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David J. Whittaker, ed. *The Terrorism Reader.* Fourth edition. Routledge Readers in History Series. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012. xv + 368 pp. $135.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-415-68731-7; $43.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-415-68732-4.

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Understanding terrorism is no easy undertaking, either for the novice or the expert. The fluidity and change in strategic, tactical, and local context of terrorism join the complex personalities, politics, and technologies all working synergistically and asymmetrically against the nations and conventional forces that often oppose these nefarious characters we call "terrorists." Understanding the three Cs–character, capabilities, and context–is critical for keeping pace with the challenges of this issue, which will no doubt intrude into our future. David J. Whittaker's fourth edition of *The Terrorism Reader* contributes significantly to broadening the study of terrorism by presenting a comprehensive approach to the subject that incorporates seminal writings of experts in the field, a task made possible through the author/editor's command of the literature on this topic.

Whittaker has crafted an insightful book on terrorism and has skillfully connected the topic of stateless terrorism, such as Al Qaeda; case studies of terrorism shaped by the unique national context of countries on six continents; and such relevant issues as definitions of terrorism, motivations, law, and ethics–and even counterterrorism programs and strategies. The reader might be surprised at the ambitious scope of such an undertaking as any one of these matters deserves extensive treatment in its own right. But here is where Whittaker excels: he has woven together these colorful issues into a tight tapestry of knowledge covering the subject comprehensively.

Part 1 deals with definitions, motivations, and the occurrence of terrorism. More than just an introduction to the leading theories on the matter, these opening chapters capture some of the stark realities of international terrorism, realities that are easily overlooked. For instance, Whittaker highlights Paul Wilkinson's *Terrorism and Political Violence: The Liberal State Response*, (second edition, 2006), which differentiates between "incorrigible" versus "corrigible" terrorists. The former is influenced and even co-opted by the political process, while the latter is maximalist in orientation demanding counterterrorism authorities to employ all possible measures to defeat such a group. Undoubtedly the relevancy here transcends terminology and cuts to the heart of the diverse character traits of terrorists.

Part 2 delves deeply into sixteen case studies of terrorism, and by doing so, expands the reader's scope on terrorism. In addition to covering well-documented areas like Israel, Lebanon, "Britain as target," and "United States: Ground Zero"–topics and areas frequently discussed in literature on the subject–other areas not often discussed receive in-depth coverage, including South Africa, Algeria, Libya, and Sri Lanka. Here is where the unique quality of the book shines. These areas of the globe are home to some of the most capable and crafty terrorist groups–groups that may find their way into the American lexicon through acts of violence, or at the very least, these tactics and capabilities may be sought by similar groups.

For instance, Whittaker's chapter on Sri Lanka–mainly the infamous Tamil Tigers–analyzes not only the effective use of the Tamil diaspora, cyberspace, and guerrilla tactics but also the unique context. Using Walter Laqueur's work, Whittaker calls attention to the illiberal polices of Colombo (denial of citizenship to the Tamil minority, restrictive language policy, and forced repatriation of Tamils); extremist historical and cultural influences; and a radicalized political context shaped by Communists on the left and militant nationalists on the right. This insightful study notes: "this was one of the very few countries in the world in which the Communist and Trotskyite parties had been strong simultaneously" (p. 134).

But the informed reader may retort: Had not the Tamil Tigers been defeated by the Sinhalese government in 2009, the case now serving as a model in effective counterinsurgency? This assessment is correct, and the author's attempt to update the book in this fourth edition

falls short of the aim. Throughout Whittaker's work, an emphasis on the 1990s remains evident, and at times appears uneven as the updates seem more like patchwork rather than major additions. Yet this imbalance inadvertently serves to emphasize lessons learned and contextual issues that should not be forgotten by the public as well as service personnel seeking to master a volatile global environment that has changed markedly since 9/11, but not so much as to justify a jettison of a previous era and its history of terrorism.

Moreover, part 3 of *The Terrorism Reader* neatly frames the topic of terrorism by adding chapters on ethics, legality, and strategic (counterterrorism) policies and programs. These aspects are indeed relevant, but the topic of counterterrorism is particularly salient. Too often counterterrorism is artificially separated from the study of terrorism, and thereby the very policies that have identified the weaknesses and character flaws in terrorist groups are unwittingly omitted. Whittaker thus corrects this mistaken trend and offers the broadsheet published by The Terrorism Research Center in 1998 as a model in practical counterterrorism policy.

The Terrorism Reader is a source that every serious student, scholar, and informed citizen cannot afford to overlook. If one's goal is to stay current on the chic ideas discussed on terrorism then avoid this book. If one's goals are more serious, seeking to broaden a visualization of the terrorist world to include insights into character traits, capabilities, and context, the very environment of global terrorism, *The Terrorism Reader* is indeed an invaluable source.

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