Reviews

Terrorist Attacks: A Protective Service Guide for Executives, Bodyguards and Police Officers (2nd edition)

by Raymond Siljander and Darin Fredrickson

Springfield, ILL: Charles C Thomas (2000) ISBN 0 398 07102 0

(326 pages, \$46.95)

Reviewed by Andrew Silke

The events of 11th September have led to a flood of new books on the subject of terrorism, with many more commissioned and soon to be on our shelves. The quality of these new texts varies enormously, and books rushed out in the wake of high-profile events are often very poor indeed. Siljander and Fredrickson's volume, however, was published prior to 11th September, and as a 2nd edition there is even further cause for hope that the book will stand aloof from the current rush to print. At one level, such hope is justified by the content, but sadly this is not quite the book that many may think.

With a title of 'Terrorist Attacks' one might expect that the book would explore how terrorists plan and carry out attacks, the methods they use, the preparations they engage in, their varying levels of success, how they respond to and try to overcome obstacles, the influence of group and individual characteristics, etc. One would probably also expect the book to contain a substantial number of case studies describing actual terrorist attacks and highlighting the specific lessons to be learned from them. However, such content is not to be found in this book.

To find out what this text is really concerned with one must focus on the second element to the title: 'A Protective Service Guide for Executives, Bodyguards and Police Officers'. The book gives advice and guidance to those who must protect VIPs and others from physical threats. Such threats include those emanating from terrorists but also include threats from organised crime, petty criminals, disgruntled employees, etc. The authors adopt a very broad definition of terrorism in their introduction, and certainly do not limit themselves only to politically or religiously motivated actors. Thus, the sceptic certainly has grounds to argue that this is really a bodyguards manual, given a thin gloss of terrorism in order to make it more marketable.

As a guide to bodyguards and other protection personnel, the book is very good. It is written in a very clear manner, it is easily understandable, and the many illustrations and photographs used provide even greater clarity. The photographs though look quite dated, and one suspects that the vast majority—if indeed not all—are survivors from the first (1981) edition of the book. The authors cover a wide range of subjects, from the threat of snipers to defensive driving to surveillance. The book comes across as a very good reference and teaching text for bodyguards. Further to their credit, the authors are not afraid to stress the limits of reading the relevant literature, and they highlight the need for real-world practice in certain areas (eg defensive driving).

However, many readers will come to this book believing that it will give them a good account and insight into the subject of terrorism. That it does not. It does give a good insight into the

world of body-guarding, but that is a very different thing. The book also suffers from a heavy US focus. Very little reference is made to real-life cases in general, but those that do come up are nearly always American in origin. Indeed, if in time a 3rd edition emerges, one hopes that the authors massively increase both the number of case studies and examples described in the book, and the amount of detail given each of these. Such expansion would greatly strengthen the book's appeal (especially given the text's reference and instructional feel).

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Note: the opinions expressed in this review are the author's, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Home Office.