

and his observation that weak regimes are more likely to use violence in response to challenges than strong regimes is premised implicitly and somewhat precariously on definitions of "weak" and "strong" that are limited to material resources. Some students will also find many of Gurr's conclusions highly controversial, such as the hypothesis that "democratic principles and institutions inhibit political elites from using state violence in general and terror specifically," (p. 57). Perhaps, but one might restate the claim so that: "Democratic principles inhibit political elites from acknowledging the use of state violence in general and terror specifically."

Whatever the flaws with Gurr's analytical framework, however, and they are not insubstantial, the work is theoretically rigorous and disciplined. Unlike the journalistic literature on state terrorism, much of Gurr's piece is capable of verification or falsification, and for that reason alone it is a substantial contribution to the field. Perhaps most importantly, it can also provide a useful theoretical construct for other scholars, a point made clear in the subsequent chapter by Lopez on national security ideology as an impetus to state terror. In a provocative essay, Lopez argues that persistent violence by some Latin American governments against their citizens finds its justification in a "shared mindset" of governing elites.

The remaining chapters are more subject specific, and include essays by Wolpin on state terrorism in the third world, Harff on genocide, Stohl on superpower conflict and terrorism, Wardlaw on terrorism and counterterrorism in democratic societies, and Friedlander on state terrorism and international law. All are useful, although most disappointing is Wardlaw's "Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, and the Democratic Society." Wardlaw's discussion is, as always, comprehensive but he covers no new ground in this essay. Readers are better advised to consult Wardlaw's extended and more fruitful discussion in *Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

In sum, this is an extremely useful collection of essays in a field that lacks theoretically rigorous work. Read in conjunction with the earlier volume, *Government Violence and Repression* presents a compelling case for the scholarly study of state terrorism and indicates, by example, how it should proceed.

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Kurz, Anat and Merari, Ariel. *ASALA: Irrational Terror or Political Tool*. Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 1986.

Gunter, Michael. *"Pursing the Just Cause of Their People": A Study of Contemporary Armenian Terrorism*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986.

These books appeared within less than a year of each other, as the decline of Armenian terrorism, begun in late 1983, continued; the only

victims of Armenian terrorism in the past two years have been other Armenians living in Lebanon. The two main Armenian terrorist groups, whose "operational scope" in the international arena was, for a time, as Kurz and Merari correctly assert, "virtually unparalleled" (p. 4), have largely reverted to the parochialism that marked Armenian activist movements before the emergence of the terrorism of 1975-1985. Such relative quiescence makes this a good moment for retrospective assessment. Kurz and Merari have used the opportunity wisely and have produced a focused, brief survey of the ASALA, inaccurate only in minor details and judicious in its overall judgments. Gunter's book is broader in scope, richer in detail and seemingly more ambitious in its aims, but it is seriously undercut, first, by a lack of objectivity that would be fatal in fields less partisan than the study of Armenian terrorism and second, by excessive dependence on English-language sources, of whose shortcomings Gunter seems sincerely, yet dangerously, unaware.

Both books begin with summaries of the historical background; in order to be adequate to any effort to understand contemporary Armenian terrorism, such a summary must deal with at least three elements of the past. It must give an account of the emergence of Armenian terrorism in the 1890s, both as a response to Ottoman Turkish persecution and pogrom and as an outgrowth of organizational efforts deeply influenced by the terrorist movements of Tzarist Russia. It must assess the transformation of this terrorist phase (1894-1923) under the impact of the genocide of the Armenian inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War and its immediate aftermath. Finally, it must situate the most recent phase of Armenian terrorism in the complex matrix of factors which made its re-emergence possible, shaped it and then contributed to its decline. These factors include, at an absolute minimum, the rise of international terrorism, in particular, the Lebanese Civil War, and the dynamics of internal politics in the Armenian Diaspora, in particular since the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in 1965, a date which marks the onset of the decade-long incubation period preceding the eruption of Armenian terrorism. No phase of the rise or decline of this peculiar phenomenon of diasporan terrorism can be properly analyzed without consideration of all these elements.

Probably because of the Israelis' unmatched understanding of the Palestinian and Lebanese situations, and their equally detailed knowledge of the connections between the Palestinians and the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), as well as the fact that no Israeli can be insensitive to genocide, Kurz and Merari excel in their analysis of all but the last of the factors enumerated above. Gunter, on the other hand, tries to evaluate the data from "the Armenian position" and "the Turkish position" (these are actual subtitles from his text), sets up naive dualities ("Propaganda or Truth?" is another subtitle), and ends up as a self-appointed and disappointing arbitrator favoring the Turkish analysis of Armenian terrorism rather than as a scholar attempting an independent assessment of the phenomenon.

The difficulty faced by the authors of both books is their lack of

access to crucial texts: what is missing is more than 3000 pages of writing in Armenian (published largely in Beirut but sometimes in Greece and elsewhere). In these texts, the terrorists theorize their movement, not simply or even primarily as terrorism, but as a first step in the transformation of the Armenian Diaspora. They employ the rich traditions of Armenian culture and rhetoric to claim for themselves revolutionary legitimacy and therefore the right to lead the Diaspora. Such a claim makes sense only when one understands how legitimacy has hitherto been achieved in Diasporan politics. To ignore that context is to hobble any attempt to understand Armenian terrorism as a fully political phenomenon. Here, as so often in studies of non-European terrorism, the danger is that analysts will view the object of their study as a violent organization rather than as a political group. This is certainly a major problem with Gunter's approach, less so with Kurz and Merari's. Understandably, Gunter, in fashioning a tendentious argument influenced by the Turkish perspective, sees the Armenian terrorists as intent solely upon seeking vengeance and/or acknowledgement from Turkey for the genocide, as well as the restoration of Armenian lands. Given the deaths of Turkish diplomats and the targeting of Turkish embassies and airline offices, few assumptions could be more natural; both Gunter, and Kurz and Merari make it. Yet the latter see further. They note that while the actual victims of the ASALA were often Turks and the ostensible target the ruling regimes of Turkey (invariably labeled as "fascist" or "colonialist"), the ASALA explicitly stated other claims as well, and they take some of these claims seriously. In order to understand the dynamics of the rise and fall of Armenian terrorism, one must take them even more seriously.

Since the end of the First World War, the Armenian Diaspora, now consisting of 1,400,000 people in 34 countries, has been led (to the extent that any such collectivity can be led) by two loose coalitions of elites, each opposing the other in petty conflict while taking virtually identical positions on most issues except the role that Soviet Armenia should play in guiding the Diaspora. Each coalition: rallies around a segment of the Armenian Apostolic Church; contains "party members" active as cultural workers in most of the Diaspora but directly engaged in politics and armed militias in Lebanon; is funded by wealthy businessmen and prosperous professionals, usually multilingual and with international connections, whose patronage is indispensable to some organizations; and are led to a surprising extent by intellectuals (teachers, writers and publicists) who play an unusually important role in a Diaspora where, by definition, culture is the site for the struggle on behalf of collective identity. ASALA emerged to challenge all of these elites. It claimed that the Armenians were a third world people oppressed by the 'first' world and its "lackey," Turkey, and that it would be as a third world people, properly led by revolutionaries, that Armenians would achieve their aims. They also argued that the existing elites merely led the processes of bourgeoisification and emigration which pave the way for assimilation. It is worth noting, as the authors of both books do without fully explicating the context which makes it significant, that the ASALA's first

bombing attack, in 1975, was directed against the Beirut office of the World Council of Churches. This otherwise innocuous organization was guilty, in ASALA's eyes, of being allied with the emergent Armenian bourgeoisie of the Middle East, in that it facilitated the emigration to Europe and North America of the educated youth from whose ranks, ASALA felt, the revolutionary leadership of the Armenians would otherwise develop.

The actions of ASALA can best be understood as having a triple audience, then, not just the Turkish targets of its early assaults, nor even just the European subjects of later attacks and their governments, but also, and above all, the Armenians of the Diaspora and the elites which lead them. Gunter's is the weaker work in part because it assumes that Turkey, the primary target of Armenian terrorism, is also the primary object of its political intentions, whereas it is clear from the Armenian writings of the ASALA that the attacks on Turkish targets are a convenient means and Turkey only a prospective and as yet remote target. The attacks are the means for legitimation of the ASALA and its political fronts in the eyes of Diaspora Eastern Armenians, to be accompanied by the delegitimization of the current leadership elites and by the creation of a revolutionary army and people that would eventually conduct a war of liberation against Turkey. The ASALA's publications have remained explicit about this strategy to this day (as Kurz and Merari point out on pp. 19-22, in their section on "The Ideological and Strategic Platform"). Indeed, two facts attest to the centrality of this strategy: the continuing assassinations and kidnappings of opposing Armenian leaders, facilitated by the chaos of Lebanon and the relative immunity of the ASALA's current base of operation in the Beka' valley; and the creation of the JCAC (Justice Commandoes of the Armenian Genocide), later the ARA (the Armenian Revolutionary Army), both probably formed by a breakaway faction of the most important Diaspora political organization, the Dashnaktsotun, in response to ASALA's delegitimizing challenge. Read with this framework in mind, and with the maximum awareness of the ever-changing dynamics of conflict between the Armenian elites as a corrective, both works can be quite helpful.

Kurz and Merari are stronger on the details of ASALA's internal structure and its ties to the Armenian Diaspora and especially about its links to the Palestinians. They correctly assess the early ties with George Habash's PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), though they overestimate the importance of the PFLP's Marxist theories, unaware of similar analyses independently developed by Armenian leftists in the period of theoretical incubation stretching from 1965-1975. They also note the shift to Naief Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine after 1979-80, a shift that was accompanied by a redirection of ASALA attacks to western Europe though the forces behind this correlation are not clear.

Gunter's text is useful in several ways. He provides a chronological account of attacks by both JCAG and ASALA which is thorough and dependable. His account of the reactions of the Armenian Diaspora to

terrorism are interesting, more detailed than anything else available in English, but flawed because of the skewing of his sources. *The Armenian Reporter*, the English-language newspaper which is Gunter's principal source in the Armenian community of America, is deeply involved in the leadership struggles and very far from a neutral reporter of events or attitudes.

Taken together, these books provide a thorough factual account of contemporary Armenian terrorism, and begin the task of understanding the forces that engendered it and may yet contribute to its resumption.

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David, Steven R. *Third World Coups d'Etat and International Security*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

There are a large number of books on *coups d'état*, but almost all of them are either case studies of a particular *coup* or are comparative political analyses of *coups* in one particular region of the world. Few of these books deal with the implications of *coups* for international politics. Therefore Steven R. David's well-argued and tightly-written book on *coups* and international security helps to fill an important gap in the field of national security studies.

David's book makes three major contributions to understanding the importance of *coups* for international security. First, he provides a valuable analysis of American policy toward *coups d'état*. He argues that since *coups* can and have produced major changes in the political orientations of Third World countries, the United States must be prepared to defend friendly regimes in the Third World from *coups* that would bring to power anti-American regimes. He also provides a well-reasoned and balanced discussion of the more controversial issue of whether or not there are circumstances under which a moral and a political case can be made for the United States supporting a *coup d'état*. Pointing to the case of American attempts to overthrow Libyan leader Muammar Khadaffi, he argues that there are indeed cases where a strong moral and political case can be made in favor of the United States taking steps to overthrow a foreign government.

Second, he provides an insightful analysis of the implications of *coups* for Soviet foreign policy. Noting how a number of *coups*, such as that in Guatemala in 1954, Algeria in 1965, Ghana in 1966 and Chile in 1973, have resulted in the overthrow of governments friendly to the Soviet Union in the Third World, he argues that in consequence, the Soviets have made the defense of their Third World allies against *coups* a matter of high priority. To this end they have developed a strategy of placing what David calls a "cocoon" around the governments of their