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**Book Review: Anna Stavrianakis, Taking Aim at the Arms Trade: NGOs, Global Civil Society and the World Military Order (London and New York: Zed Books, 2010, 224 pp., US\$39.95 pbk)**

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religious fundamentalism, this is largely overlooked in favour of an analysis of technical capacity. Yet, why terrorists want WMD is also a key issue in formulating policies of preventative response. Moreover, the construction of threat is not considered. The War on Terror is an excellent example of the way in which mass destructive effects can be manipulated in accordance with certain interests – a trend discussed elsewhere in the field of WMD terrorism as part of a growing literature on risk – and this potentially affects the arguments and recommendations outlined in this book. Finally, there could be a greater cohesion of argument. For example, the authors make the very important point that WMD are not exclusively ‘mass’; WMD may also be used on a small scale. However, this means that discussion of WMD varies across this spectrum of destruction throughout the book and it is often unclear what level of destructive effect is being examined.

Ultimately, this is fundamentally a factual introduction and not an advanced text. However, this is its main strength in that it allows the reader to effectively take a step back from the wider debate and clarify the scientific basis of a complicated argument. As such, this volume is a valuable and informative resource on WMD terrorism. Especially in a field of research so heavily connected to scientific measures – such as the technical difficulties in constructing weapons – this is an essential primer for anyone working in WMD terrorism, particularly anyone who does not come from a strong scientific background. The authors explain the science of non-state WMD use with impressive clarity and, in a debate where facts are rare, make an important contribution to the ongoing discussion on this issue.

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**Anna Stavrianakis**, *Taking Aim at the Arms Trade: NGOs, Global Civil Society and the World Military Order* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2010, 224 pp., US\$39.95 pbk).

A liberal institutionalist view of international politics contends that alongside the spheres of the state and market, there exists a ‘global civil society’. In this view, global civil society is everything that is neither profit-seeking nor a function of the state, in addition to being characterised as simultaneously progressive, global and non-violent.

In *Taking Aim at the Arms Trade*, Stavrianakis asks us to lay bare the shortcomings of liberal conceptualisations of global civil society in order to understand and probe its efficacy in relation to conventional arms control. Drawing on postcolonial and Marxist critiques of global civil society, as well as Gramscian notions of ‘hegemony’ and ‘anti-hegemony’ where global civil society serves to both challenge and maintain the hegemonic status quo, the author envisions international politics consisting of two networks of actors: ‘one comprising NGOs [non-governmental organisations] and the development agencies, the other comprising arms capital and the defence-industrial branches of the state’ (p. 163).

Within this dual, complementary network of actors, Stavrianakis’s primary interest is in the strategies and structure of NGOs since the Cold War given their capacity to act as

mechanisms that produce, reproduce and challenge particular areas of international politics. Observing the evolution of NGO strategies from targeted criticism of controversial arms trades via an 'outsider' strategy, Stavrianakis finds that their activity post-2003 has demonstrated a greater willingness to cooperate with both governments and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) via an 'insider' strategy, most notably through coalition groups such as Control Arms and more recently the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA).

Stavrianakis's hypothesis is that the predominantly liberal strategies within NGOs result in the construction of the international arms trade as a problem internal to the global South, thereby sidelining three arms control megatrends in the post-Cold War era: intra-Northern production and trade, North-South transfers and small arms proliferation. Alarming, the author reaches this conclusion by examining the work of only seven United Kingdom (UK) based NGOs and coalitions – thereby, alarmingly, 'sidelining' the approaches of other prominent North American and European networks and associations, such as the Arms Control Association based in Washington, Handicap International based in Switzerland and Netwerk Vlaanderen in the Netherlands.

The NGOs chosen for study are then categorised as either adopting the more popular 'reformist' approach that underpins the liberal conceptualisation of international politics given that their strategies and programmes favour persuasion over confrontation, or a 'transformist' approach that more aggressively seeks to critically examine the actions of the state and arms capital in the production and trade of armaments.

Coming from an unabashed 'position of critical sympathy' (p. 12) for the aims of many NGOs to curb the trade of arms from the North to the South, the author reasons that the focusing on the capacity for technology to cause violence may obfuscate the actual sources of violence. In this way, for Stavrianakis, NGOs unwittingly 'participate in and naturalise a hierarchical world military order despite their (self-)image as progressive actors' (p. 11) seeking to address the world's most pressing causes of developmental, human rights and conflict crises.

Hence, according to Stavrianakis, the notion of global civil society embedded within the liberal underpinnings of many prominent NGOs, such as Oxfam and Amnesty International, is problematic due to their inherent universalism. In support of this thesis, the author profiles the work of NGOs into small arms and light weapons (SALW), which we are told has heralded the emergence of a networked form of governance in relation to arms control, in which NGOs act in concert with states and IGOs rather than in either critical or constructive opposition. What manifests, Stavrianakis reasons, is an uneven internationalisation of public policy in the South from the region itself to a small number of Northern-based NGOs who – alongside their governments – direct policies that have implications for the global South.

The far-reaching implications of Stavrianakis's novel critique of NGO strategies go to the very heart of scholarly debates surrounding both globalisation and governance. However, this study will arguably be most useful for policy advisors and NGO staffers who wish to ensure that their strategies take into account critical perspectives from a well-trained observer. The more general audience will not only appreciate *Taking Aim at the Arms Trade's* accessible language, but also the unlaboured manner in which Stavrianakis situates the thesis within the relevant literature in IR, and instead delves rather quickly into the empirical evidence that practitioners may readily identify with and apply.

To the extent to which a balanced critique is the role of the reviewer, for me it remained unclear in the introductory chapters exactly how the analysis of NGO strategies would be conducted, and what set of factors permitted the selection of only seven UK-based NGOs that surely diluted the universality of the study's findings. More puzzling still, given the author's critique of liberal conceptualisations of global civil society, was that Stavrianakis did not examine those initiatives – such as the Principles for Responsible Investment and Cluster Munitions Coalition – which have begun publicly identifying those companies, investors and financiers involved in the production and trade of this most relevant form of conventional weaponry.

Overall, Stavrianakis's analysis unquestionably makes a practical and timely contribution to the study of civil society, particularly for those interested in the present role of NGOs advocating a binding Arms Trade Treaty.

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**Lee Jarvis**, *Times of Terror: Discourse, Temporality and the War on Terror* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, 208 pp., US\$85.00).

**Alex J. Bellamy**, *Fighting Terror: Ethical Dilemmas* (London: Zed Books, 2008, 196 pp., US\$90.00 hbk, US\$27.00 pbk).

Lee Jarvis and Alex J. Bellamy can surely agree that there are significant problems with how the US conducted and framed the War on Terror. But from this common stance, Jarvis, as a postmodern discourse analyst, and Bellamy, a Just War ethicist, build nearly diametrically opposing arguments about how to address terrorism as a topic of scholarly research. Jarvis deconstructs the use of time in the discourse of the Bush Administration, believing that the subjective nature of the term 'terrorism' leads to problems in how the morality and legitimacy of various actors are constructed (pp. 11–13). Bellamy challenges presumptions about the ethics of counter-terrorism policies and procedures, believing that it is absolutely necessary to ground approaches to terrorism in a moral framework (pp. 1–2). Both are fascinating, and fascinatingly different, accounts of how to approach terrorism.

Writing within the emerging subfield of critical terrorism studies, Jarvis ably articulates that this book is meant to 'disrupt ... specific framings of terror' (p. 11) and to explore how 'terror' and 'terrorism' are produced as research and scholarly topics. Therefore, Jarvis's main contribution is to introduce 'time' as a device in the rhetoric that emerged in the US immediately following the 9/11 attacks. Such a unique analysis is necessary, Jarvis cogently argues, because 'time' was used to frame the 'perceived coherence, necessity, and legitimacy of the Bush administration's new War on Terror' (p. 2).

Jarvis explains that time/temporality is a political phenomenon. Time is used to evoke certain images and events that have historical, social and political significance. In