

sianic theology with righteous violence, and the Saudi state's sclerotic corruption with the complicity of the official religious institutions. Trofimov aptly points out endemic regional problems with enduring repercussions for fighting terror, but is hampered by his sensationalist style ("The world was twelve months away from the tumultuous events that would cover the mosque's marble courtyard with blood, spilled guts and severed limbs"). In 1979, the Saudi intelligence services apparently had no accurate blueprints of the Grand Mosque, and knew nothing of the underground labyrinth where many of the militants took shelter; they eventually received plans to the site from Osama bin Laden's older brother. Ringleader Juhayman and his followers have inspired al-Qaeda and countless other Islamic revivalist movements to ever greater acts of violence, even though they were mesmerized by their limited understanding of an obscurantist theology and were convinced that that one of their unassuming members was the Messiah. Casual readers will be well served by this introduction to Muslim fundamentalist terrorism. (Sept. 18)

★ **Legacy of Ashes:  
The History of the CIA**

TIM WEINER. Doubleday, \$27.95 (704p) ISBN 978-0-385-51445-3

Is the Central Intelligence Agency a bulwark of freedom against dangerous foes, or a malevolent conspiracy to spread American imperialism? A little of both, according to this absorbing study, but, the author concludes, it is mainly a reservoir of incompetence and delusions that serves no one's interests well. Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* correspondent Weiner musters extensive archival research and interviews with top-ranking insiders, including former CIA chiefs Richard Helms and Stansfield Turner, to present the agency's saga as an exercise in trying to change the world without bothering to understand it. Hypnotized by covert action and pressured by presidents, the CIA, he claims, wasted its resources fomenting coups, assassinations and insurgencies, rigging foreign elections and bribing political

leaders, while its rare successes inspired fiascoes like the Bay of Pigs and the Iran-Contra affair. Meanwhile, Weiner contends, its proper function of gathering accurate intelligence languished. With its operations easily penetrated by enemy spies, the CIA was blind to events in adversarial countries like Russia, Cuba and Iraq and tragically wrong about the crucial developments under its purview, from the Iranian revolution and the fall of communism to the absence of Iraqi WMDs. Many of the misadventures Weiner covers, at times sketchily, are familiar, but his comprehensive survey brings out the persistent problems that plague the agency. The result is a credible and damning indictment of American intelligence policy. (Aug. 7)

**Democracy's Good Name:  
The Rise and Risks of the  
World's Most Popular Form of  
Government**

MICHAEL MANDELBAUM. Public Affairs, \$27.95 (336p) ISBN 978-1-58648-514-6

Democracy, until recently, was an anomaly in a landscape of monarchies, dictatorships and empires; its critics—including America's founding fathers—associated it with mob rule and demagogic tyranny. In this engaging treatise, Mandelbaum (*The Ideas That Conquered the World*) explains how the modern democratic fusion of popular sovereignty—i.e., majority rule—with individual liberty came to dominate the world's politics. His first reason is straightforward: democracy works. Democratic nations, he notes, especially the flagship democracies of Britain and the U.S., are wealthier, stronger and more stable and inspire other countries to emulate them. His second, more provocative explanation, is that the modern spread of free markets provides a "school for democracy" by establishing private property (the fundamental liberty), respect for law, civil society, organized economic interests as the forerunners of political parties, and the habit of settling differences by negotiation and compromise rather than violence. Mandelbaum's market rhetoric—he calls democracy the "leading brand of political system" among "knowl-

edgeable political consumers"—can be a bit simpleminded. But readers will find a lucid, accessible blend of history, political science and sociology, with a wealth of fresh insights into the making of the contemporary world. (Aug.)

★ **A Quiet Revolution:  
The First Palestinian Intifada  
and Nonviolent Resistance**

MARY ELIZABETH KING. Nation, \$16.95 paper (480p) ISBN 978-1-56025-802-5

A scholar of nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience, King contends that the first Palestinian intifada (1987-1993) was explicitly peaceful from its inception. Stating that "[h]istory is often the narrative of wars, and military historians enjoy prestige, whereas the chronicling of how societies have achieved major accomplishments through nonviolent resistance is scant by comparison," she draws on a wealth of documentary and statistical evidence to demonstrate that the Palestinians exercised remarkable restraint during the first years of the intifada. Tying together the threads of civil society, political mobilization and social change, she delivers a fascinating account of a nation in transition. In the occupied "territories," she argues, the Israeli military brutally repressed the "wedging open of nongovernmental political space and development of institutions not under official purview" and deepened the Palestinians' desire for change. The closure of the educational institutions in the West Bank in 1988, for example, caused teachers and professors to return to their home villages, where they were quickly able to politicize uneducated people. While King may be faulted for ignoring the gradual return to violence that's characterized the situation in recent years, her book is essential reading for anyone interested in Mideastern peace. (Aug.)

**The Book of Happy Endings:  
True Stories About  
Finding Love**

ELISE VALMORBIDA. Cyan (IPG, dist.), \$14.95 (216p) ISBN 978-1-905736-03-4

Valmorbida (*Matilde Waltzing*) brings her gift for elegant language to this collection of narratives about the search for