

10-1-2003

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Recommended Citation

Ian Illych Martinez, *Fredrick Sidell, M.d., Et Al., Jane's Chem-bio Handbook* (Alexandria: Jane's Information Group 1999). *Super Terrorism: Biological, Chemical, And Nuclear* (yonah Alexander And Milton Hoenig Eds., Transnational Publishers 2001), 11 U. Miami Int'l & Comp. L. Rev. 187 (2003)

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Book Reviews

FREDRICK SIDELL, M.D., ET AL., JANE'S CHEM-BIO HANDBOOK (Alexandria: Jane's Information Group 1999) 298 pp. Paperback.

SUPER TERRORISM: BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, AND NUCLEAR (Yonah Alexander and Milton Hoenig eds., Transnational Publishers 2001) 226 pp. Paperback.

Ian Illych Martinez*

Although both books deal with weapons of mass destruction, their aims are very different and they cater to sharply different audiences. Yonah, editor of Transnational's superb Terrorism Library, couples a wide-ranging set of articles, speeches and reports to introduce the novice reader to emerging issues in the arena. The book starts out with Einstein's letter to President Roosevelt about delivering a nuclear weapon on board a ship and detonating it in the harbor. Today's Hollywood fiction was yesterday's genesis for the Manhattan Project's reality. Nonetheless, it is chilling how this letter sets the introduction to the next piece, a National Intelligence Council paper on "Ways for Non-Missile WMD Delivery into the US" written in 1999 concludes: "a ship sailing into a port could provide secure delivery." p. 6. It begs the question: Where was Washington during the last 60 years? Perhaps, asleep at the helm.

The most chilling aspect of the book comes from CIA Director George Tenet's speech before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on February 7, 2001. Tenet describes how bin Laden—"the most immediate threat"—is seeking "softer targets" to "inflict mass casualties" using "simultaneous attacks." p. 43. Capable of "planning multiple attacks with little or no warning" conducting operations from Afghanistan his "safe haven." p. 44. Tenet's speech is followed by one by FBI Director Louis Freeh's given in 1998, which states that Islamic terrorist groups "have placed followers inside the United States who could be used to support an act of terrorism here." p. 49. Once again, you ask yourself, where was Washington?

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Super Terrorism goes through a litany of heavy weight inside the Beltway Policy Wonks. Yonah, attempts to give the reader a taste of what policy is being formulated. One piece says it all: "we are spending big, but not spending smart." p. 53. The book also includes some law for quick reference legislation on the subject. Super Terrorism is a good starting point for those interested in the debate and policy that occurred during the last administration to prepare this country for the unthinkable. However, it lacks from Yonah's superb analysis and a summation at the end would have been helpful.

Jane's Chem-Bio book is intended for a very different audience. It is catered to our first line of defense in this new war without fronts, the first responder. It assumes some familiarity with chemical and biological agents. However, even if it is lacking, Jane supplies it with blunt clarity. It is conveniently subdivided into chemical and biological agents. Each subdivision is divided into: a) effects; b) treatment; and c) agents. The handbook is small enough for a first responder to carry. Any large metropolitan area would benefit from equipping their first responders with this highly concise and informative handbook.

Even non-first responders will benefit from this volume. Those that want a quick read on chemical or biological agents and their effects can also turn to this volume. Its user-friendly format makes it attractive even to the novice who would use it for mere reference. Jane—as it usually does—has compiled an essential reference book which is highly recommended.