

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 14 Books on Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism-Related Subjects

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

The books reviewed in this column cover various topics, and are listed in alphabetical order, according to the authors' last name.

Shaul Arieli, *All Israel's Borders: One Hundred Years of Struggle Over Independence, Identity, Settlement and Territory* [In Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, Israel: Rooftop Books/ Yediot Aharonot/ Hamad Books, 2018), 442 pp., ILS 128.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-9-6556-4448-7.

Terrorism does not occur in a vacuum, but is the product of numerous underlying causes and factors within conflicts that produce aggrieved communities and individuals that feel a need to redress their grievances through violent means against their adversaries. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of the underlying causes (with other factors involved, as well) that drives Palestinian terrorist groups and their supporters to engage in violence is the stalemate over the resolution of the West Bank's territorial boundaries, with these territories in control by Israel since the June 1967 War, with terrorism by far-right militant Jewish groups also related to their objective to prevent any compromise over these territories. To understand the role that these territories' boundaries and the conflicting aspirations of their Palestinian and Jewish inhabitants, we are fortunate to have Shaul Arieli's *All Israel's Borders: One Hundred Years of Struggle Over Independence, Identity, Settlement and Territory*, which provides an authoritative, comprehensive and detailed geographical, historical, and political account of the history of the territories that have shaped the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the past century. Following an introductory overview, the book is divided into seven parts: the role of territories and their boundaries in shaping countries and the nature of the dispute over Israel's boundaries; plans to divide the territory of historical Palestine from 1922 to 1947; the nature of the borders between Israel and the Arab states from 1947 to 1967; negotiated settlements and unilateral measures to resolve the conflict from 1967 to 2008; the nature of the security wall/fence established by Israel to cordon off Palestinian areas from 2002 to 2007; proposals to establish a permanent boundary at the Annapolis, Maryland summit in 2008; and a summary of unfinished processes to resolve the territorial dispute between the Israelis and the Palestinians and how they relate to other conflicts around the world. The epilogue presents the author's insightful and balanced proposal for resolving the stalemate over the West Bank's future. This is based on an examination of three approaches: demographic and security, political, and socio-economic, with each used as a metric to measure the effectiveness of various contending plans, ranging from the extremist option of an Israeli annexation of the West Bank or its parts, to a territorial compromise that would create two states that are capable of living side-by-side in a peaceful and secure manner. The epilogue also presents the author's compilation of statistical information about the demographic and socio-economic composition of the West Bank's inhabitants (e.g., as of 2016, 623,000 Jews versus 2,900,000 Palestinians, with the number of Jews decreasing to some 400,000 if the East Jerusalem region is excluded) (p. 324). The author concludes that for long-term peace, the Israelis and Palestinians need to agree on the boundaries of a new border that would be sufficiently flexible to provide a majority status for both sides in their respective territories. Otherwise, he cautions, the cycle of perpetual violence and instability will continue to characterize the lives of the neighboring Israelis and Palestinians. The book includes numerous black and white and color maps that display the evolving nature of historical Palestine, the Israeli State, and the West Bank, illustrating the text. Hopefully this important book will be translated into English so that a larger audience will benefit from its insights on the role of the territories in shaping the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the measures required to resolve this protracted conflict. The author, a retired Colonel in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), was extensively involved as a military advisor to various Israeli government peace initiatives, and is considered one of the country's leading experts on the West Bank.

Dave Dilegge, Robert J. Bunker, John P. Sullivan, and Alma Keshavarz (Eds.), *Blood and Concrete: 21st Century Conflict in Urban Centers and Megacities* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2019), 768 pp., US \$ 38.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9845-7375-9.

The more than 50 chapters written by some 80 authors in this comprehensive *Small Wars Journal* anthology examine a significant threat: the increasing prevalence of urban centers as primary areas of military operations, surpassing rural areas in conflict regions around the world. As pointed out by David Kilcullen in his excellent preface, since it is impossible to mention all the volume's contributors, some of the issues raised by their chapters include the challenges for militaries in engaging in urban centers' physical and "cyber" terrains, and the employment of new technologies, such as drones, to conduct warfare against insurgent adversaries in such environments. Another challenge is presented by General Charles Krulak, a former Marine Corps Commandant, who is cited in John Spencer's foreword as stating that the future of urban warfare will consist of a "three-block war" where military forces "are simultaneously required to conduct humanitarian assistance on one block, peace-keeping on the other, and traditional warfighting the next over" (p. xli). In their introduction, the editors insightfully point out that "Differentiating between the tactical, operational, and strategic concerns accompanying each of these distinct (and sometimes converging) conurbations is essential to understanding and preparing for urban operations" (p. xlix). In the postscript, Margarita Konaev makes the important point that one of the reasons for the prevalence of urban warfare is that it is increasingly difficult for insurgents to operate in rural environments because "emerging technologies, and advances in surveillance techniques and aerial detection capabilities have also made the classic rural guerilla warfare settings of dense jungles and remote mountain hideouts far less safe for violent non-state groups. In cities, however, these militants can more easily blend into the local civilian population and use the city's complex and dense terrain for cover and concealment" (p. 648). Ms. Konaev's conclusion well sums up the volume's important contribution to the literature on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency: "as the world's urban population continues to grow, the future of global security will be determined by what happens in cities" (p. 651).

Nicholas Fotion, Boris Kashnikov, and Joanne K. Lekea, *Terrorism: The New World Disorder* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2007), 208 pp., US \$ 72.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 13.77 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-8264-9258-6.

This book is written by three philosophers who specialize in the ethics of conflict. They examine topics such as how terrorism is defined; the nature of suicide terrorism; significant past terrorist campaigns (such as anarchism in Russia, the Provisional Irish Republican Army, and terrorism in Greece); current terrorist conflicts (such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka, terrorism in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, terrorism in Chechnya, and al Qaida-type terrorism); the political and military causes of terrorism, including state terrorism; and the profiles of various types of terrorists, including what the authors refer to as "state terrorists" and "martyr terrorists." To examine future trends in terrorism, the authors apply yardstick factors to measure the capability of terrorist groups, such as persistence, motivation, human and financial resources, organization and training, planning, and execution of operations. These yardstick factors from the terrorists' capabilities are then applied against the capabilities of their "victims," namely the counterterrorist forces arrayed against them, leading the authors to conclude that while "terrorists have the motivation and the means to continue," their state adversaries "have the means, at best, to slow terrorism down or stop it in the long-run. For a variety of reasons, then, we, the victims of terrorism, will have to get used to living with the new world disorder" (p. 119). The next two chapters examine the arguments over the legitimacy of terrorism, in terms of for (e.g., as a just cause or last resort) and against (e.g., that terrorists lack the right to initiate aggression against innocent victims). In the concluding chapter on "Dealing With Terrorism," the authors present a series of recommendations, some of them military in nature (e.g., identifying the enemy and setting goals, good intelligence, alienating the terrorists from their constituency, and protecting the civilian population), others non-military in nature (e.g., cooperation with allies and provision of employment). The authors conclude that the spread of media of communications and military technology are ensuring that terrorism will persist "for the foreseeable future...in a new world disorder" (p. 166). The three authors are professors of philosophy at universities in the United States, Russia, and Greece.

Michael Fredholm, *Transnational Organized Crime and Jihadist Terrorism: Russian-Speaking Networks in Western Europe* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 238 pp., US \$ 136.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1387-4994-8.

This is an extensively researched examination of the threats presented by the convergence of transnational organized crime and jihadist terrorism as embodied by the illicit activities by Caucasus- and Central Asian-based Russian-speaking social networks that operate within their Western European diasporas. As a Swedish academic, the author also focuses on their illicit activities in Sweden, using court cases as empirical evidence to illuminate the magnitude of the threat they pose to the country. To examine these issues, the book's chapters cover topics such as the convergence of the activities of criminal and terrorist groups; the origins of Central Asian and Caucasian organized crime within post-Soviet territories; the origins and evolution of Russian-speaking jihadist terrorism, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Islamic Jihad Union, and their proselytizing and recruitment activities in Western Europe; the role played by organized crime in the Chechen secessionist movement which transformed into the Caucasus Emirate jihadist group; the online activities of these groups, with a focus on the Kavkaz center, a grouping that has their websites based on servers in several Western countries; and their illicit activities in Sweden. A key finding of this study is that there are more criminal than terrorist members in these networks in Western Europe. With regard to counterterrorism and policing strategies, the author recommends a focus "on the need for intelligence sharing and the use of all available legislative tools" and the importance of "prosecuting non-terrorist crime [as – JS] a means to take action that will reduce the capability of a terrorist group, by denying it resources" (p. 220). A final finding is that "the case studies of Russian-speaking transnational organized crime and jihadist terrorism networks bring implications for other diaspora-based social networks in this period of large-scale migration" (p. 220). The author is Professor and Head of Research and Development at IRI, the Swedish Law and Informatics Research Institute in Stockholm.

Phil Gurski, *An End to the War on Terrorism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 192 pp., US \$ 120.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 41.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7866-0954-0.

Written by a retired veteran counterterrorism analyst in the Canadian intelligence service, this well-informed and comprehensive book's seven chapters discuss significant issues in countering terrorism. These include assessing whether waging "war" as the primary focus of counterterrorism is an appropriate response to the threats posed by terrorism, especially in the form of Special Forces, airstrikes, drones, and targeted killings; the role of intelligence in counterterrorism, particularly in terms of human sources and intercepts, the role of law enforcement in counterterrorism, including the issue of treating terrorism as a type of crime. The volume also discusses the effectiveness of government anti-terrorism laws, such the United States' Patriot Act and Canada's Anti-Terrorism Act. Other chapters assess the effectiveness of government programs such as the United Kingdom's CONTEST and Prevent programs, as well as similar programs in other countries, such as France. Also discussed are outreach programs, including community engagement by academics, religious leaders, and technology companies in addressing the challenges of domestic terrorism and countering violent extremism. Furthermore Phil Gurski assesses the effectiveness of de-radicalization programs around the world and offers suggestions on how to formulate effective counter-extremist narrative messaging. Wider questions are also addressed, including whether the religion of Islam is responsible for Islamist extremism and, finally, what are the components for effectively countering and terminating terrorism. This book is recommended as a concise general textbook.

John Horgan, *Divided We Stand: The Strategy and Psychology of Ireland's Dissident Terrorists* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 224 pp., US \$ 38.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-1997-7285-8.

This is an empirically-based and conceptually innovative account of the emergence and persistence (at least in the near-term) of a "new breed" of dissident Irish Republican terrorists, whom the author refers to as the

“terrorists’ *terrorists*,” and “for whom there will never be a peace process, never a negotiated settlement, and who will never be satisfied by politics or appeased by mainstream opinion” (p. xi). As described by the author, these dissident terrorists span groups such as the *Continuity IRA*, the *Real IRA*, *Oglaigh na hEireann*, RIRA, and *the IRA*, as well as other “microgroups” that range in size and ambition. As explained by the author, the book examines questions, such as “Who are the dissidents? What do they want? What are their strategic, psychological, and ideological driving forces? How do they organize and execute their activity? Where are they recruiting? What factors affect the growth and maintenance of dissident activity? And how can we help in preventing violent dissident Republicanism?” (p. xi). To examine these issues, the author draws on his research team’s open source-based database on their activities and personnel over an historical period that is divided into three waves of dissident activity: wave 1 (1994-1998), wave 2 (1998-2007), and wave 3 (2007 to the present – in this case, the period prior to the book’s publication in 2013). These issues are discussed in the book’s fourth, fifth and sixth chapters. The seventh chapter presents the author’s short-term strategy for responding to the threat posed by these dissident groups. He recommends undermining their legitimacy and credibility through counter-narratives, reducing the attractiveness of involvement in their activities, employing police and intelligence operations against them, and developing “a meaningful political strategy to engage” them (p. 159). The author concludes by observing that these dissident groups’ lack of effective strategies and continued divisions among themselves mark them “doomed to failure” in the long term (p. 178). This book is a significant contribution to the literature on the dissident terrorist factions that split from their more “mainstream” terrorist organizations whom they regard as insufficiently committed to their extremist causes. The author is Professor of Global Studies and Psychology at Georgia State University, Atlanta.

Richard Jackson (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Critical Terrorism Studies* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 312 pp., US \$ 221.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 46.71 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-1386-0114-7.

This is the paperback edition of the hardcover edition that was originally published in 2016, making its lower price more accessible to the reader. For this reviewer’s assessment of the 2016 volume, see <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/519/html>.

Richard Jackson and Daniela Pisoiu (Eds.), *Contemporary Debates on Terrorism* [Second Edition], (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 292 pp., US \$ 136.00 [Hardcover], US \$ 40.76 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-1389-3136-7.

In this edited volume’s second edition, a set of 16 significant questions in terrorism and counterterrorism are examined by contrasting viewpoints. Following the editors’ introductory overview, the volume is divided into five parts. In Part I, “The Definition and Study of Terrorism,” two chapters examine whether terrorism is “still a useful analytic term, or should it be abandoned,” and “Is Critical Terrorism Studies a useful approach to the study of terrorism?” In Part II, “Categories of Terrorism,” two chapters debate the thesis of whether a ‘new terrorism’ has emerged and whether states can “be terrorists”. In Part III, “The Terrorism Threat,” five chapters debate questions such as whether terrorism poses a serious threat to international and national security, whether serious threats are posed by WMD terrorism, cyberterrorism, and al Qaida, and whether returning foreign fighters in conflicts such as the one in Syria are likely to become “future terrorists” in their former countries. In Part IV, “The Causes of Terrorism,” two chapters debate whether terrorism results from poverty and exclusion and whether religious extremism is a cause of terrorism. In Part V, “Dealing With Terrorism,” five chapters debate questions such as: are the resorts to state “suppression,” military force and mass surveillance effective in counterterrorism?, are drones a useful instrument, are counter-radicalization approaches effective in counterterrorism, and have global efforts to counter terrorism since 9/11 been effective? As a textbook, each chapter begins with an introduction and ends with a conclusion, discussion questions, and suggestions for further readings. This volume is recommended as a supplementary textbook for courses on terrorism and counterterrorism. Richard Jackson is Professor of Peace Studies and Director of the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand. Daniela Pisoiu is a Senior Re-

searcher at the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (OIIP), Vienna, Austria.

Elli Lieberman (Ed.) *Detering Terrorism: A Model for Strategic Deterrence* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 332 pp., US \$ 131.75 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1382-4060-5.

The contributors to this conceptually innovative volume examine the issue of how governments can effectively deter their non-state terrorist adversaries. One of their theses is that effective deterrence is dependent on governments focusing on the longitudinal dynamics of the deterrence process over time, a process that also addresses the “grand strategies” of the non-state adversary actors against them. Another thesis is that the strategy of terrorist groups seeks to achieve a ‘war of attrition’ against their more powerful state adversaries. To counter it, governments need to employ offensive campaigns to undermine them in order to achieve deterrence success. This conceptual framework is applied by the volume’s contributors to analyze the effectiveness of governmental deterrence campaigns over time against the terrorist threats posed by groups such as Hizballah, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hamas, the Irish Republican Army, Chechen terrorists, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), and al Qaida, the Taliban, and ISIS. In the concluding chapter, the volume editor’s last two sentences are confusing, as he writes that “Finally, learning and the development of awareness by leaders about how deterrence works, developing a deterrence model in mind, could lead to quicker resolution of ongoing antiterrorism campaign. Deterrence, thus, could be a useful and less costly tool of statecraft” (p. 319). First, whereas ‘counterterrorism,’ which connotes an offensive response, is used (correctly) throughout the volume, it is jarring for ‘antiterrorism,’ which implies a defensive posture, to be so precipitously injected into the argument when the focus remains on employing counterterrorism in deterrence to undermine the terrorist adversary’s warfare. Also, the author should better explain why ‘effective’ deterrence “could be a useful and less costly tool of statecraft” than other deterrence measures. There are, after all, degrees of effectiveness in deterrence, ranging from less to more effective implementations. Aside from such definitional problems, the volume is an important contribution to the literature on deterrence in counterterrorism.

Ajit Maan and Paul Cobaugh, *Introduction to Narrative Warfare: A Primer and Study Guide* (Washington, DC: Narrative Strategies, LLC, 2018), 62 pp., US \$ 25.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-7212-2141-7.

This short, yet highly useful book’s objective is to provide a baseline understanding of the nature of insurgent or state adversary narratives and the counter-narratives that are required to achieve desirable changes in influencing the opponent’s behavior in response. To win “Narrative Warfare,” the authors define the nature of narratives (and their distinction from other types of stories), including their offensive and defensive forms, and the four components of strategic narratives: meaning, identity, content, and structure (MICS). In Information Warfare (IW), it is essential to know how to “weaponize” narratives against one’s adversaries, which the authors explain involves attacking “the identities of the target audience and cause a disorientation in the way people and cultures understand and give meaning to events” (p. 23). To dominate the narrative space, the authors recommend operationalizing it through “a complete package of both offensive and defensive narratives coordinated to both degrade adversarial audiences and to build resilience within friendly audiences” (p. 34). In an important insight to the literature on narratives and counter-narratives, which is highly relevant to the components of effective counterterrorism, the authors conclude that “Like kinetic maneuver strategy, you must control the battlefield and force your adversary to respond, not the other way around. There is a place for counter-narrative, but its place is as a supporting effort to an overall narrative strategy that places a compelling offensive narrative at the core of efforts” (p. 49). As a useful resource for courses and workshops on these issues, the book includes a series of study questions to accompany the six chapters. Ajit Maan is the Founder and CEO of Narrative Strategies, LLC, and Paul Cobaugh, a retired U.S. Army officer in Special Operations, is the firm’s Vice President.

Wendy Pearlman and Boaz Atzili, *Triadic Coercion: Israel's Targeting of States That Host Nonstate Actors* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018), 384 pp., US \$ 65.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-2311-7184-7.

With states being challenged by non-state (or sub-state) terrorist groups that protect themselves from retaliation by finding geographical sanctuary in other states that either support or tolerate their presence, or are failed states that are unable to exercise control over their own territories, the question is how can threatened states fight them directly, including coercing their host states to put a stop to such groups? In this conceptually interesting book, the authors propose the concept of a strategy of “triadic coercion” to analyze, as they write, “wherein one state uses military threats and/or punishments against another state to deter it from aiding or abetting attacks by nonstate actors from within its territory or to compel it to stop such violence” (p. 1). To examine the components of deterrence that can succeed in overcoming such complications in countering terrorist groups that exploit their sanctuary in host countries, the authors’ investigate two main questions: “the conditions under which triadic coercion is likely to succeed” and “If triadic coercion is only effective against strong regime, why do states frequently employ it against weak ones?” (pp. 2-3). This conceptual framework is applied to examining the case of Israel’s responses to the threats presented by Palestinian terrorist groups operating from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority (since 1993), and Hizballah operating in and from Lebanon. Other cases that are briefly discussed, include Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani networks, as well as its hosting of Lashka e-Taiba (LeT) and Kashmiri groups that target India; Iraq, Syria, and Iran that tolerate the presence of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party that threatens Turkey, and others. Among the authors’ conclusions are the findings that “triadic coercion is likely to succeed when targeted against a host state that possesses a regime that is strong” (p. 243), and that “Effective triadic coercion is not a substitute for political solutions that safeguard individual and collective rights” (p. 254) because “strictly military solutions are seldom sufficient against complex problems involving national conflicts over sovereignty and territory” (p. 254). This book is an important contribution to the literature on counterterrorism. Wendy Pearlman is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and Boaz Atzili is Associate Professor and Director of the Doctoral Studies Program at the School of International Service at American University, Washington, DC.

Eli Saslow, *Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2018), 304 pp., US \$ 26.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-0-3855-4285-9.

This is a fascinating account by a Washington Post journalist of the de-radicalization from extremism process underwent by Derek Black who grew up in the epicenter of a leading white-supremacist family in West Palm Beach, Florida. His father founded Stormfront, a notorious racist community on the Internet, with his godfather, David Duke, being a KKK Grand Wizard. At age 19, he had his own extremist radio show, and was expected to follow in his father’s path as a white supremacist leader. However, following his homeschooling, he enrolled at New College of Florida, where he underwent a de-radicalization process and disavowed his previously extremist beliefs. With the author’s unique access to Derek Black, his extremist family, and their associates, this account is especially noteworthy for explaining how such ‘Alt Right’ movements have become prominent in a number of countries around the world and the possibility that some of its members might eventually decide to reject their extremist messages. In a revealing anecdote, the author quotes a conversation between Derek and his father: “‘Everything you advocated for is finally beginning to catch on,’ Don said. ‘Don’t you see that?’ ‘Of course,’ Derek said, because it was the one point on which they still agreed. ‘We’re coming up to the critical moment. That’s why I’m trying to warn people’” (p. 283).

Andrew Silke (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 668 pp., US \$ 208.25 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-1388-1908-5.

This is a comprehensive overview of findings by leading scholars of latest trends in research on terrorism

and counterterrorism around the world. Following the editor's introductory overview on the study of terrorism and counterterrorism, the volume's next 54 chapters are divided into two parts, with each part further divided into case studies. Part I: "Terrorism," covers general topics such as defining terrorism; the history of terrorism; terrorism's root causes; terrorism by states; terrorism by nationalist, separatist, left-wing and right wing groups; terrorism by lone actors; how terrorists are radicalized and their psychological make-up; terrorism in social media; how terrorist groups are organized; the effectiveness of terrorist warfare; the economic impact of terrorism; terrorism and criminality, including their financing; the phenomenon of foreign fighters who join terrorist conflicts in foreign lands; suicide terrorism; the tactic of hostage-taking; the potential use of weapons of mass destruction; and cyber terrorism. The second part presents case studies on significant terrorist groups, such as al Qaida, Boko Haram, Hamas, Hizballah, Islamic State (IS), the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and the German Red Army Faction (RAF). Part II: "Counterterrorism," covers general topics in conceptualizing counterterrorism; the roles of policing, military, and intelligence services in counterterrorism, including deterrence, imprisonment, and practice of targeted killings in counterterrorism; countering terrorist fundraising and finances; promoting the de-radicalization and disengagement of individuals from terrorism; the role of public support in counterterrorism; and the place of ethics and human rights in counterterrorism. These general topics are covered in case studies on counterterrorism in Argentina, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, India, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Spain, Russia, and two chapters on United States counterterrorism pre-9/11 and, by this reviewer, one on post-9/11. The volume's editor, Andrew Silke, is Professor of Terrorism Risk and Resilience at Cranfield University, England.

Leroy Thompson, *The Counterterrorist Manual: A Practical Guide to Elite International Units* (London, England, UK: Frontline Books/An Imprint of Pen & Sword Books Limited, 2009), 256 pp., US \$ 39.99 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-8483-2514-2.

In this highly informative practical handbook, Leroy Thompson, a renowned military expert, discusses how counter-terrorist units have evolved globally, how their members are selected, their training (such as in survival, evasion, resistance, and escape – SERE), how such units are organized, their specialized weapons and equipment, their tactics (including surveillance techniques and intelligence gathering), and how they prepare for high-risk missions, including countering the potential use of weapons of mass destruction. Also discussed is how they differ from regular military and police units. Prominent counterterrorist units around the world are also highlighted. Famous incidents involving responses by Special Forces are also discussed, including the 1976 Entebbe Airport rescue, the 1980 Iranian Embassy siege in London, the 2004 Beslan school hostage taking attack, and the 2009 response to simultaneous attacks by the LeT in Mumbai, India. The text is illustrated by numerous color photos.

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