

Art, Robert J., and Louise Richardson, eds. *Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past.*

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Art, Robert J., and Louise Richardson, eds. *Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007.

Can past successes and failures in counter-terrorism aid in democratic states' current struggles against terrorism? *Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past* seeks to answer this question. This volume, edited by Robert Art and Louise Richardson, examines 13 democratic (or at least partially democratic) states in the post-Second World War era. The goal of the book is to discern what, if any, common threads existed among these states' counter-terrorist experiences with the express purpose of identifying which methods have been most effective, under what circumstances, and whether these tactics and strategies can be employed against *al-Qaeda* and *al-Qaeda* affiliated networks.

This in and of itself is a lofty goal; to accomplish it, rather than relying on a large-N study or a few selected instances, the book employs the comparative case study method over a wide variety of cases. Though the cases vary considerably (including the ETA in Spain; the IRA and Britain; the Tamil Tigers; the FARC; Peru and the Shining Path; France and the GIA; Italy and the Red Brigades; Israel and both *Hamas* and *Hezbollah*, Turkey and the PPK; Russia and Chechnya; Venezuela and the FALN; and Japan and Aum Shinrikyo), each analysis addresses the same questions. What were the goals and tactics of the terrorist group? What was the government's counter-terror response and were these polices effective? Did the terror group adapt to the government response and subsequently did the government update its response? Finally, what factors — both domestically and internationally — contributed to the success or failure of the government's counter-terror campaign? This method, the book's clearest strength, facilitates the capacity of the reader to draw his or her own general conclusions beyond the ones highlighted by the editors.

What lessons can be derived from this effort? Some are already well-known. The first and most important rule for successful counter-terrorism is to know your enemy; in other words, there is no substitute for good intelligence. Successes tend to follow when governments increased the quality of their intelligence. The IRA chapter highlights how increasingly accurate intelligence improved Britain's ability to decapitate the group. Similarly, a lack of intelligence hindered Sri Lanka's campaign against the Tamil Tigers and Columbia's battle against the FARC. Second, security forces must be systematically coordinated in order to gather good intelligence and implement effective policy. Lack of coordination usually hamstring governments and aids terrorists in succeeding and prospering. Third, indiscriminate uses of force are counterproductive. Only one of the 13 cases featured the successful use of massive military force (Turkey versus the PKK). However, much of this particular policy's success seems attributable to factors that are rather specific to the Kurdish case, including the low

likelihood that non-Kurdish combatants would be harmed by Turkish responses against the geographically isolated group.

Among the most interesting of the more novel lessons produced by this volume is that governments should try to mobilize the more moderate groups within societies to oppose or reject the terrorist group's claims. That is, governments should try to co-opt the groups most likely to be supporters of the terrorists' political agenda while isolating the extremists from the larger society. The study of the Red Brigades in Italy is a good example of how governments and political parties can try to reoccupy the political space that resulted in the terror group to begin with. This also highlights a lesson not mentioned in the book's conclusion but one that is still important. Governments and political actors must be aware of the second order consequences of how opening and closing political space can result in terror groups. For example, had the Italian Communist party not moved toward the center, disaffecting the far right, the Red Brigade might not have emerged.

Despite the clear advantages of this ambitious volume's methodology, in many ways the cases are almost too diverse, making it difficult to draw specific policy recommendations. Furthermore, the cases are state-centered, making it even more difficult to deduce specific recommendations for governments working in concert to solve problems collectively. For example, while the editors recognize that international cooperation is crucial to the battle against *al-Qaeda*, even they acknowledge that most of the cases chosen involve terror groups operating in their own countries (or possibly neighboring countries).

Overall, *Democracy and Counterterrorism* will appeal to researchers, policy makers, and students interested in the history of terrorism and counter-terrorism. The book is very accessible to lay people and experts alike. The detail and organization of the cases allows for easy cross-comparisons, and the book is full of rich details and useful data. It represents a nice supplement to quantitative and formal modeling approaches to counter-terrorism, especially for those who are unfamiliar with major terror campaigns of the past 50 years. However, the lessons may be too broad at times or generic to apply to specific cases or events of today.

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