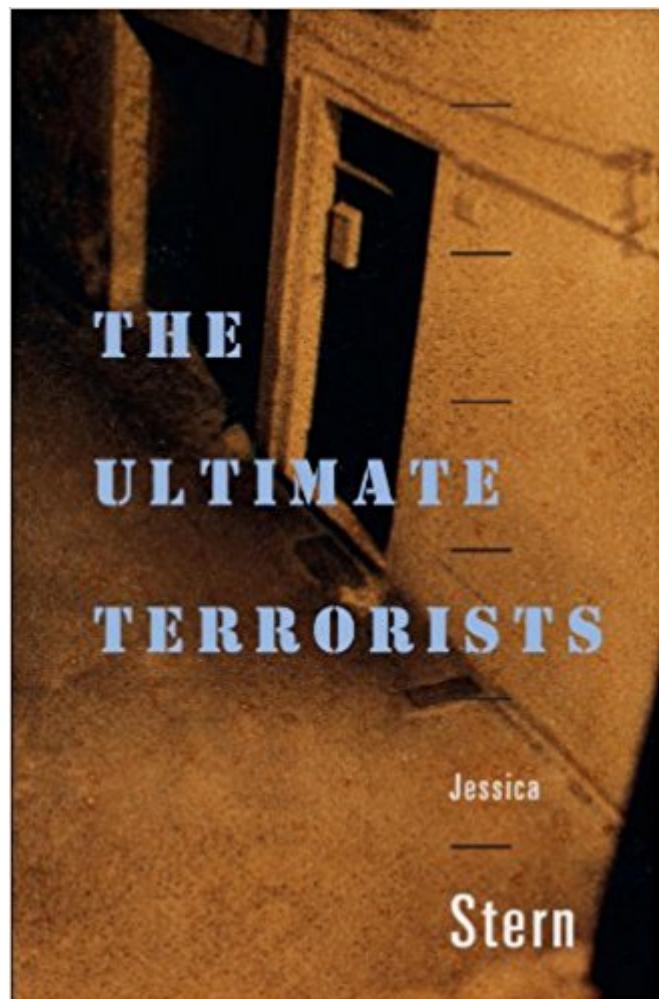


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# The Ultimate Terrorists



## Synopsis

As bad as they are, why aren't terrorists worse? With biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons at hand, they easily could be. And, as this chilling book suggests, they soon may well be. A former member of the National Security Council staff, Jessica Stern guides us expertly through a post-Cold War world in which the threat of all-out nuclear war, devastating but highly unlikely, is being replaced by the less costly but much more imminent threat of terrorist attacks with weapons of mass destruction. According to Stern, *The Ultimate Terrorists* depicts a not-very-distant future in which both independent and state-sponsored terrorism using weapons of mass destruction could actually occur. But Stern also holds out hope for new technologies that might combat this trend, and for legal and political remedies that would improve public safety without compromising basic constitutional rights.

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## Customer Reviews

In recent years, much has been made of the emerging post-Cold War threats posed by terrorist groups wielding devastating weapons. Stern, a former National Security Council staffer, explains with chilling lucidity why it is becoming more likely that those threats will materialize into a major terrorist incident featuring a weapon of mass destruction. Breaking her theory into numerous digestible parts, Stern begins by showing that terrorists themselves have changed. Whereas in the past they have been driven by political concerns (e.g., recognition of Palestinian national aspirations), terrorists now are motivated by a multitude of extremist causes, and some view

terrorism not as a tactical tool but as an end in itself. The new terrorists are also better supplied and more highly educated than their precursors. Dangerous weapons?such as those previously owned by the former Soviet Union?are readily available on the black market. In addition, the Internet makes it easier for terrorists to recruit and communicate with comrades. In cool prose that never talks down to lay readers, Stern outlines the horrific effects of biological and chemical agents, making a thoroughly convincing case that a biochemical attack would be compounded by mass panic and a dangerous social breakdown. "Because they evoke such horror," Stern writes, "these weapons would seem to be ideal for terrorists, who seek to inspire fear in targeted populations." But even as Stern stokes fear, she also offers an extensive proposal for countering the new terrorism. Her proposals will not be for everyone but will surely provide substantial food for thought. (Mar.) FYI: Stern was portrayed by Nicole Kidman in the film *The Peacemaker*.Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Stern, a former National Security Council staffer, reviews the current threat posed by terrorists possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMD)?nuclear, chemical, and biological?especially as directed against the United States. She discusses state-sponsored terrorism (Iraq), the risks of leftover materials from the former Soviet Union, and recommendations for combatting WMD terrorism, such as closer monitoring of domestic threats like political extremists and religious cults. In the post-Cold War world, the threat of terrorism is much greater than nuclear war, yet in Stern's opinion the United States is not sufficiently prepared to confront it. She hopes her policy suggestions will help reduce the likelihood and deadliness of terrorist acts. Geared to an informed audience, heavily footnoted, and with technical details of WMD components, this book is recommended for specialized collections on terrorism.?Gregor A. Preston, formerly with Univ. of California Lib., DavisCopyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I enjoyed reading this book and learned that there is a differnt way to think when it comes to terrorism.

This book must be one of the easiest books to read and understand on the subject. Sageman's book is great and Hoffman is excellent, but to me, this book was the best! The others go over terrorist inception much more, but Stern is more interested in the WMD proliferation. If there was ever a terrorist book that one could curl up to near a fireplace, this is it.

In order to determine the severity of any potential threat, that threat needs to be analyzed in terms of the enemy capability and intent, and of the friendly vulnerability. Jessica Stern, in *The Ultimate Terrorists*, expertly addresses all of these factors in her analysis of WMD terrorism. By doing so, Stern enables the reader to form an educated opinion on this topic. Whether the reader is a national policy maker, academic researcher, military professional, emergency service provider, or simply an American citizen, this book offers valuable analysis of a viable threat to national security. *The Ultimate Terrorists* is highly recommended for reading.

Jessica Stern has a unique combination of qualifications: experience in the government, where she ran the White House's interagency task force on nuclear smuggling -- and solid credentials in academia, where she has published many articles on terrorism and chemical and nuclear weapons. And she writes extremely well. In my personal opinion, this is simply the best book on the subject.

For those with limited background in terrorism as far as weapons of mass destruction are concerned, this book is a good introduction. Its greatest virtue is how easy to read it is. However, if you can stomach dry writing, I found the Richard Falkenrath book, *America's Achilles Heel*, far more thorough and informative. If it were a choice between those two books (for reasons of time or money), go with *America's Achilles Heel*. If you have sufficient time and money, get both.

*The Ultimate Terrorists* joins other timely publications in providing an assessment of differences between post-Cold War perceived threats and the modern reality of imminent terrorist attacks with weapons of mass destruction. From the threat of nuclear materials to biological warfare, *The Ultimate Terrorists* provides chapters which assess the new sources of terrorist activity.

Jessica Stern give the reader a good understanding of the weapons terrorists may use in the future. She does a good job of explaining the differences between chemical and biological weapons and does a great job presenting the problem of "loose nukes" in the former Soviet Union.

This book was well worthwhile. I am pleased that had it in stock, and shipped it right out. I am a graduate student and I needed this book in a fast manner so I could read it and then report on it. It was very accommodating to me. I certainly will use this source in the future. Thank You.

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