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New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era by Mary Kaldor. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012. 268pp., £17.99, ISBN 978 0 7456 5563 5

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fails to convince the reader that the Gore legacy in Iraq would have resembled that left by the Bush administration. For many, the legacy of neo-conservatism that has been etched into history is not simply the invasion itself, but the character of the subsequent regime change and occupation. The question of whether these perhaps more historically critical events were the result of neo-conservatism, or alternatively whether a Gore administration would have acted similarly, goes unanswered. Nevertheless, Harvey has produced a thought-provoking book that should be read widely for its innovative use of counterfactual methods and its original perspective on a defining policy issue.

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New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era by **Mary Kaldor**. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012. 268pp., £17.99, ISBN 978 0 7456 5563 5

Mary Kaldor's book *New and Old Wars* has opened one of the most prolific debates in the study of international relations, and thus represents a cornerstone text with an extraordinary intellectual impact. However, it also marks the beginning of a new direction in conflict research by implementing a conceptualisation that fails to capture the reality of contemporary warfare, and that falls short of understanding the transformative processes within conflict.

The essence of the book lies with the notion of 'new wars'. The argument is built by contrasting the idea of 'new wars' with that of 'old wars' – a concept which, according to Kaldor, has now acquired a limited explanatory capacity in terms of translating the true nature of war. The first problem with the argument rests with the concept itself. To begin with, 'new' is very vague. Throughout the book, the temporal framework oscillates between an unclear 'before the world wars' and the aftermath of the Cold War. Moreover, the chosen case studies confuse the chronological development of the thesis, since apart from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Afghanistan, the book does not exhibit any great variation of time or geography.

The second problem is that the word 'new' directs us toward the term's capacity to introduce the unprecedented. A claim that war has changed, that the world is facing the challenges of a new type of conflict

requires a comprehensive examination of the process of change, and it is at this level that the book is most misleading. For Kaldor, war has changed ontologically. While in itself this assumption represents a very interesting thesis, the argumentation reflects the changes in the character of war, rather than in its nature. War is still Clausewitzian and has remained an act of violence used to compel the enemy to one's will. The idea of 'identity politics' placed at the core of 'new wars' disregards centuries of warfare and reduces them to insignificant episodes. Changes such as the use of modern technology and increased levels of severity and duration, as well as the reduction of warfare formalism, amount to a transformation of the modalities of war.

Kaldor's book jumps through terminological hoops with the purpose of embedding a certain degree of change in a semantically powerful word. However, the incompatibility between the signifier and the signified surrounding 'new wars' is the result of an attempt to over-represent this transformation at the wrong level of war. Overall, despite clarifying the relationship between globalisation, cosmopolitanism and conflict, Kaldor's book achieves a disjointed result whose main fault is trying to put forward the case for a paradigmatic change without a clear historical background.

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International Relations since the End of the Cold War: New and Old Dimensions by **Geir Lundestad (ed.)**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 318pp., £55.00, ISBN 978 0 19 966643 0

International Relations since the End of the Cold War is a collection of essays examining the new and old dimensions of international politics since the establishment of the new world order after the Cold War. The book begins with an introduction by the editor, in which the period that preceded the post-Cold War era (the past) is examined. The collection contains fourteen essays, written by well-established and highly competent historians and political scientists of international relations, covering diverse and interesting topics related to international power, structure and system.