

other hand, there is a possibility of individuals with multiple political identities. At the end, the analyses in the book are normative approaches to American democracy using data to assess democracy within this framework. Hence, in terms of validity, questions can be raised positively and negatively about whether the book situates democracy from the right vantage point.

Ultimately, *Democracy for Realists* is an interesting and knowledgeable book about American democracy, suitable for anyone with an

interest in American political preferences, democracy, identity politics, “folk theory,” the democratic gap, and political behaviors. It is an encouraging book with empirical evidence and analyses of how American democracy functions in poor condition in our century, countering its depiction in other places around the world as one of the best and most experienced exemplars of democracy. *Democracy for Realists* is valuable to read to see the contradictions in democratic states and stimulate new ideas to build more suitable democracy for everyone.

Understanding the Department of State

By Don Philpott

Lanham: Bernan Press, 2015, 336 pages, \$42,00, ISBN: 9781598887457

Reviewed by Büşra Zeynep Özdemir, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

At the very beginning of the book, *Understanding the Department of State*, it is clearly stated that Don Philpott, the former editor of *International Homeland Security Journal* aims “to gather the information from as many sources as possible” to make his readers understand the Department of State (DoS), one of the most significant agencies of the United States (p. ix). In his book, Philpott compiles and assembles information obtained from federal, state and local websites, as well as national and international agencies and organizations. It is significant to indicate that it is an unusual book, as it does not cover the author’s comments or interpretations on U.S. foreign policy, and it solely gives the information as it is. In this respect, it can be said that the book has an encyclopedic character.



Understanding the Department of State includes three main parts and ten chapters. In Part I, “Structure and Role,” the mission statement of the Department is provided as an introduction to the agency. The organization of the DoS, and its entire scope of responsibility, from the fight against terrorism to regional stability, weapons of mass destruction to visas, are clearly defined in the same part.

Part II, “Major External Issues,” covers some specific issues that play a decisive role in U.S. foreign policy. The chapter on terrorism is the longest, and focuses mainly on the U.S. fight against terrorist organizations whose threats have reached a global scale, i.e. the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The main emphasis is on ISIS, “the greatest terrorist threat

the world has probably ever known” (p. 75), how it was created and some of its bloodiest attacks. Accordingly, al-Qaeda can be considered as the ancestor of ISIS; the Iraq War resulted in the transformation of al-Qaeda and the creation of ISIS, a more dangerous terrorist organization than its predecessor. As a result, the U.S. fight against ISIS is far different from the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. For this reason, ISIS is now different from any other terrorist organization, and fighting against it was one of the most prioritized issues of the Obama Administration (pp. 75-91, 325).

Russia is presented as the other significant threat to the world order in Part II. Accordingly, “Vladimir Putin is proving a problem for the United States” and for the world as well; his aggressive and expansionist policies, mainly his dream to widen the Russian Federation to the former Soviet Union borders, and lastly the Russian annexation of Crimea threaten world peace and order (p. 93). Philpott argues that Putin even pressures his own citizens while asserting “the ethnic Russians most at risk are those who live in Russia and who oppose the authoritarian Putin regime” (p. 100). He quotes President Obama, who referred to Putin’s aggression and Russian annexation by stating, “the best way to advance America’s interests in reducing global threats and seizing global opportunities is to design and implement global solutions” (p. 325).

Chinese military and economic muscle in the Far East is one of the threats that make “the world a more dangerous place than it was” as stated in the same part (p. 73). Similarly to Russia, China also pursues aggressive policies towards its neighbors, since “it has laid claims to numerous contested territories and islands, alarming its neighbors in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and Malaysia” (p. 105). In light of these developments, Philpott asserts that it

is difficult for the United States to maintain a positive and harmonious relationship with China.

However, as Part III discusses, Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter had pursued a softer policy towards the Soviet Union and China during their terms. Henry Kissinger, one of the most influential figures in the history of U.S. foreign policy, assisted and sometimes directed these presidents’ foreign policies as the Secretary of State. Thanks to him, the U.S. at these times implemented the “dawn of détente” towards its relations with Soviet Russia and China. The Soviet Union is referred to as one of the two superpowers, and these presidents found cooperation significant for the maintenance of peace (pp. 314, 316). In this regard, the book is significant since it provides information on both the past and the present, allowing its readers to make comparisons and to evaluate the main changes in U.S. foreign policy.

The remaining parts of the book present the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S.’ efforts to establish democratic regimes and a stable economy there, the North Korean governments’ inappropriate actions to their citizens, Iran’s attitudes supporting terrorist organizations in the region and the country’s uncontrolled nuclear activities.

The third and the last main part of the book gives a brief account of the secretaries of State from Thomas Jefferson to John Kerry, and provides information on the events that had influence on the U.S. as a whole and its foreign policy as well, such as the Declaration of Independence, the French Revolution, the World Wars, the Eisenhower Doctrine, the fall of the Soviet Union and more. Interestingly, the book was published in 2015, one year before the most recent presidential elec-

tions; Hilary Clinton, the Democratic candidate in 2016 who may run again in 2020 is described in detail in the section on Secretaries of State. Philpott depicts her quite positively and she is presented as a successful statesman. This might serve the intention to offer her as a good choice for the next presidency.

Consequently, *Understanding the Department of State* is worth reading since it provides proper, all-in-order and extensive information on the most long-lasting superpower's foreign policy. It is a must-read for students who take lectures on the DoS and others who are interested in U.S. foreign policy.

U.S. Assistance, Development, and Hierarchy in the Middle East: Aid for Allies

By Anne Mariel Zimmerman

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 273 pages, \$129.00 ISBN: 9781349949991

Reviewed by Alperen Açıkol, İstanbul Şehir University

The effectiveness of foreign aid is heavily debated in international relations. Most often, critiques emphasize that aid driven by the geopolitical agenda of the donor country only strengthens the grip of the incumbent over the state. Anne Mariel Zimmerman does not contest this view; on the contrary, her work's main theme revolves around the question, "what has U.S. assistance "bought" in the Middle East?" (p. 2). Zimmerman focuses on the principal-agent relationship between donors and recipients and points out how recipient states have the ability to use geopolitical aid based on their survival strategy. Zimmerman's main argument is that the effectiveness of foreign aid is directly related to the incumbent's survival strategy, that this strategy is largely shaped by the domestic politics of the recipient state, and that the historical background of the recipient country provides essential information about the historical structures of its domestic politics. Zimmerman identifies three survival strategies for incumbents: non-distributive, dis-



tributive and hybrid. In the cases of non-distributive strategy, recipient states use the aid money for developing state capacity. In cases of distributive strategy, incumbents use the aid money to provide benefits to their power base, and often make concessions on their sovereignty. States that adopt a hybrid strategy

combine the non-distributive and distributive strategy: on the one hand the incumbent provides subsidies and other benefits to its power base; on the other, it develops a small cadre of professional institutions that implement limited reforms. In both cases, donor states establish parallel institutions to provide public goods to the recipient states' populations.

Zimmerman provides essential information about Israel, Jordan and Egypt and their relationship with the United States by incorporating historical background to her analysis and by emphasizing the complexity of the relationship between these states and the United States. Zimmerman argues that the incumbents' survival strategy directly shapes