But this is all good, for it allows Thomas Juneau and Bessma Momani, two of Canada's foremost experts on the Middle East, to focus on a more important task: exploring contemporary Canadian policies towards the region. In this book, they have assembled a team of seventeen academics and practitioners to provide us with an excellent and well-researched survey of contemporary Canadian policies and approaches to the Middle East.

To be sure, the contributors make clear that we cannot meaningfully talk about a singular or coherent Canadian "policy" towards the region. Instead, Canada's approach has been messier, more disjointed, and more muddled. This reflects not only the diversity of the region itself, but also the region's lack of strategic centrality to Canadian interests, which allows the Canadian government to take a less integrated policy approach to the range of key issues that have confronted decision-makers in Ottawa.

The chapters in this collection explore those key issues over the last two decades. Three opening chapters focus on the broader geostrategic context, examining how Canada's relationship with the United States has shaped Canada's policy towards the region, Canada's contributions to the multilateral coalition organized against the Islamic State, and Canadian efforts to support security services in the region. The transnational link is examined in chapters on foreign fighters returning to Canada and the Canadian approach to Syrian refugees. While the editors purposely do not try to cover Canada's policies towards each of the countries in the region, there are chapters on Canada's approach to development in Jordan, "illiberal democracy" in Turkey, political Islam in Egypt, and weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. While the issue of human rights appears in numerous chapters, one chapter focuses on Canada's often confused efforts to promote human rights in the region. Three chapters focus on different aspects of Canada's approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. A concluding essay summarizes the chapters and makes an eloquent pitch for the development of a broader strategic vision by Canada in the region.

While this collection might not tell us much about Canada as a middle power, it does nicely demonstrate how—and why—the Middle East continues to matter to Canadians.

Srdjan Vucetic,
Greatness and Decline: National Identity and British Foreign Policy.
Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2021. 379 pp. £24.99 (paper)
ISBN: 978-0-22800-587-2

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Books on foreign policymaking tend to focus on politicians, institutions, nations and international organizations, and trends. Where the public do feature, they tend to be bit

players in a process taking place elsewhere, trying to have their voices heard in the corridors of power. Vucetic takes a different approach here. He argues that the landscape of foreign policymaking—what is acceptable and what is not—is decided by the public and reflected in their culture. This then informs policymakers on the parameters of their power. "Instead of framing British foreign policy orientations exclusively in terms of elite beliefs, I situate them in everyday discourses of national identity circulating in society as a whole. I do so because I believe in the critical importance of the discursive ad cultural contexts within which politics take place" (1). Underpinning this approach is the view that the driving force behind Britain's foreign policy objectives, in a fairly broad sense, is the public, and that those in government simply reflect those desires back on their audience. The people of Britain *wanted* Britain to be great and *wanted* an empire, so the governments of the time built them one. "My argument here is that Britain's search for global leadership was always an expression not so much of bipartisan consensus, ruling-class interests, elite culture, or the 'official mind' but of everyday self-understandings circulating in British society as a whole" (13).

To argue his viewpoint, Vucetic splits his book into six chapters. These cover every decade from 1945 and the election of Attlee through to Blair. Each chapter is then presented in a similar format: "(1) a summary of the main findings; (2) a discussion of top British identity categories; and (3) ... a reconstruction of a topography of contemporary Britishness with select foreign policy events" (40). This structure works very well, perhaps because each decade has its own cultural distinctness, or perhaps because each decade has its own foreign policy issues on which to focus. Either way, the chapters are compelling and Vucetic is clearly an excellent writer with a readable writing style not always found in academic texts. While specific incidents and issues are discussed, the aim here is to discuss the wider context of foreign policymaking rather than each individual incident. Vucetic argues that "[a]lthough many British foreign policy analyses now routinely incorporate identity, discourse and habits, they rarely attempt to recover these intersubjective structures inductively, much less over time and across the elite-mass divide" (40). I certainly think this is an approach with some validity. While individual events and circumstances clearly impact the responses made to them, including the international attitude to action, often the response of any government or organization is shaped by the norms of that institution and influenced by actions and responses taken previously. The "culture" of institutions and organizations matters perhaps more than anything else when considering their response to new issues and conflicts. They will often do what has worked before, or be motivated to avoid actions which have proved to be problematic or ineffective.

I certainly enjoyed reading this book, as I had enjoyed reading Vucetic's papers on the book while he was writing it. He links popular culture with wider views on foreign policymaking effectively and makes a compelling argument for linking the two elements together. Where I perhaps differ from his conclusions is on the genesis of foreign policy norms and expectations. Vucetic argues that the public and cultural expectations provide a framework for foreign policymaking: "I consider British foreign policy as a

dynamic three-way interaction between decision makers themselves, discourses of British identity into which decision makers are socialized and within (or against) which foreign policy is made, and broader processes—generational, cultural and international—that confront decision makers with different challenges within this nexus" (24). I would argue that rather than being influenced by the public and cultural norms, influential politicians and decision-makers create the framework of "acceptable behaviour" which the public then use to frame their views. While undoubtedly influenced by specific protests or incidents, the political class mould public opinion far more than they are influenced by it. Perhaps that is because the study of British foreign policy has made me cynical of the promises which politicians make of "listening to the public" or "reflecting their concerns." A cynic would argue that this is only done when it suits the purposes of those in power. However, Vucetic makes a compelling counter argument, using some excellent cultural examples. I would certainly recommend this book to anyone writing on, or studying, British foreign policy. They may not always entirely agree with Vucetic's conclusions—although I am sure many will—but even those who question his conclusions will recognize the value and strengths of his arguments and this book. It makes a valuable contribution to the field.

Benjamin Stora
France-Algérie: les passions douloureuses
Paris: Editions Albin-Michel, 2021. 381 pp. €18.90 (paper), €12.99 (e-book), [digitization of the text by Nord Compo]
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Professor Benjamin Stora's lifetime of reflection on the course and consequences of French rule in Algeria, and a major policy option of French president Emmanuel Macron to initiate a lasting reconciliation between France and Algeria, converged in July 2020 when Stora submitted his *Report on Memorial Questions Regarding Colonization and the Algerian War* to President Macron (who had commissioned it) in January 2021. The title of the published version, *Les passions douleureuses*, is a reminder to specialists on French politics and history that the controversies and the suffering provoked by the Algerian War are still ongoing and are having political repercussions in France.

Stora, who has published some thirty books on Algerian-French and colonial subjects, is himself of Algerian Jewish origin, born in Constantine in 1950. Concerned that the official silence and the conflicting memories that had followed the end of the Algerian War had stimulated political malaise in France, he published *La gangrène et*