

Book Review

Dr. Alexander Dawoody

Permanent Wars, The Neocons, and East-West Relations: The Ukraine and Gaza Wars in Context
Wilmington, Delaware: Vernon Press, 2026

Reviewed by Shahub Tossi, Ph.D.

This book was particularly engaging for me, as my own work has largely focused on economic development, public policy, and international political economy rather than conflict studies directly. That said, *Permanent Wars, The Neocons, and East-West Relations* challenged me to think more critically about the underlying structures that sustain global conflict. It does so not by simply recounting geopolitical events, but by offering a broader theoretical lens grounded in complexity and systemic analysis.

Dr. Dawoody presents a clear and compelling argument that contemporary U.S. foreign policy, especially under the influence of neoconservative ideology, which emphasizes interventionist and hegemonic strategies, has contributed to the persistence and reproduction of conflict. Rather than resolving instability, these approaches often reinforce it. The book's primary contribution lies in its attempt to move beyond these traditional frameworks by introducing a complexity-based perspective, one that emphasizes networks, feedback loops, and adaptive systems as more appropriate tools for understanding modern geopolitical realities.

The book's structure reflects this progression. Early chapters establish the conceptual foundation, particularly the importance of non-linear thinking for understanding complex dynamics in contemporary geopolitical contexts. These ideas are then applied to a detailed critique of neoconservative ideology and its policy implications, before being extended to case analyses of Ukraine and Gaza. This movement from theory to application is handled carefully and consistently, allowing the reader to see how abstract concepts translate into real-world consequences.

This theoretical framework is most clearly reflected in the book's analysis of the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as its broader treatment of East–West relations. In Chapter 6, the Ukraine conflict is framed not simply as a bilateral war, but as a proxy conflict shaped by NATO expansion, Western political interests, and the strategic use of economic sanctions and military aid. The chapter also highlights the role of media narratives and geopolitical framing in shaping public perception and policy responses. Similarly, in Chapter 7, the discussion of Gaza situates the Israeli–Palestinian conflict within a longer historical and geopolitical context, emphasizing the influence of external actors, ideological divisions, and competing international interests in sustaining the conflict. In both cases, Dr. Dawoody demonstrates how these conflicts operate within interconnected systems of

political, economic, and institutional forces, reinforcing the book's central argument that contemporary conflicts must be understood as multidimensional and systemic rather than isolated events.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the book is its methodological approach, which employs qualitative content analysis, supported by tools such as Ethnograph (<http://www.qualisresearch.com/>) to identify key themes across the literature and case materials. This approach is further complemented by the Scattering Matrix framework, which views international relations as a dynamic, interconnected system rather than a series of isolated events. While this approach may be unfamiliar to some readers, it ultimately strengthens the argument by providing a structured and systematic way to analyze complex global interactions.

At the same time, the book's conclusions extend beyond the specific cases examined. By emphasizing complexity, interdependence, and adaptability, Dr. Dawoody offers an approach applicable to a wide range of global challenges. This represents one of the book's strongest contributions. It is not limited to explaining past or current conflicts, but instead encourages a broader rethinking of how policymakers and scholars approach global governance and international relations. The book is well-organized and clearly written, maintaining a scholarly tone while remaining accessible. The integration of theory, methodology, and applied case analysis reflects a strong command of the subject matter.

Overall, *Permanent Wars, The Neocons, and East-West Relations* is a thoughtful and well-developed contribution that not only challenges conventional approaches to international relations but also advances a more dynamic and systems-oriented understanding of global conflict. By integrating complexity theory with contemporary case analyses, Dr. Dawoody provides a compelling framework for rethinking how conflict is analyzed and addressed. For scholars and practitioners interested in innovation, public policy, and global governance, the book offers both a critique of existing paradigms, such as traditional state-centric and linear models of international relations, and a meaningful step toward more adaptive, systems-based approaches. While the framework is compelling, at times the analysis adopts a strongly normative stance toward Western foreign policy, which, while central to the book's argument, may benefit from further engagement with alternative perspectives, including domestic political dynamics and the role of non-Western actors in shaping conflict outcomes.

About the Author:

Shahub Tossi, Ph.D., is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Management at Penn State University. He earned his Ph.D. in Strategic Leadership and Administrative Studies from Marywood University and also holds a Master of Business Administration from Texas A&M University. Prior to entering academia, he worked as a project manager in the aerospace sector, bringing practical industry experience to his teaching and research. His research focuses on international macroeconomics, with particular attention to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, integrating international economics, public policy, and strategic management. As an educator, he teaches courses in Strategic Management, Project Management, and Principles of Management, emphasizing analytical rigor, evidence-based decision-making, and the practical application of theory to real-world challenges. He can be reached at sit5063@psu.edu.