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Emotional State Theory: Friendship and Fear in Israeli Foreign Policy by Christopher L. Schilling

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Schilling, Christopher L. *Emotional State Theory: Friendship and Fear in Israeli Foreign Policy*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015. xxii + 127 pages. Hardcover, \$75.00.

Emotional State Theory is the latest work of Christopher L. Schilling, a political scientist and lawyer. Many political scientists describe Israel's stance in foreign policy as staunch as well as intolerant of any hostile actions or political rhetoric directed toward the country. Schilling's thesis is the following: Due to the vulnerability of Israel, being surrounded by countries hostile toward the state, Israel has adopted a stringent and unrelentingly aggressive foreign policy in the political and military arenas. Schilling quotes Shibley Talhami: "it was argued that Israel's security calculations in the context of its hostile environment are by themselves sufficient to explain the dominant tendencies of Israeli foreign policy" (p. xvii).

In his book, Schilling discusses his *Emotional State Theory* of Israel's Foreign Policy under the following framework: theoretical framework, methodological strategy, Jewish identity constructions, and Israeli foreign policy. With respect to the theoretical framework, Schilling sought to research the psychology of the foreign policy. Schilling does not argue that paranoia and the fear of state-destruction is the sole motivation in Israeli foreign policy, but living in a volatile environment does elicit these emotions. He compares the state to a person, full of varying degrees of these emotions and corresponding fight-or-flight psychological reactions. Conversely, international relations require friendship, the healing of distrust, etc., much like a friendship between individuals. If one cannot trust another, Schilling argues, then one may initiate a defensive mode – hence Israel's dominance in its foreign policy. Under the methodological strategy, Schilling looked at political science research, and asks how such a fear came into play with respect to foreign policy and to what extent that fear reached. Although the arguments of Israeli foreign policy, and the emotions tied to it, are not based solely on Israel's identity as a Jewish state, Schilling discusses Jewish identity constructions, Zionism, and Diaspora. Schilling describes anti-Semitism as part of the hostile environment that affects Israel's defense programs. Under the Israeli foreign policy section, elements of the other three are combined to argue his thesis, making note of the variations and policies of Prime Ministers Begin, Rabin, and Netanyahu.

Schilling's theory of Israel's emotional state is credible. It is backed by psychological and political evidence, and his research and explanations are very thorough. Schilling's writing is exemplary. The book is easy to read, and his framework is easy to follow. Although minorities, such as non-Jews, as well as those that live within Israel's borders that wish to see the State dissolved, are not excluded in the book, Schilling's references to Israel as one person can be interpreted as over-generalizing. Regardless, in this book, Schilling helps to foster an understanding of Israel which is especially helpful today as Israel figures so prominently in world affairs.

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