V. Book Reviews

“Counterterrorism Bookshelf” – 20 Important Books on Terrorism & Counterterrorism Related Subjects

by Joshua Sinai

This review column is the first in a series of columns that will provide a selective listing of important books by leading publishers on terrorism and counterterrorism-related subjects. The listings of publishers and their books are arranged in alphabetical order by publishers’ names, with their imprints included in their particular section. Within each section, the books are listed in alphabetical order, according to the lead author’s last name. Although most of the reviewed books are current, a few were published within the last several years, but are still considered to be important. Future columns will review books by publishers such as CRC Press, Hurst, Oxford University Press, Routledge, Stanford University Press, Springer, and University of Chicago Press.

ABC Clio/Praeger


A comprehensive and authoritative examination of the IRA’s ideological and organizational origins and evolution and how these trends have influenced its terrorist warfare until the beginning of the peace process that resolved the Northern Ireland conflict. Chapters cover topics such as the philosophy and theology of Irish Republicanism, a history of Ireland and the emergence of the IRA, the transformation of the IRA into PIRA (Provisional IRA), strategic and tactics, weapons and targets, organization and structure, the imprisonment of IRA operatives, the role of Sinn Fein (its political front), and funding. Although these topics are well covered, one of the book’s flaws is its lack of coverage of the peace process that was led by the British and Irish governments, which enabled PIRA and its leaders and operatives to re-integrate into Northern Ireland society and politics, thereby depriving the book of a wider context in which to understand the latest developments affecting IRA/PIRA. The author, a visiting research fellow at Queens University in Belfast, is a veteran analyst on terrorism and counterterrorism in Northern Ireland.


An examination of whether and under what circumstances the theology and ideology of religion (whether Christian, Jewish, or Islamic) ”causes” terrorism, when the same religious texts and traditions may be utilized by different elements to promote peaceful or violent objectives. To validate this hypothesis, the author examines how religion-based terrorism has
manifested itself throughout history, including how it compares with other forms of terrorism. One of the book's findings is that the “real causes” of religion-based terrorism are influenced by other forces in society, such as authoritarianism, global power imbalance, foreign invasion and occupation, globalization of the world economy, rapid modernization, and group psychology. The author is an assistant professor at Westfield State University, Massachusetts.

*Amsterdam University Press*


An examination of the origins and evolution of Hizballah's ideology since its founding as a Lebanese Shi'ite organization in 1978. The volume covers topics such as Hizballah's history from 1978 to 2005, changes in its religious and political ideology, and the implications of such changes on its political program and militant activities. The book is based on the author's doctoral dissertation. The author is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.


A valuable compilation of primary documents about Hizballah's political program, beginning with the party's 1985 “Open Letter to the Oppressed in Lebanon” through its November 2009 Political Manifesto. These documents, which provide a firsthand portrait of Hizballah's political evolution over the years, are accompanied by an introductory chapter, extensive footnotes, commentary, background information, glossary, and chronology. The author is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.


An examination of the historical origin and evolution of Hizballah's political program, including its attitudes toward terrorism and suicide martyrdom operations, as well as involvement in Lebanese politics. The author is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.


An innovative and interesting exploration of the dynamics of the Salafi movement worldwide and how these dynamics are reflected in the actions of their networks in Lebanon. The author is Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

A conceptually important examination of the interplay between Islamic beliefs, political activism, society and law in twelve Islamic countries since the 1970s.

*Ashgate*


The contributors to this important volume examine how violent extremism proliferates in society and the types of measures (including policing) required to counter extremism at the international and community levels. Chapters cover topics such as the origins and psychology of extremism, the nature of extremist groups and organizations, and the relationship between extremism, counterterrorism, and policing.


A critical examination of the nature of Britain’s role in the “war on terror” and how, according to the author, the military component became the dominant theme of what is basically an ideological and political conflict. To examine this thesis, the author discusses Britain’s strategic framework for conducting the “war on terror”, al Qaida’s strategic framework for its political, religious, and military warfare, the decision of the British government to intervene in Iraq in 2003 and its involvement in the country through 2009, British strategy and operations in Afghanistan from 2006 to 2010, and British countermeasures against the terrorist warfare waged by al Qaida and its affiliates in the United Kingdom. The author is Senior Lecturer in the Defence Studies Department, King’s College London, UK, and Visiting Scholar at the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding, University of South Australia.


The contributors to this important volume examine issues involved in financing terrorism and the countermeasures required in response. Chapters cover topics such as the theory and typology of different sources of terrorist financing, as well as case studies of financing by terrorist insurgents in Iraq, the Lebanese Hizballah, the Kurdish PKK, the Pakistani LeT, the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Sri Lankan LTTE, terrorist groups in the Philippines, the Loyalists in Northern Ireland, Islamist militants in Albania, and the FARC and ELN in Colombia. The concluding chapter discusses how to “think critically” about terrorist
financing. Michael Freeman, the volume’s editor, is an Assistant Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School.

**Bloomsbury**


The contributors to this volume examine the repercussions at the regional and international levels of the inability of the international and multilateral community (such as the United Nations) to resolve the conflict in Somalia, particularly the failure (also by local actors) to establish a stable government in this war-torn country. Chapters cover topics such as the effectiveness of international and regional peacekeeping forces in Somalia, the nature of the “Jihadi” insurgency in Somalia and the involvement in foreign fighters in its warfare, the threat posed by Somali piracy and its links to international crime, the nature of involvement by the United States, Japan, China, and the European Union in Somalia, and recommendations for new intervention measures that may be more effective at resolving the conflict in Somalia.


An examination of the utilization of the Internet by militant Jihadis for objectives such as propaganda, radicalization and recruitment of new adherents. Using both Arabic and English primary source materials, the author examines the interaction between the “producers” of such content and their “consumers” in order to demonstrate how Jihadism is practiced in cyberspace. Also discussed are the measures used by those who are opposed to such extremist activities. The author is Lecturer at The Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, University of St Andrews.

**Columbia University Press**


An examination of the effectiveness of Britain’s counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, where (the authors contend) they failed to defeat the insurgents, particularly in Basra (in Iraq) and Helmand (in Afghanistan). One of the authors’ conclusions is that “an ‘indirect’ means of intervention, centered on advising, training, and employing a foreign fighting force rather than on relying primarily on your own troops” (page 156) may be more effective than conducting “direct” counterinsurgency campaigns, since it is the local actors who must be responsible for defending themselves against their own internal threats. David
Ucko is associate professor at the College of International Security Affairs, National Defense University, and Robert Egnell is visiting associate professor and Director of Teaching in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, both in Washington, DC.

**Cornell University Press**


An important, field research-based examination of the state of the Protestant Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland, almost a decade after the signing of the peace accords that ended the conflict. The author discusses the problems that plagued the demilitarization of the Loyalist paramilitaries, which were due to factors such as internecine personal and political divisions and rivalries and reluctance by some to give up their criminal enterprises. Others, nevertheless, sought to utilize the peace process to rebuild their communities and participate in the political process. All these factors are crucial in understanding the current situation in Northern Ireland’s post-accord era from the Loyalists’ vantage point. The author is Associate Professor, School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC.


A well-informed account of the nature, motives, tactics and effectiveness of the many groups that formed the insurgency in Iraq and the U.S.-led counterinsurgency campaign against it, following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime in March 2003. The author is Associate Professor in Security Studies at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore (but taught at the U.S. Naval War College when the book was published).


An innovative account of the methods and tactics used by rebel groups to finance their activities in order to obtain weapons, ammunition, and other vital supplies, which is an important factor in understanding the trajectory of their capabilities and options in conducting their insurgencies. The author argues that rebel groups often fail to obtain what they require, with this thesis examined in the cases of civil wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d’Ivoire. The author has extensive experience working with NGOs in West Africa and is currently a senior analyst with BAE Systems.

A valuable discussion of the difficulty of applying international humanitarian law in distinguishing between combatant and civilian in warfare – whether regular or irregular, such as terrorism. The author is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.


A theoretically important examination of the nature of “governance” by rebel groups when they succeed in seizing power, whether over a portion of territory or an entire state, because such an aspect of insurgencies is generally overlooked by the literature on insurgency and its aftermath. Components of rebel governance are examined, such as the capacity to deliver public services to the populations under their control, ranging from police and courts, schools, hospitals, and taxation systems, as well as symbolic expressions such as adherence to “official” flags and anthems, in order to generate and sustain compliance to their rule. This framework is applied comparatively to the case studies of three diverse insurgent organizations —the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) in Congo, and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Sudan. The author is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of Africana Studies at Vassar College.


A conceptually innovative account of how conflicts that are considered to be primarily “internal” wars often spill across their national boundaries, with rebel organizations finding sanctuaries among supporting elements in neighboring countries, with such spillover potentially giving rise to wider regional conflicts and diplomatic and military disputes between such states. To examine this thesis, the author formulates a theory of transnational rebellions which is based on cross-national datasets and case studies of cross-border insurgencies, such as the Contra bases in Honduras and Costa Rica (which facilitated the Nicaraguan civil war), the Rwandan civil war (which spilled over into the Democratic Republic of the Congo), as well as the Kurdish PKK and Taliban forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The concluding chapter presents a summary of findings, recommendations for improving theories of conflict, and policy implications. The author is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of North Texas.

A highly interesting account of the modern origins of the revolutionary political violence known as terrorism through the persona of Dmitry Karakozov, a revolutionary anarchist, who pulled out a pistol and shot at Czar Alexander II, on April 4, 1866. Although the shot missed, this "unheard-of-act" of rebellion against authority served to change the course of Russian history and inaugurated the first wave of terrorism's modern era. The author is Assistant Professor of Modern European History at George Mason University.

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