

"What's Good for the Goose Is Good for the Gander"

Inside Terrorism

By Bruce Hoffman

Columbia Univ. Press; 1998, 296 pp., \$17.95
(paper)

Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy

Networks in International Politics

By Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink

Cornell Univ. Press; 1998, 220 pp., \$14.95
(paper)

Reviewed by Meghan Sile Towers

"People have accused me of being in favor of globalization. This is equivalent to accusing me of being in favor of the sun rising in the morning." – Clare Short

Globalization has been described by many as the driving force of the modern world, as inevitable as the rising of the sun, whose rays reach the farthest corners of the earth. Globalization has been credited with uniting the nations of the world through increased economic, political, civic and social ties. Unfortunately, the same sun that kisses the earth can also scorch it. An unfortunate result of the world's interconnectedness has become the globalization of terrorism. The same roads traveled by non-governmental actors to bring prosperity and positive social change have also been used by terrorists who bring nothing but devastation. Our "Brave New World" has become not only a haven for progress, but also a playground for destruction.

Inside Terrorism by Bruce Hoffman and Activists Beyond Borders by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink represent examinations of two opposing offspring of globalization. Hoffman examines terrorism while Keck and Sikkink study "advocacy networks" or humanitarian organizations.

Bruce Hoffman wrote Inside Terrorism before the Sept. 11th attacks, which makes his study of terrorism both comprehensive and misleading. Comprehensive because he does not concentrate solely on Al Qaeda or Muslim fundamentalism, but rather examines an array of terrorist organizations. However, his analysis is also misleading because it is based on a past misconception of invulnerability. Nonetheless, despite such flaws Hoffman's examination is extremely thorough and informative. His study is essentially an examination of the history, motivations, methods and structures of terrorist organizations, but it is also a subtle testament to the catalytic effects of globalization.

In Activists Beyond Borders, authors Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink examine the progression and methods of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) by studying historical examples and modern

activities. Their analysis of what they call "advocacy networks" is based on research of past movements (abolition) and modern missions (environmentalism). They emphasize the tools and structures of NGOs, while examining of the role of globalization in the formation of modern advocacy networks. Modern non-governmental organizations and terrorist groups are children of the same union, the marriage of technology and history. The difference lies in their use of violence. According to Hoffman, "Terrorism is violence – or equally important, the threat of violence – used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim." Keck and Sikkink recognize that the goal of NGOs is essentially political, to attain some type of policy change. Terrorists and activists seek similar outcomes, their modes of transportation may be different but both travel similar paths to reach their goals.

Examinations of the ideology espoused by advocacy networks and terrorists indicate that both groups feel they are acting in a heroic manner. According to Keck and Sikkink, advocacy networks are designed to "plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition." In other words, advocacy networks are groups whose goals are to somehow protect others against oppressive or harmful governments, ideals, practices or societies. Ironically, Hoffman describes terrorists in much the same manner:

Cast perpetually on the defensive and forced to take up arms to protect themselves and their real or imagined constituents only, terrorists perceive themselves as reluctant warriors, driven by desperation – and lacking any viable alternative – to violence against a repressive state, a predatory rival ethnic or nationalist group, or an unresponsive international order.

In a sense terrorists are NGOs who have taken the plunge, who have been pushed one step too far. According to most terrorists, they are fighters against oppression, a claim made by many an NGO as well. The difference is that while NGOs participate in figurative "war," terrorists would rather participate in a more literal one.

Religion is another tie that binds NGOs and terrorists. Both NGOs and terrorist groups can boast members who are driven by religious motivations. Keck and Sikkink describe religion as both a motivating and legitimizing factor for non-state action. "...Religious belief has been one of the main sources of the idea that action outside the borders of one's home countries was not only licit, but necessary." Religious groups and morals derived from religion can be seen as ancestors of modern humanitarian groups (NGOs). The spread of religion (through increasing contact between states) has allowed the spread of normative values that facilitate the effectiveness of humanitarian groups by increasing the likelihood that local groups will pursue an issue championed by the international community.

Religion also plays an important role in terrorist motivation; in fact, Hoffman describes religion as "the most important defining characteristic of terrorist activity today." He discusses the legitimacy that religion brings to terrorist acts. "Religion – conveyed by sacred text and imparted via clerical authorities claiming to speak for the divine – therefore serves as a legitimizing force." This "legitimacy" of terrorism, blessed by religion, makes it grossly lethal and effective. Devout terrorists are willing to sacrifice their own lives for their beliefs. The targeting of civilians is made easier by common labeling of unbelievers as "heretics" or "unclean" because of their religious differences.

Another similarity between terrorism and advocacy networks has been their use by weak states as a means of compensating for a lack of political or economic power. Globalization has created an international state system in which traditional sources of power can be undermined by more subtle attacks. According to Keck and Sikkink, one of the greatest tools of advocacy networks is leverage. "In order to bring about policy change networks need to pressure and persuade more powerful actors. To gain influence

the networks seek leverage ...over more powerful actors." Weak states utilize such advocacy networks to gain similar leverage over stronger states.

Weak states have used terrorist organizations as an important tool of pressure. Hoffman describes how "terrorism thus became associated with a type of covert or surrogate warfare whereby weaker states could confront larger, more powerful rivals without the risk of retribution." A weak state, without the military might to directly attack a larger state, can use terrorists to weaken the political support of larger actors. Media is another crucial tool that allows NGOs and terrorists to apply pressure. They target individual actors by making local issues into international ones. Advocacy networks utilize the media to affect public opinion in their favor, thus creating one form of the leverage so essential to their effectiveness. In fact, Keck and Sikkink even describe the media as "an essential partner in network information politics." In order to capture the attention of the media, advocacy networks often target internationally important forums. "Activists use important symbolic events and conferences to publicize issues and build networks." One example of a symbolic advocacy targeting was the protests of the World Trade Organization's meeting in Seattle in 1999. The protestors in the street attained a level of media coverage rarely seen, and thus effectively brought issues of the environment and labor to the WTO forum, as well as to a broader and perhaps more important global community.

Hoffman highlights the necessity of the media in the success of terrorism. "Only by spreading the terror and outrage to a much larger audience can terrorists gain the maximum potential leverage that they need to effect fundamental political change." The first organization to recognize the effectiveness of this tool was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), described by Hoffman as the grandfather of the modern terrorist. Like advocacy networks, terrorists will often attack symbolic sites or events in order to assure the most media coverage and response. No greater example could be made than the attack on the Twin Towers in New York City, symbols of America's economic might and the triumph of global capitalism.

Globalization has also allowed NGOs and terrorists to network, or cooperate, on an unprecedented scale. UN humanitarian missions are involved on almost every continent. Advocacy networks are active in the United States, Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Terrorists have been equally successful in globalizing. In fact, Al Qaeda has become so widespread, with cells in Europe, Africa, South East Asia, Central Asia, the Pacific and the United States, that former State Department official Charles Duelfer once remarked that "Al Qaeda became Starbucks." Other terrorist organizations have also been internationally involved. Recently, three former IRA members were arrested in Columbia for allegedly training members of the terrorist group FARC. The PLO has been recognized as training terrorist groups from Algeria, West Germany and Armenia, as well as influencing terrorist activities of South Africans during apartheid. Terrorists and NGOs can truly rival the corporate giants in international networking skills.

Though *Inside Terrorism* and *Activists Beyond Borders* are examinations of two different products of globalization, closer scrutiny reveals similar origins. Globalization is truly like the sun, which produces both light and shadow; it is a powerful force capable of great good and great evil. Hoffman, Keck and Sikkink may not have set out to provide us with examinations of the extremes of globalization, but by studying advocacy networks and terrorists they have done just that. Hoffman titles his last section "A Ray of Hope?" effectively questioning the ability of the international community to fight an enemy so intangible and ruthless. Though no solutions to the problem of terrorism may ever be created, comparing the similarities between advocacy networks and terrorist organizations does reveal that terrorism is based on an actuality, a logical progression of history, a definite strategy, and specific methods. Examining terrorism in this context removes terrorists from the shadows of obscurity and places them firmly in reality.

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