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While the title of the book suggests that media coverage of Clinton is the main focus, this is not the case. Rather, this is a smoothly-written general account, laced with quotes from journalists and pundits, that targets the largely self-inflicted political troubles plaguing the Clinton presidency. Hayden records the boyish charm and political deftness with which Clinton extricated himself again and again from near-fatal political disasters. He also notes the president's good fortune of often benefiting from inept opponents. In the latter category, the 1996 election was a cakewalk, because Clinton faced a lackluster Republican opponent and because he was blessed with a robust economy, thanks largely to forces beyond his control. Newt Gingrich, the Republican Senate leader, who rode into power propelled by Clinton gaffes, in the end self-destructed thanks to Clintonesque flaws like political arrogance and politically damaging moves.

In most of these instances, the press, which Clinton feared and detested and often tried to manipulate, played a relatively minor role. This became especially clear during the 1996 election and during the Lewinsky scandal and subsequent impeachment procedures. A major reason for press impotence was Clinton's success in personalizing his relationship with the public and in persuading majorities to accept his framing of political events. Images based on strongly-felt personal reactions to a politician invariably override contrary images featured in news reports. Still, when Clinton and his publics pass on, the warmth of human relations will dissipate and the final verdict about the Clinton presidency will be rendered in the cold light of dispassionate scholarship. If that light focuses on Hayden's text, it will show a presidency marked by superb style and acrobatic political flexibility but short on principled actions and sorely lacking in lasting substantive political achievements.

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**Al-Jazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East** by Mohammed el-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar. Boulder, CO, Westview, 2002. 228 pp. \$24.00.

For decades, the Arab world was forced to rely on national presses that were often monitored or controlled by authoritarian regimes or Western media, BBC, CNN, etc. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of Arab newspapers and satellite television stations. None has been more successful nor more controversial than al Jazeera. As Americans post-September 11 struggled with the questions, "Why do they hate us?" and "Why is anti-Americanism so widespread?" few realized that a powerful source of al Jazeera's success was its graphic coverage of the second intifada or Palestinian uprising. Arabs and Muslims across the world could have their morning cup of coffee or evening dinner and see live reports from Israel-Palestine or other parts of the Muslim world, often conveying a news coverage absent in the American media.

Americans discovered al Jazeera during the invasion of the Taliban's Afghanistan, as it provided live coverage to the world. In the ensuing days and weeks American officials like Candoleeza Rice, head of the National Security Council, and Ambassador Christopher Ross, a longtime Middle East hand fluent in Arabic, went before al Jazeera's cameras in an attempt to explain American policy to the Arab and Muslim world. In *Al-Jazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East*, Mohammed el-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar attempt to explain the Arab world's most independent and most controversial media.

The Qatar-based satellite station is a testimony to the globalization of communications and the ability of an outlet located in a small Gulf state to attract a global audience and enjoy a global impact. The authors' analysis of the origins, influential forces, and voices of al Jazeera and the nature of its programming goes a long way toward effectively addressing the question of whether it broadcasts independent journalism or is a platform for extremists. They emphasize the diversity of its founders and staff as well as the financial support and surprising independence the station has enjoyed from their patron, the emir of Qatar. The signs of al Jazeera's most important diversity and independence come from its programming, which has included interviews with not only Arab and Muslim voices but also with Israeli, American, and European guests. Its hard-hitting journalism has targeted Arab regimes as well as the Israeli and American governments. The station has addressed political, social, and religious issues that would never have been permitted by most Arab and Muslim governments: from Jordan's King Hussein's secret relations with Israeli leaders and exposes on Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak, to debates between secularists and fundamentalists on politics, sex, and polygamy. As a result, al Jazeera has been praised for its free and open journalism, accused of being a mouthpiece for fundamentalists and extremists' pandering to anti-Semitism as well as anti-Islamism, and being influenced by the Mossad and the CIA. While the U.S. government had often praised al Jazeera as a rare and important example of the development of a free and critical media, its coverage and criticism of American foreign policy in Israel-Palestine and the conduct of the American-led war against global terrorism has drawn public and private complaints to al Jazeera's patron, Qatar, from the Bush administration.

El-Nawawy and Iskandar provide rich description and detail, enabling readers, especially those that have not watched or are unable to follow its Arabic programming to see the accomplishments and pitfalls, the positives and negatives, of al Jazeera's phenomenal success. That situation will change as al Jazeera begins its English programming. While celebrating its success and global impact, the authors do not shrink from addressing hard issues and criticisms, from al Jazeera's failure to cover Qatari politics to its bias and provocative politicized coverage. In particular, they provide substantial coverage and nuanced analysis of al Jazeera's controversial role in airing Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda taped interviews. However, too often al Jazeera's

critics forget that similar questions have been raised over the years regarding the exposure Eastern media have given to hijackers and murderers. Moreover, they gloss over the serious questions raised post-September 11 of the stark differences between the more independent European and increasingly passive American media as well as their ideological biases—from liberal to neoconservative—of American newspapers and media such as the *New York Post*, *Wall St. Journal*, *New York Times*, *The Nation*, *New Republic*, *Weekly Standard*, Fox News, and CNN.

One of the lessons of post-September 11 is the importance of the media as a communicator and interpreter of news as well as a formative influence on public opinion. The failures and dangers of a lack of a free press are obvious in many Arab and Muslim countries as well as the need for governments in America and Europe to communicate their message more effectively to the Muslim world. The increased talk of the need for democratization in the Arab and Muslim worlds and attempts of some governments to proceed along a path to democratization will underscore both the importance of the media and continue to draw attention to the example and track record of al Jazeera. *Al-Jazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East* provides an excellent starting point for understanding the changes and challenges that are underway.

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**The Stakes: America and the Middle East, the Consequences of Power and the Choice for Peace** by Shibley Telhami. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 2002. 204 pp. \$24.00.

Shibley Telhami, who holds the Anwar Sadat chair at the University of Maryland, is a prolific writer, researcher, and public commentator with an unusual gift for both policy analysis and rigorous theory building. This book, a popular commentary rather than an academic treatise, surveys American policy in the Middle East and provides a real-time critique of the U.S. war against terrorism.

Telhami argues for a “prudent” exercise of American power in managing the complex set of interests and threats (terrorism, Iraq, energy security, and Arab-Israeli peace) that monopolize the foreign policy agenda. “The nature of the threat revealed by the horror of 9/11 cannot be addressed through coercive power alone” (p. 3). Telhami’s approach stands in stark contrast to the go-it-alone, transformative outlook common inside the Bush administration. “It should be clear that although power is an important asset for prudent diplomacy, it is not a replacement for diplomacy” (p. 169).

He criticizes the Bush White House for both its tendency toward unilateralism and its focus on the “supply” side of terrorism while ignoring the “demand” (that is, root causes). Telhami also takes Bush to task for missing an