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This is a comparative study of the effects of terrorism and the measures adopted to counter it on the democratic cultures of Britain, Germany, Israel, Italy, France and the United States. Edited by David Charters, the study includes contributions from Charters, Grant Wardlaw, Bruce Warner, Stephen Sobieck, Robert Evans, Michael Harrison, Noemi Gal-Or and J. Brent Wilson.

The timing for such a study is certainly appropriate. As Charters notes in his perceptive introduction to the volume, the prominence of terrorism as an issue waxes and wanes, but it is never very far from public consciousness. More important, however, is Charters' assessment that academic research is mature enough to support a comparative study that considers the extent to which democracies have achieved a balance between countermeasures against international terrorism and the protection of democratic principles.

Any reader could be forgiven for approaching this assumption with hesitation. Although there is much work that is commendable and useful (as this volume attests), it is no secret that much of the literature on terrorism is guided by political rather than by scholarly contentions. (Indeed, the politicization of threat assessments and its distorting effects on public policy is an issue that Wardlaw takes up in his introductory essay.) Fortunately, no such nonsense finds its way into this careful volume.

There are, however, two more telling objections to the premise of this comparative study. First, it is well to ask whether there is anything here amenable in comparison in a principled way. As Charters notes in the Introduction, this is only partially an issue about the tired definitional problem of distinguishing terrorism from other forms of political violence or, even more expansively, from other kinds of armed threats to democratic states. Charters does not dwell on this problem, noting only that any definition must understand that terrorism is not a monolithic phenomenon.

Since the study is an analysis of international terrorism, we likewise need some way to distinguish between international terrorism and domestic terrorism. Here Charters quickly settles on what he calls "a reasonable compromise," admitting that it is unlikely to quiet all critics. The difficulty in a comparative context, however, is not in distinguishing international terrorism from other forms of violence, but rather in isolating its dimensions and effects, as a causal matter, from "domestic" terrorism, as Charters recognizes in his conclusion. This problem is of particular prominence in countries like Great Britain and Germany, where "domestic" (or nationalist? separatist?) terrorism has been widespread. To its credit, this volume addresses these problems directly, albeit less fully than some might like.

A second difficulty also addresses the problem of terminology and comparative analysis. As Charters asks, "What can be compared? Is comparative analysis possible? What kind of framework can be employed?" Part of the difficulty lies also in the definition of

"democratic." Charters identifies a number of elements, such as multiparty systems, elected legislatures, the rule of law, and such, that if not essential to democracy, are commonly associated with democratic regimes.

Grant Wardlaw addresses the "democratic framework" as a guide to comparative analysis in greater detail in the first chapter. On the whole, this is a useful, if sometimes cryptic contribution. Wardlaw begins by stressing the importance of accurate assessments about the kinds of threats international terrorism poses for democratic governments. "[I]t is vital," he concludes, "for governments first to distinguish among types and levels of terrorist threats." (p.5) Accurate assessment is a prerequisite because it is the key to formulating effective and, no less important, measured responses to the threat. Unfortunately, as Wardlaw demonstrates, political imperatives often overwhelm sober judgment, leading governments and the media to sensationalize and overemphasize.

Wardlaw then identifies four principles that should govern antiterrorism policies in democratic states. The first is a genuine and public commitment to the rule of law. The second is that there must be an accepted definition of terrorism, else policy makers succumb to the tendency to call everything terrorism and thus to overreact. Third, and related, "language should not run ahead of the facts or options." (p. 9) Fourth, government should educate their publics to understand that terrorism is not a simple problem and that there are no simple ways to resolve the problems it occasions.

These four criteria are useful and sensitive guidelines. Wisely, Wardlaw has resisted the option of constructing a simple checklist of democratic do's and don't's. In the end, though, readers who want some sense of the precise kinds of threats terrorism poses to democratic principles, and what those principles are and what they look like in concrete terms, will find this chapter incomplete.

Within these criteria, Wardlaw concludes, "a strong case can be made that democratic states can withstand a terrorist assault without fundamentally altering the nature of their societies." (p. 10) Most of the rest of the book consists of several case studies that put this proposition to the test. As one might expect, some follow the script more closely than others. All of the chapters do take care, however, to come to some conclusion about the appropriateness of antiterrorist policies and their effects on democratic principles. Unfortunately, space constraints preclude extended commentary on these individual studies. The chapters on Italy, France, and Israel are especially attentive to the theme.

In the Conclusion, unquestionably the most useful contribution, Charters offers a comparative assessment. At the highest level of abstraction, he concludes that by itself, international terrorism was not a serious threat to the fundamental stability of any democratic state. This is hardly a novel conclusion, but Charters goes beyond conventional wisdom, noting that the definition of "success" implicit in it is unduly narrow. If we broaden the term to include forcing the state to adopt a wide array of responses, including changing public attitudes in "favor of less democratic means of government," or adopting measures that undermine democratic principles (p. 212), then certainly international terrorism "succeeded" to some extent in each of the countries

studied in this volume. This is most obvious in the adoption of antiterrorist laws and policies that might be judged undemocratic. Here Charters wisely returns to the definitional issues raised early on, noting that many of these policies (as in the United Kingdom) were adopted primarily to counteract domestic terrorism, "so a clear link is difficult to establish." (p. 213)

Charters also concludes and here the evidence is more open to interpretation that "there was no wholesale rush to restrict freedoms for the sake of greater security from terrorism." (p. 221) This is not to say that Charters, or the authors of the individual chapters, are unwilling to acknowledge the sometimes expansive powers claimed by states or the abuses of those powers. Instead, the problem is again definitional and methodological: Without some measure, how are we to know when the balance struck is the right one?

In sum, this is a fine and useful book. Its careful attention to the complexities of comparative research in the field of terrorism is admirable. Its failure to resolve fully all of those complexities, although sometimes disappointing, is itself a sign of the kinds of careful and mature scholarship that the field needs.

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