenges to Israel’s international legitimacy and standing in the community of states and, intermittently, waves of Palestinian resistance that have threatened Israeli interests and lives.

Over the years, however, neither violent attacks nor diplomatic negotiations have appeared to alter the Israeli commitment to military rule over Palestinians. Approaches such as the international boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement could provide a third way, although the effects on Israel are still uncertain. The movement could achieve its goals of unilateral concessions by Israel, or, as Pressman suggests in the concluding chapter, it could more firmly entrench Israel’s militarized posture. In his discussion of how dominant ideas change, Pressman includes factors such as unexpected events that suddenly and dramatically reorder power and opportunities. The end of the Cold War did this, he argues, for both Syria and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, when the Soviet Union ceased militarily subsidizing them. Individual leaders, Pressman describes, can also be decisive. In a briefly cited example of the U.S. role in Israeli-Egyptian diplomacy in the mid-1970s, he notes that U.S. President Gerald Ford pursued a “reassessment of Israeli-US ties” (74), which, in effect, took the form of a temporary freeze on arms agreements. Pressman explains that this pressured Israeli Prime Minister Rabin back into serious diplomatic negotiations, as he was, quoting scholar William Quandt, “anxious to end the painful and costly confrontation with the United States” (74). These examples raise some questions. When military blockades, home demolitions, arbitrary arrest, rocket and artillery fire, suicide bombings, and precision-guided bombs seem to have run their course—and when political elites sitting down

¹Devorah Manekin and Tamar Mitts, “Effective for Whom? Ethnic Identity and Nonviolent Resistance,” *American Political Science Review* (2021): 1–20.

together at foreign retreats seems to spell failure—could non-violent boycott and principled divestment work? When neither the sword nor negotiations are enough, might the purse be?

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Palestine Is Throwing a Party and the Whole World Is Invited: Capital and State Building in the West Bank. Kareem Rabie (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021). Pp. 275. \$99.95 cloth, \$26.95 paper. ISBN: 9781478011958

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The term *fascinating* can sometimes feel overused in academic circles and in descriptions of new research. But, in the case of Kareem Rabie's *Palestine Is Throwing a Party and the Whole World Is Invited*, there really is no better way to describe this thought-provoking study. Rabie indeed provides a fascinating and crucial look at the private development—*Rawabi* (a planned city built for Palestinians in the West Bank)—to demonstrate the direction Palestinian state-building is taking, how Palestine is being integrated into the global economy, and the impacts of these trends on Palestinian politics and resistance. *Rawabi* is a microcosm and a precedent, one manifestation of the ways in which Palestine is a state-building project within a neoliberal framework, and how a number of vested interests are using the economy as a means for political stabilization. Rabie relies on an ethnographic study, with insights from *Rawabi* the corporation, the Palestinian Authority and its officials, and the villagers impacted by this development.

The takeaways for Rabie's study, however, go beyond the Palestine case. As Rabie notes, this book speaks to "general relationships between states, aid, and national economics" (11). Palestine is not so different, the author argues, from other neoliberal states where governments have abdicated responsibility for social services, and ceded ground to private interests, often at the expense of public accountability. Expulsion, he contends, is "central to formation of global capitalism" (14), and "private-public partnerships might be contemporary language for the same kinds of political economic relations at the heart of colonialism, settler colonialism, and enclosure" (31). In my view, this is an essential claim that merits greater discussion. Scholars who build on this work have opportunities for comparative analysis in very interesting directions to explore the lines of differentiation between neoliberal state erosion more generally as a global trend and where colonialism, with its inherent logic of replacement, exists. There are echoes of similar lived experiences and processes across both contexts, but how they differ is also an important question.

As a political scientist reading this, I was struck by the parallels to a number of topic areas within my own discipline, including work on authoritarian practices, state capacity, and institutional formalization. Rabie's attempt to push back on research that looks at Palestine only through the lens of occupation, ignoring the "complexity, geographies, time horizon, or actors complicit in Israeli control over Palestine," (201) reminded me of the literature on authoritarian practices and the concept of "transregional authoritarian logistics space" (TALS). This literature would be very useful in conceptualizing and naming the processes Rabie describes, including how national politics is both international and local; how other actors aside from the "state" impact land, sovereignty, and resistance, such as corporations and nongovernmental organizations; how *Rawabi*'s management as well as the Palestinian Authority (PA) engage in obfuscation of information and disempowerment of neighboring villages to sabotage accountability to the Palestinian public; and more. Reading Rabie within this framework would also help correct the narrative, to some degree, on the issue of the Palestinian public. Rabie writes that "powerful publics do not tend to exist within Palestine," when, in fact, mobilizing capacity and ability