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Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli

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Those who are interested in the key issues that affect one of our more important allies in the Middle East should read this book.

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Quandt, William B. *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution and the Univ. of California, 1993. 612pp. \$38.95

"Lessons of history are invariably drawn, but involve highly subjective judgments. Still, they serve as powerful guidelines in intrabureaucratic discussion." In these few words, William Quandt reveals his mind-set toward the problems of scholarship and government. He does not develop magic formulae with magnificent inferential leaps, nor does he leave the reader puzzled about what his judgments are on important processes, events, and ideas. Quandt strikes me as a practical scholar of the first order, who has produced a significant contribution to our diplomatic history in the Middle East.

Born the son of a teacher two weeks before Pearl Harbor, Quandt went on to graduate from Stanford University and earned his doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was a staff member in the National Security Council during the October War, worked as a researcher for RAND, was a member of the political science faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, and has been a Fellow at

Brookings in Washington, D.C., for a decade and a half. His published works focus on the Middle East and serve as the foundation for *Peace Process*. One of his principal works, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1977*, is among the most definitive on the period surrounding the October War of 1973.

This book is chronologically arranged and concludes with some general guidelines, including positive recommendations and cautions of pitfalls for policy makers grappling with complex problems for the first time.

Quandt makes it clear that the frequent turnover in Washington practically guarantees that American policy makers are far less experienced and educated on the issues than those in the Middle East. He cautions that it is unlikely that the U.S. will protect its interests in the Middle East very well, because of the president's lack of continuing interest and enthusiasm. The president must understand that it is important to pay close attention to the problems in the region itself, while remembering that no long-term U.S. overseas policy can succeed without domestic support—with the consequence that he must also attend to domestic affairs. Also, he must appreciate that problems of both substance and process are significant. Grand designs of substance have seldom been fulfilled in every respect, and coping with problems of process is important and less likely to generate domestic opposition. But the ideas of substance are also essential. While it is true that various parochial interests and political rivalries can skew American choices in

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undesirable directions, Quandt asserts that American presidents have more power to overcome these than some of them would have believed. Most presidents have understood that fulfilling U.S. interest in maintaining the flow of oil while simultaneously assuring the survival of the state of Israel is only possible in the context of Arab-Israeli peace. It requires the continuing participation of the United States in the peace process, for the record shows that one cannot expect additional progress if those in the region are left to their own devices.

Quandt concludes on a positive note. He argues that President Clinton has better prospects for a successful policy than have many of his predecessors. Frequently in the past, the presidential paradigm placed the Middle East policy in the larger context of the bipolar superpower rivalry—much to the detriment of the peace process. The end of the Cold War and the consequent concentration on a regional concept is therefore to the good. Too, America's energy policy has improved since the October War, and Arabs and Israelis grow increasingly weary of the violence. So, perhaps there will be continued progress toward a permanent solution.

The attraction of this work is that it speaks with authority not subject to question, yielding a fairly detailed look at the Arab-Israeli problem. However, it may be more detailed than is practical for the *Naval War College Review's* audience, whose reading list is eternally too long. The book is concentrated at the grand strategy level, and there is little with direct application for the military or campaign strategy maker. It

would be most useful to the officer with a special interest in the Middle East or engaged in writing a thesis or dissertation on a related subject. *Peace Process* is a single-volume synthesis that is an excellent starting point, complete with appendices and a short bibliography. It is perhaps the most impressive survey available on American policy in the Middle East.

DAVID R. METS

author of

Land-Based Airpower in Third World Crises
School of Advanced Airpower Studies

Palmer, Michael A. *The War That Never Was*. Arlington, Va.: Vandamere, 1994. 358pp. \$19.95

Have you ever wondered what would have occurred if the United States and Soviet Union had stood toe-to-toe, battling it out to the end? For decades, thousands of analysts made their careers grappling with this question in both Washington and Moscow. Michael Palmer brings one such conception of a global war to life, with an unusual twist—his work explicitly deals with the war that never was.

The book opens with an intriguing premise (and one that could come true). At the end of the 1990s a Russian Navy captain studying at the U.S. Naval War College undertakes a comparative analysis of Soviet and American war planning circa 1989 in collaboration with a U.S. Navy student. It leads to a massive "Global" (the annual high-level war game at the College), involving many of the world's military and political leaders. The Russian, who is not subjected to