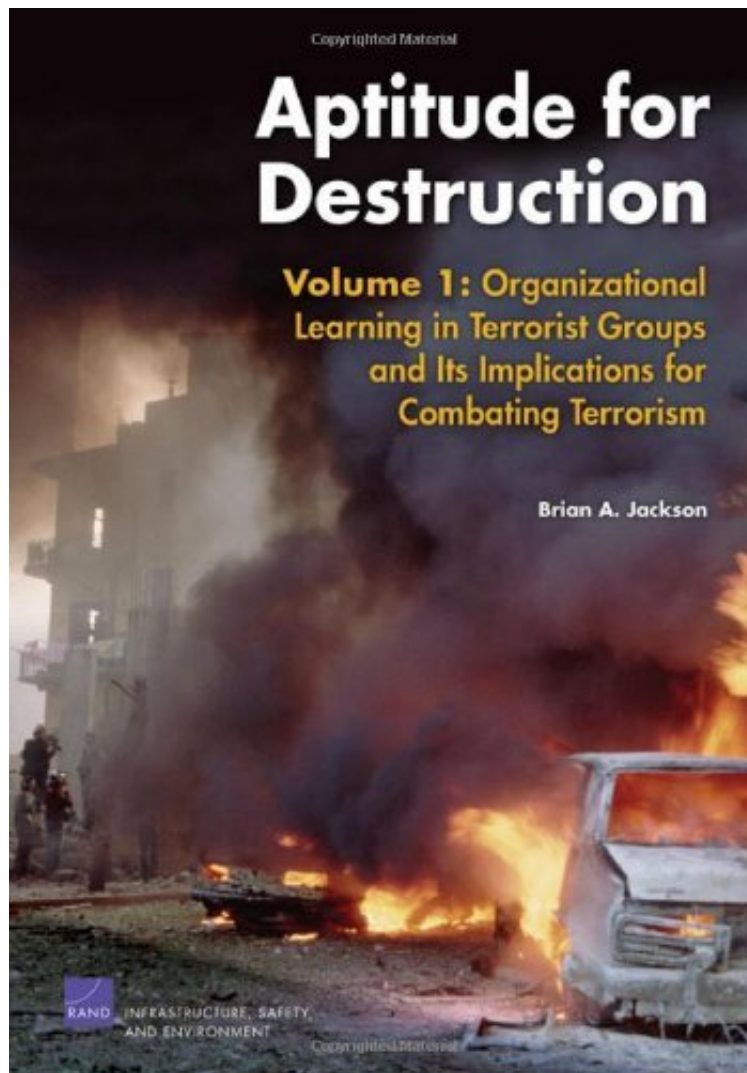


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Aptitude for Destruction, Vol 1: Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and its Implications for combating Terrorism

Brian A. Jackson

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Brian A. Jackson : Aptitude for Destruction, Vol 1: Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and its Implications for combating Terrorism before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Aptitude for Destruction, Vol 1: Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and its Implications for combating Terrorism:

Continuing conflicts between violent groups and states generate an ever-present demand for higher-quality and more

timely information to support operations to combat terrorism. Better ways are needed to understand how terrorist and insurgent groups adapt over time into more-effective organizations and increasingly dangerous threats. Because learning is the link between what a group wants to do and its ability to gather the needed information and resources to actually do it, a better understanding of the group learning process could contribute to the design of more-effective measures for combating terrorism. This study collects and analyzes the available information on terrorist groups' learning behavior, combining input from the organizational learning literature, published literature on terrorist and insurgent groups, and insights drawn from case studies and workshop discussions. It describes a model of learning as a four-part process, comprising acquiring, interpreting, distributing, and storing information and knowledge. This analytical framework, by providing a fuller picture of how terrorist groups try to adapt and evolve over time, may help in understanding the behavior of individual groups and the level of threat they pose; in developing effective counterstrategies to detect and thwart their efforts; and in appropriately allocating resources to counter potential and proven adversaries. A companion report, *Aptitude for Destruction, Volume 2: Case Studies of Learning in Five Terrorist Organizations*, examines in detail the learning activities of five major terrorist organizations and develops a methodology for ascertaining what and why groups have learned.

Rated 4 stars out of 5. How does a seemingly normal person become a terrorist willing to savagely take human life? What makes that person able to adopt new strategies? Simply put, it is something learned, often through indoctrination. A two-volume work by RAND explores this phenomenon, studying the concepts and processes of learning and applying it to the world of terrorism. Volume one guides the reader through this process of learning, highlighting why terror groups must learn how to be effective and how tactical knowledge, or lack thereof, ultimately influences the effectiveness of the group. The beauty of volume one is its versatility. Though written with an eye towards terrorist groups, its concepts are equally applicable to any criminal enterprise. Simply substituting the word 'criminal' for 'terrorist' makes this book germane to anyone tasked with predicting or countering crime. Overall, the volume is a fascinating study of how terrorists, and criminals, become who they are. Security Management, January 2006

From the Inside Flap Understanding how terrorist groups learn may aid in developing strategies to combat terrorist activities

About the Author Brian Jackson (Ph.D., bio-inorganic chemistry, California Institute of Technology) is an associate physical scientist at RAND. JOHN C. BAKER is a Technology Policy Analyst at RAND, Arlington, Virginia. His work is concerned with the international security implications of commercial observation satellites and other dual-use space technologies. Among his earlier publications is the co-edited *Commercial Observation Satellites: At the Leading Edge of Global Transparency*.