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The U.S. Coast Guard's War on Human Smuggling

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from a terrorist attack between 2002 and 2007 was one in 1.8 billion. They offer a more transparent model that takes into account the probabilities of attack, potential losses, and the like.

Mueller and Stewart's discussion of the relative benefits of low-cost security measures is engaging. They argue that many of the far less expensive and less imposing measures are more effective. A RAND study claims that suspicious-package reporting reduces the risks to shopping malls 60 percent, while costly searching of bags manages only 15 percent.

Also, since 9/11 many of the few attempted terrorist attacks in the United States have been prevented by tip-offs and informants. Both the shoe bomber in 2001 and the underwear bomber in 2009 were stopped by fast-acting airline passengers. In addition, the public's pre-9/11 complacency is most likely gone for good, and that is a rarely discussed but valuable (and free) benefit for homeland security.

In perhaps their most provocative, but not unconvincing, chapter, Mueller and Stewart offer several premises that should form the foundation of homeland security. They argue that the number of potential targets is infinite, while the number and competence of terrorists are extremely small. (Risa Brooks has an excellent *International Security* article on the second issue.) If you protect one target, it is easy for terrorists to move to another. Subways cannot be truly protected without shutting them down.

Mueller and Stewart argue that political considerations play a major role in determining politicians' major incentive to "play it safe" and exaggerate the terrorist threat, at no cost to themselves. When George W. Bush stated, correctly,

that the war on terror could not be won but that the threat could be reduced, his Democratic opponents pounced on this reasonable statement, asking what would have happened if Reagan had felt the same about communism.

The book concludes with a discussion of politicians' responsibility to communicate risks accurately. The striking and unfortunate dissimilarity between the national-security and the medical professions struck me as I read this.

This book is serious and approachable, an important contribution. If it became the dominant mantra in Washington, we all would probably be exactly as safe as we are now, while spending a lot less.

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Noble, Dennis L. *The U.S. Coast Guard's War on Human Smuggling*. Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2011. 297pp. \$29.95

Of the eleven missions of the U.S. Coast Guard today, none is more fraught with human drama, tragedy, and the capacity to touch the soul than the interdiction of the smuggling of illegal migrant workers into the United States. Dennis Noble, long a chronicler of the history of the Coast Guard, sets out this story from the perspective of those who dare to enter the United States illegally and of the men and women of the Coast Guard who respond to the challenge. That the story unfolds at sea only enhances the urgency of the tale.

Noble centers on the unique stories surrounding the migrant flows from Cuba (in the Fidel Castro era), Haiti (since the fall of the despot President Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier), and mainland China. A constant thread that

runs throughout the narrative is how different laws, regulations, and political environments over time have resulted in disparate migrant policies. Cubans, for example, benefited from the “wet foot/dry foot” policy, which did not apply to Haitian migrants, who were viewed as fleeing not for political reasons but for economic ones. Noble paints a vivid picture that highlights the experiences of all the participants from all aspects.

A strong point of this work is Noble’s research, which includes visiting and photographing locations in Cuba that have played a significant role in the migrant story. He also excels in bringing out little-known aspects of migrant life. For example, a fact not commonly known is that since 1999 the U.S. Coast Guard has had a liaison officer assigned to the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. The Mariel boatlift of April 1980, in which at least 7,665 Cubans arrived in southern Florida, is well documented, but the number lost in that exodus is unknown. The Mariel boatlift was actually the second of three large migrant attempts from Cuba by sea. The third wave of evacuees made for the United States between 1991 and 1994, when the Coast Guard intercepted over forty-five thousand Cubans. I was stationed in Miami in 1993–94 and recall seeing several Cuban fishermen who had been rescued by the Coast Guard and were detained at its base at Miami Beach. They chose to return. Was their look of apprehension because of what the United States would do or how their own government would respond when they returned?

Noble gives equal treatment to the plight of the evacuees of Haiti, while the Chinese migrant story has a peculiarly sinister aspect. Since June 1993, when the coastal freighter *Golden Venture* was grounded off Queens,

New York City, the Coast Guard has found itself involved in a human-smuggling operation the likes of which it has never encountered before. It has involved the canny smugglers known as “Sister Ping” and the “snakeheads.”

Noble rounds out his book with a look at the politics and policies of migrant interdiction and includes some of his own recommendations for the problem.

The only distraction, albeit a minor one, is the overuse of acronyms, which breaks up Noble’s otherwise smooth narrative. However, this in no way should deter anyone from reading this interesting work. It is obvious that Noble has a clear passion for the Coast Guard and a deep respect for the men and women who serve in it.

Dennis Noble has given maritime history a solid and well documented book on a mission unique to the U.S. Coast Guard—a mission not likely to go away anytime soon.

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Twomey, Christopher P. *The Military Lens: Doctrinal Difference and Deterrence Failure in Sino-American Relations*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2010. 240pp. \$35

It has been said that “weapons speak to the wise—but in general they need interpreters.” Political scientist Christopher P. Twomey, associate professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, California, shows the difficulty of that interpretation. He makes a strong case that the existence of different military languages—that is, different doctrines—explains otherwise puzzling examples of deterrence failure and escalation.