a simple summary the various chapters are not possible. As an alternative, Mandaville presents a discussion on three domains; Islamist politics, religious knowledge and Muslim identity followed by a critical discussion on the term "post-Islamism" and how it has been conceptualized. In the end he concludes by reiterating his idea that the challenge for us all, scholars and students, is to move beyond Islamism and widen the boundaries of what is to be characterized as Muslim politics. If, paraphrasing Mandaville we erase the supposed boundaries of "religion" and "politics", and move beyond today's understandings of the state, we will understand the complex impact of globalization and the various forces in Muslim politics in a more comprehensive manner.

In my opinion one of the many strong assets of this book is that in a very eloquent manner not only combines scholarship in political science and Islamology, but it melts them together into a truly cross-disciplinary undertaking. The pedagogical ambition to combine in depth studies of Islamist movements with shorter and supplementary textboxes containing other complementary examples makes the book very useful as a course book. At the same time, the book is of interest to scholars with an interest in contemporary Islam, not only because of the empirical studies, but also in terms of the theoretical perspective that is the foundation of the book. In short, Mandaville's thinking on how to approach Muslim politics is challenging and rests on an understanding that it is crucial to analyze it in regard to local, regional and world issues. Hence, this is an understanding of "Islam" as a social phenomenon in which Muslim politics is produced in interplay with the society at large. This way of analyzing Muslim politics makes *Global Political Islam* one of the best scholarly books on Islamism and Muslim politics on the market today.

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US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: From Crises to Change

By *Yakub Halabi*
Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009, 159 pp., ISBN 9780754675242.

Scholars of diplomatic history and politics have long debated the question of how U.S. foreign policy is formulated. In *US foreign Policy in the Middle East: From Crises to Change*, Yakub Halabi argues that after major crises that have threatened U.S. interests new ideas emerge that bring about changes in foreign policy. According to Halabi, "A major crisis stimulates change in thinking; power makes change possible; and ideas make change feasible" (p.133). Taking a post-positivist position, Halabi asserts that ideas shape reality more than self-interest or "other observable variables" (p.17) and sets about to prove his thesis using a historic overview of major crises in the Middle East from 1945 to the contemporary era. The study is based entirely on published material, mostly secondary sources.

Halabi begins the narrative by emphasizing that the U.S. has had to "grapple with the fundamental problem of how to create a stable post-crisis order that would both serve its own interests and uproot the sources of the crisis" (p.1). The overview demonstrates that the policy of promoting stability in the region through support of friendly regimes -often authoritarian and corrupt – while seeking to prevent further crises has frequently failed. Halabi divides the overview of U.S. policy into three main timeframes: 1945-73; 1974-79; and 2001 to the contemporary era.

Chapter 3 focuses on policy from 1945-73 with mention of U.S. policies regarding oil, Israel and secular nationalist leaders. In the discussion of the 1956 crisis, one of the major flashpoints of the period, Halabi fails to mention John Foster Dulles' calculated shift in policy that led to the withdrawal of U.S. financial aid for the Aswan dam in a manner that was calculated to embarrass Nasser and possibly bring about his overthrow. In this instance a major shift in policy occurred prior to the crisis, not the reverse. It was the change in U.S. policy that led to Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal that in turn precipitated the 1956 war. Halabi characterizes Israel during this crucial period as a "new actor" but the Lavon Affair, described earlier by Halabi, indicates that Israel was major factor prior to the 1956 crisis. In the aftermath of the 1967 war, which is only discussed briefly, Halabi asserts, perhaps correctly, that Israel never intended to return the Occupied Territories (p. 51). However his arguments in this regard, and in many other instances throughout the book, would be much stronger were they based on primary materials from archives, presidential libraries, and government documents.

The 1973 oil embargo and its impacts are discussed at length in Chapter 4. Halabi provides useful charts on the financial aspects of the petroleum industry and production levels and is on strong ground in noting the various push-pull factors regarding policy formation during this period. Halabi correctly assesses the Arab Israeli conflict as central to U.S. policy but in the discussion of the conflict during the 1970s he fails to stress the determination of U.S. policy makers, especially Henry Kissinger, to control a step-by-step process that would preclude an international conference over which the U.S. might not have sole control. During this period the U.S. was also determined to take an incremental approach to a solution rather than seeking an overall settlement to the conflict. Halabi erroneously states that a full Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was signed at Camp David in 1978 (p. 77). In fact, the treaty was only signed in 1979 after Carter, ignoring the advice given by most of his key advisers, exerted considerable personal pressure on Egypt and especially Israel.

Chapter 5 details with U.S. policy toward Iran from 1979 to 2001 with an emphasis on how the revolution contributed to the growing influence of neo-orientalism and what Halabi defines as "neo conservativism" in the formation of U.S foreign policy. During this timeframe policy makers in the U.S. sought to promote both capitalism and democracy which they believed would lead to better wealth allocation that, in turn, would lead to more stability. In reality these policies were major factors in the further destabilization of the region and the increased power of dictatorial regimes. One might also argue that in many instances, as in Egypt, capitalism and the controlled limited democracy of the Mubarak regime actually widened the gap between the wealthy and powerful and the poor, disenfranchised which in turn advanced the popularity of various Islamist movements.

Chapter 6 describes the war on terror and subsequent U.S. decisions regarding policies in the region. Although Congress and media pundits were scathing in their criticism of Saudi Arabia after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Halabi over emphasizes the extent of the Bush administration's pressure on Saudi Arabia to reform its political and social structures.

In the concluding chapters, Halabi stresses that the U.S. has paid a high price both for its support of authoritarian, corrupt regimes (p.102) and the double standard regarding Israel. He also describes in some detail the geopolitical repercussions of the project to democratize Iraq, noting rather blandly that U.S. efforts have been impeded by "clumsiness and sluggishness" (p.123). Others have more accurately attributed the failures of U.S. policies in Iraq to hubris, ineptitude at the highest levels of government and a willful disregard for objective realities on part of key policy makers.

Halabi concludes that Iraq was not the best choice for a "pilot model for secular democracy" (p.131), but he then makes the rather surprising recommendation that Lebanon could be the best option for the U.S. democratization project. Given the inherent instability of the Lebanese confessional system and its absolute weakness vis-a-vis its Syrian and Israeli neighbors, Lebanon might be one of the least likely candidates for further U.S. involvement. Ironically, had the U.S. really wanted to push for democracy in the region a long term policy to foster civil society in the Occupied Territories might have been one of the more fruitful places in which to begin. However the window of opportunity for such policies has unfortunately long since passed. Halabi does however agree with the Iraq Study Group report that the Arab Israeli conflict needs to be resolved (p. 132).

Halabi's study is a provocative short summary of U.S. foreign policy over the past fifty plus years; however, his thesis regarding the importance of ideas in determining changes in foreign policy after crises would be more persuasive had primary government documents and material from policy makers been utilized to demonstrate that new ideas actually emerged following specific crises and then that they were actually implemented by the U.S. government.

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