

1984

The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict

Augustus R. Norton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Norton, Augustus R. (1984) "The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 37 : No. 1 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol37/iss1/15>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

Unlike most authors, active politicians and military leaders, Leiken does not emphasize Soviet military might and nuclear weapons inventory. Rather, he concentrates almost exclusively on Soviet diplomatic, economic and commercial "offenses" starting with the USSR's opening venture—to win the hearts and minds and nations in the Third World—in Angola in 1975. He reviews the tremendous growth of Soviet trade with Latin America from \$68 million in 1960 to over \$900 million in 1977.

His discussion and viewpoint of Soviet-Cuban relations provides a refreshing analysis of this sometimes rocky friendship. He reminds readers, or enlightens them to the fact that Andropov's and Castro's brands of communism are not a homogeneous ideological mix. Soviet participation in Cuba's total import/export market is now 70 percent, up from 48 percent in 1975, plus Cuba's total reliance on Soviet military aid almost guarantees active Cuban support for Soviet adventures and interests in Latin America.

Leiken recognizes the widely differing cultural, ethnic, social, political and economic history of Central American, Caribbean and the littoral states in northern South America. While he does not discuss all of the nations and islands in the region, he succinctly relates the enormous strategic role the region commands in both the Atlantic-Pacific and north-south trade routes.

The strongest point of the work is

the author's relatively unbiased but detailed examination of the USSR and Cuban actions in Central and South America with his major emphasis on the three most potentially explosive nations—Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua—especially since the beginning of the Sandinista revolution. The growing presence and influence of the Soviet Union in the United States' backyard is thoroughly covered.

Leiken's treatise has been meticulously researched and profusely footnoted. Lack of an index somewhat diminishes the book's value as a research tool, however, the relative brevity of the book and a detailed table of contents offsets this one weakness.

As stated in the book's foreword by former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, William D. Rogers, "Leiken has contributed importantly to the general understanding of Central American events and Soviet designs. And his timing could hardly have been better."

JAMES G. HEYDENREICH
East Lyme, Conn.

Rubin, Barry. *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1981. 298pp. \$22, paper \$10.95

Barry Rubin, whose earlier book treating US policy in Iran (*Paved with Good Intentions*) may be familiar to many readers, has now turned his attention to the struggle for Palestine. Using archival, as well as standard historical sources Rubin

presents a well-researched and intelligently written account of the Arab states' handling of the issue of Palestine from the end of the nineteenth century through the war of 1948. Rubin also treats the unsuccessful attempts of Jordan's King Abdullah to reach a rapprochement with the nascent state of Israel, attempts which abruptly ended when Abdullah was assassinated in 1951.

In an important sense, the struggle for Palestine was not a struggle against the Jewish settlers of the Yishuv, but was a struggle between and within the Arab states. Rubin clearly establishes that Arab decision-making regarding Palestine was fundamentally skewed on two levels. Within the Arab states, the emotive appeal of the issue of the fate of a mandatory Palestine was so keen, that even those Arab politicians inclined to compromise were forced to adopt tough positions. At the level of state-to-state relations, Arab leaders were so suspicious (with some cause) of the intentions of other Arab states, that they often adopted intransigent positions in order to prevent Palestine from falling under the control of their rivals.

The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict is a story of missed opportunities, flawed policy coordination and—as the results of the 1948 war indicate—an overly optimistic evaluation of Arab military capability and competence by the Arab states. Only on 17 April 1948, were the Arabs ready to accept a compromise solution taking account of Zionist aspirations and capabilities. But, by that

time the opportunity was past and events continued on the “slippery road to war.”

AUGUSTUS R. NORTON
Major, US Army
US Military Academy

Headrick, Daniel R. *The Tools of Empire. Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1981. 221pp. \$17.95

The great theories of modern imperialism are well known. Putative political and economic motives, the search for capital investment, national grandeur or outposts of defense, the ideology of national competition and social Darwinism, anxiety that the world was closing, local interests and the political weaknesses of indigenous population—all these “causes” are much debated. Far too little attention is paid to the question of how technology shaped the development of empire. With this study Headrick puts its role at the center of the stage. It is a fine introduction to the subject; a reliable, informative interpretation and his lucidity makes his book a pleasure to read.

The history of imperialism is the history of warfare, and Headrick confirms the truth of Belloc's lines that, “Whatever happens we have got the Maxim gun, and they have not.” In an astonishing opening chapter Headrick shows how, in the early years of nineteenth century expansion, the East India Company, collaborating with pioneers of British industrialization—against the