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the wider business and social science worlds, and specifically with regard to Russian futures. Such an engagement might have given the volume both a more effective structure and the methodological tools to enable it to avoid some of the traps that others have fallen into.

This leads to the main problem, which lies in the volume's roots in the protests of late 2011 and early 2012 that the editors argue resulted in increasingly evident instability in Russia (p. 10). If some might dispute the actual extent of the instability, there is little substantively wrong with this premise on its own terms, or the claim that the protest demonstrations demand a look ahead over the coming decade, or even the emphasis placed on the unsustainability of the current regime. The result, however, is that throughout the volume, as framed explicitly in the introduction, there is a tension between the alternatives of evolution and revolution, both leading more or less inevitably to the end of the current regime, one way or another (pp. 8–16). This poses two problems. If it points accurately to the difficulties faced by the authorities and the rise of protests as a result of socio-economic or political problems, the volume does not take the opportunity offered by the scenario method to explore in detail the variety of possibilities of how such protests may emerge, who might lead them and with what substantive results. If nationalism is a possibility, as the editors note, what about the possible rise of the political left? Instead, there are broader observations that 'one can safely predict that public discontent will be triggered in the future by socio-economic and/or political developments' (pp. 12–13), and that the 'time factor will play an important role in determining whether the development will follow an accelerated evolutionary scenario or whether we're in for a revolution with an unpredictable outcome' (p. 16).

Second, the scenario method—difficult and even flawed as it may be—demands a more open-ended approach that attempts to envisage a range of possible outcomes, and 'thinking the unthinkable', even if this goes against the desires of the authors or what appear to be logical developments from the current situation. A serious flaw in the volume, therefore, is that it does not develop in any sophisticated way the possible scenario that the current regime might remain in power, and even the possibility of it being able to successfully regenerate itself, and how it might go about this. Given the efforts being made to do so, illustrated for instance by the development of the All Russian National Front, this is an important gap, perhaps emphasized by the substantial and renewed increase in Vladimir Putin's popularity during the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

How Russia is evolving, and how the current regime will cope over the long-term both with popular frustration and government ineffectiveness are important questions for Russia-watchers. This volume offers some insight into the nature of the problems currently faced, but not the range of possible scenarios over the next decade.

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Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the limits of liberal intervention. Christopher Chivvis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2013. 249pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 10761 386 7. Available as e-book.

The Syria dilemma. Edited by Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel. Boston: Boston Review Books. 2013. 285pp. Pb.: £8.00. ISBN 978 0 26202 683 3. Available as e-book.

As policy-makers repeatedly ponder the quagmire of a possible western humanitarian intervention in Syria, their thoughts naturally drift to the most relevant recent example

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of liberal interventionism: Libya. Although the circumstances surrounding the ‘Libya case’ and the ‘Syria case’ are highly dissimilar, there are many relevant comparisons and interactions between the Libya intervention in 2011 and the subsequent (non-)decision leading to Syria non-intervention. Both decisions were decisively impacted by the long shadows of Iraq and Afghanistan; domestic considerations inside France, Britain and the US overshadowed policy-makers’ abilities to act upon their states’ genuine strategic interests; and the decisions of Russia, the Arab League and the UN determined the policy options available to the western powers, showcasing the increased importance in the post-Bush years of non-western diplomatic support for western-led interventions in Arab lands.

Two recent books look at western, predominantly American, policy towards Libya and Syria as ‘test cases’ within the evolving doctrine of western liberal interventionism, attempting to diagnose the discourse and decision-making matrix that impacted policy formation. *Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the limits of liberal intervention* by Christopher Chivvis and *The Syria dilemma* edited by Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel benefit from many of the same strengths and suffer similar weaknesses. Both are eminently readable: *The Syria dilemma* because it is largely a collection of opinion pieces written by famous columnists (e.g. Fared Zakaria, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Vali Nasr, etc.) and impassioned advocates (mainly diaspora Syrians writing for non-specialist westerners); *Toppling Qaddafi* because Chivvis is an accomplished and prolific analyst, noted for his flowing prose and compelling argumentation. *Toppling Qaddafi* is an example of contemporary think-tank scholarship at its ‘best’—internet news clippings interspersed with interviews of government officials seeking to illustrate a germane policy point. However, both books lack significant novel scholarship or even an interesting deployment of existing secondary sources. Punditry and think-tank reports deserve their place in moulding policy formation. They are also uniquely suited to informing and engaging the lay-person, government official and scholar alike. Yet repackaging such fascinating ephemera into book form has its risks; as Ecclesiastes warns, ‘everything in its season’.

The books are worth consulting as ‘period-pieces’ that succinctly capture the range of debates, perceptions and prejudices inside American policy-making circles in 2011–2012 concerning Syria, Libya and the formulation of a ‘doctrine of Liberal Interventionism à la Samantha Power’. Chivvis is a hard-nosed realist, who sees liberal interventions as compatible with US strategic interests. He studies the ‘Libya case’ to see what worked and what didn’t. Postel and Hashemi are obsessed by Syria as a western ‘dilemma’ and spend no time showcasing how the Syrian civil war has affected Syrians and broader regional dynamics. They have selected a wide range of opinions on the question of intervention, but even the ‘Arab’ viewpoints are directed at the general American reader and do not contextualize events in Syria. These two books are not about Libya or Syria *per se* and, hence, contain precious little information about the situation on the ground.

Chivvis’s work captures the DC mindset which sees the role of the US in the Libya intervention as paramount. In reality, while the American role was undoubtedly crucial as the Europeans lacked the capacity to intervene without US technical support, the diplomatic push for intervention as well as the political and military goals of the action and the failures of the reconstruction were led from Number 10, the Élysée Palace, and Doha. Despite being America-centric, it is the best account to date of the insular attitude towards Libya which prevails inside the Beltway, but unfortunately Chivvis seeks to understand the ‘Libyan case’ as yet another ‘American intervention’ rather than focusing on the multi-dimensional aspects, whereby the complexity of the uprisings on the ground and competition between Doha and Paris were far more important than American decision-making for

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forging the post-Gaddafi reality.

The Syria dilemma demonstrates that the Syrian civil war is a globalized conflict and that any desirable solution for the Syrian people and the world requires a global hegemon or a hegemonic coalition to impose it. Barring that, the struggle to unseat Assad will continue to play out as a proxy civil war—where outside interference does more harm than good. The introductory chapter by Hashemi and Postel loosely sets the stage for the different contributions, but does not attempt to draw any larger conclusions. In this way the whole book is akin to reading a greatest hits list of American op-eds about Syria: many viewpoints are aired, many epithets are hurled, yet no conclusions are reached. At its worst, Michael Ignatieff's facile comparison between Bosnia and Syria is spurious in its attempts to link the aspirations of the people in the two countries and the substate institutions provided by sectarian networks. At its best, Kenneth Roth and Marc Lynch argue for pragmatic policy options that merit serious consideration.

Over the past decade, the discipline of political science has opened its gate to all comers with a paradigm to analyse, a theory to test, or a viewpoint to air. *Toppling Qaddafi* and *The Syria dilemma* illustrate that neither a test case nor myriad viewpoints can substitute for extensive primary research combined with old-fashioned area studies expertise.

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Party politics and the prospects for democracy in North Africa. By Lise Storm. Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner. 2014. 244pp. £43.50. ISBN 978 1 58826 958 4.

In *Party politics and the prospects for democracy in North Africa*, the author examines 'how the constellation of party systems, as well as the character of the relevant political parties, impact on the prospects for democracy in the Maghreb' (p. 10, emphasis in original). She argues that the prospects for democracy in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia are determined by the structure of the political system, the nature of the political party system and the character of political parties. Noting that there has been little systematic analysis of political parties in the Arab world, Lise Storm attempts to chart a middle ground between scholars specializing in political parties and North African area specialists, setting out a theoretical framework designed to satisfy the former without being too rigid and formulaic for the latter. In so doing, she embarks upon a challenging task, but with considerable experience in the region, including published scholarship on Morocco, she is well equipped to achieve her goal.

An adherent to the body of literature on democratic transition known as transitology, Storm argues in the introduction that significant political change is generally negotiated at the elite level, normally via some form of pact or agreement but occasionally through revolution. In chapter two which includes a concise review of the theoretical literature on political parties and democracy, she notes that the prospects for a transition to democracy in any country, including the three under discussion, and the likelihood that democracy will survive 'are both closely linked to the existence of political parties and the level of institutionalization of the party system in which they operate' (p. 15). This leads her to conclude that any analysis of the level of party system institutionalization reached in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia prior to the Arab Spring centres on the regularity of party competition, the establishment of stable roots in society and political system legitimacy because all three indicators impact on the potential for existing or new political parties to become democratic vehicles.

The remainder of the book is structured by country, as opposed to theme, with two chapters each on Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. The format for the two chapters on each