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***Terrorism: The Basics.* By James Lutz, and Brenda Lutz. New York: Routledge, 2011. ISBN-10: 0415573343. Glossary. Resources. References. Index. Pp. 180. \$22.95.**

Academics James Lutz and Brenda Lutz have crafted a short, insightful, useful, and broad introduction to the subject of terrorism, providing “the basics” in a time when such studies are in need and demand. The Arab Spring has directly and indirectly increased the reach, depth, and potency of Al Qaeda and its affiliates; state sponsors of terrorism continue unabated and perhaps undeterred; lone wolf terrorists emerge from influences almost undetectable; and globalization continues to animate the upwardly mobile along with the discontented, who sometimes resort to political violence--terrorism. Many Americans in both the security and civilian sectors, and the global public in general, struggle to keep pace with this fluid environment, and the psychological and human terrain manipulated and exploited by these nefarious and mysterious individuals commonly called “terrorists.” The Lutz team has found a clear method to address this need to better understand terrorism: provide brief yet broad answers to the basic questions--What is terrorism? What do terrorists want? Who becomes a terrorist? What are the techniques? and Who are the targets?--answers that are articulated in chapters labeled with the very same questions, along with others addressing similar key questions.

James Lutz and Brenda Lutz are able to furnish a practical study and broad perspective on terrorism in large part due to their research backgrounds. Dr. Lutz is Professor of Political Science at Indiana University-Purdue University and has focused not only on this important subject but also on its more relevant aspects: terrorism and economic warfare; democracy and its relationship to terrorism; the success of terrorist groups; and the effects of terrorism on foreign direct investment. Brenda Lutz, researcher at the Decision Sciences and Theory Institute at Indiana University, has contributed to these studies and has specialized in animal welfare groups, some of which constitute a significant strain of terrorist activity.

Terrorism: The Basics is their forth book on this subject, and displays the distinct quality of brevity and concision, not a minor feature given the needs of a burgeoning defense and security industry inundated with ideas about terrorism yet needing newer members in the field to acquire critical information, and mid-career professionals to gain a more comprehensive scope. Many service personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan may find this book more beneficial than others in its genre for the very reason of its organization, and will be able to use the study to place their experience within both historical and political context and beyond the activities of today's most visible players in terrorism like Al Qaeda.

Moreover, the authors provide a workable definition of terrorism, and identify chief characteristics that can be explored further--not an easy task for experts given the penchant in the field for over-analysis and endless theoretical discussions. *Terrorism* opens early with this definition and thus allows a useful explanation to follow. The study notes: “While there are many objectives of terrorism, the keys include political objectives, violence, target audiences, organization, a non-state actor as the target or perpetrator, and groups that have limited resources” (p. 14). Subsequent chapters expand these sub-components and present not only concrete aspects of each (political, religious, ethnic, and state terrorism) but also introduce people and players that counter terrorist and counter insurgency analysts and personnel may encounter in the future. For instance, the Lutzes create a comprehensive view in Chapter 6: Who Supports Terrorists? by outlining the key players: domestic sympathizers; foreign governments; diaspora movements; foreign sympathizers; cooperating terrorist groups; and criminal organizations (pp. 82-93). Other chapters likewise excel at helping the reader to visualize the terrorist world and its supports and structures.

Terrorism: The Basics is not, however, without significant flaws in construct and quality. These experts on terrorism find no difference between “freedom fighters” and “terrorists,” and underscore that the very term “terrorism” is arbitrary, politicized, and even utilized by governments in order to delegitimize an opponent--no doubt true in many cases but not an excuse to blur the distinctions. The targeting of children, the elderly, women, civilians, and the cognitively challenged, and mentally ill, a practice conducted in earnest and emphasis by many terrorist groups, is given only tangential treatment by the authors, who thus stray from a fundamental aspect of terrorism: terrorists seek power while freedom fighters seek justice. Direct targeting of civilians, over-reaction by governments in response to terrorism, and terrorism against civilians as an aberration in behavior of groups are neither justifiable nor ethical

practices but are indeed qualifying variables in the cause, character, and context of the subject, and deserve more attention and understanding by the authors.

Furthermore, *Terrorism: The Basics* gives only scant attention to the changing dynamics of the principals: the terrorist organization; the population; and the host nation--as well as the international environment. Change is a critical variable in understanding terrorism: leadership, organization, tactics, government responses, population attitudes, and politics all change, individually, collectively, and globally and thus shape and reshape issues and the environment. Terrorist groups can further organize, centralize, decentralize, criminalize, dehumanize, and internationalize (i.e., becoming more violent, politically mainstream, fractionalized, or self-interested). For instance, the Taliban have transformed from non-state soldiers, to state soldiers, to non-state soldiers again, a result of the interplay of state support, military gains and losses, and tactical adaptability. The individual transformation of terrorists from recruit to trainee, to practitioner, to experienced operative, to perhaps leader is a personal dimension understood well by many experts and bears directly on the security environment as well as the evolving nature of terrorist groups. Given this fundamental character of terrorism, the peripheral treatment of this issue by the authors inadvertently creates a sterile and lifeless image of terrorists that discounts their virulence.

Nonetheless, James Lutz and Brenda Lutz have provided a concise, practical, and broad overview of the subject of terrorism that non professionals, and professionals in the security sector, will find useful. The time saved in reading this brief and pithy account is alone worth the cost of the book. No doubt, terrorism will remain a viable threat in the immediate future, and understanding the basics is central to developing the knowledge and skills necessary to fight it--or at the very least, understand it better.

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