

# Preface

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The proposed book is a result of an upper-undergraduate class, Economics of War and Terror (later titled Economics of War, Terror and Conflict) that I taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from 2015 to 2018. I clearly remember when Martin Perry, the Chairman of the Department of Economics, wrote me back in 2014 that he would like me to teach this course as a visiting professor. He proposed this course to me, 'cause he noticed in my CV that I had written a few (economics) research papers on terrorism. I was excited at the prospect of teaching such an off-beat topics course, but was apprehensive too. I knew that Walter Enders and Todd Sandler had published a book, entitled *The Political Economy of Terrorism*, which I hadn't read but had heard about, and I was not sure whether this book will suffice. (Another well-respected textbook on terrorism is by Jonathan White, *Terrorism and Homeland Security*, which came to my knowledge later.) Moreover, I was more familiar with research papers published in professional journals and I had virtually no idea how one could frame the main ideas of many research papers that are technically demanding in terms of tools that a junior or a senior undergraduate student would be expected to know. But, I had the inner confidence that I will figure out ways to explain the main ideas prevailing in the frontline professional research by using tools that the undergraduate students would be familiar with. Essentially, that is exactly what happened. As I taught it repeatedly over six semesters, the presentation slides got better, I discovered many other pieces of research in and outside of economics and the proportion of lectures on terrorism in the total number of lectures on terrorism, war and conflict grew.

Apart from my own enthusiasm for the subject, two things kept me going. First, it is the students. At the end of each semester, some students would come up to me and say that it is a very difficult course — unlike what they had anticipated in the beginning — and yet they enjoyed it. Some even went to the extent of saying that it is one of the best courses that they took at UIUC. That was immensely gratifying to me as a teacher. I had taught undergraduate courses in economics in the U.S. several decades ago, but my evaluation in this course is the best in my

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long teaching career. (For a change, no one complained about my accent in the course evaluation forms.) I found the undergraduate students at UIUC smart, enthusiastic, and receptive to what I was teaching. Second, it is the appreciation and support I received from Martin Perry. On almost every occasion where he would introduce me to someone or vice versa, he would go on to say that I am teaching this course and it is a very popular course in the undergraduate economics curriculum. He even mentioned that when he introduced me as a visiting faculty in the graduation ceremony at the end of the 2016-17 academic year. I am grateful to Martin Perry.

Books by both Jonathan White and Walter Enders and Todd Sandler are rich in terms of facts and a systematic presentation of what terrorism is about. The former is written from the perspective of law enforcement and justice whereas the latter approaches it from a national and international security viewpoint and is more analytical in terms of economic models and insights. This book is related more to the latter, which gave me the initial confidence. It is can be seen as a takeoff from Walter Enders and Todd Sandler's work in that it presents more comprehensive and rigorous analytics on terrorism from the standpoint of economic logic. I had many slides on different aspects of terrorism and all I needed to do is to convert them into regular text. The idea of writing a book struck me naturally sometime during the second year of teaching.

At this point of time, I have finished rough drafts of two chapters and I already find myself indebted to my wife, Rajashree. My spending of hours and days in planning the book and writing chapters has already deprived us of precious time together especially when both of us are over sixty.