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Book Review

A Practical Introduction to Homeland Security: Home and Abroad

Newsome, Bruce Oliver and Jarmon, Jack A.

Roman & Littlefield, 2020, 408 pages, ISBN 9781538125663 (epub) | ISBN 9781538125656 (paperback), Price: \$85.00 (paperback).

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In *A Practical Introduction to Homeland Security: Home and Abroad*, authors Bruce Oliver Newsome and Jack A. Jarmon provide a well thought-out, in-depth analysis of key components that need to be understood when it comes to the state and workings of homeland security as well as its international connections. They break down different concepts that make up this broad unit in a structured way that allows for readers interested in the subject to focus on a specific category, making the reading material easier to approach. Both Newsome and Jarmon have written other works regarding international relations and national security. This work, however, contains a more holistic, general idea of the topics for anyone who wishes to become familiar with the basic concepts within these sectors.

Each chapter is equipped with its own box that provides more detailed information regarding something that was brought up earlier, which allows for readers to garner more of a thorough look at some points that were made. Further, there is a glossary at the end of every chapter that can be used to reference any terms that were mentioned anywhere within that specific chapter, making the book as a whole very easy to navigate and reread for key points that might need more clarification or reinforcement, perfect for anyone who is trying to conceptualize these topics for the first time.

The book starts off with chapters providing background information about how the Homeland Security department was formed. Both Newsome and Jarmon observe how security is simply “the absence of risks,” and they both mostly work inversely rather than in conjunction (1). They explain how the importance of “achieving a balance between risk and resources” is the basis of strategies that take place within homeland security (2). Initially, this might come off as something that seems to be a simple definition, but it is actually an important piece of information that is needed to understand the concepts that are brought up later in the book. To elaborate, in the section concerning terrorism, Newsome and Jarmon discuss how after the attack on 9/11, “western counterterrorism as a whole began to change,” with the US [sic] focusing on “risk prevention by fighting terrorists abroad” while Britain focused on a “broad risk management” that dealt with a general approach (121). These specific terms that deal with risk management can only be entirely understood if there is background knowledge regarding what exactly risk-taking entails (which is provided in the beginning of the book), and the explanation regarding the balancing of both risks and having resources to combat any situations are what shape these approaches that different countries take when it comes to serious, high-risk situations. Overall, the two authors work together and lay a proper foundation that the reader is able to use to guide them through the rest of the chapters, which

provide more detailed evaluations and analyses of different homeland security-based sectors and concepts.

The Homeland Security department was one of the first out of different departments set into motion after the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001. Newsome and Jarmon provide a clear timeline of the events, specifically the regulations that were passed, after this major event that eventually encompass what is now an official department in the U.S. Government. The multiple forms of legislation that were passed after this major event resulted in a lot of differing opinions and thoughts, and the two authors make sure to highlight these, such as when it comes to the USA Patriot Act, which was created in order to target and punish terrorist attacks from occurring both in the country as well as globally. Due to the amending of some of the original legislation to the point of people being surveyed and monitored extremely, these “new crimes and procedural adjustments received criticism” that inevitably resulted in a reevaluation of the amount of surveillance that the government should be able to do over the people (60). Other major acts of legislation similar to this one includes the Protect America Act as well as the RESTORE Act. It is crucial for the authors to provide an unopinionated account of their contents for the reader, which they managed to do successfully. In comparison to other homeland security works, this is one of a few that have done this well.

Perhaps the most impactful strategy that the authors employ to help readers conceptualize the information that they break down is with their comparisons and connections to other countries and their own usages of resources that may contrast with the U.S. due to differing reasons. A global security system is important because every country requires support from others during times of need, and this importance is why this text brings up comparisons of this system to other forms throughout the work. After bringing up how the Homeland Security department in the U.S. is structured, they go on to explain that “the United Kingdom assigns a broad portfolio to its counterterrorism effort,” which allows for the reader to grasp that not all of these departments in every country are structured in the same way, regardless of whether or not these countries are allies or have similar backgrounds when it comes to other alliances (32).

Throughout the work, setting aside any small typos, such as a sentence on page 27 that had November 11, 2001 written rather than September, it is evident that there is a lot of input and effort that was put into creating a book that would provide as clear and concise a source as possible for any reader who wishes to learn about the workings of Homeland Security in the U.S. and its interplay with other countries as well. While other works tend to take a look at one side rather than focusing on a holistic approach of material in order to allow for the reader to formulate their own ideas, this book is the perfect source material to ponder on how all of these originally-different sectors all came into one in order to meet the needs of both the country and people. Both Newsome and Jarmon have created a book that meets the needs of any student or person in general interested in this complicated but rather interesting department of the U.S. Government in a balanced and structured way, making it an invigorating and fun read overall.