H-Diplo | Robert Jervis International Security Studies Forum

Roundtable Review 16-5

Emma Ashford. *Oil, the State, and War: The Foreign Policies of Petrostates.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2022.

4 October 2024 | PDF: https://issforum.org/to/jrt16-5 | Website: rjissf.org | Twitter: @HDiplo

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Introduction by Robert Vitalis, University of Pennsylvania, Emeritus

It is a pleasure to introduce the roundtable on Emma Ashford's *Oil, the State, and War*. Ashford is one of the more distinctive voices in the rethinking US foreign policy "space," as we say now, a columnist at *Foreign Policy*, and self-defined heterodox theorist. Her book confirms it. All three reviewers agree that it is terrific, and, I can add, great to teach. Two of her fellow political scientists, Stefan Andreasson and Rosemary Kelanic, together with historian Gregory Brew, underscore its many strengths. Chief among them is its success in specifying the wide array of oil's possible effects on producing countries' foreign policies, the big one being that oil states appear statistically speaking, more likely to go to war, all else equal.

Andreasson's gift to H-Diplo readers is in his careful dissection of Ashford's method of analysis, which distinguishes among different classes of oil producers, identifies the range of political behaviors that oil wealth permits—not just arms-buying and war-making but aid-dispensing and influence-leveraging—and hypothesizes distinctive pathways from oil wealth to outcomes, for example, the weakening of a regime's intelligence agencies. Andreasson goes on to correct an overstatement early in the book. *Oil, the State, and War* isn't the first to explore oil producers as political actors. A then new field of international political economy came into its own in the 1970s via the study of the producers' changing relations with western oil companies.[1] Ashford is inquiring instead about oil and the wars of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

I recommend reading Kelanic's graduate-field-seminar-of-a-review next to better understand the changing fashions in political science research across those decades and where Ashford's work fits. It also sets up the first and most important of her three criticisms. If, as Ashford's statistical analysis appears to suggest, petroleum producing states are prone to go to war, what explains it? Ashford provides a provisional answer in her response, in which she also engages with the other reviews.

As we might expect from someone whose methods of choice are not running regressions but reading Persian language sources and validating his findings via multiple company and government archives, Gregory Brew suspects that some of Ashford's key generalizations about petrostates rest on historical oversimplifications. His comments are supported on a larger scale by a new work by Benjamin Smith and David Waldner, who are two political scientists who have supplemented their country and regional specializations with advanced statistical skills. Readers should add their recent *Rethinking the Oil Curse* to Kelanic's citations. Their findings suggest that analysts mistake a small set of historically unique Middle East cases "for a global statistical relationship."[2]

[1] Robert Vitalis, "Black Gold, White Crude: An Essay on American Exceptionalism, Hierarchy, and Hegemony in the Gulf," *Diplomatic History* 26:2 (Spring 2002): 185-213:, 188.
[2] Benjamin Smith and David Waldner, *Rethinking the Oil Curse* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 70.

Contributors:

Emma Ashford is a Senior Fellow with the Reimagining US Grand Strategy program at the Henry L. Stimson Center and an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. Her first book, *Oil, the State, and War: The Foreign Policies of Petrostates*, was published by Georgetown University Press in 2022, and her second book, *First Among Equals: U.S. Foreign Policy for a Multipolar World*, is forthcoming from Yale University Press. A term member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Ashford holds a PhD in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia.

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Gregory Brew is a historian of oil, US foreign policy, modern Iran, and the Cold War. He was a 2021-2023 postdoctoral fellow at the Jackson School of Global Affairs at Yale University and is the author of *Petroleum and Progress in Iran: Oil, Development and the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) and, with of David S. Painter, *The Struggle for Iran: Oil, Autocracy, and the Cold War, 1951-1954* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2023). He is currently an analyst at Eurasia Group covering energy and Iran.

Rosemary A. Kelanic is a Senior Fellow and Director of Middle East Engagement at Defense Priorities. She publishes widely on energy security, great power politics, and US grand strategy in the Middle East. Her work has appeared in outlets ranging from *Foreign Affairs* and *Security Studies* to *The Washington Post* and *The National Interest (online)*. Dr. Kelanic's book, *Black Gold and Blackmail: Oil and Great Power Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2020), explains the differences in energy security strategies that great powers adopt, while her edited volume (with Charles L. Glaser), *Crude Strategy: Rethinking the U.S. Military Commitment to Defend Persian Gulf Oil* (Georgetown University Press, 2016), urges a reappraisal of U.S. engagement in the region. Dr. Kelanic spent ten years teaching political science at the University of Notre Dame and Williams College prior to entering the policy world. She earned her PhD in Political Science from the University of Chicago and her BA, *summa cum laude*, from Bryn Mawr College

Review by by Stefan Andreasson, Queen's University Belfast

A wealth of research and literature exists on the connections between natural resources such as oil and politics. It is well established that what Timothy Mitchell, in his thesis on "carbon democracy," terms the "age of oil" has had profound implications for democratic development in the post-colonial era.[1] Likewise, a wide range of scholarly works, ranging from Daniel Yergin's seminal history of oil in the twentieth century to Jeff Colgan's more recent study of oil and international order, recognize that the global oil trade is central to International Relations (IR) and international affairs.[2] The existing literature is a rich one in which a multitude of approaches to the social, political and economic dimensions of oil (and natural gas) have been explored in great breadth and depth.[3] In that sense the field is also a crowded one, but one to which Emma Ashford's recent contribution, *Oil, the State and War*, is a most valuable and, on the whole, novel addition.

The book provides a detailed and instructive insight into the role of "petrostates" in international affairs and is animated by the fact that, according to Ashford, "[o]ne group of countries…stand out in its continued aggression: oil-rich states" (1). That is, petrostates matter for IR because they are, among other things, "more likely than other countries to start wars." Based on this statistically verifiable fact (the evidence of which is produced in the book's quantitative analysis), Ashford seeks the explanation for such behavior in the "fundamental premise" that "oil shapes the foreign policy of petrostates." The main aim of the book is to establish this link between oil and foreign policy in the context of proneness to initiate conflict and to generate and conduct plausibility tests of a range of "pathways" from domestic oil production to foreign policy behavior.

To generate a set of pathways and test their plausibility, Ashford begins by identifying the universe of petrostates that are categorized into three main types and one subtype depending on their characteristics at different points in time throughout the period 1960 to 2011 (4-8).[4] First, "oil-dependent" states are those

[1] Timothy Mitchell, "Carbon Democracy," *Economy and Society* 38:3 (2009): 399-432. For the detrimental economic and political effects of dependency on oil as embodied in the literature on the "resource curse," see Michael L. Ross, *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

[2] Daniel Yergin, 2011. *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (Simon and Schuster, 2011); Jeff D. Colgan, *Partial Hegemony: Oil Politics and International Order* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

[3] See, among others Anthony Sampson, *The Seven Sisters: The Great Oil Companies and the World They Made* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1975); Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (University of California Press, 1997); Steve Coll, *Private Empire: ExxonMobil and American Power* (Penguin, 2012); Matthew T. Huber, *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Blake C. Clayton, *Market Madness: A Century of Oil Panics, Crises, and Crashes* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Meghan L. O'Sullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America's Power* (Simon and Schuster, 2017).

[4] Ashford's analysis draws on several data sets to provide the relevant metrics. For instance, Michael Ross's *The Oil Curse* provides a measure of oil and gas revenues per capita, and a measure of export revenues is generated from a combination of the World Bank Databank, BP Statistical Index, and the US Energy Information Administration data. Four appendices identify the sources of data and outline the methods used to analyze that data throughout the

whose economies are dominated by oil production and where oil rents are at some point in the relevant time frame greater than 10 percent of GDP. Nearly all the states from both industrialized and lesser developed countries included in Ashford's statistical study are thus classified as oil dependent. Second, "oil-wealthy" states are those who receive substantial wealth from oil and gas production (whether or not they are dependent on that wealth), surpassing at some point US$1,000 per capita. The majority of petrostates discussed in the book fall into this category as well. Third, "super-exporter states" are those that contribute a substantial proportion of global oil supply, which is here defined as more than two percent. This is a smaller category of petrostates including several of the OPEC members, as well as Brazil, Canada, Russia, and the United States. Finally, the "super-exporters" constitute a smaller subtype of the super-producers. These are states that both produce and export a substantial proportion of global oil supply, meaning that they produce more than two percent of global supply and also export more oil than they consume. These super-exporters include states such as Canada, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.

Having thus categorized the types of petrostates, Ashford identifies nine pathways through which the nature of oil production shapes foreign policy behavior including examples of each (9). Oil-wealthy states can afford to engage the following typical behaviors: sustained spending on "resource arms racing" (Iran); the use of "petroleum proxies" to intervene in other states' affairs (Algeria); and the pursuit of "oil altruism" to enhance their soft power by means of charitable or altruistic purposes (Qatar, Norway). Oil dependent states are generally afflicted by the "resource curse" which often manifests itself as follows: as weakness in the "institution-intelligence nexus" (Iraq); as "petro-personalization" (Venezuela); and in the prevalence of "public sector petrostates" (Venezuela). These phenomena make such states susceptible to erratic, poor, and less restrained decision-making. Super-producers and super-exporters wield control over substantial global market share which makes it possible for them to engage in the following behaviors: threatening to use the "oil weapon," such as embargoes and supply shutoffs, to achieve foreign policy goals (Russia); pursuing "soft oil power" to derive prestige and leverage (Qatar); and, in the case of super-exporters specifically, enjoying a "hegemonic umbrella" protecting them from aggression and, in particular, sanctions (9). Ultimately, the combination of data and case studies deployed throughout subsequent chapters to test these pathways suggest that they are all plausible, with the one exception of the oil weapon which is often threatened and generally feared but seldom effective.

The development of the typology is very helpful, and the book constitutes an example of mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) comparative research at its most rewarding. Ashford's account provides an effective antidote to the tendency to treat petrostates as fundamentally similar, or as one (monolithic) category, which inevitably entails overlooking important variation across cases. Oil-dependent, oil-wealthy, and super-producer/super-exporting petrostates do not act alike in all (or even most) instances,

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chapters, including detailed regression analysis the results of which are summarized in the main text. These appendices make a valuable contribution to those who will attempt to further test and explain the pathways identified by Ashford.

and in some cases, they differ from each other systematically due to the internal dynamics of their respective oil sectors. We cannot draw conclusions about the foreign policy behavior of oil-wealthy Norway or Qatar based on the behavior of Iraq or Saudi Arabia. Thus, the typology and pathways that Ashford provides, and which explain how we can best define different kinds of petrostates and then make the crucial link from those different kinds of petrostates to anticipating their foreign policy behaviors, constitutes the key contribution of the book.

The case study chapters exploring and explaining the pathways from oil production and exportation to foreign policy are empirically rich and insightful despite the relative brevity of each succinct case study. At times, comparatively lengthy discussions (in the abovementioned context of brief case studies) which may reflect the author's expertise and particular interests, such as that of arms spending and military detail in Chapter 3 on oil wealth and military power, may arguably run into the law of diminishing returns. But on balance, the empirical analysis, which comprises an accessible combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, is highly accessible and relevant for scholars of IR and practitioners alike. These analytical chapters provide a superb translation of domestic dynamics into foreign policy. Moreover, the book does not deploy the same method of analysis across each dimension of the relationship between oil production and foreign policy. This methodological variation is justified by the fact that the analysis concerns a range of internal dynamics, or "pathways" to foreign policy. Some of these pathways are more conducive to a wholly qualitative analysis. Others are helpfully explored by means of a more explicit reliance on the statistical manipulation of data. While some chapters include mixed-methods data, some are wholly qualitative, such as chapter 5 on how the resource curse shapes foreign policy as illustrated by case studies of Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

It may be debated whether the claim about the key premise—that oil production shapes foreign policy behavior—is as novel (or counterintuitive) as Ashford suggests. It is certainly the case that most studies of oil in IR focus on the agency of major importers like the US and other industrialized countries vis-à-vis oil producing regions like the Persian Gulf. But it is much less clear that IR scholars tend to treat the "oil-rich states as passive objects or as victims of energy-seeking states" (2). In fact, the entire literature informed by Raymond Vernon's "obsolescing bargain" in studies of relations between international oil companies and oil-rich states in the context of resource nationalism is premised on the increasing power and agency of the latter vis-à-vis the former.[5] Nevertheless, the nuanced and multi-dimensional tracing of the relationship leading from states' internal dynamics (oil production) to external relations (foreign policy) behavior that

[5] Raymond Vernon, "Sovereignty at Bay: The Multinational Spread of U. S. Enterprises," *The International Executive* 13:4 (1971): 1-3. For adaptations of Vernon's theory of the obsolescing bargain in studies of resource nationalism and oil, see Paul Stevens, "National Oil Companies and International Oil Companies in the Middle East: Under the Shadow of Government and the Resource Nationalism Cycle," *The Journal of World Energy Law & Business* 1:1 (2008): 5-30; Vlado Vivoda, "Resource Nationalism, Bargaining and International Oil Companies: Challenges and Change in the New Millennium," *New Political Economy* 14:4 (2009): 517-34.

Ashford provides sets this book apart from other accounts that explore the role of oil-rich states in IR and deal with such linkages in less explicit terms.

The framing and context of *Oil, the State and War* is intriguing, and especially important in a time when petrostates face unprecedented challenges due to the embryonic energy transition. The energy transition will be complex and protracted, but whatever the outcomes in terms of its impact on attempts to mitigate climate change, it is certain that the transition will disrupt international relations.[6] In the inevitably volatile and uncertain context of the energy transition, the stakes will be especially high for states which are economically dependent on fossil fuel export revenues. In this context, the final chapter in Ashford's book considers the future of the petrostates. While the number of petrostates may increase due to a combination of resilient demand, persistently high prices, and new technologies (e.g., hydraulic fracturing, ultra-deep sea and Arctic drilling), they nevertheless face a highly uncertain future. If demand for oil eventually declines, the super-producers and super-exporters may lose both influence and hegemonic protection. The oil-wealthy states will have fewer economic resources at their disposal and may thus find the trade-offs between "guns-or-butter" more difficult to negotiate. For the oil-dependent states, where "the damage to institutions and political structures has already been done" their challenges will be steeper still (255-56). At the same time, Ashford recognizes that mitigating climate change constitutes a particularly complex and difficult collective action problem, such that "the world may never successfully decarbonize" (256). If that is the case, the relevance of petrostates to IR will remain with us for the long-term, even if we have reached "peak petrostate" (256).

[6] Vaclav Smil, "Examining Energy Transitions: A Dozen Insights Based on Performance," *Energy Research & Social Science* 22 (2016): 194-97; Daniel Scholten, Morgan Bazilian, Indra Overland, and Kirsten Westphal, "The Geopolitics of Renewables: New Board, New Game," *Energy Policy* 138 (2020): 111059.

Review by Gregory Brew, Eurasia Group

The study of oil can be a confounding one. Key terms, such as "resource curse," "oil weapon," and "energy security" are deployed extensively, yet flutter under vague definitional parameters and imprecise formulation. What, exactly, is a "petrostate?" How is it formed, and how does it interact with other states?

Emma Ashford tackles these questions in *Oil, the State, and War: The Foreign Policies of Petrostates*, a refreshing and rigorous analysis of what makes oil-dependent states tick. Rather than lean on the petrostate formula, which she regards as "more anecdotal than practical" (4), Ashford lays out a more detailed and precise blueprint for how oil states operate in the international system. "Oil shapes the foreign policies of petrostates," she argues (1), but *how* oil and foreign policy interact depends on the nature of oil's role in state formation, oil's importance to the national economy, and the market power exercised by the oil state itself in the international economy.

Ashford describes three kinds of distinct petrostates (5-10). First, there are oil dependent states, where oil contributes a significant portion of state revenue, foreign exchange, or annual GDP growth. Second, oil wealthy states, which can leverage oil revenues into a source of economic, military, or diplomatic power. Finally, there are the super producer or super exporter states, which possess inordinate market share and thus an ability to disrupt the flow of oil, impacting its price and availability on the global market.

Analysis of the foreign policies of petrostates has been limited, to some extent, by Western perceptions of the oil weapon and its potential power to undermine the energy security of oil-consuming states. Ashford contends that these fears have been overblown: scholars in the West "have tended toward a myopic focus on their own energy vulnerability," reducing the agency of exporting countries and conflating them into one big, dangerous OPEC-like bloc (14). "The oil weapon is a dud," she argues, though oil states can exert influence by other means, drawing "real benefits from their status and role in the international system" (194).

Ashford complicates ideas surrounding oil states' proclivity toward violence. Oil states often spend more money on weaponry, though their wealth gives them greater opportunities to pursue what Ashford calls "oil altruism," supporting foreign proxies or influencing the foreign policies of other states (115-117). The simple presence of wealth does not offer sufficient explanation for this behavior: Ashford argues that domestic state formation, particularly the impact of the resource curse, exerts greater influence over how oil states form and pursue their foreign policies (123).

Ashford draws from the work of Robert Vitalis and others who have made similar arguments regarding the ineffectiveness of the oil weapon.[1] She references political scientists Emily Meierding and Rosemary A. Kelanic, both of whom argue that oil states are neither as aggressive, nor as powerful as literature often

[1] Robert Vitalis, *Oilcraft: The Myths of Scarcity and Security that Haunt US Energy Policy* (Stanford University Press, 2020).

suggests.[2] Finally, her interpretation of oil states' role in the global marketplace builds off the work of Jeff D. Colgan, particularly his "revolutionary oil theory" in explaining the connection between oil and conflict.[3] Like these other works, Ashford's book is frequently an exercise in myth-busting: she applies rigorous analysis to some of the most pervasive and widely held ideas surrounding oil and oil-states, and draws conclusions that are at times counter-intuitive but often compelling and thought provoking.

Ashford concludes the book by suggesting that we have reached "peak petrostate" (252-255) as climate change pushes states to divest from fossil fuels and pursue energy alternatives. The dramatic failures of Russia to use its "energy weapon" in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, together with the growing inability of states within OPEC (the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) to manage oil prices amid uncertain demand, suggests she may be right.

The exception, interestingly enough, is the United States—far and away the most prolific oil producer in history. Having recovered its oil production with the shale boom of the early 2000s, the United States now commands considerable market share, "almost 20 percent of the world's oil supply," which, along with its hegemonic financial and military might, gives it unique powers other oil states lack. While oil has weakened or undermined other states, there is no question that the United States "is more powerful for being a petrostate" (252).

While Ashford crafts an inventive approach to the problem of petrostate foreign policy, at times her narrative leans on conventional wisdom. The resource curse, while neither "uniform nor inevitable" (13) does form an important part of her analysis. States which are dependent upon oil are presumed to possess weaker state institutions, which influence how they form and pursue foreign policy objectives: Ashford uses Ba'athist Iraq under the rule of President Saddam Hussein as an example, pairing it with Saudi Arabia's decisionmaking process in Yemen in the 2010s, and argues that both states launched wars of choice based on poor decision-making processes.

From Hussein Mahdavy's original formulation of the rentier state through the subsequent scholarship of, among many others, Hazem Beblawi, Terry Lynn Karl, and Michael Ross, rentier states (especially those dependent upon oil) appear doomed to suffer the same set of maladies due to the imbalances caused to the state's foreign exchange earnings, state revenues, and overall industrial development.[4] An analysis of a

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[2] Emily Meierding, *The Oil Wars Myth: Petroleum and the Causes of International Conflict* (Cornell University Press, 2020), Rosemary Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail: Oil and Great Power Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2020).
[3] Jeff Colgan, "Oil and Revolutionary Governments: Fuel for International Conflict," *International Organization* 64:4 (2010): 661-94.
[4] Hossein Mahdavy, "The Patterns and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: the Case of Iran," in M.A. Cook, ed., *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: From the Rise of Islam to the Present Day* (Oxford University Press, 1970), 443-467, Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani, eds., *The Rentier State* (Croon Helm, 1987), Terry Lynn Karl, *Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro States* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1997), Michael Ross, *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Shapes the Development of Nations* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

state's foreign policy that draws from the resource curse literature should interrogate these assumptions, which grow more complex when one considers the role of foreign capital and foreign powers. Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen was only possible thanks to the immense material and logistical support afforded to Riyadh by its alliance with the United States. Both Iraq and Saudi Arabia did not discover or exploit their oil, but rather had their oil exploited *for them* by foreign companies, nationalizing their oil industries only in the 1970s. While Ashford acknowledges this distinction, and limits her analysis to the post-1974 period, any discussion of oil state foreign policy ought to take such origins into account, especially in the case of Latin American and Middle Eastern states which often grew out of their oil industries, rather than vice versa.

Nevertheless, Ashford's book adds sufficient nuance to complicate the lines linking oil exploitation with militarism, corruption, and authoritarianism. "A developing state that discovers oil," she acknowledges, "is likely to have poorer outcomes in governance and economic development than one that doesn't," even though "culture, governance, and civil-military relations all play a role in foreign policy formulation and military effectiveness" (125, 149). Her examples and data sets span continents and time frames and make persuasive arguments for a more elaborate, multi-faceted typology. There is not just one petrostate model, but many.

Review by Rosemary A. Kelanic, Defense Priorities

Emma Ashford's new book, *Oil, the State, and War: The Foreign Policies of Petrostates*, pulls off an impressive balancing act: it advances the scholarly literature on the international politics of oil while remaining relevant and accessible to both policy and general audiences. Many have tried and many have failed to achieve that feat because the demands of the two audiences are nearly irreconcilable. With remarkably clear prose, Ashford delivers the intellectual rigor prized by academia while remaining firmly focused on why her findings matter to the wider world. Everyone can read this book and learn from it.

Oil, the State, and War is part of an ongoing renaissance in scholarship relating to international oil politics. The 1970s oil shocks inspired an initial wave of work on energy security concerns,[1] but after the drastic price decline in the mid-1980s, the topic lay largely fallow until the mid-2000s.[2] At that time, the massive growth in Chinese energy demand–and related increases in prices–reopened concerns about resource scarcity and oil import dependence and inspired a second, ongoing wave of work on the security ramifications of energy, particularly for great powers like the United States and China.[3]

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[1] David A. Deese, "Energy: Economics, Politics, and Security," *International Security* 4, no. 3 (1979/1980): 140-153; Deese, "Oil, War, and Grand Strategy," *Orbis* 25, no. 3 (1981): 525-555; Stephen D. Krasner, "Oil Is the Exception," *Foreign Policy*, no. 14 (1974): 68-84; Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton University Press, 1978); Robert J. Lieber, "Energy, Economics and Security in Alliance Perspective," *International Security* 4, no. 4 (1980): 139-163; G. John Ikenberry, *Reasons of State: Oil Politics and the Capacities of American Government* (Cornell University Press, 1988); Bruce W. Jentleson, *Pipeline Politics: The Complex Political Economy of East-West Energy Trade* (Cornell University Press, 1986); Robert L. Paarlberg, "Food, Oil and Coercive Resource Power," *International Security* 3, no. 2 (1978): 3-19; Thomas L. McNaugher, *Arms and Oil: U.S. Military Strategy and the Persian Gulf* (Brookings Institution, 1985); Edward Friedland, Paul Seabury, and Aaron Wildavsky, "Oil and the Decline of Western Power," *Political Science Quarterly* 90, no. 3 (1975): 437-450; Hans Maull, "Oil and Influence: The Oil Weapon Examined," in *Adelphi Paper no. 117* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1975); Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, "Sino-Soviet Relations and the Politics of Oil," *Asian Survey* 16, no. 6 (1976): 540-552; Klinghoffer, *The Soviet Union & International Oil Politics* (Columbia University Press, 1977); Ray Dafter, "World Oil Production and Security of Supplies," *International Security* 4, no. 3 (1979/1980): 154-176; Margaret Doxey, "Oil and Food as International Sanctions," *International Journal* 36, no. 2 (1981): 311-334; Morris A. Adelman, "International Oil Agreements," *The Energy Journal* 5, no. 3 (1984): 1-9; Fiona Venn, *Oil Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (St. Martin's Press, 1986); Roy Licklider, *Political Power and the Arab Oil Weapon: The Experience of Five Industrial Nations* (University of California Press, 1988); Licklider, "The Power of Oil: The Arab Oil Weapon and the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and the United States," *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (1988): 205-226.

[2] Exceptions include Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (Free Press, 1991); Michael T. Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* (Owl Books/Henry Holt & Company, 2002); Lieber, "Oil and Power after the Gulf War," *International Security* 17, no. 1 (1992): 155-176; David S. Painter, "International Oil and National Security," *Daedalus* 120, no. 4 (1991): 183-206; Adelman, *The Genie out of the Bottle: World Oil since 1970* (MIT Press, 1995).

[3] David Zweig and Bi Jianhai, "China's Global Hunt for Energy," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (2005): 25-38; Bruce G. Blair, Chen Yali, and Eric Hagt, "The Oil Weapon: Myth of China's Vulnerability," *China Security* (2006): 32-63; Joe Barnes

Since the early 2010s, Jeff Colgan, Cullen Hendrix, and others, drawing on the comparative politics literature on the "resource curse," have broadened the study of global oil politics to look at whether and

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and Amy Myers Jaffe, "The Persian Gulf and the Geopolitics of Oil," *Survival* 48, no. 1 (2006): 143-162; Steve A. Yetiv and Chunlong Lu, "China, Global Energy, and the Middle East," *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 2 (2007): 199-218; Paivi Lujala, Jan Ketil Rod, and Nadja Thieme, "Fighting over Oil: Introducing a New Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24, no. 3 (2007): 239-256; Doug Stokes, "Blood for Oil? Global Capital, Counter-Insurgency, and the Dual Logic of American Energy Security," *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 245-264; John S. Duffield, *Over a Barrel: The Costs of U.S. Foreign Oil Dependence* (Stanford University Press, 2008); Eugene Gholz and Daryl G. Press, "Protecting 'the Prize': Oil and the U.S. National Interest," *Security Studies* 19, no. 3 (2010): 453-485; Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson and Miranda Priebe, "A Crude Threat: The Limits of an Iranian Missile Campaign against Saudi Arabian Oil," *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 167-201; Toby Craig Jones, "America, Oil, and War in the Middle East," *Journal of American History* 99, no. 1 (2012): 208-218; Painter, "Oil and the American Century," *Journal of American History* 99, no. 1 (2012): 24-39; John Lee, "China's Geostrategic Search for Oil," *The Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2012): 75-92; Jeff D. Colgan, "Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War," *International Security* 38, no. 2 (2013): 147-180; Charles L. Glaser, "How Oil Influences U.S. National Security," *International Security* 38, no. 2 (2013): 112-146; Michael A. Levi, "The Enduring Vulnerabilities of Oil Markets," *Security Studies* 22 (2013): 132-138; Gholz and Press, "Enduring Resilience: How Oil Markets Handle Disruptions," *Security Studies* 22 (2013): 139-147; Joshua Rovner and Caitlin Talmadge, "Hegemony, Force Posture, and the Provision of Public Goods: The Once and Future Role of Outside Powers in Securing Persian Gulf Oil," *Security Studies*, 23, no. 3 (2014): 548-581; Llewelyn Hughes and Austin Long, "Is There an Oil Weapon? Security Implications of Changes in the Structure of the International Oil Market," *International Security* 39, no. 3 (2014/2015): 152-189; Andrew T. Price-Smith, *Oil, Illiberalism, and War: An Analysis of Energy and Us Foreign Policy* (MIT Press, 2015); Inwook Kim, "Refining the Prize: Chinese Oil Refineries and Its Energy Security," *The Pacific Review* 29, no. 3 (2016): 361-386; Glaser and Rosemary A. Kelanic, eds., *Crude Strategy: Rethinking the U.S. Military Commitment to Defend Persian Gulf Oil* (Georgetown University Press, 2016); Roger J. Stern, "Oil Scarcity Ideology in Us Foreign Policy, 1908–97," *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (2016): 214-257; Emily Meierding, "Dismantling the Oil Wars Myth," *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (2016): 258-288; Kelanic, "The Petroleum Paradox: Oil, Coercive Vulnerability, and Great Power Behavior," *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (2016): 181-213; Thijs Van de Graaf and Colgan, "Russian Gas Games or Well-Oiled Conflict? Energy Security and the 2014 Ukraine Crisis," *Energy Research & Social Science* 24 (2017): 59-64; Chia-yi Lee, "Oil and Terrorism: Uncovering the Mechanisms," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62, no. 5 (2018): 903-928; Anand Toprani, *Oil and the Great Powers: Britain and Germany, 1914-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2019); Kim, "A Crude Bargain: Great Powers, Oil States, and Petro-Alignment," *Security Studies* 28, no. 5 (2019): 833-869; Victor McFarland, *Oil Powers: A History of the U.S.-Saudi Alliance* (Columbia University Press, 2020); Emily Meierding, *The Oil Wars Myth: Petroleum and the Causes of International Conflict* (Cornell University Press, 2020); Robert Vitalis, *Oilcraft: The Myths of Scarcity and Security That Haunt U.S. Energy Policy* (Stanford University Press, 2020); Rosemary A. Kelanic, *Black Gold and Blackmail: Oil and Great Power Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2020); Michael T. Klare, *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum* (Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company, 2004); *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy* (Metropolitan Books, 2008); *The Race for What's Left: The Global Scramble for the World's Last Resources* (Picador, 2012); Meghan L. O'Sullivan, *Windfall: How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America's Power* (Simon & Schuster, 2017); Kim and Jackson Woods, "Gas on the Fire: Great Power Alliances and Petrostate Aggression," *International Studies Perspectives* 17, no. 3 (2016): 231-249;. Glaser and Kelanic, "Should the United States Stay in the Gulf?," in Glaser and Kelanic *Crude Strategy: Rethinking the U.S. Military Commitment to Defend Persian Gulf Oil* ed. (Georgetown University Press, 2016).

how oil wealth might shape the foreign relations of net-exporting countries.[4] This area of the field, into which Emma Ashford's book clearly falls, treats oil producing countries not as objects of great-power intrigue but as important actors in their own right.[5]

Oil, the State and War breaks the study of oil-driven foreign policy wide open by hypothesizing an array of new mechanisms that connect oil wealth to countries' international behavior. The mechanisms themselves stem from a crucial observation: petrostates are not a monolith. Rather, Ashford originates a typology of three kinds of petrostates from 1960–2011 and deduces causal pathways for each. The first and largest category, oil-dependent states, consists of the 40 countries with oil revenues accounting for 10 percent or more of GDP. These tend to be the developing countries which are perhaps most closely associated with the ills of the resource curse. The second category, oil-wealthy states, is comprised of 30 countries for whom oil and natural gas revenue contribute at least $1,000 to per capita GDP. The final category, super-producer states, contains 21 countries whose oil production represents 2 percent or more of global share. Among super-producers, Ashford also identifies a subgroup of 14 super-exporters—those countries fortunate enough to both surpass the 2 percent market-share threshold and produce surplus oil beyond what they consume domestically (4-8, 264-267).

The categories themselves are important, but Ashford's major contribution is the original, distinctive causal pathways she proposes for each type of petrostate. These are both broader than prior work—i.e., they link oil wealth to multiple aspects of foreign policy, not just aggression—and more analytically sophisticated, building upon findings developed from earlier scholarship. For instance, whereas Jeff Colgan's book generally contends that oil export dependence (when combined with revolutionary governance) abets aggression by providing resources that leaders can use to insulate themselves from public accountability,[6] Ashford's claims are more specific. Accountability suffers particularly because oil-dependent states are more likely to be run by personalistic dictators who overly centralize foreign policy decision-making, and because nationalized oil companies dominate the economy, crowding out private businesses whose interests might otherwise constrain leaders (134-137). Fascinatingly, Ashford also suggests a fresh mechanism: that oil dependence might weaken states' intelligence and information-gathering institutions,

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[4] On the resource curse, see Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (University of California Press, 1997); Michael L. Ross, *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations* (Princeton University Press, 2012); Thad Dunning, *Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). On the application of the resource curse to foreign affairs, see Colgan, "Oil and Revolutionary Governments: Fuel for International Conflict," *International Organization* 64, no. 4 (2010): 661-694; Colgan, *Petro-Aggression: When Oil Causes War* (Cambridge University Press2013); Cullen S. Hendrix, "Oil Prices and Interstate Conflict," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 34, no. 6 (2017): 575-596; Hendrix, "Cold War Geopolitics and the Making of the Oil Curse," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 2-22.

[5] For a similar perspective see Colgan, *Partial Hegemony: Oil Politics and International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Christopher R. W. Dietrich, *Oil Revolution: Anticolonial Elites, Sovereign Rights, and the Economic Culture of Decolonization* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[6] Colgan, *Petro-Aggression*, 30-31.

leading to higher rates of misperception and foreign policy mistakes (132-134). Because of their specificity, these causal claims are potentially more falsifiable, and thus allow for more rigorous empirical tests by future researchers.

Ashford likewise proposes three mechanisms predicting foreign policy outcomes for oil-wealthy states—those with oil revenues burning holes in their pockets. First, she expects that such states will spend more on weapons purchases and military expenditure in general, potentially leading to arms racing (9, 23, 69). In line with earlier work,[7] Ashford finds a sizable effect on military spending (although only in absolute terms; oil-wealthy states do not spend a greater proportion of GDP on the military compared to other states) (298-299). She also finds a link between oil price spikes and increased military spending in oil-wealthy states (61-62). Although she dangles the intriguing possibility that military spending by oil-wealthy states could trigger arms races and finds that oil price increases roughly correspond to greater global military spending (63-65), she does not test that part of the argument as thoroughly; for instance, she does not examine whether the neighbors of oil-wealthy states also spend more on arms, trying to keep up with the Jones's.

Second, Ashford hypothesizes, and finds evidence, that oil-wealthy states support armed proxies (e.g., rebel groups) at higher rates than non-oil-wealthy states; in fact, the amount of meddling by funding proxies is roughly in line with major powers globally (94-96).

Finally, Ashford proposes that oil-wealthy states might engage in what she calls "oil altruism"—essentially, donating oil profits for charitable, ideological, or more generally, prestige-based reasons—and she supports the claim with case studies on Venezuela, Qatar, and Norway (101-113). The idea that these three countries, which are different in so many respects, spend oil revenues similarly to burnish their public image is intriguing; I hope that future scholars, especially those working from a constructivist perspective, develop theories about when and why certain oil-wealthy states invest in spreading ideas. Perhaps efforts by the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which were oil-wealthy states in the latter part of the Cold War, to spread their respective ideologies during that time could represent additional examples.

For her final category, "super" petrostates—i.e., super-producers and the smaller subset of super-exporters—Ashford outlines three additional causal mechanisms, each of which links these states' significant oil market share to foreign policy outcomes. The first of these follows well-trod ground: the possibility that super-exporters could coerce political concessions through threats or actual cutoffs of oil (and/or natural gas), a strategy known popularly as the "oil weapon." Discussing the oil weapon and the most infamous use of it—the 1973 Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) embargo—is practically obligatory in any book on oil and international politics, given the outsize role the case has played in shaping popular imagination.[8] There is no avoiding it, even if there is not much new to say. Ashford dutifully recounts the record, showing that, in fact, the oil weapon generally failed to live up to

[7] Michael L. Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics*, 53, no. 3 (April 2001), 325-361.
[8] For an excellent critique of the 1973 case, see Vitalis, *Oilcraft*.

hype (170-171). The only interesting question here is: how many times must scholars demonstrate that the oil weapon is a dud before we can finally move past 1973? (Note that this critique is not a reflection of Ashford's work, but rather, on the inability of audiences to update beliefs when presented with conflicting information.)

Fortunately, the final two mechanisms relating to super-producers and super-exporters get back to being interesting. Ashford suggests the possibility that such states might enjoy "soft oil power" or attract a "hegemonic umbrella" of protection from interested great powers. Does producing a sizable share of global production confer intangible clout? Ashford suggests yes, while fully appreciating the difficulty in studying influence, something that is perhaps at its strongest when its actual use is absent—i.e., the most influential actors may get their way without even having to make threats, let alone act. Ashford cleverly uses sanctions data to approach the problem, hypothesizing that soft oil power might manifest as either an increased propensity for super-states to threaten or impose sanctions or a decreased likelihood of being threatened or targeted with them. She finds a roughly 50 percent reduction in the likelihood of receiving sanctions or sanctions threats for super-exporters, though not for super-producers (202-205). Super-producers, however, are slightly more likely to threaten or send sanctions than other states–a result that holds even when particularly sanctions-happy super-producers like Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States are removed from the analysis (206-207). These results are interesting, and in the case of sanctions-sending, somewhat counterintuitive from what I would have expected. Unfortunately, Ashford devotes a scant few pages to the theoretical of question of why this would be the case—a disappointment given that the book is, at heart, a theory-building exercise. However, no book can do everything, and she has planted the flag for deeper exploration by future scholars. The final mechanism, hegemonic protection, whereby super-exporters attract powerful patrons to look out for them, appears plausible but limited to very special cases, namely, US protection of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

There is not much to criticize about this book, but I will raise a few points, lest I jeopardize my credentials as a trained academic assassin. First, Ashford discovers that all petrostates, regardless of their category, are more prone to starting conflicts (38-46)—a finding that is surprising, given that other work suggests that oil wealth alone is insufficient to spur higher rates of aggression, unless it is combined with great power alliances or revolutionary regimes.[9] That new finding is great, except that Ashford does not offer a solid explanation for *why*. On the contrary, she has sold me on the notion that oil-dependent states, oil-wealthy states, super-producers, and super-exporters are essentially different beasts, subject to different causal logics, so why would they all converge on an increased propensity for aggression? And in fact, none of the proposed causal pathways link super-producers or super-exporters to higher levels of conflict initiation at all. For a book devoted to theory development, the lack of an explanation for why even super-states might be unusually aggressive is disappointing.

[9] Colgan, *Petro-Aggression*; Kim and Woods, "Gas on the Fire," 231-249.

Another drawback of the book is that it conflates the effects of oil and natural gas production, especially for oil-wealthy states (1, 23), when in fact, there is good reason to expect the political effects of these hydrocarbons to diverge. The global oil market, which is truly global, operates quite differently from natural gas markets, which remain highly regional. This is because oil is highly energy-dense—it contains a large amount of energy per unit of volume—whereas natural gas is a vapor, the opposite of dense. As a result, to make transportation of natural gas economical, one must either build pipelines or LNG facilities to condense the gas so it can contain enough energy to make shipping it worthwhile. The fact that natural gas exports rely on expensive fixed infrastructure limits the ability of importers and exporters to adapt to trade disruptions–something that buyers and sellers in the oil market can do with relative ease.[10] I take the point that oil and natural gas often co-occur and thus the effect of each might be hard to separate from the other (285, 287). But commentators so often mix the two up that it is unfortunate that Ashford's book might add to, rather than subtract from, the confusion.

I also wish Ashford had written more specifically about how oil production might influence the foreign policies of the United States and China, which appear in her typologies but are almost never thought of as petrostates. The United States has been a super-producer since 1965 and China since 1974. China was also oil-dependent from 1979–1982; the US was oil-wealthy from 1979–1985 and again in 2006 (264, 267). Given the substantive importance of both countries in the international system, and the fact that their status as petrostates is overlooked, extended case studies of one or both could have been especially interesting. After all, the burgeoning Sino-American great-power rivalry is one of the most consequential political developments of the twenty-first century. How might their status as super-producers influence their relationship with each other and with the rest of the world?

Overall, Ashford has done the field a service by better conceptualizing the natures of different petrostates and seeding a bevy of ideas about how their behavior might diverge from non-petrostates. This is a theory-driven book that uses empirical analysis to demonstrate the plausibility of its claims but does not claim to fully test them. No matter. She need not comprehensively test everything to produce an outstanding contribution. Ashford packs in a heroic amount of analysis yet leaves us wanting more. The result–a piece of scholarship that is chock full of hypotheses just begging for additional empirical research–is a book perfect for students casting about for thesis or dissertation topics.

[10] Gholz and Press, "Protecting 'the Prize,'" 453-485.

Response by Emma Ashford, Stimson Center

I would like to thank Robert Vitalis for writing the introduction to this roundtable, and the reviewers for taking the time to consider the book's merits and its faults, and to exercise their skills—as Rosemary A. Kelanic puts it—as "trained academic assassins." I also apologize to them for the delay in finalizing this roundtable. The international environment over the last few years has been utterly fascinating for those of us engaged in study at the intersection of energy, war, and international politics; it has not, as a result, been conducive to meeting deadlines.

The original impetus for this book grew not so much out of an interesting question in international security, but rather from irritation at the ill-defined nature of a concept. As Kelanic points out in her review, there has been a renaissance in the study of oil, gas, and global politics that has moved us significantly further down the path to understanding these issues. Yet, as little as a few short years ago, not only were the mechanisms linking oil and conflict underexplored, but much of the knowledge on this question might be characterized more as folk wisdom than scholarly knowledge. "Petrostate" appeared in numerous polemical—and even scholarly works—but was rarely defined, and then inconsistently.[1]

This book thus fills an unusual niche for a modern political science volume. As all three reviewers note, the book focuses more on definitional issues and theory building than on testing specific hypotheses. Yet theoretical brush-clearing work is the *sine qua non* of interesting questions in international security. Many of the International Relations terms that we take for granted as core building blocks of the field (i.e., hegemony, power, polarity, etc.) are undertheorized. In the case of this book, the focus is on defining the petrostate. As Stefan Andreasson puts it above, this volume attempts to provide an "antidote to the tendency to treat petrostates…as one monolithic category." If it can do that, I will be satisfied.

For this reason, it is important to be clear that this book is not the final word on anything, something that may well have made the reviewers kinder here than is warranted. But it is my hope that other scholars will take some of these interesting questions and run with them. There is so much more to do in this space. Just one example shows the depth of this topic. As several reviewers note, this volume was not fully able to investigate the fascinating connections among oil markets, petrostates, and sanctions. Much of the work being done at this intersection is primarily in the policy space, as governments and think tanks explore new,

[1] Terry Lynn Karl, "The Perils of the Petro-State: Reflections on the Paradox of Plenty," *Journal of International Affairs*, (1999), 31–48; Marshall I. Goldman, *Petrostate: Putin*, *Power*, *and the New Russia* (Oxford University Press, 2008); Andreas Goldthau and Kirsten Westphal, "Why the Global Energy Transition Does Not Mean the End of the Petrostate," *Global Policy* 10, no. 2 (May 2019): 279–83, https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12649; Inwook Kim and Jackson Woods, "Gas on the Fire: Great Power Alliances and Petrostate Aggression," *International Studies Perspectives* 17, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 231–49, https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekv004.

innovative ways to sanction oil producers, even as the academic literature suggests that sanctions in general are a fool's errand.[2] This topic is ripe for more rigorous academic study.

The reviewers also have some thoughtful and constructive criticisms. Andreasson notes accurately that the idea that oil production shapes foreign policy is not a "novel" observation. Yet it is also true that is so banal and understudied that it is treated as an assumption in the field. Oil shapes international relations outcomes in some way, but understanding how, why, and when that occurs *is* worth studying. It is also a topic where political scientists would benefit from reading the work of their peers in political economy, history, and even anthropology. In each of these of these fields there has been significant and fascinating work on the interactions among energy companies, governments, and populations;[3] I am particularly grateful to Gregory Brew for lending a historian's eye to the book in his review.

Kelanic's criticism that the book does not answer its own central question—why petrostates of all types are aggressive despite the variations among them—is also well-taken. I often thought while writing this volume that the question of oil and war bears some resemblance to the democratic peace literature.[4] The statistical correlations between oil and conflict are clear across a variety of indicators, a variety of robustness tests, and almost any modeling changes that could be thrown at them; I have little doubt the connection is there.

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[2] Agathe Demarais, *Backfire: How Sanctions Reshape the World against U.S. Interests*, Center on Global Energy Policy Series (Columbia University Press, 2022); Daniel W. Drezner, "Targeted Sanctions in a World of Global Finance," *International Interactions* 41, no. 4 (August 8, 2015): 755-64, https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2015.1041297; Nicholas Mulder, *The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War* (Yale University Press, 2022); Özgür Özdamar and Evgeniia Shahin, "Consequences of Economic Sanctions: The State of the Art and Paths Forward," *International Studies Review* 23, no. 4 (December 15, 2021): 1646-71, https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viab029; Peter A. G. Van Bergeijk, "Introduction to the Research Handbook on Economic Sanctions," in *Research Handbook on Economic Sanctions*, ed. Peter A.G. Van Bergeijk (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839102721.00006.

[3] David S. Painter and Gregory Brew, *The Struggle for Iran: Oil, Autocracy, and the Cold War, 1951–1954* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2022); Timothy Mitchell, "Carbon Democracy," *Economy and Society* 38, no. 3 (August 2009): 399-432, https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140903020598; Leif Wenar, *Blood Oil: Tyrants, Violence, and the Rules That Run the World.* (Oxford University Press, 2017); Douglas Rogers, "Oil and Anthropology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44, no. 1 (October 21, 2015): 365-80, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102214-014136.

[4] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (December 1999): 791-807, https://doi.org/10.2307/2586113; John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994): 87-125, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539197; Bruce Russett, "Bushwhacking the Democratic Peace," *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 4 (November 2005): 395-408, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3577.2005.00217.x; Bruce M. Russett and John R. Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (New York: Norton, 2001); Stephen L. Quackenbush and Michael Rudy, "Evaluating the Monadic Democratic Peace," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 26, no. 3 (June 19, 2009): 268-85, https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894209104554; Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett, "Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946–1986," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (1993): 624-38, https://doi.org/10.2307/2938740.

And yet, theoretically, I do not have a full story for why this is the case. Kelanic is right: it is genuinely strange that all the different kinds of petrostates (big exporters, wealthy, corrupted, etc.) are so strongly tied to conflict. I suspect that the answer lies in how central energy is to our way of life and our economic interactions. As Jeff Colgan puts it in his article on oil and conflict, "Strikingly, I find that between one-quarter and one-half of interstate wars since the beginning of the modern oil age in 1973 are connected to one or more of these oil-related causal mechanisms. No other commodity has this kind of impact on international security."[5] This volume attempts to provide some potential answers to the puzzle of why oil and conflict are so often related. It does not, however, provide one overarching answer.

A final point from all three reviewers relates to the interaction between great-power conflict and oil production. When writing this volume, I largely tried to avoid relying on cases of clear-cut great powers that are major oil producers, as I think an argument could quite plausibly be made that sovereign energy resources—or lack thereof—may be somewhat endogenous to great power status. Even if they are not, one might argue convincingly that great powers are relatively unique in outlook and behavior.[6] Except for Russia, therefore, I largely tried to avoid drawing conclusions from the experiences of the great powers.

But the reviewers are correct to note that energy dynamics and domestic energy production do play a role in great-power politics. America's position in the 1970s was weak, partly due to the decline in its own energy production and the apparently healthy Soviet oil and gas industry. America and its allies were heavily reliant on foreign energy to fuel the militaries they would need in case of conflict with the Soviet Union.[7] Today, the China-US rivalry is also likely to be intrinsically connected to energy production, imports, and exports. The United States is once again one of the world's largest producers of energy; China finds itself more in the position that the United States did in that earlier period. While both China and the United States are major global producers of oil, China is still heavily dependent on overseas imports, while the United States enjoys highly secure domestic and North American energy supplies.[8]

Energy also remains a source of power for states. One of my own regrets around this book is that it was published in 2022, just as Russia invaded Ukraine. This war not only brought significant interstate conflict back to the European continent, but it also initiated a period of substantial upheaval in international energy markets, perhaps the biggest energy shock since the 1991 Gulf War. This book was written during a period where it seemed inconceivable, for example, that Europe might cut itself off from Russian oil and gas entirely. I think the book's central insights on petrostates and conflict, and on the oil weapon, hold up reasonably well. The shift away from Russian energy was costly but necessary, and Russian threats were met

[5] Jeff D. Colgan, "Fueling the Fire: Pathways from Oil to War," *International Security* 38, no. 2 (2013): 149.
[6] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (Updated Edition) (W. W. Norton & Company, 2003).
[7] Melvyn P. Leffler, "From the Truman Doctrine to the Carter Doctrine: Lessons and Dilemmas of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 7, no. 4 (October 1983): 245-66, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.1983.tb00394.x.
[8] Llewelyn Hughes and Austin Long, "Is There an Oil Weapon? Security Implications of Changes in the Structure of the International Oil Market," *International Security* 39, no. 3 (2014): 152-89; Daniel Yergin, *The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations* (Penguin Press, 2020).

by European attempts to diversify supplies.[9] Yet what scholar can resist the appeal of such a fascinating and world-historic case? I regret that I could not include it in this book's cases.

In conclusion, I greatly appreciate the fact that the reviewers took time to consider the book. My hope is that it contributes to some of the ongoing streams of research that have emerged in recent years on the links between oil and conflict. The world is heading into a profound period of energy transition over the next 50 years, an economic and technological shift that cannot be inherently separated from questions of international competition and security.[10] By better understanding the ways in which energy shapes the politics and foreign policies of states, we will be better placed to understand the changes that such a transition may bring.

[9] Mark Finley and Anna Mikulska, "Wielding the Energy Weapon: Differences Between Oil and Natural Gas," 2023, https://doi.org/10.25613/G9P2-3F78; Ewan Thompson, "6 Ways Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Has Reshaped the Energy World," Forum Agenda (World Economic Forum, November 8, 2022), https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/russia-ukraine-invasion-global-energy-crisis/.

[10] Thijs van de Graaf and Michael Bradshaw, "Stranded Wealth: Rethinking the Politics of Oil in an Age of Abundance," *International Affairs* 94, no. 6 (November 1, 2018): 1309-28, https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy197.