

# The Academy of Political Science

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for war, against the low mimetic attempt to deflate the threat and restore normal politics.

Smith expertly reconstructs these “genre wars,” demonstrating how the theoretical apparatus he brings to bear can provide new insights into familiar historical debates. He skillfully conveys the shifts in the characterization of Nasser during the Suez crisis, and the struggles in 1990–91 over how to characterize the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait—with the apocalyptic doing battle with the low mimetic, and the Discourse of Liberty bestowed on such unlikely referents as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The descriptive analysis has its limits. Smith confines his attention to op-eds published in prestigious newspapers, taken as a proxy for national public discourse. Perhaps this was the case in 1956, but it is far less tenable today. Television and new media forms do not simply replicate the discourse of the elite press; they often engage a wider set of arguments and evidence, and construct very different narratives than those to be found in *The New York Times* (whose coverage itself became a political issue in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq). Attempting to explain Operation Iraqi Freedom without mention of FOX News seems a tragic enterprise indeed.

For all the brilliance of his descriptive analysis, Smith is less successful in explaining when and why one genre is likely to triumph. Apocalyptic narratives may explain why a large portion of the American people supported war with Iraq in 2003, but not why the George W. Bush administration sought the war in the first place. No explicit theory links these narratives with an actual position toward the war. At best, Smith shows how public narratives constitute one permissive condition allowing politicians to move toward war.

Smith succeeds at presenting new insights into the dynamics of public debate about war, if not at his avowed ambition of presenting a causal theory of war. Regrettably, he ignores decades of constructivist international relations theory that could have helped fill in the missing causal pieces. Without those foundations, casting questions of war and peace as literary genre wars offers a useful thought experiment, but not a coherent alternative theory of the causes of war.

MARC LYNCH  
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**Strategies of Dominance: The Misdirection of U.S. Foreign Policy** by P. Edward Haley. Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 304 pp. Cloth, \$55.00; paper, \$22.95.

This useful book marshals extensive secondary materials on U.S. foreign policy from George H.W. Bush through George W. Bush to support the view that there is considerable overlap among the assumptions underlying the foreign policies of these three administrations—assumptions that go to make up what P. Edward Haley calls “the post-Cold War paradigm” (*passim*). The

presentation is revealing, but somewhat unsystematic, because it is not informed by a theoretical perspective that would guide categorization of the key elements in each president's foreign policy.

The analysis of what Haley, in the subtitle of the book, terms "the misdirection of U.S. foreign policy" is interesting, because most studies of the period have tended to focus on the differences between the foreign policies of the administration of Bill Clinton and that of Bush II—the more so as the imbroglio in Iraq and the continuing emphasis on "the war on terror" have shaped even experts' views of the two administrations.

The book asserts that American decision makers adopted a new foreign policy paradigm starting in 1990, combining "assumptions drawn from the past, such as American exceptionalism, democratization, economic sanctions, and coercive diplomacy, and others that came out of the unexpected end of the Cold War, such as American primacy, bandwagoning, and globalization" (p. 2). It argues that the three presidents "agreed about fundamental assumptions and disagreed over means rather than ends" (p. 3).

Haley recognizes that there are significant differences. Clinton was more of a "liberal institutionalist," the term often applied to his emphasis, largely shared with his predecessor George H.W. Bush, on multilateralism and reliance on international institutions, while the current Bush administration has, until recently, emphasized its disdain for the United Nations and its preference for "going it alone" in hopes that others would "bandwagon," or follow along, either because they had no viable alternative or because they came to see the wisdom of the Bush policies.

Progress in developing systematic ways of describing and explaining foreign policies depends on efforts to conceptualize the key elements of the worldviews underlying and informing those policies. Some scholars have made efforts to do just that for political worldviews more generally. The pioneer in this effort was, of course, Nathan Leites, who developed his concept of the "operational code" and applied it in his studies of the Soviet Politburo and French politics. (Haley uses this term early in the book, but without attribution or systematic application.) Subsequent efforts employing either that concept or others, such as cognitive maps, have been made, but none has yet captured the imagination of enough researchers to constitute a standard way.

Nonetheless, had Haley employed one of the existing conceptual schemes, or even developed his own, the similarities and differences among the three administrations' foreign policies that he helpfully teases out and expresses in a series of guidelines could be even clearer, and our understanding of foreign policy more generally could have been advanced further. Nonetheless, this is a valuable and interesting book as it stands.

Haley concludes that unless the United States recognizes the weaknesses of the post-Cold War paradigm and seeks new ideas as the basis for foreign policy—an eventuality he expects to require a sustained national debate—it will

continue to flounder in the world. In his concluding chapter, he offers his own general suggestions of ways in which that discussion might go. His suggestions will be welcomed by those unhappy with current American foreign policy, though they are not particularly novel or penetrating. The comparative account of the three administrations' foreign policies, by contrast, is a real contribution to our perspective on the past fifteen years.

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**Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War** by Robert M. Cassidy. Westport, CT, Praeger Publishers, 2006. 224 pp. \$49.95.

In a very timely, interesting, and thought-provoking book, Robert Cassidy argues for re-conceptualizing what was first called the “global war on terrorism,” then the “global struggle against violent extremism,” and currently, the “long war.” He argues that the prolonged struggle against al Qaeda and its affiliates should be seen as a global counterinsurgency, which requires an appropriate strategy, integrating national and international resources and agencies. Conceptualizing the “long war” as a global counterinsurgency requires also rethinking military culture, doctrine, and interagency coordination, and Cassidy’s book does just that. The author analyzes well the challenges great powers have faced in the so-called small wars (pp. 21–35). Especially after the Vietnam War, the U.S. military became very resistant to getting involved in such wars, and it continued to organize and train for large-scale conventional warfare, even when its Cold War enemy, the Soviet Union, was collapsing and the so-called operations other than war (OOTW) were demanding increasing attention. The American military’s cultural preference for “big” wars has marginalized counterinsurgency and stability operations and has led to “inability to develop strategy and doctrine” for counterinsurgency (p. 118).

Cassidy maintains that in order to be able to prosecute a successful counterinsurgency campaign, the U.S. military needs to undergo a cultural change and embrace counterinsurgency as a core competency for the long term (p. 19). The 2001 war in Afghanistan and the 2003 war in Iraq spurred the military to take some significant steps toward overcoming its cultural bias against OOTW. While currently all national security and military strategy documents mention explicitly the need to improve U.S. capacity for irregular warfare, Cassidy correctly argues that much more still remains to be done (pp. 32–35).

In addition to the U.S. case, the book also includes two chapters that focus on the military cultures of Russia and Britain—how military culture has affected the capacity of these countries to conduct counterinsurgency operations, and the lessons from their experience. These chapters are interesting and useful, and would be understood even by readers who are not very