PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book had humble beginnings. It was born out of a meeting of the minds of two (as yet) doctoral students who shared a concern about the dearth in critical studies of security in the Middle East. Our thoughts about the field did not correspond with the availability of literature on the library shelves. The end of the Cold War brought about fundamental shifts in the international political system, which many scholars and practitioners believed would have ripple effects in all regions and fields of interest, including what may be termed 'national security'. Literature on security during the Cold War era was focused primarily on the military, the state system and superpower rivalry. However, with the end of the Cold War, the theory and practice of security has been subject to widespread rethinking, taking into consideration a larger range of issues and contexts that were previously neglected. A substantial literature has developed that offers critiques of the orthodoxy of strategic studies as well as means to broaden and deepen the study of security in the global system. Unfortunately, this current has been slow to reach the Middle East, one of the most volatile, yet strategic, regions of the post-Cold War era.

Sometimes, with a lot of effort, ideas come to fruition. For the reasons outlined above, we organized an international conference entitled 'Redefining Security in the Middle East: Effects of the Peace Process' at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, on 23–24 June 2000. In order to undertake such an ambitious project, on such a controversial subject as security in the Middle East, it was necessary to do major fundraising as well as solicit advice from a large number of colleagues: academics, practitioners and administrative staff.

The individuals who assembled at this conference came from a variety of backgrounds, in respect of race, nationality, religion and ethnicity, from three different continents (America, Europe and the Middle East), and from different 'sides of the fence' so to speak in the Arab–Israeli context, whose common interest was in dialogue in support of peace in the Middle East. The main objective of the conference was to investigate the impact of the Middle East peace process on the development of Middle East security agendas, focusing on alternative methods and philosophies of conflict and conflict resolution in the region.

The conference was organized around panels intended to serve as chapters of the book: conceptual issues of redefining military/strategic security, environmental–economic security, multilateral security issues, and gender and social–cultural issues. The papers were submitted prior to the conference and

were given extensive comments and critique by a discussant on each panel. The conference attracted a sizeable audience of scholars, practitioners and members of the public at large. A roundtable discussion provided an opportunity for each contributor to determine how the peace process has influenced the definition and practice of security in the Middle East and how his or her paper fitted in with the overall theme. Each of the papers addressed one or more of the following themes as central to the objective of redefining security in the Middle East:

- 1 issues of knowledge, power, inclusion, and exclusion in the definition and redefinition of 'security';
- 2 the inability of the traditional security concept to explain contemporary concerns and interests of different state and non-state actors in the Middle East;
- 3 the changing nature of security concerns in the Middle East as a facet of the altered strategic context of the peace process era; and
- 4 the intersections of political, social, environmental, cultural, gender, and other collective identity issues in redefining security in the Middle East.

The spirit of optimism that underpinned this project was literally shaken by the outbreak of the second *intifada*, which began at the end of September 2000 (three months after the conference took place). We observed the chain of violent incidents with horror and utter disappointment. From that point on, the idea of analysing the effects of a peace process that ceased to exist (or was terminally ill for quite some time) became problematic, to say the least. Not only did the configuration of circumstances on the ground change fundamentally, but the attitudes, fears and hopes of the participants themselves were challenged to the core, particularly as most, if not all, of them are deeply passionate about and connected to the region through family, friends and other significant bonds.

As the region continued to descend into violence and chaos, a project such as ours became a difficult sell. Observers pointed out that a redefinition of 'security' could not take place during a time of such flux and confusion. Nevertheless, as editors and contributors of the volume, we stand firm in our belief that now is *precisely* the time to think about new concepts, new policies and new discourses about security since it has become quite obvious that the old ones are not working. We do not provide a singular alternative or magical approach that is intended to 'solve' the Arab–Israeli conflict. Our goal is simply to provide a broader terrain for discussion, debate and analysis of the possibilities and constraints for and on conflict and conflict resolution in the region, to consider the complicated reality in alternative ways and to continue – even in times of crisis – to envisage an alternative, more peaceful, future for all the parties involved. Our hope is that students and scholars of the politics of

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the Middle East, in particular, and the global arena, in general, will employ this book as a means by which to think differently about the meaning and practice of security.

This book would not have been possible without the contributions of many people. We are deeply appreciative of the financial support given by the Department of National Defence (Canada), the University of Manitoba's Centre for Defence and Security Studies (CDSS), Department of Political Studies and Faculty of Arts, and McGill University's Research Group on International Security, Department of Political Science and Faculty of Arts. This support allowed us to finance the travel, accommodations, ground transportation and meals of the participants in the conference. We thank Geoffrey Aronson from the Foundation for Middle East Peace, Washington, DC, for giving an excellent keynote address. We are also grateful to Rex Brynen and James Devine, who offered valuable comments on the papers as chairs/discussants of panels at the conference. We appreciate the participation by members of the audience, some of whom came from afar.

On the administrative side, Pat Kruchak (CDSS) was indispensable in providing assistance on a daily basis for over three years, particularly through the reimbursement quagmire following the conference. Also, our assistants, Lindsey Troschuk and Ariann Kehler, contributed their organizational and interpersonal skills, and their creativity during the conference itself. Lenore Martin offered valuable advice throughout the process of publication, for which we are grateful. We are indebted to the two anonymous readers designated by Manchester University Press who provided critical comments on the initial prospectus. Also thanks to Tony Mason, Commissioning Editor for Politics, International Law & Economics (MUP) for continuous critical guidance on the organization and submission of the typescript for the book, as well as to Marilyn Cresswell for specific advice on contractual issues. The Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne, Australia, provided a second home for Tami for the last four months of the project, during which time ample administrative support was given.

Our gratitude is also due to all the contributors – some who became involved at short notice in the latter stages of publication, and particularly to those whose chapters were submitted early on – for their continued hard work. We thank also those participants at the conference whose papers were not included in the book, but whose involvement deepened our perspectives a great deal. If not for the Internet, this project would have been near impossible, as we communicated across several continents and saved what may have otherwise been a very lengthy paper trail.

Finally, we thank and dedicate this book to our families. This project impinged on three years of time that were as much theirs as our own. Brent

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