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Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy

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after 9/11,” he argues, “the Bush administration fashioned a comprehensive strategy for American domination of the Persian Gulf and the procurement of ever-increasing quantities of petroleum.” This “strategy of maximum extraction” involved three goals—the stabilization of Saudi Arabia, the removal of Saddam Hussein and his replacement with a stable government capable of substantially boosting oil output, and the escalation of pressure on Iran in the hopes of producing a favorable leadership change there as well.

As important and overlooked as oil has been as a determinant of U.S. strategy toward the region, this characterization of the Bush administration’s policies may appear simplistic given the various other motives offered, such as non-proliferation, antiterrorism, and Israel’s security. In particular, given the title of the book, the connection between energy concerns and the invasion of Iraq would have benefited from more thorough analysis. As it is, Klare devotes just one page to an explicit discussion of the administration’s oil-related motives for ousting Saddam. As indirect evidence, he points to U.S. efforts to seize Iraq’s oil facilities at the outset of the war, but this overlooks the equally plausible goal of ensuring that postwar Iraq could finance its own reconstruction. Ultimately, Klare’s argument is largely structural in nature, but it is also a powerful one that cannot be easily dismissed. As he notes in the preface, “Since cheap oil is essential to the nation’s economic vigor, American leaders, of whatever party affiliation, have felt compelled to do whatever was necessary to ensure that enough was available to satisfy our ever-expanding

requirements.” As the competition for oil intensifies, what is deemed necessary could well be increasingly a military response.

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Cronin, Audrey Kurth, and James M. Ludes, eds.
Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy.
 Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press,
 2004. 320pp. \$26.95

This volume is a much-needed tonic. *Attacking Terrorism*—a somewhat bellicose title, since most of the articles included recognize the need for a carefully calibrated response to terrorism—is a diverse collection of focused and even-handed assessments of the military, diplomatic, economic, and legal tools available to confront the problem. Cronin, a terrorism specialist with the Congressional Research Service and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University, and Ludes, a former editor in chief of *National Security Studies Quarterly*, selected their contributors well. The diversity of expertise this volume offers affords it a broad perspective on counterterrorism strategies.

Lindsay Clutterbuck offers an exploration of a legal approach to combating terrorism (including illuminating discussions of British and European Union practices); she concludes that it is best to combine the legal and military elements of the struggle rather than approach counterterrorism solely as a war. Striking a similar note, Timothy Hoyt argues that the “use of military force may prove spectacularly unsuccessful if it is not carefully correlated

with political objectives.” Yet he argues that it is “indisputable” that we have entered into a war with al-Qa’ida. Hoyt makes the point that the terrorists’ campaign meets Clausewitz’s definition of a “continuation of policy by other means,” and that the American response will likely involve the use of military force over “many years.” He also observes, however, that the elusive nature of terrorist organizations raises serious obstacles to employing military force to counteract them.

In a well-timed essay, Paul Pillar offers an excellent overview of the intelligence challenges peculiar to terrorist organizations. He notes there is grave danger in a rush to reform following an event such as 9/11. “A couple of well-publicized mistakes . . . become the basis for a widely expressed belief—repeated unquestioningly by scores of commentators—that ‘the FBI and the CIA don’t communicate with each other.’” (Ironically, Cronin echoes exactly this criticism of interagency communication in her conclusion.)

Carnes Lord offers a penetrating chapter on the opportunities and, more tellingly, the difficulties involved in what he terms “psychological-political instruments.” While Lord is certainly correct that we must not “write off the West’s assets in this contest,” one finds oneself grimly concurring with Fouad Ajami’s assessment of public diplomacy’s prospects: “It’s hopeless. We will not get a hearing.” Lord claims the key task is not to sell democracy but to undermine radical Islam. Patrick Cronin also argues that “foreign aid triage” will certainly be of use in this regard. This aid will be urgently needed to “strengthen general order, moderate

institutions, and influential community and national leaders” in order to combat terrorism over the long term.

Martha Crenshaw reviews both counterterrorism strategy and the interaction between terrorism and security scholars over the past two decades. She observes that “al-Qaeda evolved under specific and perhaps unique historical circumstances; the assumption that al-Qaeda will be a model for future terrorism may be incorrect.” Daniel Gouré remarks that the American homeland security strategy is “a pell-mell rush” that lacks an obvious attempt to “provide a risk assessment that would rank order threats.”

Audrey Kurth Cronin herself supplies two excellent pieces. The volume opens with her survey of the four “levels of analysis” of terrorism—the individual, the group or organization, the state, and the international system. Her structured exploration of the problem is much needed. She rounds out the volume with a chapter on what might be called “grand counterterrorism strategy.” Cronin calls for an assessment of each potential target’s relative involvement in terrorism, and not a strategy that reflexively attacks “states that do not control the current wave of terrorism.” Our integration of counterterrorism tools is in “an extremely primitive state.” She concludes with the observation that “positive power” (aid, reconstruction efforts, and image enhancement) is an essential element of a balanced counterterrorism strategy. “This position is not naïveté or liberalism but pragmatism.”

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