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International Intervention in Local Conflicts: Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution since the Cold War. (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010, ISBN: 978-1-84885-318-8, 322 pp., £65.00)

At a time of Arab 'revolutions', particularly the one in Libya, once again - following the impotence of international community in Bosnia, Somalia and, Rwanda in the 1990s - there have emerged a heated debate on the concept of international intervention. This poses one of the toughest tests for an international society that is built on Westphalian principles of state sovereignty, non-intervention, and the non-use of force. It is expected from sovereign states to act as protectors of their citizens' security and well-being, but a hard question arises when states act like gangsters toward their own people and/or they are impotent to find a lasting peaceful solution to their local conflicts. Should those 'tyrannical' states be considered as legitimate actors of the international society and immune from international interventions? As related questions in this regard, what are the responsibilities of other states to enforce newly emerging global human rights norms against governments violating them? What are the obstacles on the way of effective international intervention? In the light of these questions, the volume is compiled of thirteen essays that were categorised into five parts examining the impact of international intervention on the resolution of local conflicts as well as the roles of local actors in determining the course.

The introductory chapter provides the theoretical framework of the volume. Janice Gross Stein stresses upon the transition from the cold war to the post-Cold War era and its implications for local conflicts. With the proposition that the structure of the international system has an enabling and constraining impact on the resolution of international conflicts, Stein puts forward several trends that have been shaping the patterns and practices of conflict resolution in the unipolar moment: a sharp decline in armed conflict involving a state, a dramatic decline in genocides and politicides, and decrease in the amount of traditional high-intense inter-state conflicts, but non-state armed groups initiated more violent campaigns against civilians than did governments in the 17 years between 1989 and 2005.

In line with these quantitative changes in the nature of conflicts, practices and norms to resolve them have also changed. First of all, there has been a significant increase in conflict resolution attempts, mainly initiated by the United Nations (UN). This has led the twenty-first century to begin with fewer conflicts, but many of them are stalemated. In conjunction with the change in practices, there has been taking place a profound normative change in the concept of sovereignty. This normative change is reflected lucidly in the doctrine of 'the responsibility to protect', which conceptualizes sovereignty not only as right but also as responsibility. However, changing the norm does not necessitate that it will be reflected in the practices, mainly due to controversy over change in the meaning of sovereignty.

Following this theoretical part, the volume puts its emphasis on the international role in conflict resolution and analyses the record of international involvement in resolving local conflicts in a broad range of contexts. In the first section of this part,



Chen Kertcher compares the UN's interventions to resolve local conflicts in Cambodia and Somalia and examines the record of those involvements. Kertcher questions the criteria for success and failures and asserts that if intervention operation is helpful to major factions, it will likely to be considered as a 'success' as in the case of Cambodia. In the following section, Adrian Guelke compares the British and Irish governments' involvement in the peace process in Northern Ireland and evaluates pros and cons of promoting Irish model to other contexts. In his section entitled 'International Engagement and the Yugoslav War of Dissolution', James Gow discusses the efforts of international institutions to prevent the break-up of Yugoslavia and evaluates the reasons of ineffectiveness. In the last section under this part, Stephan Wolff and Annemarie Peen Rodt present detailed analysis of the European Union's (EU) management of ethnic conflicts in the western Balkans. They argue that despite EU's limited conflict management capabilities, it has role to play in the western Balkans and this will likely to contribute the Union's future role as a serious international actor.

Proceeding part of the volume stresses upon American and European involvement in Middle East conflicts. By putting the spot light on the ongoing intersection between the international arena and the internal bureaucratic rivalries within the external actors, the US, the EU, and France, this part of the volume illuminates various dimensions of a country's intervention in regional conflicts. Without a doubt, the US has been a prominent actor in conflict resolution process in the Middle East. In this regard, it is not a surprise to note that two chapters concentrate on American involvement into Middle East conflicts. Robert David Johnson's essay reveals in what ways internal bureaucratic and institutional rivalries have effected involvement in the Middle East under the presidencies of Ronald Regan and George H.W.Bush. In parallel, Robert J.Lieber examines the underpinnings of the George W.Bush administration's Middle East policy and how local responses have shaped it. He propounds that given the state of play at the Middle East, the successor presidents will likely to pursue more or less same policies in the region.

The European Union has becoming increasingly involved in Middle Eastern process of conflict resolution. George Simonis's essay analyses the EU's collective efforts to transform the Middle East and resolve the Israeli-Palestine conflict by making a comparison of forms of its external governance in the Middle East. Individually, EU member states have been determining the course of conflicts in the Middle East as well. The essay of Jean-Pierre Filiu analyses France's efforts to resolve the intractable conflict in Lebanon under François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac. While the Gaullist president Chirac positioned Lebanon at the heart of his Middle East policy, Mitterrand put his emphasis on Israel-Palestine conflict and took a distanced stance against Likud's aggressions against Palestinians.

The final section of the volume shifts the attention into the complex ways in which domestic and regional factors shape international interventions to resolve Middle Eastern conflicts. Uzi Rabi and Brandon Friedman's chapter shows the repercussions of the deeply entrenched divisions between the Arab States and Iran on Middle Eastern conflicts. In the same vein, by describing the state of play in the Lebanese conflict, Eyal Zisser presents the Arab-Iranian 'Cold War' as a significant factor undermining



international efforts to resolve the conflict. Zisser argues that competing local Islamic forces – supported by their Syrian and Iranian patrons with different agendas in the region – led to a gridlock in the Lebanese government. Clearly, this Arab-Iranian competition has profoundly affected the Arab-Israeli peace process. By shedding a light on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Joseph Kostiner and Chelsi Mueller’s co-authored chapter compares the mediation efforts of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the period of 2006-2009. They assert that both of these local powers considered their intervention as a vehicle to bolster their regional position vis-à-vis Iran, thereby, determined the pattern of the peace process. In the last chapter of this part of the volume, Marvin G. Weinbaum examines the ramifications of international intervention on local Afghani actors with differing visions on Afghanistan’s future. Besides, Weinbaum proposes guidelines for the state-building process in the post-Taliban state.

In the volume’s concluding chapter, Rajan Menon questions the ability of the international community to mount an effective response to civil conflicts. By considering its record of incapacity in dealing with many atrocities that occurred in the last four decades, the author evaluates the success and failures of multilateral peacekeeping operations in Kosovo, Bosnia and Darfur and reaches the conclusion that the failures greatly outweigh the successes. Moreover, Menon enumerates the reasons of failure to take collective action during atrocities and assesses the concept of ‘international community’.

All in all, it is a timely compiled book on international interventions in local conflicts. It provides its reader in-depth analysis not only from the perspective of international actors, but also, from the prism of local actors in the conflict resolution process in the post-cold war period. Given that essays in the volume mainly concentrated on conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, it misses the opportunity to provide its reader to make comparisons by including several chapters on other protracted conflicts such as the ones in the former Soviet Union. Besides, ascending regional power Turkey’s efforts to mediate in Middle Eastern conflicts could also be included. Beyond these shortcomings regarding the scope, it is not possible to talk about a strong link between the theoretical framework and the essays in the volume. Notwithstanding these deficiencies, the volume is a recommended reading for the scholars, who are willing to broaden their insights on changing norms/ practices of international interventions and dynamics of local conflicts in the post-Cold War period.

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