

Adamec, Ludwig W. *Historical Dictionary of Afghan Wars, Revolutions, and Insurgencies*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD, Toronto and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2005.

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looking at modern peacekeeping operations, Marten is able to make the case that the past, at least in some ways, does repeat itself. Furthermore, this work adds to an expanding body of research and scholarship addressing our new, post-Cold War world and asks what the role of the West — the international community — should be in terms of peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

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One of the first things one should always try to do when writing a book review is identify a central theme or argument; rather difficult it could be said when reviewing a dictionary. Ludwig Adamec's update of his 1996 *Historical Dictionary of Afghan Wars, Revolutions, and Insurgencies* does not have, nor does it require, a central theme. Instead, it sets out to provide a quick reference for a variety of terms, events, and people involved in the modern history of this region of South West Asia. For the most part, Adamec succeeds in doing so.

The thirtieth such *Historical Dictionary of War, Revolution and Civil Unrest* overseen by Jon Woronoff, Adamec's addition to the series updates his original book to include the American-led invasion following the attacks on Washington and New York in 2001. Rather than trying to tell the story of a particular operation as Sean D. Naylor attempted in *Not a Good Day to Die*, or offer a detailed description of a societal nuance like Nancy Tapper's various articles on the Durrani-Pathan tribes of the 1970s and 1980s, Adamec has tried to pull together the major players, events, and places that have characterized Afghanistan over the last 300 years. Adamec does not go into the detail that these authors have done, but what he loses in depth he certainly makes up for in breadth.

Adamec, a professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona and director of the Near East Centre, has written extensively on Afghanistan, Islam, and their histories. He is, most certainly, an expert on the subject. His book is divided into several sections, beginning with the requisite foreword and acknowledgements. Adamec also provides a list of abbreviations and acronyms along with a detailed, 88-page chronology that is completely cross-referenced with the principle section of the book, the dictionary. The dictionary itself is preceded by a comprehensive introduction and followed by a

series of appendices that provide some primary source material on the subject of both the Soviet and current ISAF occupation of Afghanistan. Finally, an extensive and detailed bibliography makes up the last 30 pages.

The bibliography is quite extensive and easily one of the book's strengths. Divided into sections covering general topics, the history of Afghanistan from 1700 to the turn of the last century, the various Anglo-Afghan wars, the Soviet intervention, the rise of the Taliban and finally, the intervention by the United States in late 2001. Although several entries are of older texts – some dating from the late-1800s – and some are based purely on the examination of the people of Afghanistan, the majority of the entries are based on certain events. As the title of the work states that the dictionary is one of wars, revolutions, and insurgencies, the lack of emphasis on culture is not surprising; but it is unfortunate. Topics such as revolutions and insurgencies cannot truly be discussed or understood without a good understanding of the culture behind these activities.

Although some entries are quite informative, especially those relating to conflicts prior to the 1980s, and all are extensively cross-referenced, several entries are rather odd. Space is devoted to entries such as “Special Forces, Equipment” (p. 300) or Operation ANACONDA (p. 237). The entry devoted to equipment simply lists kit that is commonly used by all soldiers while Operation ANACONDA, along with Operation VALIANT STRIKE (p. 240), were only two of many operations that have occurred in Afghanistan since 2001 as part of the American-led Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (also receiving an entry with some commentary as to its success and failure). The choice of entries is somewhat confusing and inconsistent.

Despite these concerns, the introduction is a very succinct overview of the history of modern Afghanistan and incredibly informative. A second edition, given the recent events since 2001 is certainly warranted for this book and Adamec's effort to do so is, for the most part, successful. Although the book treats the cultural nuances somewhat thinly and his more recent entries sometimes tend to prognosticate rather than recount, Adamec's book does what it is supposed to do: serve as a foundation for further research. This book would serve any current or would-be student of this troubled region of South West Asia well as an initial guidepost to further research. Adamec's *Historical Dictionary* is a worthy entry into a long and important series on a sadly relevant, important topic.

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