

BOOK REVIEWS

Schlagheck, Donna M. *International Terrorism: An Introduction to the Concepts and Actors*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988.

Schlagheck's book is one of the most recent additions to an already existing wide body of literature on the subject of terrorism. The author correctly observes that "the last twenty years have witnessed a groundswell of interest in terrorism." Any scholar familiar with this literature will acknowledge that the market is now "saturated" with a variety of works including articles, monographs, and even a special periodical dedicated to this topic. Hence, one may ask: What is the contribution of a new book to such a highly focused and well researched area? Has it broken any new ground? Actually, how different is this new publication from the existing works?

According to the author, the purpose of this book is to fill in a gap which, correctly observed, exists in this broad area of study. A close examination of the book, however, reveals that it is simply one more study which overlaps previous writings. The key questions presented in the preface have been asked time and again over the last 20 years. Yet the answers provided are as elusive as ever, and the reader is constantly reminded of this particular feature of terrorism. Any attempt to address the very same questions—"What is terrorism? Who employs terrorism? Why? What are the remedies?"—is but an exercise in redundancy.

The author intends to "illuminate the basic concepts and issues in international terrorism," and to provide a useful tool ". . . to establish the framework for a terrorism seminar." The preface and first chapter raise the reader's expectation that ultimately the subject matter will be thoroughly explored and related to the broader area of political violence and world politics. But to no avail.

From the outset the author fails to outline a research agenda for the book, or to provide methodological guidelines. In the following eight chapters, the author attempts to address all major problems and topics pertaining to various types of terrorism while the book's title suggests only one kind. The case study approach has been applied throughout the book, and its brevity makes for nice overviews. However, this does not allow the author the opportunity to tell us much that we already do not know. The effort to be comprehensive in terms of addressing important issues such as State Terrorism, Nationalism, Radical Ideology, Media Coverage and others, has taken a heavy toll on the depth and analysis of these subjects and concepts. Thus, each chapter, using several case studies, becomes a simplistic and shallow illustration of various terrorist groups. The only apparent common denominator to the case studies seems to be violence. And so are the concepts which are supposed to provide any analytical framework. In due process, the author fails to inform the reader as to the methodology, logic, and reasons for selecting these particular cases. The attempt to be broad in scope also undermines the book since no

conclusions are drawn. The narrative nature of these cases tends to overlook important questions pertaining to the root causes of terrorism, and generally focuses on the form of terrorism. Each chapter is summarized briefly with no conclusion, thus contributing to repetitious statements.

The book is replete with inaccuracies and misleading information. For example, it was pointed out that William Buckley, the CIA Station Chief in Beirut, was kidnapped in 1986 rather than April 1984. The significance of this grave error is that the Iran-Contra Affair had already been exposed in 1986, long after Buckley's abduction in 1984 and subsequent execution in 1985. To put the events into perspective, and to understand America's obsession with the release of hostages from Lebanon during much of the Reagan administration it is imperative to set the dates straight. The main reason for the Iran-Contra initiative was Buckley's kidnapping. Another example claims that Allan Berg, radio talk show host, was killed on the streets of Denver. There is no citation of a source for this event. Furthermore, Berg was murdered on the porch in front of his house. Again, the author fails to provide basic accurate information and to acknowledge the significance of such an event. In other words, the killer had premeditated Berg's execution, and this act was one of selective targeting rather than random shooting on the streets of Denver. These two seemingly minor details point to the fact that the author has limited knowledge of terrorism and does not follow even basic guidelines of historical research methods, and often fails to document her sources.

The author has chosen to discuss the Jewish zealots who lived in Judea under the Roman Empire. Accordingly, the author describes them as terrorists since they used hit-and-run attacks. However, partisans who employed similar methods during World War II against occupying Nazi troops were never considered terrorists. The zealots had targeted Roman troops who occupied their territory and country which at that time was not yet named Palestine, but rather was known as Judea. The author fails to recognize this fact. Furthermore, the author provides additional confusion to an already inaccurate study when she argues that "The Palestinian people remained in Palestine" though the boundaries of Palestine had not been defined yet. Also she contends incorrectly that the Palestinians remained while the Jews were exiled by the Romans. These and other pieces of misinformation are troubling especially when the initial goal is to provide basic information. It should be noted that in those days there were no Palestinians, or Muslims, or Arabs and the land was named Judea. The narrative of the Jewish zealots, Palestinian Nationalism, Israel and other closely related subjects demonstrate political bias, distortion and confusion. Often, ambiguous language creeps in which can easily confuse the innocent reader.

In conclusion, very little good can be said about this book. Though it purports to be a comprehensive study of international terrorism, in reality it is a shallow, ill-documented narrative of already old case studies. The book has little to offer in terms of concepts, framework and basic historical truths. It is dense with error, redundancy and ambiguity. Unfortunately, the author has taken the sources at face value without adhering to basic research methods

to preserve historical accuracy. Finally, it is distressing to notice that the author does not provide conclusions to her descriptive work. Furthermore, it is surprising that the publisher did not insist on a bibliography and settled for a very short list of suggested reading.

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Kam, Ephraim. *Surprise Attack: The Victim's Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

The problem of anticipating the onset of war provides the focus for this study of surprise. Ephraim Kam, formerly a senior analyst with the Israeli Ministry of Defense, now an instructor in the Israeli National Defense College, argues that this is the most complex instance of strategic surprise. His analysis proceeds at four levels: 1) the individual analyst, 2) the small group, 3) the larger structure of the intelligence community and military organization, and 4) the relationship between the decision-makers and the intelligence community. His central assumption is that mistakes made at the level of the individual analyst determines the failure to anticipate war.

Surprise Attack is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the components of a surprise attack. Part II examines the impact of judgmental biases on intelligence analysis. Part III looks at the environment in which the analyst operates. Throughout the book Kam draws selectively from eleven major surprise attacks that have occurred since the outbreak of World War II. Chronologically they begin with the German invasion of Denmark and Norway on April 9, 1940 and end with the Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel on October 6, 1973. Kam concludes that surprise is inevitable and that the failure to prevent surprise does not evolve overnight. It is the accumulation of several factors. Especially important are the quality of information available, the persistence of conceptions in the face of contradictory information, and the inherent interdependence among the various factors producing surprise. After noting that safeguards usually fail, Kam concludes his study by putting forward two policy recommendations of his own: the intelligence community should strive to inculcate a spirit of openness, and the threshold of certainty needed to issue a warning should be reduced.

In presenting his argument, Kam retraces well travelled ground. He provides readers with a solid review of the literature on strategic surprise and the variables that affect an individual analyst's ability to predict future events. The volume's primary weakness is that Kam's work does not extend our knowledge. His work is more in the vein of confirming what others have already established. This is somewhat disappointing because Thomas Schelling in his foreword promises us more. He states that *Surprise Attack* is different from earlier studies of strategic surprise, such as Wohlstetter's study