

## BOOK REVIEWS

Farrell, William Regis. *The U.S. Government Response to Terrorism: In Search of an Effective Strategy*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982.

“Vengeance is mine ... saith the Lord.” Perhaps the bureaucratic organization of a liberal, democratic government is a manifestation of such vengeance, which has had a damaging influence on the smooth evaluation of counter-terrorism policies in the United States. While a dedicated infrastructure, with origins in the highest governmental levels, does exist, it is a convoluted, organizational nightmare yet to be seriously tried and, should such a test occur, it may well be found wanting. Certainly, the Iranian Desert debacle could be offered in vivid illustration, although it could be judged as either hypothesis — what *could* happen — or fact — what *will* happen.

Dr. William Farrell has undertaken to describe past and present organizational problems encountered by U.S. federal authorities in their search for a functional counter-terrorism programme. He centers on the size and nature of the governmental bureaucracy which he contends contains within itself many weaknesses preventing unity of action. His examples include the divergent complexities of inter-agency (and personal) rivalries, rigidity, absurdly strict conformity to rules, lack of standard operating procedures (SOP's), and conflicting interests at the various concentrations of power. His examination spans the beginnings of policy development during the Nixon Administration, travels through the Carter years, and touches upon early trends in the Reagan approach. Dr. Farrell outlines the origins and composition of the infrastructure, the role of the military, the influence of organizational factors upon the still-evolving system, and summarizes conditions in existence at the time of his writing. He, like Kupperman and Trent,<sup>1</sup> is critical of the lack of concern demonstrated by the various agencies involved.

This needed volume is a product of events, serving to highlight U.S. government response to the phenomenon of terrorism under the constraints of organizational precepts. As such, it provides a glimpse of the practical and political hurdles facing executive, judicial and administrative agencies in their endeavours to meet the terrorist challenge, domestic and foreign. Conceptually, the book should provide help for policy makers and policy-implementers alike; unfortunately, it is lacking in the scope and depth of treatment the subject so desperately deserves.

Dr. Farrell has not, aside from an overview of some fundamental organizational theory in his third chapter, attempted a scholarly exploration. While an academic approach was not a required element, the result only touches the surface of the subject leaving the reader with many unanswered questions. The style bears a striking resemblance to papers prepared at military staff colleges where readers are expected to be familiar with omitted detail, such as, for example, the relationship and responsibilities of the National Guard in a counter-

terrorism situation. Possibly this is a consequence of Dr. Farrell's considerable service as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. He is at present a Lt. Colonel with the Security Division of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and previously served at the U. S. Naval War College, studying the U.S. government's efforts to combat terrorism, as well as graduating from that institution.

Obviously the author has devoted time and effort to his research in which he was aided by access to privileged information. Nevertheless, the impression remains of a text prepared for the purpose of drawing attention to a situation, as opposed to an examination in depth. Understandably the book is parochial, yet it would have gained in substance and stature through a wider review of sources of material. Dr. Farrell has been too restrictive when drawing on resources at hand, for instance, CIA reports, leaving some of his definitions lacking in thorough development. To be fair, however, he has succeeded in sounding a warning about the need for a more unified governmental attitude to the problem of terrorism and has cast doubt upon any assertion that the U.S. actually has a "clear, understandable, and effective strategy to counter terrorism."<sup>2</sup>

This relatively short volume of 142 pages is comprised of eight chapters, bibliography and preface. The latter arguably claims, "Through a comprehensive examination of the press and public testimony and a very extensive series of interviews, the true measure of the anti-terror programme is revealed."<sup>3</sup> Chapters One and Two briefly introduce the terrorist setting within the United States and skip quickly across the terrorist panorama concerning definition, concepts, and response. To his credit, Dr. Farrell does not allow himself to become bogged down in contentious definitional analysis, but his explanations suffer from a failure to mention such basic realities as political terrorism.

Chapter Three is devoted to placing the impact of organizational influence into perspective. Reading between the lines, it is possible to gain a picture of the problems of government based on a large bureaucracy. The value of Chapter Four lies in the organizational depiction of the counter-terrorism committees formed by Nixon and Carter, and the explanations of tasking and inter-relationships. Dr. Farrell's military background comes to the fore in the next chapter dealing with military involvement. By far the longest section, it can be faulted for assuming too much knowledge on the part of the reader. It does, however, consider a possibility also suggested by Kupperman and Trent: in the event of a serious terrorist incident, all previous planning would be scrapped in favour of an *ad hoc* response.

Chapter Six is decidedly weak, comprised mainly of statistics, (surprisingly taken from a commercial firm<sup>4</sup> rather than the CIA) and an amateurish 'menu' of weapons available for use by terrorists. Chapter Seven mitigates the faults of its predecessor through a valuable description of the manner in which government agencies respond to assigned counter-terrorist responsibilities. In his conclusion, Dr. Far-

rell asserts, "There are no simple rules to prescribe for the U.S. in countering terrorism."<sup>5</sup> Happily, he does not then attempt to determine any; the chapter is essentially a repetition of the major points raised throughout the book with a short section referring to the role of the media.

From a purely technical viewpoint the book would benefit by inclusion of more subject sub-titles and by physical separation of paragraphs. The confusing position of organization charts in the middle of Chapter Four is compounded by lack of relationship to an excerpt of Congressional testimony which they interrupt. The bibliography is a limited but acceptable selection which includes a number of writings by recognized authorities in the field of terrorism research and references to academic studies of management and organization.

Despite several faults, the volume has the redeeming feature of presenting a practical perspective of organizational problems facing a liberal, democratic government when embarking on a counter-terrorism programme. The text lacks depth, the scope is restrained, and from a purely management or organizational research standpoint it is of marginal value. This said, it is nonetheless true that Dr. Farrell has taken a valid step in a necessary direction. Certainly his book should be included in those libraries holding research material devoted to political science, criminal justice, law enforcement, security, or defence studies. The serious student of counter-terrorism would find a reading of Dr. Farrell's work to be beneficial for a more reasoned appreciation of the vagaries of upper-level governmental response.

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#### Footnotes

1. Robert H. Kupperman and Darrell M. Trent, *Terrorism: Threat, Reality, Response* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institute Press, 1979).
2. William Regis Farrell, *The U.S. Governmental Response to Terrorism: In Search of an Effective Strategy* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p. ix.
3. *ibid.*
4. Risks International Inc.
5. Farrell, p. 125.