

2014

# H-Diplo

## H-Diplo Roundtable Review

[www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables](http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables)

**Volume XV, No. 23 (2014)**

24 February 2014

*Roundtable Editors:* Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse

*Roundtable and Web Production Editor:* George Fujii

Commissioned for H-Diplo by Thomas Maddux

Introduction by Thomas Maddux

**Rory Miller.** *Inglorious Disarray: Europe, Israel and the Palestinians since 1967.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-231-70256-0 (hardcover, \$35.00). London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 2011. ISBN: 978-1-84904-116-4 (hardback, £25.00).

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XV-23.pdf>

## Contents

---

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge.....	2
Review by Daniel Möckli, Office of the Foreign Minister, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.....	5
Review by Costanza Musu, University of Ottawa.....	11
Review by Simon C. Smith, University of Hull.....	14
Author's Response by Rory Miller, King's College, London.....	16

**This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License.** To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

---

In most classrooms where U.S. teachers discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1967, instructors who are not specialists on the topic most likely turn to a few general assessments such as William B. Quandt's *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* in a third edition that came out in 2005 or a recent collection entitled *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989-2001* which consists of chapters by five specialists including Quandt on negotiations from 1989 through the initial efforts of the Barack Obama administration.<sup>1</sup> Specialists move beyond these surveys to explore an increasing number of more specialized studies that take advantage of archival research and familiarity with the publications of the participants in the Middle Eastern conflict beyond the United States and Israel. A number of these studies are the subject of H-Diplo Roundtables and reviews that have been released recently or are forthcoming.<sup>2</sup>

What receives secondary, if any, attention in the general accounts is the role of Europe in the Middle Eastern conflict. Rory Miller's *Inglorious Disarray: Europe, Israel and the Palestinians since 1967*, along with a number of studies mentioned in his bibliography and in Constanza Musu's review, focuses on the role of European states and the European Union (EU) in the conflict. As a specialist who has offered a class on the EU and the Middle East for a number of years, Miller intended to provide a "chronological, historical, narrative that documented the story clearly in a well-written manner" for students of Europe and the Middle East. The reviewers agree that Miller has succeeded in fulfilling his objective. Simon C. Smith concludes that Miller "has produced a stimulating and genuinely original study that provides a new perspective on the ongoing Israel-Palestine question." Miller's shift of focus from the role of the superpowers in the conflict is appreciated by Smith, who also notes the author's multi-archival research and extensive uses of newspapers. For Costanza Musu, the author of a related study, *European Union Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Quicksands of Politics*, Miller's study is "meticulously researched and documented, and the author makes effective use of a combination of primary and secondary sources in order to offer the reader a clear picture of the complicated process of

---

<sup>1</sup> William B. Quandt *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition; Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Daniel C. Kurtzer, Scott B. Lasensky, William B. Quandt, Steven L. Spiegel, and Shirley Z. Telhami, *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989-2001* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> See Guy Laron, *Origins of the Suez Crisis: Postwar Development Diplomacy and the Struggle over Third World Industrialization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); Jesse Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); William Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The 1967 Arab Israeli War: Origins and Consequences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Avi Raz, *The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Détente: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969-1973* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); and Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

European policymaking.” Daniel Möckli concludes that Miller provides an impressive “mosaic” in his skilful review of the issues ranging from Europe’s response to the aftermath of the Six Day War in 1967 through the negotiations in the 1990s and up to the arrival of the Barack Obama administration. Miller “lays out the discussions and positions of the EU or of national governments in Europe, adding piece by piece to what for the reader becomes an ever-growing mosaic of information about Europe’s engagement in the Middle East conflict.”

Miller’s conclusion that neither the EU nor the European governments have been able to become a “full player” in the Arab, Israeli, Palestinian conflict is endorsed by the reviewers with some qualification. Miller emphasizes the impact of “distinct national interests in a diverse Community” as weakening Europe’s response to the issues. “Time and again historic feuds, local jealousies, domestic politics, and intra-European competition have prevented” a common policy, Miller emphasizes, and the reviewers agree, noting that this is the source of the phrase “Inglorious Disarray” in the book title (2-3). Smith also approves of Miller’s further assessment of “Europe’s inability to compete with the US in the Middle East” and the belief of Israel and the Palestinians that the U.S. “has more to offer them in the role as mediator, guarantor and sponsor” (3). Musu favourably notes Miller’s emphasis on the emergence of EU as the most significant donor to the Palestinians and largest trading partner with Israel which Musu suggests will give the EU a “crucial role in the development of a newly-established Palestinian state.” She recognizes the value of Miller’s chronological approach but would have preferred a more “systematic organization of the author’s views of each historical phase” and a “concluding chapter offering an overview of the author’s findings.”

The “mosaic” of chronological detailed description that Möckli considers a strength of Miller’s study is also by viewed by him as its main weakness, although he recognizes that Miller delivers what he promised. More analysis would have strengthened the impact of the study, according to Möckli, who recommends “analytical wrap-ups both at the end of the chapters and at the end of the book.” Möckli also raises the question of whether internal divisions among the Europeans offered the biggest obstacle to Europe having a more significant role in the region as compared to resistance by Israel and the U.S. to a larger European participation. A more developed assessment of the different roles that Europe played in the conflict and the “evolution of these roles” would have strengthened the study, according to Möckli, and provided important insights on issues such as the “more or less explicit division of labor between Europe and the U.S. ... with the former focusing on economic peace building while leaving Middle East diplomacy to the latter” and an “analysis of the evolving positions of the EC/EU with regard to final-status issues and how to bring about peace in the Middle East.”

### **Participants:**

**Rory Miller** is Professor of Middle East & Mediterranean Studies at King’s College London. He is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin (BA), and the University of London (MA, PhD). His research and teaching focuses on the role of small states in the international system and external intervention in the Middle East. He is the author or editor of eight books and many

scholarly articles and has written widely in the international media and in policy publications including *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He is co-editor of the Palgrave Macmillan book series on the Political Economy of the Middle East and is a member of the executive committee of the European Association of Israel Studies (EAIS).

**Daniel Möckli** was Deputy Head of Think Tank at the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich until the end of 2012. He has since taken up the position of an advisor in the Office of the Foreign Minister, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. He holds a PhD in history from the University of Zurich. He has covered the issue of Europe and the Middle East conflict in several publications, including *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009); "The Middle East Conflict, Transatlantic Ties and the Quartet," in *European Involvement in the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, ed. Esra Bulut-Aymat, Chaillot Paper 124 (Paris: EUISS, 2010), 65-74; "The EC-Nine and Transatlantic Conflict during the October War and the Oil Crisis, 1973/74," in *European-American Relations and the Middle East: From Suez to Iraq*, eds. Daniel Möckli and Victor Mauer (New York: Routledge, 2011), 77-92; and "Major Trends in European-American Relations and the Middle East" (in the same publication, 235-49, with Victor Mauer).

**Costanza Musu** is Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Public and international Affairs at the University of Ottawa, Canada. She obtained her Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Subsequently she was Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence and Assistant Professor of International Relations at Richmond University (London-UK). She has been a consultant for the Military Center for Strategic Studies - Center for Advanced Defense Studies (CeMiSS-CASD), the think tank of the Italian Ministry of Defence, and the Book Reviews Editor of the journal *Mediterranean Politics* (Routledge). Her publications focus on transatlantic relations in the Middle East, European foreign policy, and Western policies towards the Middle East and North Africa region. Her latest book, entitled *European Union policy towards the Arab-Israeli peace process. The Quicksands of Politics* was published by Palgrave Macmillan.

**Simon C. Smith** is Professor of International History at the University of Hull. His publications include: *British Relations with the Malay Rulers from Decentralization to Malayan Independence, 1930-1957* (Oxford University Press, 1995); *British Imperialism, 1750-1970* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); *Kuwait, 1950-1965: Britain, the al-Sabah and Oil* (Oxford University Press, 1999); *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950-1971* (Routledge, 2004); *British Documents on the End of Empire: Malta* (The Stationery Office, 2006); *Reassessing Suez: New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath* (Ashgate, 2008); *Ending Empire in the Middle East: Britain, the United States and Post-war Decolonization, 1945-1973* (Routledge, 2012). He is currently working on a book for Ashgate based on the correspondence between Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson.

Review by Daniel Möckli, Office of the Foreign Minister, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

---

Covering more than four decades of the European Community (EC) and European Union (EU) engagement in the Israel-Palestine conflict is a difficult and ambitious task. Rory Miller has done a fine job in coming up with a study that is comprehensive, highly informative, and reasonably short. *Inglorious Disarray* is not the first publication tracking the evolution of Europe's efforts to advance Middle East peace.<sup>1</sup> However, together with Costanza Musu's recent monograph on the same subject matter,<sup>2</sup> it is certainly the most detailed and most valuable account so far, offering a wealth of new insights to anyone working on this issue.

Taking a strictly chronological approach, Miller covers the story of Europe's (non-) involvement in the Israel-Palestine conflict from the Six-Day War in 1967 to U.S. President Barack Obama's Cairo speech in 2009. Choosing 1967 as the starting point makes sense both because the Six-Day War was a major game changer as far as the Palestine issue was concerned and because France under President Charles de Gaulle ended its strategic relationship with Israel and, as a harbinger of later EC positions, moved rather close to the Arab position in the Middle East conflict. Miller subsequently dedicates three chapters to the 1970s. Among the issues covered are the launch of European Political Cooperation (the predecessor of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy) in 1969/70; the EC-Nine's first declarations on the Middle East conflict; the transatlantic crisis over Europe's role in the Middle East in the context of the October War and the oil crisis in 1973/74; the – largely ineffective – Euro-Arab Dialogue that brought together the member states of the EC and the Arab League; and the brief period of European-American convergence on the Palestine issue in the late 1970s when President Jimmy Carter made the case for a 'Palestinian homeland.'

The next chapter, on the EC's Venice Declaration of 1980, is a particularly interesting one. The broad story of this declaration, which is the most important European statement on the Middle East conflict during the Cold War, is well known: as Carter's initial focus on a comprehensive solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict was overtaken by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, the U.S. refocused again on working out a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace deal. 'Venice' came to mark a counter (or at least complementary) model to 'Camp David' in that the Europeans made the case for also tackling the Palestine issue. The declaration referred to the Palestinian "right of self-determination" and the need to "associate the PLO with the search for a comprehensive

---

<sup>1</sup> Older accounts include Panayiotis Ifestos, *European Political Cooperation* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987); Soren Dosenrode and Anders Stubkjaer, *The European Union and the Middle East* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); and Elena Aoun, "European Foreign Policy and the Arab-Israeli Dispute: Much Ado About Nothing?," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 8 (2003): 289-312.

<sup>2</sup> Costanza Musu, *European Union Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Quicksands of Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

peace” and called Israeli settlements in the occupied territories “a serious obstacle to the peace process” and “illegal under international law” (90). Miller’s achievement in this chapter is to put this text into the political context of its time. He traces the gradual convergence of European positions on ‘Palestinian self-determination’ in the course of the 1970s as well as the change of thinking with regard to the role of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). At the same time, he sheds light on the EC’s very delicate position on the eve of ‘Venice’ between high-flying Arab expectations and much U.S. and Israeli pressure not to formulate an alternative European approach to Middle East peace. If a European-American clash similar to 1973 was averted this time, this was also, as Miller shows, because the Europeans eventually watered down their declaration.

After another chapter covering the 1980s (a largely lost decade in the search for peace), Miller spends two chapters on the 1990s. While the EU became the most important ‘payer’ of the peace process, its political role still remained limited. However, Miller rightly points out that even if the Madrid conference of 1991 and the Oslo process came to be dominated by the U.S. as external mediator, these milestones of the peace process actually reflected much of what the Europeans had long advocated in terms of how to resolve the conflict. He also shows how it was against the background of the gradual derailment of the Oslo process in the second half of the decade that the Europeans increased their efforts to get more politically involved in the search for peace, for instance by setting up the position of an EU special envoy to the peace process.

The fact that the EU became part of the Middle East Quartet in 2002 (with the U.S., Russia, and the UN as the other three members) could be interpreted as evidence that Europe was increasingly acknowledged to be a politically relevant ‘player’ in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Miller does not really go into this, however. Still, his final two chapters on the past decade do cover many important topics, including the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet’s Road Map, Europe’s anger at the Bush administration’s neglect of Palestine, British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s role in pushing for a two-state solution, Israel’s unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip, the election victory of the Islamist movement Hamas and the ensuing policy of EU non-engagement, the Annapolis peace conference, the Gaza War, and the coming to power of Obama. As throughout the book, he skilfully introduces each of these issues and lays out the discussions and positions of the EU or of national governments in Europe, adding piece by piece to what for the reader becomes an ever-growing mosaic of information about Europe’s engagement in the Middle East conflict.

This mosaic is a strength of the book in that it will likely provide any reader – including experts – with surprising new perspectives and details, no matter whether historical or more recent European activities are concerned. But the mosaic also stands for the book’s main weakness. *Inglorious Disarray* is as rich in details as it is short of big-picture analysis. If you read the study from A to Z, there is a real risk of being overwhelmed by the wealth of information and the long sequence of events. In this regard, the book resembles a type of narrative most typically found in the French historiographical tradition: erudite, elegant, profound, and well-structured, but with few major arguments and conceptual ideas that would guide you through the text and that stick in the head after reading.

To be fair, one of Miller's declared purposes is to "document" Europe's attempt to insert itself into the politics of the Palestine issue (2). In that sense, he does deliver what he promises. Still, it is regrettable that he has not drawn out more analysis of the fascinating materials he has collected. In the introduction, he does actually come up with some major factors as to why Europe has not managed to establish itself as a major 'player' in the Israel-Palestine conflict, namely 1) the distinct national interests in a diverse Community; 2) Europe's inability to compete with the U.S. and the U.S.-Israeli special relationship, with Israel rarely trusting Europe's motives for involvement in the peace process; and 3) Arab awareness of the U.S.-Israeli special relationship, leading the Arabs to believe that only Washington has the power to push Israel towards a resolution of the conflict (2-4). But he does not use these short conceptual reflections as a basis for his narrative. It would have been invaluable for readers to get analytical wrap-ups both at the end of chapters and at the end of the book. But *Inglorious Disarray* offers neither, referring only occasionally and usually somewhere in the middle of chapters to the bigger issues regarding Europe's engagement in the Middle East conflict.

If we stick for another moment with the question of why Europe has not managed to assert itself as a key 'player' in the Middle East, it may just be that Miller, by means of his book title, suggests that European disunity has been the major stumbling block. This would be a perfectly valid main argument, and certainly one that is often put forward. Indeed, Miller shows more than once in the book how single countries blocked progress on common European positions for years, such as when Greece during the 1980s took a more distinct pro-Arab line than its fellow EC members. However, one could equally argue that the Middle East conflict, being the oldest and most permanent of all European foreign policy topics, is actually one of those EU issues where member states have managed to agree on a fairly extensive *acquis* of common positions. While there is no doubt that the EU has been cacophonous at major turning points of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the biggest obstacle to a more prominent European profile in this case may not be internal European divisions but resistance by both Israel and the U.S. against a bigger European role. The Venice Declaration is only one of several examples where the Europeans, as a result of US pressure, have said or done less than they had initially intended. Seen in this context, one could argue that the transatlantic prerogative that has characterised much of Europe's involvement in the Middle East conflict has stood in the way of a more distinct European profile too: if resolving the conflict has been a major European foreign policy priority for decades, sound relations with the U.S. have usually been considered even more important.

In addition to a more conceptually-driven assessment of why Europe has not emerged as a major 'player', the book would also have benefitted from more systematic reflections on the different European roles in the Middle East conflict – and on the evolution of these roles. Again, the materials for such an undertaking are all there, but Miller goes down that road only very selectively. Scattered over the different chapters, we learn about roles such as Europe as a forerunner of ideas, as an actor who may have indirect impact by influencing U.S. policy, or as an underwriter of the economics of the peace process and a two-state solution. Yet, the author leaves it to the reader to put all these observations together and into perspective. The fact is that putting the right pieces of Miller's narrative together does lead to interesting additional insights. To give just one example, you could probably argue

that there were at least two periods of a more or less explicit division of labour between Europe and the U.S. concerning the Middle East conflict, with the former focusing on economic peacebuilding while leaving Middle East diplomacy to the latter. Whereas Europe in the first period from 1974 to about 1976 went along with such a division of labour largely because of heavy U.S. pressure, it much more willingly accepted a complementary role in the early 1990s when there was considerable hope that the U.S. could deliver peace.

The 'wish list' of what extra benefits could have been drawn out of Miller's materials also includes an analysis of the evolving positions of the EC/EU with regard to final-status issues and how to bring about peace in the Middle East. What sort of milestones other than the Venice Declaration have there been? In what ways is the European approach to resolving the conflict distinct? Obviously, this is a big issue in itself, and perhaps it would be too much to ask of Miller to provide this sort of service to the reader too. Be that as it may, the fact remains that *Inglorious Disarray* provides a great basis for any scholar seeking to depict long-term trends in Europe's engagement in the Middle East – though it will be read most fruitfully in combination with some other studies that take more conceptual approaches.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the point about big picture analysis, there is one other issue to raise. Although the number of references in the book is impressive (the "notes" section comprises almost 50 pages), Miller's literature base for this study is curiously selective and a little imbalanced. Judging by the references, much of his narrative is based on newspaper articles, memoirs of policy makers, plus 'older' literature of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. While some of the more recent publications are listed too, they do not seem to contribute to the narrative nearly as much as newspaper articles. What is more, Miller does not refer at all to a notable number of important newer works<sup>4</sup>. One implication of this omission is that he must have invested more time in reconstructing the sequence of events by means of media analysis than would have been necessary. Another one is that his story appears less accurate and complete in some of those periods where new literature is available.

This is not to say that the book does not greatly benefit from the newspaper sources. Indeed, one of the main values of the study is the many quotes of politicians, pundits, and intellectuals that Miller skilfully weaves into his account of any given event. However, there are passages in the book that would have benefited from the insights of recent works. On the one hand, this concerns the period of the late 1960s and early 1970s where Miller has not taken into account the archive-based research of scholars of European integration history and/or the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> Had he done so, he would likely have stressed much more

---

<sup>3</sup> Musu, op. cit.; Daniel Möckli and Victor Mauer, eds., *European-American Relations and the Middle East: From Suez to Iraq* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Patrick Müller, *EU Foreign Policymaking and the Middle East Conflict: The Europeanization of National Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> See notes 5 and 6.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, N. Piers Ludlow, ed., *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Jan van der Harst, ed., *Beyond the Customs Union: The European*

that Britain's push for Western European Union (WEU) consultations on the Middle East (18) had little to do with finding a common European position on the conflict but was all about isolating France and pressuring de Gaulle to let Britain into the EC. He would also have found it much easier to account for the emergence and the substance of the EC's first publications on the Middle East conflict in the context of the October War and the oil crisis and to relate the dynamics of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's Year of Europe initiative of 1973/74 to the conflict between the EC-Nine and the U.S. over Europe's role in the Middle East (chapters 2 and 3).

On the other hand, it is striking that Miller has written his last two chapters on developments since 2000 without consulting the recurring analyses of some of the most interesting authors and institutes covering these issues.<sup>6</sup> This may partly explain why he says little about some relevant issues, such as the role of the EU in the Quartet. It may also account for why he does not pay more attention to the EU's traumatic experience of transatlantic disunity over the Iraq War, which, according to several authors, was the primary reason as to why Europe remained fairly passive vis-à-vis the Middle East conflict despite wide-spread frustrations with the policy of the Bush administration. Moreover, in explaining the EU's policy towards Hamas, Miller pays much more attention to the behaviour of Hamas and to the group's 'overthrow' (188) of Fatah in Gaza in mid-2007 than some other authors who instead emphasise the 'War on Terror' context and the U.S. pressure on Europe to go along with the three Quartet conditions for engagement. While this obviously is a question of interpretation, the inclusion of other perspectives would have been helpful in this case.

This reviewer has come across very few factual errors in this carefully edited book. As *Inglorious Disarray* is the kind of monograph that may well go through several editions to take into account the most recent developments, let me nevertheless briefly list these errors. It is the Conference "on" (rather than "for") Security and Cooperation in Europe (ix, 131). France (in the person of Foreign Minister Michel Jobert) *did* participate at the

---

*Community's Quest for Deepening, Widening and Completion, 1969-1975*, Publications du Groupe de liaison des professeurs d'histoire auprès des Communautés européennes, vol. 11 (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007); Geraint Hughes, "Britain, the Transatlantic Alliance, and the Arab-Israeli War of 1973," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008): 3-40; Daniel Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009); Matthias Schulz and Thomas Alan Schwartz, eds., *The Strained Alliance: US-European Relations from Nixon to Carter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Catherine Hynes, *The Year That Never Was: Heath, the Nixon Administration and the Year of Europe* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2009); Niklas H. Rossbach, *Heath, Nixon and the Rebirth of the Special Relationship: Britain, the US and the EC, 1969-74* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Subsequent to the publication of *Inglorious Disarray*: Aurélie Éliça Gfeller, "A European Voice in the Arab World: France, the Superpowers and the Middle East, 1970-1974," *Cold War History* 11, no. 4 (2011): 659-676, as well as her *Building a European Identity: France, the United States, and the Oil Shock, 1973-74* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Names that come to mind include Rosemary Hollis (City University, London), Richards Youngs (FRIDE, Madrid), as well as Muriel Asseburg and Volker Perthes (SWP, Berlin). Also missing are the publications of the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris.

Washington energy conference in 1974, in fact it was there that the EC-Nine faced their first major division in their dealings with Kissinger (44). Finally, ESDP was not the “successor” to CFSP but an integral part of it (173).

Like any other book, *Inglorious Disarray* does have its weaknesses. But it is definitely a publication worth reading and not to be missed for anyone interested in Europe and the Middle East. The fact that this reviewer has found fault more with omissions rather than with specific aspects of the narrative itself speaks for the quality of Miller’s text. Because of its wealth of information, this is the kind of book that may actually still be worth buying. Given the remarkably low price (£25 / \$35 for the hardcover), you could even call it a bargain.

Review by Costanza Musu, University of Ottawa

---

The European Union has long been directly and indirectly implicated in the Middle East conflict because of its geographic proximity, dependence on Middle Eastern oil, security needs, and the historical role played by several of its member states in the region. The Arab-Israeli conflict, and the subsequent peace process, have been among the most strongly debated issues by member states since the establishment of European Political Co-operation (EPC) in 1970; the peace process has been the subject of innumerable joint declarations and joint actions on the part of the European Community (EC) first and the European Union (EU) later, and has always remained a high priority issue in the European foreign policy agenda.

For these reasons a number of scholars have studied the problem of European Middle East policy: the first works date back to the 1980s and focus on the EC's early attempts to coordinate the member states' foreign policies and to reach a unified stance on the subject, and on U.S.-Europe relations in the region.<sup>1</sup> In more recent years other scholars have focused on specific aspects of the policy, e.g. the EU's institutional limits, its economic involvement in the peace process, its policy towards the Mediterranean region (with only limited reference to the problem of the peace process) and the limitations imposed on the EU's role by American leadership in the region.<sup>2</sup> Further studies have focused specifically on the role of the EU in the peace process, on the role of France, the UK, and Germany in forging a common European approach on the issue, and on Israel's relations with the EU.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, the evaluation of Europe's Middle East policy that these works offer is rather negative: over and over again the picture drawn is that of a policy that suffers from the lack of coordination on the part of the member states of the EU, from different and diverging

---

<sup>1</sup> See Allen, D. and Pijpers, A. (eds) (1984), *European Foreign Policy-Making and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers; Greilsammer, I. and Weiler, J. (1987), *Europe's Middle East Dilemma: The Quest for a Unified Stance*, Boulder: Westview Press; Greilsammer, I. and Weiler, J. (1988), *Europe and Israel: Troubled Neighbours*, New York: de Gruyter; Garfinkle, A. (1983), *Western Europe's Middle East Diplomacy and the United States*, Philadelphia Policy Papers, Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute; Bonvicini, G. and Coffey, J.I. (eds) (1989), *The Atlantic Alliance and the Middle East*, London: Macmillan Press.

<sup>2</sup> See Roberson, B.A. (ed.) *The Middle East and Europe*, (London: Routledge, 1998); Ginsberg R.H., *The European Union in International Politics. Baptism by Fire*, (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001); Dosenrode, S., and Stubkjaer, A., *The European Union and the Middle East*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Daalder, I., Gnesotto, N., Gordon, P., *Crescent of Crisis. US-European Strategies for the Greater Middle East*, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2006); Youngs, R., *Europe and the Middle East: In the Shadow of September 11*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006); Möckli, D. and Mauer, V.(eds.), *'A Strained Partnership: European-American Relations and the Middle East from Suez to Iraq'*, London and New York Routledge, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Musu, C., *European Union Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Quicksands of Politics*, (Palgrave Macmillan, Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics, 2010); Müller, P. (2012), *EU Foreign Policymaking and the Middle East Conflict. The Europeanization of national foreign policy*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2012); Pardo, S. and Peters, J. (2010), *Uneasy neighbors. Israel and the European Union*, (publication Plymouth, UK, Lexington Books, 2010).

national agendas and interests, and from the pre-eminence of American interests and policies in the region.

In the context of this rich literature, Rory Miller's book offers another effort at documenting "Europe's evolving, albeit stifled and often frustrating, attempt to insert itself into the politics of the Palestine issue and how this impacted on its relationship with Israelis, Palestinians and the Arab world" (2).

The book does not escape the pessimism that permeates the previous literature. Miller argues that the EU has not really succeeded in becoming a "full player" in the politics of the Palestine conflict, and that this is an unavoidable consequence of the difference between distinct national interests, as well as of Europe's "inability to compete with the US in the Middle East" (3). Other important factors, he argues, have been Israel's distrust of European motives for involvement in the peace process, and the Arab belief that only the U.S. could 'deliver' Israel to the negotiating table and subsequently guarantee the fulfillment of any agreement reached.

The narrative of the book is structured chronologically, starting with an analysis of Europe's inability to react in a coordinated fashion to the Six Days War of 1967, and ending with the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States in 2008 and with the delivery of his Cairo speech in June 2009.

The book's ten chapters are meticulously researched and documented, and the author makes effective use of a combination of primary and secondary sources in order to offer the reader a clear picture of the complicated process of European foreign policymaking. Documents from the British and Irish archives are examined, as well as American, Israeli and United Nations official publications.

Miller analyzes in detail the role of relevant EU member states, as well as the regional and global implications of the evolving situation in the Middle East, and the mixed record of Europe's attempts to carve a role for itself.

Each chapter highlights the paradox that often characterizes EU's policy towards the Middle East: on the one hand the desire to increase Europe's presence and influence, on the other the continued disunity among the member states, that often leads to a declaratory policy of little substance. Together with the predominance of the United States position in the region, all these elements, Miller argues, combine to produce the "inglorious disarray" of the volume's title.

The book makes no theoretical claims, but rather aims at making an historical analysis and assessment of over four decades of European policy towards the region, and of the disconnect between its rhetoric and its action. As mentioned, this balance evaluation is largely negative but, Miller argues, the EU has at least succeeded in consolidating its position as the lead donor to the Palestinians, and being Israel's largest trading partner further reinforces the importance of its role. In this sense, should a peace agreement be reached between Israel and the Palestinians, the EU will have a crucial role in the

development of a newly-established Palestinian state.

In the richness of its details, and the thorough analysis of every step in the elaboration of the EU's policy, this book will offer a valuable read to anyone interested in the topic. The writing is clear and fluid, the analysis is lucid and unforgiving,

The book, however, suffers from some weaknesses that limit its ability to effectively convey its central arguments. While the chronological organization of the chapters allows the reader to follow each historical development in a linear fashion, at the same time it makes it difficult to isolate each issue and evaluate its relative weight.

Chapters are not divided in sections, and none of them offers a summary of the author's arguments. In fact, the book itself is devoid of a concluding chapter offering an overview of the author's findings. Instead, important analytical elements are spread throughout the text, leaving the reader hunting for them amongst the highly detailed account of events.

While it is not the purpose of the author to develop a theoretical argument, or to draw a general theoretical conclusion about European foreign policy through the study of the EU's Middle East policy, the book would have benefited from a more systematic organization of the author's views of each historical phase, which are essential to effectively guide the reader through the maze of a highly complex issue and of a myriad of facts.

The question of Israel and the Palestinians, surely one of the most vexed and tortuous in the post-war world, has unsurprisingly generated a vast literature. The role of outside powers has tended to focus on the superpowers, especially the United States. Rory Miller's new book, however, seeks to redress the balance by concentrating on the role of Western Europe. In so doing he provides new insights into the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Miller dates Europe's attempt to reach a common position on international affairs with the resignation of Charles de Gaulle as French President in April 1969. Using the Palestine issue as his exemplar, Miller's account is essentially that of the failure of the European Economic Community, and latterly the European Union (EU), either to act as one or to translate economic power into international influence.

*Inglorious Disarray* charts Europe's attempt to involve itself with the Israel-Palestine conflict, including such key benchmarks as the Venice Declaration of 1980 which, while recognising Israel's right to exist, condemned the Israeli government's territorial occupation since 1967 and the building of settlements outside pre-1967 borders. As the title of the book suggests, nevertheless, the thrust of the analysis is towards an explanation of the reason for Europe's limited success in exercising influence despite being the most significant economic donor to the Palestinian Authority and also being a key trading partner with Israel.

Miller accounts for Europe's lack of success in becoming a major player in the Israel-Palestine question principally with reference to the ongoing dominance of the United States, which since the mid-1970s has established an unassailable position as principal external power, both politically and militarily, in the region. It has retained this role despite the fact that European Union economic aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) has far outstripped that of the United States. For instance, by 1998 the EU provided almost 55 per cent of all aid to the PA, as against just 11 per cent from the United States (148). Accounting for this apparent anomaly, Miller points out that "both Israel and the Palestinians still see US diplomacy, not European money, as the key to achieving a final political settlement" (4). Equally, the Arabs have embraced the concept that only the United States, due to its 'special relationship' with Israel, has the power to guarantee any concessions for peace made by the Israelis.

According to Miller, another factor in restricting Europe's clout in the ongoing regional conflict has been the reluctance of Israel to trust Europe's motives in getting involved in the peace process and scepticism towards initiatives deriving from Brussels or the national governments of the EU. For instance, an Israeli foreign ministry report written in the aftermath of the Venice Declaration declared that "the political principles of the European Community are destructive and unacceptable and stand no chance of being considered viable by Israel" (93).

Finally, Miller argues that the inability of Europe consistently to speak with one voice has also hampered its efforts to have a major voice in the conflict. For instance, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher speaking on American television shortly after the Venice Declaration assured viewers that the U.S. was the 'single most important nation and what it does is the single most important thing in the Middle East' (98).

Rory Miller has produced a stimulating and genuinely original study that provides a new perspective on the ongoing Israel-Palestine question. Moreover, he gives insights into the workings of the EEC/EU, and the reasons for its failure to translate economic power into international influence. This failing, and the equal failure of Europe always to act as one, makes the title, *Inglorious Disarray*, especially apposite. In terms of scope and ambition, Miller's book is extremely significant and, as such, deserves not only to find a wide readership, but also enjoy a long shelf life. Indeed, it will be essential reading for serious scholars of the Arab-Israeli dispute, as well as being of interest to the general reader. By focussing on the approach of the EEC/EU to the question of Israel and the Palestinians since 1967, Miller has made a significant contribution to the historiography of the Arab-Israeli conflict which, hitherto, has tended to focus on the role of the superpowers, especially the United States. Overall, Miller's analysis is underpinned not merely by a deep appreciation of the existing literature, but also by an array of archival and newspaper sources drawn from a number of different countries. His combination of scholarly endeavour and commendable objectivity makes *Inglorious Disarray* a particularly welcome addition to the already voluminous literature on Israel and the Palestinians.

Author's Response by Rory Miller, King's College, London

---

My thanks go out to Tom Maddux for initiating this roundtable review of my book. I also very much appreciate the efforts of the three reviewers –Daniel Möckli, Costanza Musu, and Simon C. Smith. They have all been generous in their praise and considered and constructive in their criticism. I also believe that some of the informed and informative comments they have made in relation to my book will contribute to the ongoing, and much broader, debate on the best ways to approach, understand, analyze and ultimately explain the European role in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

I do, however, want to take the opportunity provided by this response to briefly clarify exactly what I was trying to do in *Inglorious Disarray* and why I did it the way I did. As I noted in my acknowledgements, *Inglorious Disarray* was born out of the numerous conversations and discussions that I have had with students from across Europe and the Middle East who have taken my EU and Middle East class over the last decade and a half. I wanted my book to mirror this fascinating and illuminating two-way engagement and I felt that the best way to do so was to present it, like the teacher-student conversations that it springs from, as an evolving story over a number of years.

Moreover, from the outset this book's intended audience was students of Europe and the Middle East both inside and outside of the academy who were intrigued by, but not necessarily yet expert in, the multi-dimensional, complex, and often contradictory nature of Europe's engagement with the Israel-Palestine conflict

Given all this, I believed, and still do, that the most fitting approach was a chronological, historical, narrative that documented the story clearly in a well-written manner. That is why I was very happy to read Daniel Möckli's view that the book is "erudite, elegant", Costanza Musu's view that it is "clear and fluid" and that "the analysis is lucid" and Simon C. Smith's conclusion that it is "stimulating." I also think that the most original arguments made in *Inglorious Disarray* benefit from the approach that I chose to adopt. In particular, I think that it suits my examination in the earlier chapters of how the Palestine issue became intertwined with evolving European efforts to develop a joint foreign policy in the late 1960s and how the European move towards recognition of Palestinian self-determination evolved in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In later chapters I think it suited my analysis of British Prime Minister Tony Blair's approach to the Palestine issue as a function of his attitude to the transatlantic relationship, and how Hamas after 2006 viewed the Palestine Liberation Organizations's engagement with Europe in the 1970s as a model for gaining its own legitimacy in the international arena.

Of course, there is a downside to all this. As both Möckli and Musu note, my approach limits both the focus on "conceptual ideas" and the ability to convey "central arguments". Both points are well taken. I also agree that the book would have benefited, as Möckli suggests, from a deeper engagement with the literature on the history of European integration and the Cold War for some of the earlier chapters and from feeding in some of the thinking in other recent works on the wider subject. Again, these points are well taken.

Though in my defence I would say that I did not have access to a number of the most important recent works – including those by Musu (2010), Pardo & Peters (2010), Möckli & Mauer (2011) and Muller (2011) – prior to submitting my final manuscript to the publisher in early 2010. Having read them since, I know that they, along with the comments included in the three reviews here, will greatly illuminate both my future thinking and writing on the fascinating and frustrating subject of Europe and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

**This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 United States License.** To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.