

The Academy of Political Science

475 Riverside Drive · Suite 1274 · New York, New York 10115-1274
(212) 870-2500 · FAX: (212) 870-2202 · aps@psqonline.org · <http://www.psqonline.org>

POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

Volume 122 · Number 3 · Fall 2007

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Political Science Quarterly
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Book Reviews

The One Percent Doctrine: Deep Inside America's Pursuit of Its Enemies Since 9/11 by Ron Suskind. New York, Simon & Schuster, 2006. 284 pp. \$27.00.

This book, an examination of U.S. intelligence activities after the September 11 terrorist attacks, is rather difficult to review for a scholarly journal. Ron Suskind, a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal* during the 1990s, seems to aim his writings at the general public as well as policymakers, not at the scholarly community. The style of this book is not that of a monograph. There are no footnotes; although the author refers to “nine thousand internal documents from the Treasury Department” (p. 353) in his possession, he does not specify which statements or quotes in the book are based on those documents. The publisher’s blurb in the inside jacket calls this “a riveting work of narrative nonfiction.” As befitting such a description, the text is quite lively, with very short sentences and paragraphs throughout the volume, which is liberally sprinkled with direct quotes that are not footnoted.

It is thus virtually impossible to assess the contributions of the book to the scholarly literature. For instance, early in the book, the author refers to “a global village of Islamic terrorists” (p. 12), or “new transnationalists” (p. 35) against whom the United States was devising “a global strategy” (p. 15) for waging a “war on terror,” a term that was becoming part of “the global vernacular” (p. 19). Two years into this war, the author notes, “the global community was thinking constantly, almost obsessively, about the dictates of U.S. power” (p. 264). In view of the fact that there is already voluminous scholarly literature on globalization, “the global,” “transnationalism,” and the like, it might have been expected that the book would place itself in the context of this literature. If it had done that, its contribution to the ongoing scholarly debate on globalization would have been clearer.

The book may, nevertheless, be of interest to readers of this journal as a primary source. It presents one contemporary observer’s attempt at making sense of U.S. decision making in the ongoing war on terror. Curious about intelligence operations and concerned over their domestic reach, Suskind interviewed a large number of officials, including those at the Central Intelligence Agency, read a voluminous amount of material, and pieced together a plausible story of what boils down to President George W. Bush’s anti-terrorist

strategy, or lack thereof. The author portrays Bush as being devoid of any sense of “policy process” (p. 225), and far more interested in results (such as the capturing of terrorist suspects) than in process. The defining of strategy and operative details were left to Vice President Dick Cheney, “the global thinker of the pair” (p. 213), who devised the “one percent doctrine” of the book’s title, namely that a decision to go after a suspect need not be based on anything more substantial than 1 percent certainty.

The overall impression the book conveys, then, is that of a nation under centralized authority taking on global terrorists and pursuing “postmodern rules of international behavior” (p. 214). This is a rather frightening picture of the world’s super-power presiding over a global village of terrorists. The book is almost entirely about U.S. decision making, not about terrorists, and the effect it produces on the reader is one of irrelevance, the irrelevance of U.S. power at the disposal of a leadership pursuing a 1 percent doctrine to wage a war on terrorism that is getting nowhere. Terrorists continue to thrive. But, at the same time, one could argue, so does the global community, which has not been decimated, either by the terrorists or by the U.S. “postmodern” unilateralists. To ponder reasons why would be a worthy undertaking for scholars and non-specialists alike. And one of the book’s virtues is to encourage us to ask that question.

AKIRA IRIYE
Harvard University

China and Iran: Ancient Partners in a Post-Imperial World by John W. Garver. *Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2006. 401 pp. Cloth, \$50.00; paper, \$24.95.*

It was a strange sight when Mao Zedong’s premier, Zhou Enlai, hosted a state visit by Empress Farah of Iran’s right-wing Pahlavi dynasty in 1972, and bizarre again when the Islamic Republic’s theocratic ruler Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini welcomed Chinese premier Li Peng in 1991. John Garver draws a bright thread between these visits and other events as well, making sense of one of the most complex, puzzling, and important diplomatic relationships in recent history.

Despite drastic changes of ideology on both sides, the leaders of Iran and China have pursued strategic benefits in their ties for 35 years. Iran has a large population, major resources, and a strategic location, but its ambition to be the dominant power in its region has been frustrated by its neighbors’ enmity and the competing objectives of more-distant great powers—at different times, Britain, Russia, and the United States. China is the only big power for whom Iranian dominance in the Persian Gulf would be a good thing. Similarly, few powerful states look with pleasure on China’s rise to great-power status, certainly not Japan, India, or the United States, and Russia’s tolerance for China’s