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# Cooperating Rivals: The Riparian Politics of the Jordan River Basin, by J. Soslan

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relative importance of the different arenas of mobilization (elite discourses, the public, and the legal system). In the case of Japan, such an in-depth exploration would have paid greater attention to the government's overall goal of raising its profile in the United Nations and attaining a permanent seat in the Security Council. In the United States, exploring the reasons for not joining CEDAW provides fertile grounds for drawing on interest group and institutionalist accounts in order to develop more confident predictions about the relative importance of the different mechanisms across a diversity of nations. Not only would this have given the study a stronger footing in comparative politics, but it might also have created additional benefits for human rights activists who want to learn more about the kinds of strategies that are most likely to produce success in a given domestic environment.

Treaties and states are certainly central to human rights change, but Simmons's approach also largely forces her to ignore the increasing relevance of nonstate actors and the question of how to effectively protect rights in situations where governments lack even a basic capacity to live up to their international obligations. While governments may well be willing to increase the recruitment age for their military (pp. 339–40), today's more significant threat to children is rogue rebels whose behavior is not likely to be affected by international law. But even in her analysis on the role of transnational civil society groups, Simmons does not push for systematic claims linking the external to the domestic, let alone an agency that actually facilitates the diffusion of those norms in the first place (transnational nongovernmental organizations, a United Nations committee, etc.). Many transnational NGOs working in the humanitarian and development area have only recently adopted an explicit rights-based approach in their work and, thus, acknowledged the very assumptions of domestic governmental accountability underlying this study. And traditional advocacy by North-based human rights groups has put limited emphasis on local empowerment, relying primarily on "shaming" and external pressure.

With this impressive study, Simmons has certainly put to rest an academic debate about the relevance of human rights treaties; now we are back to studying the precise mechanisms most likely to promote sustainable human rights change. A treaty-based approach to human rights is important, but it is most successful when agents on the domestic and international level have developed a sophisticated understanding of how to effectively integrate rights language in their broader strategies of social and political change. The domestic mechanisms advancing compliance are not a given, but are themselves dependent on the resources and strategies available to domestic and external agents favoring (or resisting) an international norm. Given the recent strategic changes in the behavior of many transnational activists engaged in human rights issues, the effects that Simmons identifies as causal for the modest positive

role of human rights treaties in the past should only become more relevant and powerful in the future.

**Cooperating Rivals: The Riparian Politics of the Jordan River Basin.** By Jeffrey K. Sosland. Albany: State

University of New York Press, 2007. 310p. \$80.00.

doi:10.1017/S1537592710001994

— Neda A. Zawahri, *Cleveland State University*

In comparison to other international rivers in the Middle East, the Jordan River is a small stream. Yet, in this parched region of the world, this stream is critical for the survival of several of its riparians. Though shared by the Lebanese, Syrians, Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians, for the latter three societies it is the only perennial river. This international basin is perhaps one of the most studied within the hydro-politics field, and due to the absolute scarcity of water among the riparians, journalists along with some experts have been using this case as an example of past, present, and future "water wars." Do we need another book about the Jordan River? The simple answer is yes.

Drawing on declassified documents from the United States and Israel, information from the Truman and Eisenhower presidential libraries, archives of the *Jerusalem Post* and *Jordan Times*, and field interviews, Jeffrey K. Sosland sheds light on several attempts to mediate the Jordan River dispute. The new data enable Sosland to challenge conventional arguments suggesting that the water question cannot be resolved unless the source of the protracted Arab–Israeli conflict is addressed first. Yet, prior to the resolution of this protracted conflict, from 1979 until 1994, Israeli and Jordanian engineers met secretly to divide and share the Yarmouk River, a tributary of the Jordan River. Supported by the United States and United Nations, these meetings took place in secret as the riparians lacked any official diplomatic relations. What made and sustained this tactical, functional cooperation between adversaries is the book's major research question.

Combining liberal theories about preference formation with neoliberal institutionalist and neorealist theories about interstate bargaining, Sosland argues that the preference to cooperate over shared freshwater arises when a third party is present, the riparians are interdependent on the basin's waters, the negotiations are secret and bilateral, and interstate relations are secretly improving. Tactical functional cooperation permits riparians to exchange information, enables reciprocity and issue linkages, and lengthens the shadow of the future.

These factors were present between Israel and Jordan in 1979, but absent in other periods between Israel and the other Arab riparians. Since Israel and Jordan were both allies of the United States, they could benefit from the superpower's interest in facilitating tactical functional cooperation. Jordan relied heavily on the Yarmouk's waters to irrigate its Jordan Valley and provide drinking water to

Amman, its capital. Israel relied on the Yarmouk to provide water to powerful farmers near the Yarmouk. As the intake to the Jordanian canal required dredging, the monarchy turned to the United States to coordinate a meeting with Israel over the Yarmouk. Having just completed the Camp David accord that neutralized its border with Egypt, Israel was interested in improving relations with Jordan and securing a second border as well. The prospects for secret bilateral relations between these riparians also improved because Jordan was confronting threats from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Syria. Through its alliance with Israel and the United States, Jordan was able to balance these threats.

Together, these forces facilitated what became known as the secret picnic table talks, during which engineers met to allocate the Yarmouk. These talks involved a period of unstable cooperation because of moments of great political tensions and successful behavior-altering cooperation. Such tension, which involved placing the military along the border in preparation for war, arose as Israel or Jordan cheated in an attempt to augment its own share of the river, as when Israeli farmers, dissatisfied with the water they received, augmented the flow unilaterally. *Cooperating Rivals* argues that these secret meetings laid the groundwork for the 1994 Israeli–Jordanian Peace Treaty by building trust and confidence between these adversarial states.

Although the book is about a single case study, its coverage of the Jordan River ranges from 1920 to 2006. Chapter 2 discusses the Jordan basin from 1920 to 1956, a period of conflict during which the United States attempted to achieve a basinwide accord. One such effort was the Eric Johnston mission, which failed, according to Sosland, because of the complex interests involved in multilateral negotiations and the mediations' public nature. Nevertheless, the Johnston Plan succeeded in organizing Israel and Jordan's development of the international basin, and it became the baseline for all future negotiations. Chapter 3 considers the period between 1957 and 1967, which involved the U.S. attempt to prevent the water dispute from escalating into a war. As described by Sosland, this was a time of unilateral development of the basin by Israel and Jordan and of border clashes as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan attempted to divert the Jordan River. Although many have suggested that the 1967 Arab–Israeli war was an extension of this water conflict, Sosland suggests that military clashes over the Jordan River had ended in 1966. Chapter 4 covers the secret talks over the Yarmouk between Israel and Jordan. In Chapter 5, the author analyzes the Israeli–Palestinian negotiations, which have focused on the West Bank mountain aquifer and the Gaza coastal aquifer, excluding the Jordan River. The final empirical chapter covers the Madrid multilateral negotiations, implementation of the Israeli–Jordanian 1994 agreement, and a brief analysis of the Israeli–Syrian and Israeli–Lebanese negotiations.

The findings from this study contribute to the literature on the management of international rivers in arid regions that confront protracted conflicts, such as the Indus, Euphrates, and Tigris Rivers. Power-based arguments that the distribution of power in the basin determines the prospect for cooperation and conflict are inadequate because states' preferences are much more complex than that. The weaker state can form alliances with a superpower to upset the existing distribution of power within the basin; alternatively, the more powerful state can use the water issue to further its own foreign policy objectives. Mediators need to continue to assist states in addressing issues of low politics, which can minimize the possibility that these conflicts will spill into the larger dispute.

Sosland is at his best when he discusses the picnic table talks between Israel and Jordan and the various U.S. attempts to mediate an accord. An important question generated by his book that can be addressed in future research concerns a deeper understanding of the Lebanese and Syrian governments' preferences toward cooperation or conflict over the Jordan basin. As an upstream riparian to the Hasbani River, a tributary of the Jordan, Lebanon is an important player, but it tends to be dismissed as insignificant because it has alternative sources of water. Such conclusions were also drawn about Syria vis-à-vis the Yarmouk tributary. However, as Sosland notes, Syria has been increasing its consumption of this river beyond its allocation under the Johnston Plan, challenging Israel and Jordan's ability to comply with their treaty. Future research needs to help us gain a better understanding of the preferences and behavior of Syria and Lebanon from their own perspectives.

Because of its depth of data and insight, *Cooperating Rivals* should be of interest to those in the fields of hydro-politics, environmental security, and international relations.

**Intelligence for an Age of Terror.** By Gregory F. Treverton. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 320p. \$30.00. doi:10.1017/S1537592710002008

— Peter Gill, *University of Liverpool, UK*

This book takes up where Gregory F. Treverton's previous *Reshaping National Intelligence for an Age of Information* (2001) left off. It provides an opportunity for the author to discuss the consequences of the greater public importance enjoyed by intelligence and his belief that the shift to terrorism and other transnational threats as the preeminent targets runs deeper than is realized (p. vii). The book begins with a description of where intelligence was during the Cold War period, but "its purpose is to describe where intelligence needs to go" (p. 1). The main themes are the change in the nature of the risk (suicide bombers cannot be deterred as states could), the great expansion in the number of consumers of intelligence in both the public