1-1-2009

Review of Global Business and the Terrorist Threat

Kathy Anne Wood
onekaw@msn.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://research.create.usc.edu/published_papers

Recommended Citation
http://research.create.usc.edu/published_papers/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by CREATE Research Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Published Articles & Papers by an authorized administrator of CREATE Research Archive. For more information, please contact gribben@usc.edu.
Review of *Global Business and the Terrorist Threat*

Kathy Anne Wood*

*Department of Homeland Security, onekaw@msn.com

Copyright ©2009 The Berkeley Electronic Press. All rights reserved.
“This book is an eclectic collection of chapters that explores the relationships between global business and terrorism” (Richardson et al, p. 1), and is presented in the format of chaptering. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2009, this would then be a “selection of what appears to be the best in various doctrines, methods, or style.” According to the editors, it intends to represent “many examples of the potential links between global business and terrorism” (Richardson et al, p. 1). To that end, I find this to be a well-organized compendium, and although there is much technical data to support the varied theories, it is a comfortable read.

The book approaches a topic that is foremost in many emergency planners’ minds. It is also important to practitioners in fields such as international business, public policy, terrorism/threat analysis, and security. This provides a broad-based gathering of knowledge from within the field. The pool of experts that contributed to this work is extensive. Many, if not all, have authored their own books on the varied topics, and each is a scholar in their own right - well recognized within their respective fields. Their strengths enhance the strength of the compendium itself.

A symposium, conducted in August 2007, lead to this work. It intended to be the last of four such gatherings under the CREATE (Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events) editors.

The point most strongly identified and, I believe, well supported is that first and foremost this is a global issue. It must be dealt with at that level by governments and business, and by the public and private sector. This is a point made by each of the contributors whether they are discussing business continuity, continuity of government, or resilient response to economic terrorism.

One of the primary themes, that seems to run through each of the fourteen sections or chapters, is succinctly stated by author Jon Coaffee in his conclusion, “Given the vast array of targets, strategies and technologies available to would-be terrorists, traditional and often static counter-terrorism approaches focused on ‘planning-out’ terrorism are no longer suitable without appropriate managerial resilience.” “…there has been a paradigm shift from counter-terrorism towards
resilience,” (pp. 108 & 109). I find this statement both profound and intuitive. If you observe today’s public and private enterprises, you will see that the focus has shifted to cooperation in both the public and private sectors in order to allow the resilience that will be necessary to withstand and recover from any type of attack, whether from natural or manmade impetus.

The book, as written, continues to open doors to thought provoking initiatives and ‘new ways to do business,’ and provides a plethora of charts and tables to support the ideas and initiatives put forth by its authors.

Another theme that seems to establish itself is the need to setup “…the appropriate infrastructure for [the] collecting and disseminating [of] information” as stated by Yossi Sheffi (p. 40). Communication, or the sharing of experiences and ideas, has become a focus for many in this global war. An example is London and the UK, and the lessons learned that are being shared with other global business centers and cities; i.e. London Resilience partnership and New York’s Office of Emergency Management, police departments in both locations, etc.

Section 7, by author Thomas Baumert, looks at the financial side of terrorism and how it affects us on a global scale whenever an attack of terrorism is committed. He discusses the impacts seen from the train bombing in Madrid, Spain on 11 March 2004.

Section 8, by author Dean C. Alexander, continues with the economic theme, but through the “unintended transactions that may arise between transnational companies and terror groups based in host countries.” (p. 136)

Section 9, by author Garrett R. Beeler Asay and Jefferey Clemens, turns the focus to changes in passenger density and regional travel resulting from September 11th terrorist attacks (9/11). The authors have stated, “…the impact of the terrorist threat on the air travel industry itself is important in its own right. To the extent that terrorism is responsible for increasing the perceived risks of air travel, [resulting] in several unique costs…” (p. 149). Such cost increases continue to have a significant impact on all travelers.

Sections 10 and 11 again focus on the economic effects of transnational, global bilateral trade, and suggests that instead of dealing exclusively with homeland security or military actions abroad, that “positive actions internationally to deter terror or potentially terrorist activities and suggests that the global business strategy may be applicable to other countries in other parts of the world.” (p. 198)

Sections 12 and 13 discuss the impacts of border closings, partially and completely, through simulations, graphs, and charts. I found some of their suppositions to be extreme, and as they stated, “…to be considered the upper bounds….” But, they did provide some thought provoking information and statistics.
Finally, Section 14 by authors Henry H. Willis and Tom LaTourrette focuses on the challenges of benefit-cost analysis for terrorism security regulations as observations from regulatory analysis. In their summary they propose that a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA), a maturing methodology in assessing terrorism security regulations validity and being applied within the Department of Homeland Security, has its challenges both theoretically and methodologically, and that new methods and data will need to be developed to address such challenges.

Together the sections form a complex picture of the global difficulties faced by the US and other nations in fighting the terrorists intent on disrupting our universe. This picture is painted rather darkly overall, but provides insight into possible windows of light for the future. All in all, it is a very interesting and technically sound book. I would consider it good reading material for some of the Homeland Security Management degree programs to open and widen their prospective thinking for the future of Homeland Security.

This book represents a diverse and significant contribution to our ability, as a global nation and economy, to be resilient and recover quickly and efficiently when the time comes.