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Joseph T. McCann

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Découvrir la revue

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BOOK REVIEWS

Bloom, Mia. *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

      Among the many perplexing challenges in the field of terrorism studies are understanding the motivations of suicide terrorists and identifying effective methods for deterring the threat. Of course, what makes suicide terrorism so difficult to study is the fact that those who are successful at the craft are no longer available for empirical study. Instead, we are left to examine either terrorists who were thwarted or relinquished their lethal intentions (an obviously skewed population) or data of limited relevance that provide minimal insight into the minds of those who kill themselves in the course of killing others.

      Into the emerging literature on suicide terrorism comes *Dying to Win: The Allure of Suicide Terrorism* by political science professor Mia Bloom. Among the major questions that this book seeks to answer are whether propaganda is effective in soliciting or deterring suicide terrorists, what motivates suicide terrorism in various regions around the world, and whether the phenomenon will spread into the United States, which has been virtually – though not completely – free of this form of political violence.

      The book is rather concise, fairly readable, yet sophisticated and filled with detail. Professor Bloom begins by providing a nice introductory chapter on the historical antecedents of suicide terrorism by looking carefully at the motives of ancient sects like the Hindu Thugs, Muslim Assassins, and Jewish Zealots, as well as the more modern example of Japanese kamikaze pilots during World War II. In the next two chapters she examines specific examples of suicide terrorism, namely Palestinian bombers and the proficient suicide terrorists of Sri Lanka. Both chapters detail the history and social context of political conflict in these cases, the manner in which suicide terrorism evolved, and the various motives of bombers.

      The fourth chapter, which provides a theory of suicide terrorism, seems a bit out of place in the middle of the book and would have been more effective near the beginning; still, it is one of the strongest and most practical discussions in the volume. Bloom's theory provides for a number of important distinctions, including differences between first, domestic versus international audiences of suicide terror; second, individual versus organizational motives; and third, terrorists motivated by religious as opposed to nationalist goals. She makes an important observation that suicide terrorism is often used as a coercive bargaining strategy by various terrorist organizations with similar goals that nevertheless compete with one another for members and support. In addition, there are several com-

pelling anecdotal examples, including a detailed chapter on the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) in Turkey, that demonstrate how the use of heavy-handed counter-terrorism measures by government security forces often increase, rather than reduce, the occurrence of suicide terror attacks.

Although *Dying to Kill* does a very good job of discussing factors that contribute to the spread of suicide terrorism across various regions of the globe, there are less satisfying answers to the important question of why some terrorist groups, like the IRA and ETA, have not utilized suicide terror attacks as part of their methods. Although a reasonable explanation offered in the book is that terrorist organizations embrace or shun the use of suicide attacks based on whether the tactic is endorsed by the communities that support the organization, this explanation leaves unanswered the basic question of why certain communities endorse the tactic or not. In this regard, a more extensive analysis would have been welcomed.

The last two chapters of the book are very well done and provide useful insights into the phenomenon of suicide terrorism. Bloom's analysis of the unique group of female suicide bombers, and the social and cultural factors that prompt some women to become martyrs, is particularly astute and one of the book's major contributions. Moreover, she offers a practical chapter on the prospects for suicide attacks in the United States, as well as a discussion of the disparate views between citizens of the Western world (who often look for conflict to end quickly) and *al-Qaeda* and its extremist followers (who view the current war on terror as a "centuries-long struggle").

Overall, *Dying to Kill* is a very solid piece of scholarly research on a complex and looming threat to ordered society. Among the notable aspects of Bloom's work is her extensive field research, where she traveled to many regions about which she wrote and conducted interviews to gather insights into the ethnic and political conflicts marked by suicide terror attacks. Furthermore, the strengths of this book include a working theory of suicide terrorism that can be tested further, a valuable assessment of the dynamics of female suicide terrorism, and an analysis of the positive and adverse effects that various counter-terrorism measures have on the incidence of suicide terrorism. Although there are a couple of distractions, namely some rough editing in parts of the book and a cursory discussion of why certain terrorist groups have not engaged in suicide terrorism, the advantages of this book far outweigh any of these minor diversions.

Dying to Kill offers impressive insights, novel coverage of emerging and important issues, and hypotheses that can be tested empirically. It is a book that all terrorism researchers, and certainly anyone faced with combating suicide terrorism, should read and study carefully.

Joseph T. McCann is a Clinical Psychologist at UHS Hospitals in Binghamton, NY, an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology at Binghamton University (SUNY), and a Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Upstate Medical University (SUNY).

Politi, Mauro, and Guiseppe Nesi, eds. *The International Criminal Court and the Crime of Aggression*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Although the International Criminal Court (ICC) is now operational, a specific issue remains unresolved in the post-Rome negotiations. Article 5 of the ICC Statute includes the crime of aggression, genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, that are subject to the court's jurisdiction. However, the court cannot exercise jurisdiction with respect to the crime of aggression until there is agreement on the definition to be used for aggression, and agreement between the ICC and the Security Council of the United Nations that the crime of aggression shall be consistent with the relevant provisions of the UN Charter as they involve the Security Council.

This book contains a collection of papers presented at a second international conference on the ICC held at the University of Trento from May 30 to June 1, 2001, at which diplomats and scholars addressed the unresolved specific issues involving the crime of aggression and the related concern over the relationship between the ICC and United Nation's involvement with the use of force disrupting the maintenance of peace and security in the international community. The Preparatory Commission for the ICC (PrepCom), established by the final act at the Rome Conference, was given the task of dealing with the unresolved issues alluded to. As the PrepCom had not established a resolution of the issues, the 2001 Trento conference examined the topic.

The volume is divided into three parts. Part 1 comprises four papers that present the historical background of the crime of aggression. Although the unifying title encompassing these papers is "The Crime of Aggression from Nuremberg to the Rome Statute," some of the details precede the work of the United Nations, especially in one paper on how crimes against peace became the "Supreme International Crime." Another paper is woven around the question of whether perpetrators of the crime of aggression will ever be tried before the ICC. Still another contribution addresses the debates that took place during the three sessions of the PrepCom in 2000. It is the intricacies from a legal standpoint and the political factors that illustrate the impasse to a consensus.

Part II contains six papers that focus on the possible definition of the crime of aggression to be used by the ICC in the exercise of the court's jurisdiction. The