

proficient application of criminological studies to the field of human rights atrocities. Though this is the intention – and a refreshing one as such – significant conceptual and methodological challenges remain should criminology choose to fully embrace this field. Nonetheless, by drawing the map of international crimes to the attention of an audience engrossed with the study of crime and its causes and reactions, new insights upon the gravest of crimes may hopefully be engendered.

*Kjersti Lohne*

Slantchev, Branislav L (2011) *Military Threats: The Costs of Coercion and the Price of Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9780521763189.

Deterrence theory, the core of security policymaking, has received solid analytical foundations through the work of Fearon, Powell, Morrow, Wagner and others. This impressive tour de force of Slantchev offers a synthesis of this work and simultaneously extends it through an evaluation of how moves such as the use of military threats influence the risk of war. The author explores the implications of a baseline crisis game under different cost and informational assumptions from which he derives a plethora of theoretical results. The added value of *Military Threats* is the encompassing evaluation of all contingencies that are imaginable within an interstate crisis. Many of the insights are not comforting. For instance, this is the case for Slantchev's confirmation of a thesis originally formalized by Banks that the probability of war increases with the utility of a challenge. Slantchev qualifies arguments like the audience costs thesis, according to which domestically constrained actors such as democratic leaders are better able to signal their resolve. Accordingly, this mechanism does not necessarily decrease the risk of war, as democratic peace proponents have maintained. Although the author offers rich illustrative evidence drawing on a wide range of cases, quantitatively oriented scholars will certainly expose the controversial claims of the monograph to systematic tests. The only problem that this encyclopedic monograph has originates from its richness. While it is sometimes difficult to see what the core message is, the author does not give full justice to his findings in the conclusion. He reminds us there that military coercion is not cheap. Unfortunately, such 'implications' do not reach sufficiently beyond the informal recommendations policy wonks try to sell during military crises.

*Gerald Schneider*

Vasquez, John A (2009) *The War Puzzle Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press. xxi + 477 pp. ISBN 9780521708234.

Vasquez's present volume succeeds his previous landmark book *The War Puzzle* (Cambridge University Press, 1993) – a critique of the dominant realist perspective. In this volume, he adds two new chapters to the original text. Apart from this, retrospective commentaries on the original chapters along with a second appendix have been included. Vasquez criticizes the realist strategies to understand the causes of war as well as the policies inspired by realism. In fact, he establishes that instead of providing security to states, 'the practices of power politics' are 'associated with the outbreak of war' (p. 90). Thus, he argues, they are against the foundation of peace. On the basis of empirical evidence, Vasquez advances the theoretical understanding of various paths to war – by combining territoriality with some realist variables (arms races, balance of power, alliances and the like) – through a 'steps-to-war' model. This model points to territorial disputes as the key to explaining why some rivals frequently slide into war while others do not. Territorial disputes create security dilemmas; they compel rivals to indulge in alliance building and arms races, which finally increase the probability of war. According to the author, two major underlying causes of war are: (1) rivals indulging in realpolitik practices to handle salient issues and (2) the presence of contiguous territorial disputes. In the last 16 years of research, peace researchers have conducted rigorous tests on Vasquez's latter proposition and found it consistent with the evidence. This work is a significant contribution to the scientific and conceptual understanding of the origins of war. The book is highly recommended to all who want to understand why states go to war.

*Surinder Mohan*

Wright, Robin, ed. (2010) *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and US Policy*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. ix + 270 pp. ISBN 9781601270849.

Any publisher would vouch that the task of producing a book on the current political conflict around Iran written by 50 top-class experts within three months falls into the category of impossible. Yet the beautifully designed and well-edited volume under review is proof positive of such a remarkable accomplishment. The chapters are admittedly and often regrettably short and