Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986), p. 14.

8 Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System" in *Ideology and Discontent,* ed. David Apter (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), pp. 56–57.

Ian Shapiro

The books under review reveal considerable agreement about suicide bombers.[1] Yet there is a significant gap between the scholarly consensus they embody and widespread perceptions about the subject. We learn, for example, that suicide missions are as old as the hills. We learn that there is no particular link between the propensity to engage in suicide attacks or other forms of extreme terrorism and religious belief—let alone belief in Islamic fundamentalism. We learn that Sri Lanka's secular Marxist Tamil Tigers have been responsible for more suicide attacks than any other group in recent decades. We learn that even within Islamist groups like Hezbollah, the majority of suicide attackers have not been religious at all, and that some of the religious ones have been Christian rather than Islamist. And we learn that suicide attackers are of both sexes and of various ages, incomes, and education levels.

These findings merit widespread dissemination. They also prompt the observation that the least interesting things about suicide attackers, for political scientists, might be their religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or what they believe. Some subset of any population can likely be mobilized to die—and to kill—as aggressive crusaders for a politicized cause. The more interesting political questions are about who mobilizes and directs them, and what the conditions are that make people accept, and perhaps even support, suicide attacks as legitimate. Knowing a great deal about what was in the heads of Kamikaze pilots during World War II would not tell us much about why they were sent or what produced a culture in which their activities were validated.

In many circumstances, suicide missions are a weapon of the weak, a way for groups lacking in significant military resources to inflict maximum damage at low cost. This is why they are often deployed by political groups that lack conventional armies, such as insurgent militias and transnational ideological movements. Terrorism, of which suicide bombing is an extreme and dramatic form, is often the most effective tool they can deploy. And, as Robert Pape's book makes clear, it is often successful.

This logic of violence is not unique to terrorist groups. Social historians Douglas Hay and Michel Foucault long ago noted the existence of an inverse relationship between the coercive capacity at the state's disposal and the level of draconian punishments. Weak states engage in the kind of grotesque punishments described in the opening pages of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* just because they lack routine mechanisms of enforcement.[2] Richard Posner formalized this intuition by noting that the optimal punishment for a crime is the value of the benefit to a criminal

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for getting away with the theft in question, multiplied by the probability of his being caught. When this exceeds the amount of money the criminal will be in a position to pay in fines or compensation, criminal sanctions become necessary to achieve deterrence.[3] The weaker the state's capacity for enforcement, the more draconian punishments will have to be in order to work. The logic of violence engaged in by nonstate actors is, in this sense, of a piece with the coercion engaged in by governments.

It is often said that even if we shift from the perpetrators of suicide attacks to those who send them, rational calculation has little to do with it. For instance, there is a common perception that the leaders of the major Islamist terrorist groups are messianic lunatics incapable of rational action, or that they seek either perpetual conflict or world domination. But more than anything else, this reveals ignorance about their goals and their tactics. Both the Palestine Liberation Organization and Hamas have restricted their targets to Israelis, and Hamas has never attacked anyone outside the Middle East. Hezbollah has attacked Americans only in Lebanon. Iraqi insurgents never attacked anyone outside of Iraq until more than two and a half years after the 2003 American-led invasion. Even Al Qaeda's leaders believe they are engaged in a defensive jihad, not a bid to take over the world or wipe out the American way of life. The leaders of all these groups see themselves as engaged in struggles of national or regional liberation, trying to overthrow corrupt regimes, and/or expelling an imperial military presence from their part of the world (Pape 2005, pp. 241–50).[4] If there was ever any doubt about this, it is laid to rest in the books under review.

Ill-informed pronouncements on the irrationality of these groups and their leaders abound among Western commentators and governments. For instance, five years after Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, Ehud Barak and Bill Clinton put what was essentially the same deal that Yassir Arafat had been willing to agree to in 1995 back on the table at Camp David. This time he rejected it—prompting many to repeat Abba Eban's old line that Arafat "never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity."[5] Far from reflecting Arafat's irrationality, though, his intransigence can just as well be seen as a reasonable response to changes in Palestinian politics and his place in them that had occurred in the intervening five years. His visibly corrupt Palestinian Authority (PA) had lost legitimacy. Years of humiliation at the hands of successive Israeli governments, plus the failure to deliver material improvements, had eroded his personal popularity among Palestinians. The growth and popularity of other groups, particularly Hamas, had accelerated, with the result that Arafat would probably not have lasted a week in Palestinian politics had he signed on at Camp David in 2000.[6] The problem was not that Palestinian leaders are irrational. Arafat arguably played his hand the only way he could. The "problem" is that the situations leaders such as Arafat confront often practically rule out negotiated settlements. Indeed, as I and others have noted elsewhere, it is the exception rather than the rule for the window of opportunity for such settlements to open.[7]

The inability of American leaders to understand these dynamics in the Middle East has persisted into the post-Arafat era. In January of 2005, Hamas won the local elections in Gaza, prompting his successor, Mahmoud Abbas, to postpone general Palenistinian Authority elections scheduled for July for fear of losing them. The following December, Hamas easily won the local elections in the West Bank, and a month later was swept into power on a landslide in the delayed elections for the Palestinian parliament. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice responded by demanding an investigation into why the Bush administration had been surprised by the outcome.[8] The real question was how anyone who had been paying attention to Palestinian politics over the preceding several years could possibly have been surprised.[9]

The more significant reality the Bush administration had been missing, however, was that the Hamas leadership had been signaling interest in an end to violence and a settlement with Israel for some time. This began with a unilateral cease-fire agreed upon with the Palestinian Authority in June of 2003. It fell apart when a West Jerusalem bus bombing by a rogue Hamas cell from Hebron (disowned by the Hamas leadership) produced massive Israeli retaliation, including the assassination of Ismail Abu Shanab—the main Hamas architect of the cease-fire—among others. The bus bombing was a catalyst for concerted multilateral containment of Hamas. The European Union put the whole organization (not just its military wing) on their terrorism blacklist, funds of sister organizations were sequestered in Israel and elsewhere, and economic support from Arab states declined sharply.[10]

At the same time, Hamas was becoming an increasingly successful political force in Gaza and the West Bank. Yassir Arafat's corrupt and ineffective Palestinian Authority had lost popularity in the last years of his life. Hamas was operating as the de facto welfare state—especially in Gaza. Israel's killing of many of its military leaders after 2003 and the jailing of charismatic figures like Raed Salah boosted its popularity. Nowhere was Hamas's increased political confidence and strength more clearly underscored than in the Cairo Accord with Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, in March of 2005. Hamas agreed to a lull in terrorist operations in exchange for new elections to the PA, which would bring them to power the following year.[11] This was a dramatic shift from their boycott of the 1996 elections. Quite possibly it reflected their discovery of what groups like the Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) Basque separatists had learned before them: that popular support tends to be eroded by extreme forms of terrorism.[12] Certainly Hamas's move was widely welcomed; 73%

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of Palestinians supported its decision to participate in elections, and over 61% thought that if Hamas became part of the Palestinian Legislative Council, it would abide by council decisions.[13]

The combination of military defeats and political strength led Hamas to adopt a new truce in January of 2005, indicating that it would be made permanent if Abbas—now PA president following Arafat's death—could get assurances of Israeli reciprocity and release of Palestinian prisoners. Sharon rejected the offer, noting only that "quiet will be met with quiet."[14] Hamas continued the truce nonetheless and, following its 2006 election victory, began floating trial balloons about being willing to recognize Israel as an "occupier state," the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state within "provisional borders" as outlined in the U.S. road map as an interim solution on the way to a two-state solution based on the 1967 boundaries, and a long-term (perhaps 10-year) *hudna,* or truce.[15] The Hamas leadership also quickly and publicly rejected Al Qaeda's offer of support and its advice never to make peace with Israel in the wake of its international isolation and ostracism after its 2006 election victory.[16] But the continued refusal to consider disarming or to accept Israel's legitimacy led their offers to fall on deaf ears in Jerusalem and Washington—where these remain preconditions for negotiations.

A South African comparison might be instructive here. When the apartheid government decided in 1990 to unban the African National Congress and all other political groups, release all political prisoners, and begin negotiations, the ANC had neither recognized the government's legitimacy nor suspended its armed struggle. Most white South Africans feared the ANC as an agent of the USSR—not least because its leadership overlapped with that of one of the most Stalinist communist parties in the world. During the on again–off again negotiations over the next two years, the ANC refused requests to decommission weapons or accept that the government's insistence on constitutionally mandated "power sharing" would ever be part of a settlement. At the time, power sharing was considered non-negotiable by most whites. Nonetheless, the government continued negotiating with the ANC even after multiparty talks twice broke down—leading eventually to a settlement and democratic elections in 1994.[17]

As President F. W. de Klerk subsequently explained, what gave both him and Nelson Mandela room to maneuver was the fact that neither made negotiating dependent on the other side's acceptance of conditions or benchmark achievements. That would have provided targets for spoilers on both sides who were determined to kill the possibility of an agreement.[18] Their absence made it possible for the reformers in the government and the moderates in the ANC to produce results, moving the process forward and enhancing their legitimacy. The repeated failures of lulls, truces, and agreements in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict for just this reason has been seen many times.[19] Whether a settlement with Hamas could in fact be negotiated is an open question, but it is far from clear that it could not. There is little in Hamas's actions over the past several years to suggest that its leadership is unresponsive to the logic of containment or incapable of strategic compromise. But Israel and the U.S. administration have first to come to grips with the reality that Hamas's legitimacy on the ground means that it must be dealt with.

As Pauline Jones Luong and Ellen Lust-Okar have noted, Islamists who either come to power in national states or approach the possibility of it will increasingly find themselves at odds with transnational Islamist groups like Al Qaeda. The business of consolidating and operating a regime is bound to involve imperatives and compromises that the transnational group has no reason to support and will likely reject—most obviously the building of broad coalitions of national support, but also assuming political responsibility for conducting diplomatic relations with other wielders of power in world politics.[20] We saw this with Hamas's rejection of Al Qaeda's post-2006 election advice not to embrace a two-state solution that would implicitly concede Israel's sovereignty. We saw it with Iran's cooperation with the Northern Alliance and the United States in Afghanistan after 9/11. The Iranian regime was no friend of Al Qaeda, and was happy to see their Taliban enablers wiped away. And we saw the limiting case of the tension in Afghanistan itself. Mullah Omar's inability to reconcile the demands of being a functioning state in the international order with continuing to provide a haven for Al Qaeda cost his Taliban regime its existence.

Suicide bombing and other forms of extreme terrorism have multiple costs for the perpetrators and their causes. They tend to erode popular support for militias because of the reprisals they provoke (and also because they can produce civilian casualties among the populations they purport to liberate). Nonetheless, countervailing forces sometimes lead people to support these tactics. Why? The answer seems to be that when there is widespread repression of whole communities, as with the Palestinians on the West Bank, then people become willing to tolerate the risks and costs of harboring terrorists. As Stathis Kalyvas and Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca put it in a particularly illuminating article in the Gambetta volume, "what matters is not that the individual personally experiences political repression or economic deprivation but, rather, that the living conditions of the community are so grim and hopeless as to move people to extreme acts" (228). Such extreme acts can involve the use of violence by terrorists, or the disposition of populations to support and sometimes even promote such violence. In either case, we are dealing here with a kind of contextually based rationality.

Yet while intuitions about rational choice are a good guide to understanding the decisions of leaders to deploy

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(or refrain from deploying) suicide attackers and other extreme forms of terrorism, they do not explain the conditions that shape popular support for these decisions. Indeed, since rational choice calculations are assumed to operate at the level of the individual rather than the group, the Kalyvas-Sánchez-Cuenca finding suggests that we need to understand more about the sociology and social psychology of group deprivation and humiliation.

A good place to look is the study of the conditions that influence the collective resistance. Whereas the rational choice literature sends us in search of selective incentives to get individuals to contribute to the provision of collective goods, the sociological and psychological literatures on this topic suggest that we should look to the factors that influence group solidarity and other forms of identification.

One relevant finding in these literatures is that explicit collective exclusion leads to collective resistance, but that more subtle and implicit forms of exclusion and domination do not. Apartheid in South Africa and racial segregation in the American South, for example, were forms of manifest oppression that bred the anti-Apartheid movement and the Civil Rights movement. Once explicit barriers to social and political inclusion are gone, however, collective resistance is exceedingly hard to foster. This is true even when the actual chances for advance are slight, due to the way housing markets and related factors operate (as with the implicit school segregation in much of the United States today); likewise when exclusive clubs abandon explicit racial quotas or prohibitions on membership, yet still make it exceedingly difficult for Jews or blacks to join. Then the excluded groups seem to bifurcate between those who believe with irrational optimism that they will be the ones to "make it" and those who feel too disempowered to try to do anything about it. In short, soft apartheid generally works.[21]

These literatures might provide sources of insight into the collective humiliation that leads people to support terrorists in their midst, despite the enormous costs of such support. One only has to look at increased support for Hezbollah in Lebanon in August of 2006 by people whose homes and livelihoods were destroyed by the Israeli invasion to see that there is something to be explained here that is not addressed in the books under review. Certainly these literatures seem like a better way to go than rational choice intuitions and imputations. For as useful as rational choice theories might be when thinking about the decisions of political elites, including elites within terrorist movements as I have noted, rational choice models have never done well in explaining mass political behavior or the complex dynamics of collective action.[22] And it is these dynamics that we need to understand more fully if we wish to illuminate the most perplexing features of suicide bombing and other forms of extreme terrorism.

Notes

1 This review draws freely on my forthcoming book, *Containment: Reinventing a Strategy Against Global Terror* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

2 Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); Douglas Hay, "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law," in Douglas Hay et al., eds., *Albion's Fatal Tree* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975).

3 Richard Posner, "An Economic Theory of the Criminal Law," *Columbia Law Review* 85 (no. 6, 1985): 1193–1231.

4 See also Michael Scheuer, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2004), pp. 6–17.

5 See Charles M. Sennott and Charles A. Radin, "Arafat Illness Spurs Struggle for Influence: Key Palestinians Jockey over Possible Successors," *Boston Globe,* 5 November 2004, available at http://www.boston.com/news/world/articles/2004/11/05/arafat_illness_spurs_struggle_for_influence?pg=full (May 5, 2006).

6 A Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research poll in July of 2000 showed 68% of Palestinians believed Arafat's overall position at Camp David was "just right," while 15 percent believed he had compromised too much. PCPSR, "Public opinion poll #1," 27–29 July 2000, www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2000/pla.html [6/17/03]. Quoting Palestinian sources to the effect that "Arafat's ability to maneuver is nil," former Secretary of State James Baker concluded: "what was not enough for Mr. Arafat was too much for many Israelis, to whom any agreement will be submitted by referendum." James A. Baker III, "Peace, One Step at a Time," *New York Times,* 27 July 2000, p. A25.

7 See Courtney Jung, Ellen Lust-Okar, and Ian Shapiro, "Problems and Prospects for Democratic Settlements: South Africa as a Model for the Middle East and Northern Ireland?" *Politics and Society* 33 (June 2005): 277–326.

8 "I've asked why nobody saw it coming," said Ms. Rice. See Steven R. Weisman, "Rice Admits U.S. Underestimated Hamas Strength," *New York Times,* 30 January 2006, p. A1.

9 See Jung, Lust-Okar, and Shapiro, "Problems and Prospects," pp. 310–14.

10 Graham Usher, "The New Hamas: Between Resistance and Participation," *Middle East Report Online,* August 21, 2005, http://www.merip.org/mero/mero082105.html (June 6, 2006).

11 Ehud Yaari, "Fight Delay," *The New Republic,* February 13, 2006, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC06.php?CID=899 (June 6, 2006).

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12 See Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca, "Nationalist Terrorism as a Constrained War of Attrition," mimeograph, Instituto Juan March and Universidad de Madrid, February 2005.
13 Poll # 55, Jerusalem Media and Communication Center, December 2005, http://www.jmcc.org/publicpoll/results/2005/no55.pdf (July 12, 2006).
14 Chris McGreal, "Islamists Halt Attacks on Israel," *The Guardian,* 24 January 2005, http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1396958,00.html (June 20, 2006); "Officials: Israel Ends Targeted Killings," NewsMax.Com wires, January 26, 2005, http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2005/1/26/11452.shtml (June 18, 2006).
15 Ehud Yaari, "Fight Delay."
16 See "Hamas Rejects Al-Qaeda's Support," 5 March 2005, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4776578.stm (May 17, 2006).
17 In the event, constitutionally mandated power sharing was accepted by the ANC for the interim (1994) constitution, but the National Party agreed to give it up in the final (1996) constitution in exchange for other concessions.
18 Interview with de Klerk in Cape Town, December 8, 2004.
19 See Jung, Lust-Okar, and Shapiro, "Problems and Prospects," pp. 288–90, 297–301.
20 Pauline Jones-Luong and Ellen Lust-Okar, "Rethinking the Relationship of Transnational and National Islamists," paper presented at the Conference on Democracy, Governance, and Identity, University of Michigan, May 5–6, 2006.
21 For further discussion of these literatures, see Ian Shapiro, *The State of Democratic Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 121–39.
22 See Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), Chapters 4–7.

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Completed in 2005, Robert Pape's *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* is based on extensive research conducted by the Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism. This book belongs to what one might call the quantitative school of terrorism studies, as it relies mainly on data gathered on suicide attacks and their perpetrators over the last two decades. Its author takes issue with the conclusions of those who stress the importance of the doctrine of Islam in the shaping of the suicide terror phenomenon. Such a debate is part and parcel of a wider dispute within U.S. academia, boosted by 9/11 and its Iraqi aftermath, though it was already rooted in the "Orientalism" battle back in the 1980s. However, it also touches on an ongoing conflict between scholarship and partisanship: Should academics take sides and advocate specific policies, at the risk of submitting their scholarly credentials to the political goals they champion, or should they shun away from politics, at the risk of remaining clad in their ivory tower while social debates rage, uninfluenced by their expertise? The issue of terrorism is crucial to that matter.

Pape states from the onset where he stands. He challenges the cultural preconceptions that he contends shape common wisdom about suicide terrorism in the Al Qaeda era. He attempts to debunk them with numerous facts that the findings of his Chicago Project allowed him to gather. According to him, Islamic fundamentalism plays only a minor role in suicide terrorism worldwide, when compared to secularist movements (such as the Sri Lanka Tamil Tigers and nationalists in Lebanon or Turkey). Also suicide terrorists are neither fanatics and crazies nor disenfranchised slum dwellers: They are better educated and more middle-class than their peer groups. They also have clear political objectives—fighting foreign domination, rather than pursuing *jihad*—and their strategy is rooted in a realistic understanding of the balance of forces at the world level: They use the most potent of the weapons of the weak against democratic superpowers, compelling them to backtrack. Finally, suicide terrorism works; its efficiency derives from the concessions it manages to extort from democratic states. The whole rationale of the war on terror has to be rethought as it is based on false premises and doomed to failure, the Iraqi fiasco being a case in point.

Such a challenging perspective is definitely refreshing: after all, we are still at pains to make sense of suicide terror (to borrow from another of the books under review), and the phenomenon still looks flourishing, four years and billions of dollars after 9/11. To what extent is that analysis sound? There is no doubt that Pape's work is commendable in many aspects. His chapter entitled "The

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