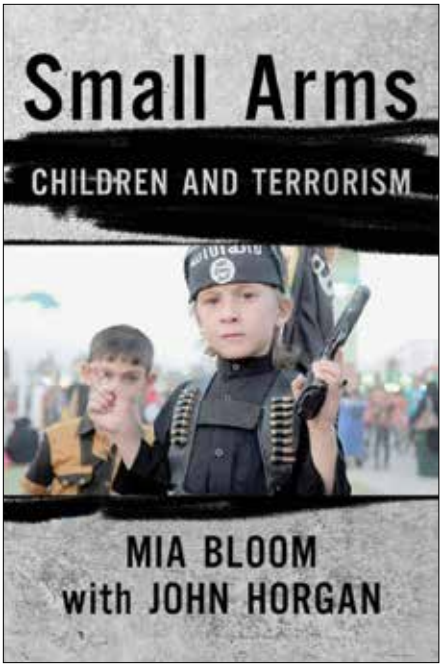

Small Arms: Children and Terrorism

By Mia Bloom with John Horgan
Cornell University Press, 2019
248 pp. $27.95
ISBN: 978-0801453885

Reviewed by Kira I. McFadden

Each year, tens of thousands of youths under the age of 18 take part in armed conflicts. Yet the use of children in war, particularly in acts of terrorism, remains woefully understudied and not well understood. In *Small Arms: Children and Terrorism*, political scientist Mia Bloom with psychologist John Horgan compare children in terrorist organizations and child soldiers, examining how children are recruited, trained, and exploited, as well as how their experiences shape reintegration and rehabilitation efforts.

Drawing on in-depth field research, as well as new primary and secondary sources, the authors offer detailed case studies to illustrate the phenomenon of children in terrorist groups. Organized around chapters depicting various dimensions to the life cycle of the child terrorist, *Small Arms*' thematic focus is on the so-called Islamic State, although comparisons are drawn with contemporary and historical terrorist groups, too. While the strength of the book lies in its interdisciplinary approach, the analysis sometimes muddies the distinction between children as terrorists and children as soldiers.

Children play a wide variety of roles as informants, spies, peer recruiters, executioners, jihadi brides, frontline fighters, and suicide bombers. The main difference between child soldiers and terrorists, however, is the recruitment process, which Bloom and Horgan examine in detail. While both are drawn into conflict for similar reasons, children in terrorist groups are more likely to be supported by the community, religious leaders, peers, and family. The authors do well in recognizing that while these children are victims, some have also perpetrated heinous crimes, and they do not assume a one-size-fits-all process for addressing their actions.

Contemporary scholarship regarding children's involvement in terrorist groups tends to revolve around children's victimhood. While *Small Arms* does play to an emotional dimension, the scholarship is sound and should evoke concern about the future of terrorism and efforts to combat it. First, terrorist groups will continue to recruit children because they provide operational advantages. Children, especially girls, are able to move more freely and attract less suspicion than adult males, making them useful as spies and suicide bombers. Child martyrs and preachers are powerful recruitment tools to shame those with wavering allegiances. Physically, children are also well suited for bomb making and hard labor.

Perhaps more concerning is the implication of rigorous indoctrination and exploitation for the endurance of extremist ideology. The generational nature of terrorism—strategies, ideologies, resource streams, and alliances learned and strengthened in one conflict tend to appear in the next—is well documented. Bloom and Horgan's most important contribution is detailing the process by which children under the Islamic State "learn terrorism." As with cults and other extreme social groups, months of intense positive reinforcement, rewards, "insider" identity markers, routinization of violence, and military and Sharia training teaches children to be passionate participants in the movement and to shame those who express doubt. As *Small Arms* makes clear, parents in the Islamic State played a disturbing and central role in radicalizing their own children.

This raises a "ticking time bomb" dilemma in that children associated with terrorist groups may present an ongoing security risk in a manner atypical of children associated with other armed groups. While these children usually lack formal education, skills learned under the Islamic State are transferrable to other criminal enterprises. Recidivism for these young people could include not only re-engagement but also other forms of violence and criminality. While the Department of Defense has expressed interest in deradicalization activities in Iraqi and Syrian refugee camps where foreign women and children may become more radicalized over time, it is not currently a priority. Countering violent extremism requires that planners examine the process of radicalization and institute measures for deradicalization, reintegration, and repatriation. At the same time, security concerns should not influence the question of accountability for past acts of terrorism.

Small Arms is a must-read for policymakers and planners working on counterterrorism strategy, particularly those grappling with how to work with regional partners to mitigate the fallout from the Islamic State. With so little existing political science scholarship in this arena, Bloom and Horgan earn the dubious distinction of providing the most comprehensive overview of children and terrorism. Their "white paper" recommendations for effectively countering violent extremism among children, all of which require integrating interagency, nongovernmental, and foreign partners, should generate considerable discussion.

The role of family, including children, in terrorism must be understood if we are to combat cyclical violence and the

resurgence of the Islamic State. *Small Arms* is one of only a few pieces of scholarship to examine the long-term challenge of children in terrorist organizations. While the authors admit much remains unknown, this book is an excellent dive into an underexamined issue and a must read for those working to end generational cycles of violent extremism. JFQ

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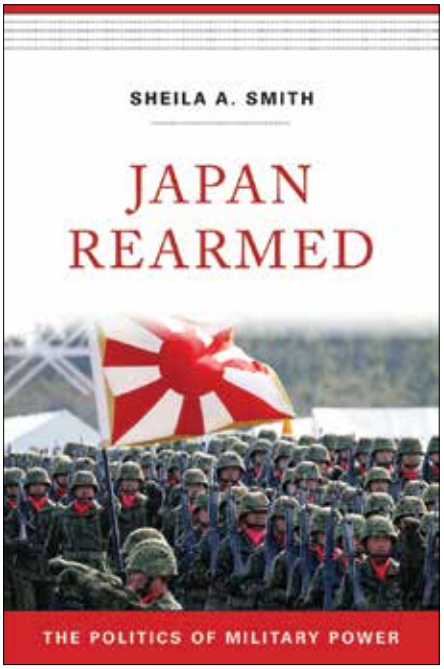

Japan Rearmed: The Politics of Military Power

By Sheila A. Smith
Harvard University Press, 2019
352 pp. $29.95
ISBN: 978-0674987647

Reviewed by Nathaniel L. Moir

According to the June 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy, the U.S.-Japan alliance is the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. The strategy also explains why it is imperative that the U.S.-Japan alliance adapt to meet the challenges that threaten our security and shared values. *Japan Rearmed: The Politics of Military Power* examines how Japan is responding to the challenges of Chinese military modernization, a rogue regime in North Korea, and environmental crisis by improving the Japanese Self Defense Force's (SDF) joint structure and, politically, by adapting the Japanese constitution to support the SDF's engagement in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. As the book makes clear, the security interests of the United States and Japan are closely intertwined.

Sheila A. Smith, a Senior Fellow for Japan Studies at the Council of Foreign Relations, analyzes Japan's position as a cornerstone of the Indo-Pacific alliance. Smith is objective in her assessment of the alliance, and the book is unique in its focus on the relationship between the SDF, Japanese politics, and Japan's alliance commitments. It is an exemplary work, drawing on an array of primary sources, government documents, and a deep understanding of Japanese history to produce a comprehensive and engaging analysis. The only substantive criticism one might levy is the sparse assessment of changes in the U.S.-Japan alliance as a result of the Vietnam War and rapprochement with China after 1972. Readers unfamiliar with those events will benefit from her suggested reading list.

Established in 1954, Japan's SDF faced restrictions against collective security participation and offensive operations because of Japan's actions during World War II. While Smith provides enough history to contextualize contemporary advancements, her focus centers on explaining how Japan is adapting to new threats, primarily through constitutional interpretations that permit increased collective security cooperation. These changes are evolving quickly as Chinese and North Korean threats to Japan metastasize. As a result, Smith emphasizes the evolution of the SDF and regional alliances after 1989.

The end of the Cold War complicated the U.S.-Japan alliance. For decades after World War II, the United States provided Japan with security guarantees in exchange for basing rights and economic assistance. Smith's diagnosis suggests that historic cooperation is now called into question because of the changing threat environment and current alliance structure. The U.S.-Japan alliance differs from the Nortah Atlantic Treaty Organization and the U.S.–Republic of Korea alliance because the U.S.-Japan alliance has no combined command structure or contingency plans. Moreover, the SDF's ability to adapt remains constrained by lack of command structure and planning, let alone by restrictions against using military force. Politicians, especially Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, seek to alter this through revisions to the 1947 constitution. However, modifications, even new interpretations, are strenuously disputed in the National Diet of Japan.

The Japanese constitution's Article 9 is the central legislative guidance for civil-military relations and the regulation of military force. It states that the "Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right." During the Cold War, Japan could rely on U.S. nuclear deterrence to provide national security, so revising Article 9 and deploying the SDF was largely unnecessary. Today, however, changes in the threat environment have forced debate in the National Diet concerning not only reinterpreting Article 9 but also creating the laws required to permit the SDF to deploy beyond the Japanese archipelago. The SDF's support for Iraqi reconstruction demonstrates how Japanese law adapted in the past and may adapt again for future deployments. This issue of deployment, along with greater responsibilities and self-reliance for the SDF, are central debates in Japan today.

While Smith devotes ample attention to the Chinese and North Korean threats, she also provides a unique look at the role of the SDF in environmental crisis management. This aspect is central for arguments underpinning efforts to revise Article 9. The Great Hanshin earthquake of 1995, the Fukushima nuclear disaster, and the recent devastation