

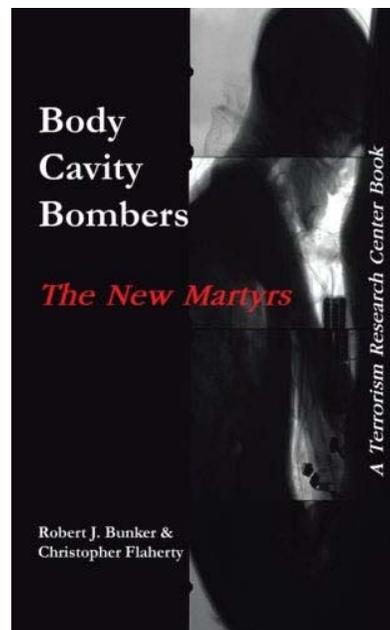
## Brief Reviews

**Body Cavity Bombers: The New Martyrs.**  
By Robert J. Bunker and Christopher Flaherty. Bloomington, Ind.: iUniverse, 2013. 294 pp. \$23.95, paper.

On August 28, 2009, Abdullah al-Asiri, an alleged member of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, was scheduled to meet Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, head of counterterrorism for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He had convinced the prince that he had surrendered and that he could persuade more al-Qaeda operatives to lay down their arms. Unbeknownst to the prince, Asiri had an explosive hidden in his anal cavity. The body cavity bomb (BCB) blew Asiri asunder in a truly gruesome fashion but did not kill Nayef. The world was thus introduced to the latest tactic in al-Qaeda's campaign of suicide terrorism.

Four years later, Bunker, a senior fellow with *Small Wars Journal*, who once held the title "Futurist in Residence" at the FBI Academy, and Flaherty, a London-based security, terrorism, and intelligence expert, examined this incident and others in an important and chilling new addition to the emergent field of suicide terrorism studies. Bunker and Flaherty wrote most of the chapters, but eight other authors, representing various technical specializations, also contributed to the book.

A combination of history, analysis, and speculation, *Body Cavity Bombers* explains through a series of ghoulish scenarios the significance of bomb types, blast dispersion patterns, and the possibilities inherent in the human anatomy for concealing explosives: vaginal, gastrointestinal, subcutaneous, "new cavity" (i.e. surgically-created), and even breast-implant bombs. Perhaps the most macabre scenario explores the possibility of a terrorist



organization aborting the fetus of a pregnant woman and implanting a bomb into her expanded uterus.

The authors argue that the inspiration for BCBs comes from American pop culture; in focusing on Hollywood's fascination with "the trope of the exploding man," al-Qaeda has entered into the realm of "mytho-fantasy," searching for a BCB that can take down buildings and kill scores of people. But no such bomb exists since the human body is a remarkably effective blast containment device. The BCB has thus far been limited to what the authors call "in situ attacks," which require terrorists to come close enough to embrace their targets.

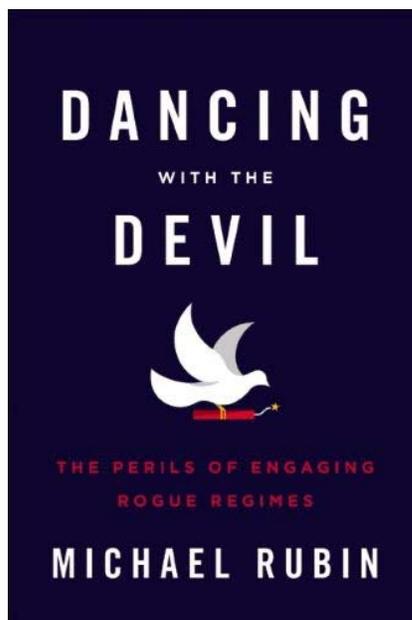
Bunker and Flaherty's belief is that al-Qaeda's search for a compact bomb with so massive a payload "could easily lead ... into an expensive, time wasting search for the viable BCB, which ultimately leads to [al-Qaeda's] defeat." Such an estimation seems overly optimistic. However, few will disagree with their admonition that "the TSA

[Transportation Security Administration] is not thinking strategically.” One can only surmise what further intrusions the current approach to the “war on terror” will bring.

A.J. Caschetta  
Rochester Institute of Technology

**Dancing with the Devil: The Perils of Engaging Rogue Regimes.** By Michael Rubin. New York: Encounter Books, 2014. 384 pp. \$27.99.

What can diplomatic engagement with so-called rogue regimes achieve? According to the established view, even fruitless talks allow diplomats to learn about an adversary, which can, in turn, yield useful results. But the evidence, cogently laid out by Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute, tells another, and disastrous, story. Rubin exposes such received wisdom as complacently wrongheaded, presenting multiple case studies involving (among others) Libya under Qaddafi, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Iran, Afghanistan under the Taliban, and North Korea.



Engaging rogues, Rubin demonstrates, harms U.S. interests by granting undeserved legitimacy and, in many cases, financial payouts to hostile regimes and groups. The Islamic Republic of Iran epitomizes this problem: Decades of diplomatic overtures have emboldened this sponsor of terrorism and would-be nuclear power.

Throughout, Rubin questions key assumptions underpinning such diplomacy: Does an adversary’s willingness to talk evince a willingness to reach a negotiated settlement or rather a desire to pocket bribes and concessions? Does the tactic of trying to mire an adversary in endless diplomatic maneuverings really nudge tyrants toward becoming peace-loving statesmen?

Rubin’s case studies are replete with officials downplaying, whitewashing, and evading their adversaries’ flagrant duplicity and brutality. Western officials across the political spectrum recoil from acknowledging that certain regimes seek goals beyond the bounds of morality. They do so at their peril, warns Rubin: “When U.S. presidents embrace diplomacy and incentives as the solution to rogue behavior—when hope trumps change—the United States does not win peace, but hastens conflict.”

Rubin’s argument is compelling, though additional discussion of Nixon’s diplomacy with China and Reagan’s with the USSR would have bolstered it. The author leaves open the possibility (with qualifications) of successfully engaging certain rogues while correctly suggesting that some regimes are beyond the pale. The book brilliantly underscores the urgency of grappling with, rather than skirting, the difficult issue of assessing a regime’s character.

Elan Jurno  
Ayn Rand Institute

**Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement. By Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell. Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 2010. 353 pp. \$79.95.**

Hamas is in crisis after losing the patronage of Iran and Syria and, more recently, suffering the fall of a sympathetic Mohammed Morsi in Egypt. The movement, which is described alternately as a political movement or a terrorist group, desperately seeks new patronage and protection in a dangerous region.

Published before these crises, this volume by Milton-Edwards of Queen's University Belfast and Farrell of the *New York Times* remains, nonetheless, a helpful guide to understanding Hamas.

The authors provide good contextual chapters on Islamist antecedents in the British Mandate of Palestine, as well as on the years when Palestinian nationalism and Islamism were nearly extinguished by Israel's birth in 1948 and the allure of pan-Arabism. While describing the rise of Hamas's founder, the late Ahmed Yassin, they also note the influence of a precursor group known as al-Mujamma, which "set fire to libraries, newspaper offices, billiard

halls, and bars" to promote its Islamist views.

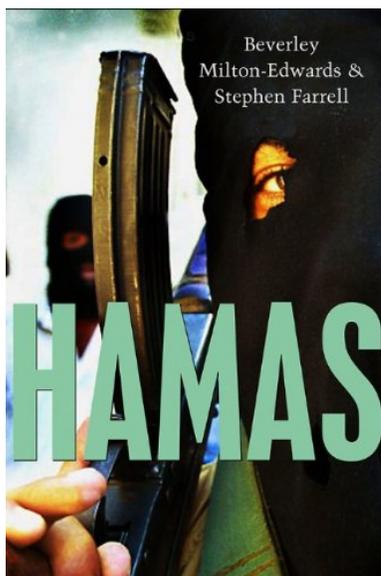
Israel failed to extinguish this Hamas antecedent when it was still on the rise, indeed granting the group "official status" in 1978, with the goal of weakening the violent and powerful Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Enjoying excellent access to Israeli officials, the authors go on to explain how other Israeli policies have attempted but failed to weaken the movement.

The authors were also privy to the thoughts and insights of senior Hamas figures. The book is filled with a granular analysis of Hamas's internal politics, the movement's civil war with the rival Fatah faction, its cultural misogyny, its suicide bombing operations against Israel (including the use of female "martyrs"), and its fractured leadership, which is often at odds with itself.

Despite the faction's successful participation in the Palestinian elections of 2006, Hamas does not see itself as "evolving" into a nonviolent, political movement. The authors further debunk the notion that there are political and military wings to Hamas, citing insiders who affirm that "once the political leadership has authorized attacks, their location, timing, and nature are left to the military leadership."

*Hamas* paints a picture of a movement that is in equal parts brutal and pragmatic. At times, the authors' sympathy for the Palestinian cause prompts them to overlook the cost of Hamas's violence and rejectionism. They also downplay the ties that undeniably exist between Hamas and al-Qaeda. These and other problems notwithstanding, this solid study helps to understand Hamas.

Jonathan Schanzer  
Foundation for  
Defense of Democracies

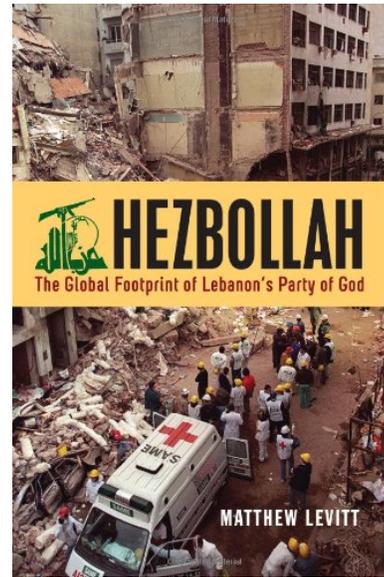


**Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God.** By Matthew Levitt. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2013. 426 pp. \$32.95.

Al-Qaeda's success in carrying out the most devastating terrorist attacks ever meant that the dozen or so years since have seen American attention and resources dedicated to chasing down and dismembering the bin Laden network. That focus has implied a chronic failure to address other "terrorist groups of global reach," to use Bush administration terminology.

In *Hezbollah*, Levitt of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy argues compellingly that none are more deserving of such attention than Lebanon's Hezbollah or Party of God. In meticulous fashion, Levitt—a former FBI analyst and senior Treasury Department official—charts the organization's political trajectory from its roots as an Iranian-sponsored, Syrian-supported offshoot of the Lebanese civil war to its current status as the Levant's premier extremist actor. In the process, he demolishes a number of convenient, conventional myths about Hezbollah's purported political moderation, its constructive role in Lebanese politics, and its ability to reconcile with Israel's existence.

Levitt's most significant contribution, however, lies in mapping the organization's contemporary political footprint. In chapter after chapter, *Hezbollah* furnishes devastating details about how



Iran's chief terrorist proxy has emerged—and now thrives—far beyond its birthplace in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Of particular note is Levitt's review of Hezbollah's longstanding presence in the Americas and the potential dangers that this holds for U.S. security.

*Hezbollah* stands as a definitive chronicle of the activities of Lebanon's most notorious Shiite militia—and of the place that the group occupies in Iran's strategic arsenal. Should Iran go nuclear, Hezbollah's fortunes will turn yet further for the better—while those of Israel and the West would take a marked turn for the worse.

Ilan Berman  
American Foreign Policy Council

**Implosion: The End of Russia and What It Means for America. By Ilan Berman. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2013. 252 pp. \$27.95.**

With Russian president Vladimir Putin playing an outsized role on the world-stage, any book discussing “the end of Russia” is quite the intellectual outlier. But Berman, vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council and an experienced Russia hand, looks to the field of demographics (too often ignored by students of international affairs) to observe that Russia’s population is on the precipice of a rapid decline and that its current economic strength rests on weak foundations. Berman has done an enormous service in pointing out this deep trend in international affairs.

Russian birthrates are well below replacement levels; life expectancy has declined, and Russians are rapidly fleeing the corruption and lack of opportunity in their homeland by emigrating to the West. Russia’s depopulation is particularly problematic in the Far East where a resurgent China covets the vast resources of this enormous region. As Russians leave Asia, Moscow will be hard-pressed to enforce its authority in the face of China’s growing presence.

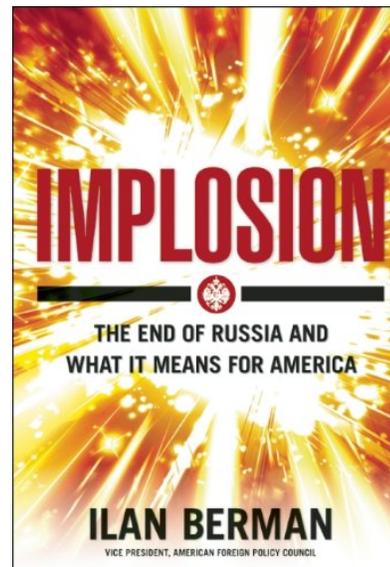
Meanwhile, in European Russia, Muslims are the fastest growing segment of the population and, thanks in great part to Russia’s heavy-handed counterterror policies, are isolated from broader Russian society and turning towards radical Islam. Berman suggests some nightmare scenarios were these trends to continue, but more importantly, he raises the fundamental question of what will become of Russia when Russians are a minority in their own country.

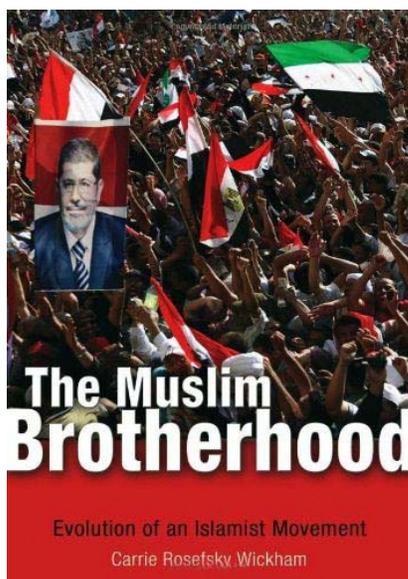
While the Russians have proven adept at exploiting their Soviet-era arms, nuclear, and space industries as well as the

country’s vast energy reserves to woo and pressure other states, the author also shows how other Soviet legacies, such as a decayed social and physical infrastructure, are rapidly hollowing Russian power.

After sketching out these trends, Berman prudently avoids making predictions, but a more in-depth analysis would be welcome. Are there no opportunities for the United States and the West in Russia’s coming implosion? And how can Washington best position itself to take advantage of them? Finally, Russia is not the only Eurasian country facing a demographic collapse: How will aging Europe and Japan factor into Russia’s future?

Aaron Mannes  
University of Maryland  
College Park





**The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement.** By Carrie Rosefsky Wickham. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013. 384 pp. \$29.95, paper.

Wickham, known for her 2002 study *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt*, continues to examine religion and political change in Egypt. This time she focuses on the era before the electoral win of the presidency by Muslim Brotherhood leader Muhammad Morsi, whose reign lasted just one year.

A political scientist at Emory University, Wickham published this study just as the Brotherhood's presidential star was falling. In nine chapters, she illuminates the early years of the Brotherhood's founding after 1928, its growth, how it coped with its branding as an illegal movement throughout much of its history,

and finally the trial and error of its foray into electoral politics. Wickham also spends some time on similar Islamist groups in Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco.

Drawing on about one hundred interviews, Wickham concludes that none of the Islamist groups moved toward moderation, including the Muslim Brotherhood. She maintains that such groups resist easy categorization and indicates where "hybrid agendas" illustrate the collision between the concepts of democracy and those of the Shari'a (Islamic law).

The author proceeds cautiously, almost surprised by her insights: "Over the course of more than twenty years of research on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the more I have learned, the more struck I've become how little we know about its internal operations. For example, we have yet to fully understand the Brotherhood's methods for recruiting and socializing its members; the size and regional, generational, occupational, and class composition of its base; the sources of its financing; the activities of its local cells and branch offices; and the mechanisms available to its leaders to promote conformity and limit the expression of dissent."

A next edition would be strengthened with more key Arabic and European sources. Transcriptions should avoid dialects (*thawabit* rather than *thauwabet*) and be exact (*Islam huwwa al-Hall* not *huwa al-Hal*). Despite these minor concerns, Wickham's book provides a solid guide to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Wolfgang G. Schwanitz  
Middle East Forum

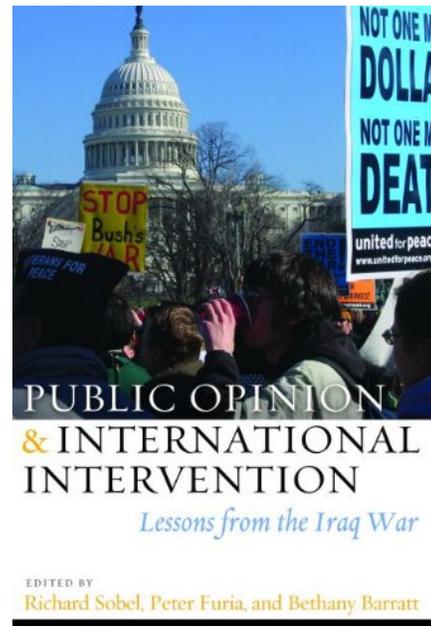
**Public Opinion and International Intervention: Lessons from the Iraq War.** Edited by Richard Sobel, Peter Furia, and Bethany Barratt. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012. 306 pp. \$29.95.

Sobel, senior research associate in Harvard University's program in psychiatry and the law, is co-editor of this fine work in the embryonic field of analyzing the impact of public opinion on foreign policy. The anthology explores the effects of public opinion on six countries that participated in the Iraq war that began in 2003: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Poland, the Netherlands, and Japan; and six that did not: Germany, France, Mexico, India, Turkey, and Canada.

The authors' general conclusions are useful. There seems to be little evidence of a "rally around the flag" effect in the run-up to and during the height of the conflict, nor did casualty rates make an apparent impact on public opinion. Governments faced negligible electoral consequences when public opposition was ignored. Not surprisingly, the four countries in Iraq for the longest period had the highest initial public support for war.

The sections on Japan, U.K., and Poland are sound, and the breadth of analysis in the Germany chapter masterful. The opening chapter on the United States by Ole Holste is rife with anti-Bush polemics that make it appear out of place. The piece on Canada misses the special importance of Quebec's antiwar sentiment at a time when secessionist feelings were strong.

Public opinion is often affected by how the media frame events when far removed from the public's eyes and ears. Measuring public opinion through media-



commissioned polls is also affected by the headline-seeking questions for which they are willing to pay.

By depending on media-sponsored polling, the authors fall short of portraying the true complexity of public opinion. Any study of public opinion and foreign policy ought to incorporate quantitative content-analysis of news along with polling data and foreign policy events, and thus, the authors' approach to data is the book's main weakness. Combining these three sets of findings and analysis may be the future of the field, and these authors have the talent to contribute to it.

Conrad Winn  
Carleton University and COMPAS Research  
Toronto

