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to the myth that it is the Arabs who have blocked peace settlements, it has been Israel that has been responsible for various lost opportunities for peace. In great detail, Shlaim reviews the history of Israeli territorial expansionism, provocations, escalation, avoidable wars, and squandered diplomatic openings. The two key issues—to this very moment—have been Israeli unwillingness to compromise on its territorial demands and on a fair solution to the Palestinian problem. Contrary to its myth of "purity of arms," Israel has deliberately and ruthlessly targeted civilians throughout its history in defiance of the basic norms of morality in warfare: against Jordanian, Egyptian, and Syrian villages in the 1940s and 1950s, and especially in the Israeli invasions of Lebanon in 1978, 1982, and 1996. In all these cases the purpose has been to send neighboring populations and their governments a message: they should not support or harbor activist Palestinian political and guerrilla movements.

In the view of Shlaim and this reviewer, both the basic Zionist and the Palestinian case are persuasive. As Shlaim concludes: "The moral case for the establishment of an independent Jewish state was strong, especially in the aftermath of the Holocaust. But there is no denying that the establishment of the State of Israel involved a massive injustice to the Palestinians . . . a debt that must at some point be repaid" (p. 598). If a majority of the Israeli public comes to acknowledge this debt—and despite the ongoing violence that is the direction in which things are going—it will be in no small part because of the courageous, unswerving devotion to truth exemplified by Avi Shlaim and his Israeli colleagues.

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The Web of Politics: The Internet's Impact on the American Political System *by Richard Davis. New York, Oxford University Press, 1999. 225 pp. Cloth, $39.95; paper, $18.95.*

Informative and easy to read, this book describes the uses of and adaptations to the Internet by the participants in political communication in the United States. Chapters are devoted to news media organizations and their audiences, interest groups, candidates in campaigns and elections, government officials (the three branches are covered in one chapter), and ordinary Internet users.

The format of these chapters is to describe each development, give examples, then extrapolate to predictions of the future. Thus, the "Electronic Lobbying" chapter covers the way interest groups are using the Internet in their relations to their members, the mass public, and policy makers. This variously entails educating, persuading, recruiting, mobilizing, and lobbying.

Some of the data come from original research by the author: content analysis, surveys, and interviews. But the sites of only three Usenet groups are con-

tent analyzed, the response rate to questionnaires sent out is quite low, and there is an oversampling of the sites of Democrats and challengers. Moreover, the results are not always convincing: 50 percent of groups with annual incomes of less than $1 million a year are said to lack web sites (p. 82), but that is only two of four (p. 190).

Davis's oft-stated thesis is that "the Internet will not lead to the social and political revolution so widely predicted" (p. 168). Because they are effectively adapting to the Internet, the existing power structure, traditional media, and powerful groups will continue to dominate the production of political news and information, the expression of opinion, and the mobilization of political participation. Internet users will continue to be the affluent, the already politically interested and active. Because the Internet is not an adequate tool for political involvement by the public, there will be no rise of Internet democracy in which people become political activists through acquiring information, registering opinions, making policy, and generally interacting with their government.

This thesis may be right. Certainly caution is called for to combat the high-flying hype, the wildly optimistic and fanciful predictions of revolutionary change from so many who write about the Internet. But Davis's analysis is problematically based on the assumption that people's interest in public affairs will not increase, a lack of recognition that situations and conditions change, and a reluctance to speculate. So he concludes that even though the Internet can enable people to be far more informed about, participate in, and influence politics and government, it doesn't matter.

A different scenario is possible, somewhere between the extreme alternatives of status quo and revolution. Fueled by the availability of computers in their classrooms, this country's children and youth will grow up to regard and use the Internet as a habitual source of information (fast-breaking and in-depth), a way of communicating, and a means to action. The American Association of Retired Persons will institute an Internet literacy program for those of its millions of members with the leisure to learn. Even if they are not politically inclined, people will be educated to take advantage of the Internet or will use it of their own volition. Events such as an economic recession will rouse the public from complacency to action. The Internet will make politically relevant information even more widely available and easy to access: campaign finance contributors in detail, analyses of political advertisements irrespective of where shown, congressional conference committee mark-ups. It will provide polling stations and electronic voting.

Americans have a penchant for gravitating to and exploiting new technology in ways that cannot always be predicted or controlled. It is reassuring to expect that we will be able to rely on future, more optimistic editions of Davis's book to keep us informed of new developments, their political implications, and effects.

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