

Having said all this, I wonder if I am the person to review this book after all. I share almost all of Record's views and do so from a position of a relatively well-informed observer who was involved in the lesson learning process, has lectured and written on the war and debated it in seminar. This is a good book even though much of it is self-evident. It is the kind of book senior leaders should read every year or so: the splash of sobering cold water we all need from time to time to awaken our real selves. It is a book Congress should read in order to be better able to formulate the tough questions at budget time. It is a book for the American public to read to remind themselves of the fragility of any victory — to keep before their eyes the proverb that "Pride goeth before a fall."

Douglas V. Johnson II  
US Army War College

Kemp, Geoffrey. *Forever Enemies?: American Foreign Policy and the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 1993.

The Islamic revolution of Iran in 1978-79 has not only drastically changed the shape of politics in that country, but has also similarly affected Iran's ties with its neighbors and its former patron, the United States. The duration of this bad blood between Washington and Teheran has been only about sixteen years, but these ties may not get better anytime soon. That seems to be the logic underneath the tongue-in-cheek title of Geoffrey Kemp's monograph, *Forever Enemies?*

In the post-Cold War world, when the arch enemy of the United States, the Soviet Union, has become non-existent, the need for an enemy has remained very much alive. After all, the winning grand strategy, containment, worked very well for the United States and the Western alliance for about forty-five years. Washington had gotten so used to having an enemy that US foreign policy misses having one now. Iran, though no match for American military might in the 1990s, has demonstrated a political will to challenge the only remaining superpower. But it has to be careful about not crossing that imaginary line when the United States would unleash its military might on Teheran. Iran's arch enemy, Iraq, is still bleeding profusely from the punishment it received from the United States in 1991.

There are a number of conflicting issues. In two arenas, Iran appears to be — at least so says the Clinton administration and the preceding one — challenging Washington. The Persian Gulf and Lebanon were two areas where Iranian activities never really decelerated, as Washington sees it. But what is the reality? Does Iran have the right to create a sphere of influence in the Persian Gulf? If so, what should be the nature of its activities? What are Iran's legitimate interests in the Persian Gulf area? How should it go about pursuing them? Is the Iranian presence in Lebanon a legitimate one? None of these questions are directly addressed by Kemp.

Regarding Lebanon, Kemp falls back on the conventional wisdom that Iran has established a network of terror that is deleterious to American and Israeli interests. It should be pointed out at the same time, however, that he does recognize Iran's right to build its conventional military strength.

Being a former National Security Council staffer, Kemp proceeds from the premise that the United States has every right to enhance its strategic influence, but Iranian attempts to behave similarly should be curtailed. However, he does not go as far as President Bill Clinton's National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, in advocating the contentious policy of "dual containment." Kemp's own preference for dealing with Iran is much more sophisticated than Lake's.

Viewing it from Washington, Iranian foreign policy toward the United States has been confrontational. The argument from Iran is that it had made two major gestures in the recent past, but Washington remained intent on sustaining a confrontational posture. The first such gesture was the Iranian activism in bringing about the release of all American/Western hostages in Lebanon. The second gesture, argues Iran, was its proclaimed and real neutrality during the Gulf War of 1991. No similar gestures were made from Washington. Instead, the United States has continued its efforts to isolate Iran, though these endeavors have not produced the kind of results desired by the Clinton administration. In the meantime, Iran has been trying to sustain a balance between its economic development and arms build up. This obvious dichotomy is pulling Iran in two different directions, and is also fuelling the debate and a related tug-and-pull between the pragmatists and hardliners within its domestic arena. Kemp quite accurately focuses on this variable in his study.

One interesting section of this monograph deals with a summarized discussion of two groups of critics of American policy toward Iran — "the olive branchers" and the proponents of "expanded confrontation." On a number of occasions in this study Kemp breaks away from the prevailing conventional wisdom in Washington regarding Iran. For instance, regarding Iranian foreign policy activism, he notes, ". . . Iran's hope of becoming a key player in Central Asia depends much more on economic relations than on the ideological appeal of an Islamic state." (p. 31) On the same issue Kemp appears to agree with the views of "other specialists" that "the threat of Iran's formulating a fundamentalist revolt in Central Asia is exaggerated," and that ". . . Iran has been pragmatic and sensible in its policies towards Central Asia since the collapse of the Soviet Union." (both statements are on p. 43)

In his analysis of the military capabilities of Iran, Kemp relies heavily on another study prepared at the Carnegie Endowment by one of his colleagues, Shahram Chubin. Kemp's own conclusions on this issue are as follows. First, "Iran currently poses no significant land threat to any of its Gulf neighbors, including Iraq." Second, "Iran could pose dangers for U.S., and GCC maritime operations if its sea denial capabilities continue to improve." Third, "Iran could pose a threat to sea traffic in the Gulf, including the Strait of Hormuz." Finally, "[t]here is little

likelihood that Iran can pose much of a conventional threat to the Gulf so long as the United States maintains a strong forward military presence.”

While treating the Iranian military build up as a threat to US interests in the Persian Gulf region, Kemp fails to note that the growing American military sales to the Saudis and the other Gulf sheikhdoms are also causing more than their fair share of concern in Teheran. Iranian foreign policy activism and its alleged support for a number of terrorist organizations are also a source of concern. However, it is also true that it is the economic ineptitude and pervasive political corruption in Egypt and Algeria that are the chief variables contributing to the popularity of political extremism within their borders. If the economic asymmetries between the rulers and the ruled were not to grow in these countries, Iran could do little to fan the flames of extremism. The author fails to make this point in this study.

Kemp’s suggestion of a constructive engagement between the United States and Iran, I am sure, will not be considered seriously by the Clinton administration. Remembering how difficult it has been for his predecessors to deal with Iran, President Clinton is likely to follow a policy that will keep the United States and Iran enemies, at least throughout the remainder of the 1990s.

Overall, without breaking much new ground, Kemp’s study follows the path of a reasoned argument. It does not tell anything new to students of Iran; however, it should be read by the officials of the Clinton administration since they have not manifested much understanding of Iran.

M.E. Ahrari  
Armed Forces Staff College

Copson, Ramyond. *Africa’s Wars and Prospects for Peace*. M.E. Sharpe, 1994.

Raymond Copson has written an excellent book which cogently and coherently examines the crisis of conflict in Africa. He begins with a startling review of the costs that African wars have imposed on the continent. He surveys Africa’s wars since 1980 and provides a rough delineation based on notions of “gravity.” He then offers an analysis of the causes of these wars, detailing both domestic factors and the international dimension. Further, he attempts “to weigh the prospects for peace and war in Africa over the next few years, particularly in light of major changes now affecting African countries and the international system.” Finally, he suggests some ways in which the international community might attempt to influence conflict management and movement toward peace.

Copson’s examination of the costs of wars in Africa immediately highlights the major drawback to writing a book on African wars — conflict and violence are so endemic that you can never really get a true snapshot of the continent. This is complicated, he rightly notes, by the lack of reliable data.