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| |  | | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Kandel G. Eaton  J.D. is ex-officio newsletter editor for the ABA Committee on International Arms and National Security     |  | | --- | | **Read other reviews:**  [Internet Movie Database](http://www.us.imdb.com/title/tt0167260/)  [All Movie Guide](http://www.allmovie.com/cg/avg.dll?p=avg&sql=1:278981)  [Readers' comments](http://docs.google.com/user_feedback.htm) |       Terrorism, as the shadow of Mordor, grows in strength to acquire the penultimate power. Whether it is the Ring or nuclear weaponry, both seek to dim the lights of freedom in the wake of its darkness. The Ring and the War on Terror have in common a fearsome ability to divide and conquer, even though "the spin" is to unite all peoples. | |  | | --- | | *"This day is not for one man, but for all.*  *Let us rebuild the world and share our days in peace."*  -King Aragorn  **The Politics of Victory**  by Kandell G. Eaton  *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (*LOTR*) is a literary jewel, its many facets reflecting the mingling in time of war and pop culture. Nearly half as old as the eleventy-one years of Bilbo Baggins (readily willful Ian Holm), this FINALLY winner of an eleven Oscar sweep proves that Peter Jackson (PJ) has created one of the best films of all time.  An awesome staff, crew, "and New Zealand" completed the magnificent genesis that became Middle Earth. The ultimate professional cast outshone every agony with superb characterizations: they owned those roles. The academy ought to have created a group Oscar to recognize acting so good it can't be singled out; their memorable performances flawlessly tied to each other despite and because of digital technology.  PJ is certainly capable of "picturing justice." He invites and sometimes unwittingly demands the audience take sides in the fight for Middle Earth. The film's greatest strength, unlike the industry standard "in your face" films that force the audience to watch quick edits and pointless action that are too easily forgotten,, is its audience friendliness. This is one video game-movie that has a plot.  We Ringers do wonder: what is next for PJ? Hopefully its prequel *The Hobbit* accompanied by music from the greatly missed Led Zeppelin? Or have some fun with Harvard Lampoon's *Bored of the Rings* (1969)?? Or perhaps write continuing fantasies from Middle Earth??? Lot of possibilities are out there; just stopping with *LOTR* would so disappoint its new multitudes of fans.  *LOTR* taps deep into the subconscious wells of humanity. Its omnipotent connection incarnates positive ideals before us--making individual duty, protest and conflict personably relevant to each audience member. *The Fellowship of the Ring* makes us question our motives, and why we choose to fight. The *Two Towers* left us in the lurch of an uncertain future, much like the present times, focusing on ethics of conflict. *The Return of the King* (*ROTK*) elaborates on victory, how difficult it is, even in the aftermath, to be satisfied with mere peace, of what we do next as humankind.  *ROTK* opens with Treebeard and his fellow Ents flooding and destroying the Uruk-hai factory at Isengard. Though Mordor has yet to be dealt with, the Ents return to Fangorn forest. Gandalf the White (elegantly intuitive Ian McKellen), fresh from victory at  Helm's Deep, meets Merry (daringly bashful Dominic Monaghan) and Pippin (recklessly amusing Billy Boyd) guarding Saruman (serenely demented Christopher Lee), and Wormtongue (spineless henchman Brad Dourif). The victorious ride off to Rohan, leaving the defeated to their own devices. There is more left to do.  On the way, Pippin discovers a Palantiria, an all-seeing stone, and hides it from the others as they go. Once there, in typical mishap, he looks at the stone (after being told not to). The Dark Lord, who controls it, attacks him. Sauron thinks he has found Frodo (sweetly sensual Elijah Wood) and his One Ring (the voice of savagely demanding Alan Howard) that will restore him to physical form and power. Pippin is in real danger of losing his life.  Gandalf protects Pippin and leaves Merry at Rohan. They must travel to Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor, next to be attacked. The fantascape of Middle Earth in Terra's breathtaking New Zealand mingles both plots. Advanced satellite technology is as good as a Palantiria.  But Sauron mistook Pippin for Frodo, and we accidently found Saddam Hussein by word of mouth. Bin Laden is still elusive and dangerous. Neither world had useful information about its enemy. Fallible interpretation happened despite technological advantages.  In similar vein the U.N. has yet to act in the War on Terror with more than rhetoric. Terrorism, as the shadow of Mordor, grows in strength to acquire the penultimate power. Whether it is the Ring or nuclear weaponry, both seek to dim the lights of freedom in the wake of its darkness. The Ring and the War on Terror have in common a fearsome ability to divide and conquer, even though "the spin" is to unite all peoples.  Sauron divided Middle Earth by giving the leaders of each race a slave ring as terrorists divide countries against countries, encouraging dissension and breaking treaties. To gain control, through fear and violence, they band together their economic strength and their plan of global domination. Both these same unwieldy evils must be defeated so life can thrive.  At Minas Tirith, Denethor II, the Steward of Gondor (arrogantly suffering John Noble) mourns the death of his son Boromir (bravely smooth Sean Bean), and yearns for a similar heroic end for his youngest Faramir (wildly obedient David Wenhem). Pippin offers his service to Denethor as payment for Boromir's death. He accepts. Gandalf has Pippin light the bonfire s to call for help from Rohan against Denethor's will. Faramir is wounded and thought dead defending the river against the orcs, where Corsairs will land to attack Minas Tirith from Pelennor fields. Gandalf saves Faramir from cremation, and instead Denethor burns. Gandalf takes command, but even with Rohan and Gondor, their defenses will not enough to defeat the Shadow of Mordor.  Mortal Arwen (warmly defiant Liv Tyler) is dying as Sauron's strength increases. She begs her father Lord Elrond (supremely responsive Hugo Weaving) to repair Anduril, the sword of Gondor, and give it to Aragorn (courageously ambivalent Viggo Mortensen), to be King. This happens. Aragorn takes up Anduril from Lord Elrond. Along with Legolas (boldly sophisticated Orlando Bloom) and Gimli (brashly proud John Rhys Davies), Aragorn wields it to make a deal with the King of the Dead (mockingly haughty Paul Norell) and his ghostly army, holed up in the Cursed Mountains. When Mordor is defeated by the Dead, Aragorn releases them, as promised from King Isildur's ancestral curse.  King Theodan of Rohan(strongly intelligent Bernard Hill) falls to the Witch King, Lord of the nine Nazgul, (scuriliously violent Lawrence Makoare). Eowyn (reluctantly gracious Miranda Otto) has taken Merry with her into the second great battle for Middle Earth. She fights the Witch King, who may rightly have claimed no man can defeat him. And is destroyed by her. Eowyn becomes the Queen of Rohan.  *ROTK* digresses to Smeagol (haplessly deviant Andy Serkis). He murdered his fishing buddy to get the Ring. Now permanently Gollum (haplesssly volatile Andy Serkis), he has turned Frodo against Sam (PJ's avatar, brilliantly faithful Sean Astin) and is leading him to the lair of Shelob (best ever giant ferocious spider), beyond which Mordor lies. Frodo fends her off for a time, with the spectral aid of Galadriel (coolly possessive Cate Blanchett), but becomes poisoned, cocooned, and left for dead. Sam had followed and caught up with Gollum, throwing him off the mountain. He discovers Frodo and fends off wounded Shelob. He thinks Frodo is dead and hides when orcs show up to take him. Sam learns Frodo is only paralyzed and follows them to the orc headquarters. Frodo awakes to find the Ring gone and himself a prisoner. Sam finds him, and gives him back the Ring he has been" safe-keeping."Frodo puts it on and they ramble on to find Mt. Doom..  Meanwhile, Arargorn attacks the Black gates to battle, to distract the great eye of Sauron from finding Sam and Frodo. It works well, Sam and Frodo are nearing the river of fire that will destroy the Ring. Frodo hesitates as Gollum reappears. He knocks Sam over to get to the Ring. Frodo dons the Ring and becomes invisible. Despite this, Gollum manages to bite it off his finger. Gollum rejoices reclaiming his "precious." Frodo grabs him and they both fall over the cliff. Gollum sinks into the lava, unsuccessfully reaching for the nearby Ring. Sam rushes to the edge to find Frodo climbing up and helps him to level ground. A volcanic earthquake errupts as the Ring melts and they run for their lives.  The tower of Ban-Dur falls, and Sauron is finally destroyed. The rest of Mordor cracks and panicked orcs fall into the crevices. Sam and Frodo are left on rock surrounded by lava and await death. The end of shadow, the light returns to cover Middle Earth. With the turbulence over, Gandalf appears with his eagles whose claws grab Sam and Frodo, and swiftly carry them to safety and recovery at Minas Tirith. Middle Earth is saved! The Fellowship survivors, Arwen and the other elves, Rohan and Gondor, reunite to crown King Aragorn. The race of men is restored.  Iraq has seemed to reject both Hussein and the U.S. Their ruling committee of governance may well have to create and altogether new form of government, perhaps a larger version of city-county unification similar to various governments in the state of Florida. We must stay in Iraq to be the catalyst for justice and prosperity of a people that has never been given a political will or individuality. We have seen them endure through wars and out of necessity they have forged their own survival. We must accept that they may not want to have either a King or a U.S. style of government. China is proof that the profit motive leads to Westernization in a country's own time. We seem to be pushing them to retain fear and violence, something we have never purported or promoted to stand for ourselves or in other countries. We must accept their ways of governing themselves, as they must reject violence and terror. It is the challenge yet to be taken up to maintain the details and goals of mere peace, as the Elves have conceded to the race of men. Succeeding this challenge is a guarantee of world peace. And this is much tougher to achieve than any war. The U.N. must lead the way in this.  The four tiny Hobbits are honored ("you bow to no one"), say their goodbyes, and at last return home to the Shire. Merry and Pippin resume their mischievous ways. Sam marries and has two children. Frodo finishes Bilbo's book after four years, leaving room for Sam to add to it. Its effect similar to rebuilding the Memorial Tower at 1,776 feet so what happened is always remembered in proper perspective. Frodo's wounds may have healed, but the mental scars have vividly remained. He and Bilbo are invited to join Gandalf, Galadriel, and Lord Elrond on one last adventure. His friends see him off, knowing they may never see each other again. Shining light steers the tall ship, out of Middle Earth, into the unknown. As on our Terra, the hope of civilization has always been found in the West.  Posted June 29, 2004 |   **Would you like to comment on this article? Please submit your comments** [**here.**](http://docs.google.com/submit-comments.htm) |  |  | | --- | | [Top of page](#gjdgxs) |  |  | | --- | | [Home](http://docs.google.com/index.html) | [Silver Screen](http://docs.google.com/silver_screen.htm) | [Small Screen](http://docs.google.com/smallscreen/small_screen.htm) | [News & Views](http://docs.google.com/newsnviews.htm) | | |