

Naval War College Review

Volume 44
Number 4 *Autumn*

Article 35

1991

From Beirut to Jerusalem

Carol Ford Benson

Thomas Friedman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Benson, Carol Ford and Friedman, Thomas (1991) "From Beirut to Jerusalem," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 44 : No. 4 , Article 35.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol44/iss4/35>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

and timely work which is well worth the reading.

THOMAS SEAL
Major, U.S. Marine Corps
Quantico, Virginia

Friedman, Thomas. *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989. 525pp. \$19.95

This book makes sense of the maelstrom of forces and vacuums that hurled and dragged us into the Gulf War.

It sheds light on how a coalition of dissimilar partners became "logical." It explains the effect of the Levant upon American defense, the significance of unenforced U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, the unarguable imperative of the Lebanese question, and the reasons for Israel's acts and policies.

Probably more timely at this writing than when it was published in 1989, *New York Times* reporter Thomas L. Friedman's book identifies four unique attributes of Yasser Arafat that give him legitimacy throughout the Arab world, however much we may wish to deny him that leadership role. It suggests how a view of Israel as a "strategic asset" permitted President Reagan to "tolerate behavior by Israel that no other American administration would have countenanced." He offers us the "two out of three" formula that will necessarily guide President Bush in getting Israel to accept any political

compromise. He also provides an on-site observer's analysis of the mechanics of the 1983 suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, and the foolishness of the U.S. rules of engagement there, that is better than anything this reviewer has seen.

Mr. Friedman asks prescient questions: "Are you sure that God would not prefer that you give some land back in return for peace with the Palestinians?" he asks a key player. The reader begins to see how the diametrically opposed responses of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish peoples in a present reality defined by the past appear rational to the actors. This makes the book pragmatic and militarily useful.

The author leaves us embarrassed not by U.S. military superiority but by our ignorance of how it will be used by our friends and foes. He contrasts the two forms of governance practiced in the region: "benign authoritarianism" and "bloodspilling authoritarianism." Does Western-style democracy have Middle Eastern precedents?

From Beirut to Jerusalem, a National Book Award winner that reads as easily as a novel, will impress warrior-statesmen and scholars. Now that it is available in paperback there is no excuse not to have read this essential book.

CAROL FORD BENSON
San Francisco, California