

of people and commodities linking Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan and especially the movement of capital in this triangle through the institution of *hawala* (traditional system for the transfer of money and credit) and the agency of *hawaladar* (individual who implements the transfer of money and credit) are described and analyzed.

The book contains four appendices, of which two are especially noteworthy. Appendix 2 offers a very useful and virtually error-free glossary of local terms and concepts. Appendix 3 is a real bonus: it offers the translation into English from Hazaragi (the local variant of Afghan Farsi in Hazarajat) of a transcription of a taped narrative of the travel account of Abdul Ahmad from Hazarajat to Tehran through Baluchestan, Zahedan, and Mashhad. The narrative is replete with important ethnographic information about the complexities and challenges the Hazara migrants face in their quest to create and maintain, through kinship and friendship, economic and cultural relationships between their parent community in Hazarajat and locations beyond the borders of Afghanistan. In these appendices, as throughout the study, Alessandro Monsutti demonstrates fluent competence in local language, a competence that anchors the integrity of his ethnography. For this alone *War and Migration* occupies a unique place among Western ethnographies of Afghanistan.

Those familiar with previous ethnographic writings about the Hazara (and other ethnic and tribal communities in Afghanistan) can clearly see what difference the combination of sound theory and creative methodology and research techniques together with the researcher's competence in local culture — especially local language — makes in the quality of their anthropological representations. Alessandro Monsutti's *War and Migration* is by far the best ethnography of the Hazaras and arguably among the limited Western ethnographic writings about Afghanistan — virtually all outside the United States — that is uncontaminated by American foreign policy considerations and Cold War ideol-

ogy. This is an outstanding contribution to the anthropology of Afghanistan and to refugee and migration studies in the global context. *War and Migration* sets new scholarly standards for ethnographic integrity in Afghanistan studies. It is indispensable reading for scholars and others interested in Afghanistan and the surrounding region.

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Conflict in Afghanistan: Studies in Asymmetric Warfare. by Martin Ewans. New York: Routledge, 2005. 178 pages. Maps and figures. Notes to p. 189. Sel. bibl. to p. 192. Index to p. 198. \$63.

Reviewed by Abdulkader Sinno

Conflict in Afghanistan describes and discusses four attempts by great powers to occupy Afghanistan and to shape its polity in a way that increases their influence: The First and Second Anglo-Afghan Wars (1838-42, 1878-80), the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-89), and the American occupation (2001-present). The author also briefly discusses the events of the Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) while acknowledging that, while it could also qualify as asymmetric warfare, it is different from the other four conflicts in which the weaker side was resisting occupation.

The book relies mostly on correspondence and archival material for the chapters dealing with the Anglo-Afghan wars and on published memoirs and secondary sources for the chapters dealing with the Soviet and American occupations. The choice of sources explains the tone and style of the book. The chapters on the British invasions are about British leaders with poor judgment underestimating the Afghan landscape. While Ewans explores the intentions, options, and limitations of the British decision makers, he leaves the reader uncertain

about why different Afghan tribes, leaders, or chieftains do what they do. Afghans come across as no more than another daunting aspect of the forbidding landscape, not as the strategic actors who outdid the British. Readers of other studies of Afghan conflicts such as Gilles Dorransoro's *Revolution Unending* and Barnett Rubin's *Fragmentation of Afghanistan* might wonder whether the complex Afghan social structure played a role in those events — a role that the author simply missed.¹

The chapters on the Soviet and American occupations of Afghanistan also suffer from this shortcoming: The author focuses on the decision makers from Pakistan, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Those chapters provide a good condensed diplomatic history and a chronicle of key battles, but they understate the role of the Afghans themselves. The author's focus on the importance of "jihad" and reference to the Afghans' martial ethos (pp. 171-72) do not suffice to explain why Afghans sometimes resist foreign occupation but tolerate it at other times (year one of the first Anglo-Afghan War and the first two years of the American occupation). Afghan local leaders, not only party and national leaders, must be considered as strategic actors to adequately understand the evolution of those conflicts.

This book leaves the reader wishing for more analysis from the author, particularly because he rightly tells us that both the Russians and British failed to learn from previous attempts to occupy Afghanistan and establish loyal regimes. The three previous attempts by foreign powers to reshape the Afghan polity suggest that such attempts fail dramatically and are very costly for the occupying power. The author does not seem to fear that such will be the outcome of the American "intervention," as he calls it, but

he fails to tell us why this would be the case. If history doesn't matter, then why juxtapose four episodes of foreign occupation of Afghanistan in a book and lament the failure of others to learn from it? If history does matter, then why not draw the worrisome lessons it suggests? If the American occupation is different from previous ones, then why not tell us what makes it different?

Instead of answering such urgent questions, the book's conclusion unfortunately digresses into thoughts on how the West should deal with al-Qa'ida while suggesting that a grasp of Afghan history is a sound basis for a better understanding of the non-Afghan al-Qa'ida. Many educated readers will likely disagree with this assumption.

This book will mostly interest those who want to evaluate the probability of the success of the current foreign intervention in Afghanistan on their own, to read a condensed diplomatic history and chronicles of past battles in Afghanistan, or to gain a basic understanding of the periods of Afghan history it covers.

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ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

The Israel-Palestine Conflict: A Hundred Years of War, by James L. Gelvin. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. x + 256 pages. 22 illustrations. 11 maps. Gloss. to p. 268. Timeline to p. 273. Bios. to p. 277. Index to p. 294. \$65 cloth; \$22.99 paper.

Reviewed by Neil Caplan

With the aim of providing "a compelling, accessible, and up-to-the-moment introduction for students and general readers" (frontispiece), UCLA Professor James

1. Gilles Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); and Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).