

BOOK REVIEWS

Netanyahu, Benjamin, ed. *Terrorism: How The West Can Win*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1986.

Terrorism: How the West Can Win is a disappointing book, which promises much more than it delivers. The title suggests that the reader can expect a clear, reasoned counter-terrorism strategy. What the book offers is a great deal of moral fervour about the terrorist problem, but little of substance in the way of solutions. Nonetheless, it is worth reading.

The book, and its limitations, have their genesis in a 1984 conference on terrorism organized by the Jonathan Institute, a Jerusalem based foundation dedicated to "public education on the threat of terrorism and the necessary responses to it." The Institute was established in memory of Jonathan Netanyahu, the Israeli Colonel who died leading the rescue operation at Entebbe ten years ago. The editor of this volume is his brother Benjamin, currently Israel's permanent representative to the United Nations. Basing a book on the proceedings of a conference is not always the best foundation for a cohesive volume. In this case, thirty-eight essays are organized into eight chapters covering such subjects as terrorism and totalitarianism, terrorism and Islam, the role of the media, international networks, and legal aspects of countering terrorism. Pulling these together into a unified volume would tax the talents of the most experienced editor and clearly the task has defeated Netanyahu. Thus, the book never amounts to more than the sum of its parts. The fault lies partly in substance and partly in style.

Considering the matter of substance first, one assumes a volume which is supposed to provide guidance for the West in defeating terrorism ought to proceed logically from problem to solution. Such a book would start with a definition of the problem, a discussion of its origins, and an analysis of the current situation. This last point is important, since the development of counter-terrorism policies can proceed only from a dispassionate assessment of the threat. That assessment should cover those groups currently active, their organization, motivation, membership and recruitment, financing, training, targets, tactics, goals and levels of activity, as well as offering some realistic projection of patterns and trends. The special problems posed by state-sponsored terrorism, which seems increasingly to be the most troubling aspect of the current situation, would certainly deserve a separate chapter. Having analyzed the problem, it should be possible then to move on to the discussion of responses. For the study to be complete this section ought to cover the following ground: peaceful mediation/resolution of disputes or grievances giving rise to terrorism; economic sanctions, responses to abuse of diplomatic privileges; legal aspects such as international law, conventions, treaties and agreements, jurisdictional obstacles, extradition, courts, trials and sentencing, status

of convicted terrorists, sequestering assets of terrorist groups; tasks and problems of intelligence collection, assessment, and dissemination, both domestic and international; crisis management; multilateral cooperation; responses to the media/propaganda problem; covert operations; and military missions and tasks, including rescue operations and reprisals.

These are complex and difficult issues, which ought to be addressed thoughtfully and intelligently. Furthermore, these issues are inter-related; none can be dealt with in isolation. Weaving them into a coherent whole, then drawing the common themes together to provide a 'road map' of international counter-terrorist policy requires both considerable skill and knowledge of the subject. This is where Netanyahu's book demonstrates its major flaws. It provides neither a clear, balanced assessment of the current terrorist problem, nor a reasoned analysis of the major issues of responses identified above.

Rather, and this is a problem of style, the chapters and essays, diverse in content, length, and format, cover a lot of ground relating to the problem in a haphazard fashion without coming to grips with the purpose of the book. Most of the essays are far too short to offer true insights, so broad generalities are offered instead. With few exceptions, the essay groupings do not form cohesive chapters, and the chapters do not constitute a book. Worse still, many of the contributors are inclined to hyperbole and polemic, advancing simplistic assertions without supporting evidence. The book betrays a crusading zeal which reduces complex issues to simple black and white, thereby robbing the volume of the balance and objectivity so essential for discussion of such a controversial subject. Terrorism may indeed be "the cancer of the modern world," as Paul Johnson states at the outset of his essay, but such fulminations, however well articulated, are poor substitutes for well-researched, documented, thoughtful analysis. It is instructive that the leading academic researchers on terrorism, such as Brian Jenkins, Paul Wilkinson, and Grant Wardlaw, are conspicuous by their absence from the list of contributors. Their presence at the conference and contributions to this volume would have served Netanyahu's purposes well.

That said, the book may be commended to readers if only for the pleasure and value of reading concise, well-written intellectual argument. There is much in the book that the interested layman will find stimulating and provocative. One does not have to share all of the premises and prejudices of the individual authors to recognize that terrorism forces democracies and their citizens to confront significant moral and philosophical issues. In this, the authors share an unexpected common intellectual ground with the terrorists themselves — a belief that there are no innocent bystanders, that everyone is a participant in the struggle and thus must choose which side they are on, what they believe in and stand for.

Moreover, the book contains several outstanding contributions. Professor Elie Kedourie provides the reader with a brief (seven pages) but brilliant *tour d'horizon* which places "Islamic Terrorism" in its proper historical and contemporary contexts. Renowned American lawyer

Arthur Goldberg offers a devastating legal and moral critique of the British governments handling of the Libyan embassy shooting incident in 1984. Diplomats everywhere will cringe at his assertion that the so-called "People's Bureau" did not meet the legal criteria for immunities accorded to diplomatic premises and personnel and therefore could have been entered and searched. However, they will find it hard to refute his argument that the Vienna Convention is not a suicide pact wherein the security and safety of the host country and its citizens may be jeopardized at the whim of those who are prepared to abuse violently the privileges accorded by diplomatic status. Israeli Chief Justice Meir Shamgar sheds useful light on an important and contentious area: the legal distinctions between military forces (including guerrillas) and terrorists. The former wear uniforms, carry arms openly, operate in formed bodies under a designated commander, and are required to observe the laws and customs of war, particularly those conventions regarding treatment of non-combatants and prisoners-of-war. Terrorists, he points out, do not observe these criteria for the legal belligerency status they so often claim. At a time when the term terrorist is often widely misapplied to almost any act of violence by individuals or a government, these distinctions are important to keep in mind. Professor Yehuda Blum's exploration of the legal aspects of government responses to international terrorism, with particular reference to the United Nations Charter, bears close reading in view of the recent American action against Libya and the subsequent debate about the legal and moral aspects of reprisals.

Unfortunately, good as these essays are, they amount to very little wheat among a great deal of chaff. There is undoubtedly a case to be made for the prescription Netanyahu provides in his concluding essay — political pressures, economic sanctions, and military action — but it is not adequately explored in this book.

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William S. Turley. *The Second Indochina War: A Short Political and Military History, 1954-1975*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986.

Though breath-taking in its brevity, William Turley's *The Second Indochina War* is an important new account of America's intervention in Vietnam. Originally intended as a three part study of the French, American, and Vietnamese-Cambodian phases of Indochina's half-century orgy of violence, Turley's work suffers from being exposed as a