“Counterterrorism Bookshelf”:

47 Books on Terrorism & Counter-terrorism Related Subjects

by Joshua Sinai

This column consists of two parts: capsule reviews of six books published by various publishers, and, continuing the series begun in previous columns, highlighting books by publishers with significant publishing programs in terrorism & counterterrorism studies, providing this time capsule reviews (with the authors listed in alphabetical order) of 41 books published by Routledge. Please note that while most of these books were recently published, several published over the past few years deserving attention were also included.

Note: Future columns will review books by publishers such as Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, Stanford University Press, and the University of Chicago Press.

General Reviews


In this highly interesting and innovative account of the political psychology of six Israeli Prime Ministers, the author draws on the academic literature on the psychology of political conversion to examine how such political leaders approached, whether through conciliation or intransigence, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Based on the book's six case studies of Yitzhak Shamir, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, Yitzhak Rabin, Ehud Barak, and Shimon Peres, the author finds that those who rejected full-blown peace processes tended to be “those leaders who are emotionally attached to and focus on a violent conflict-ridden past…because they are less able to forge a new image of a past opponent as a partner,” while “risk tolerant leaders” are more likely to make peace. (p. xvi). A highly useful conceptual framework in the form of a matrix is provided to examine the ideology and cognitive style of such political leaders regarding their propensity to engage in potential peace processes. This is broken down into factors such as their adherence to a particular ideology, cognitive flexibility, risk propensity, emotional intelligence, and whether their advisers expressed diverse views. This book is a valuable contribution to the literature on counterterrorism with its focus on the challenges involved in resolving terrorism-related conflicts. The author is a professor in Israel studies and international relations at Michigan State University.


The contributors to this important anthology examine the magnitude of threats presented by the evolution of narco-trafficking criminality, and corruption at all levels of the Mexican state into a full-scale narco-terrorist insurgency that threatens the security of the Mexican state, and has seen its violence spill over into its United States neighbor. The volume's chapters cover topics such as a framework for analyzing criminal national security threats, a review of Mexico's counter drug policy and related security measures, the possible benefits of creating a paramilitary force in Mexico to counter such threats, the spillover of Mexican criminal violence into America's border states, armed tactics employed by the drug cartels, the involvement of the Anonymous hacktivist group in targeting the Los Zetas drug cartel, an assessment of the American defense department's military measures against such transnational organized crime, the relevance of Colombia's counter-drug
and counterinsurgency campaigns to the Mexican area of operations, and future trends in Latin American narco-criminality and terrorist warfare. The anthology’s chapters were originally published in the Small Wars Journal. Dr. Bunker is adjunct faculty, Division of Politics and Economics, Claremont Graduate University and a Senior Fellow with Small Wars Journal-El Centro, and Dr. Sullivan is a career police officer in Los Angeles and a Senior Fellow with Small Wars Journal-El Centro.


A highly detailed and authoritative account of the similarities and differences in the way the liberal democracies of Britain and France conduct counterterrorist policies and operations against their respective adversaries. The book’s chapters cover topics such as the nature of the Islamist-based terrorist threats facing France and Britain, the history and evolution of their counterterrorist organizations, how both countries coordinate intelligence, police and prosecution in their counterterrorism responses, how they manage the judicial frameworks for prosecuting suspected terrorists, and how both countries tackle Islamist terrorism and its supporting communities. One of the author’s conclusions, based on his analysis of the British and French cases, is that “if [liberal democratic] norms and institutions play a crucial role in shaping counterterrorist policy, then states in certain circumstances are constrained from making an overly repressive response to terrorism.” (p. 327) The author is a research fellow at the Centre for Political and Constitutional Studies in Madrid and a Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of War Studies at King's College London.


This is a highly comprehensive and insightful account of Thailand’s counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign’s strategies, operations, and tactics from 1965 to the current period. Beginning with a valuable theoretical discussion of the differences between terrorism and guerrilla insurgencies, the author proceeds to discuss the components of effective counterinsurgency, which he terms the “COIN Pantheon” because not only does it involve “force applications based on quality intelligence, but also lasting social and economic programs, counterpolitical warfare, political remedies for the disenfranchised, and government acceptance of previously ignored cultural realities.” (p. xiv) Based on these crucial criteria, the author finds that the Thai way of COIN is generally effective in several areas, such as in the security, political and economic realms, with the government military forces often “achieving the upper hand.” (p. 372) In other areas, however, the author writes that the Thai way of COIN “is also, unfortunately, self-hindering due to turf battles, rivalries, corruption, and egos.” (p. 372) The author is director of Muir Analytics, LLC, which advises clients in reducing exposure to risks in conflict areas.


This is a concise, highly engaging and authoritative introductory overview of terrorism in all its dimensions, starting with a history of terrorism, how to define terrorism, terrorists’ motivations, strategies and tactics, the root causes of terrorism, the nature of terrorists’ mindsets, how individuals become radicalized into terrorism, the characteristics of suicide terrorism, the components of effective counterterrorism, and future trends in terrorism. Although intended as a ‘quick read,’ this well-written book nevertheless is filled with numerous insights. It discusses the 1st century Sicarii as well as 19th century Russian anarchists to illustrate the history and evolution of terrorism. In assessing the effectiveness of terrorist warfare, the author points
out that five key areas determine a group's capability: quality of leadership, quantity of members, quality of members, availability of weapons, and their financial base. (p. 38) Effectiveness in counterterrorism, in the author's formulation, involves deterring terrorists and their supporters through penalties and punishments, increasing the ability of the security forces to identify and thwart terrorists, reducing the vulnerability of potential targets, tackling the underlying grievances and root causes that give rise to terrorism, and increasing the public's resilience in the face of terrorist attacks. (p. 102) The author is a Professor at the University of East London, where he also serves as the program director for terrorism studies.


This is a highly innovative application by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists, law enforcement experts, and scientists of computational techniques to examine the targeting techniques and attack patterns of the Indian Mujahideen (IM) terrorist group. The book begins with an examination of the history and evolution of IM's terrorist campaign against the Indian state, the nature of its organization and membership, areas of operation, and links to other South Asian Islamist groups. It then transitions to a discussion of the conceptual framework’s “syntax and semantics of Temporal Probabilistic (TP) behavioral rules” that technologically compute the IM's attack and targeting behaviors. (p. 49) This chapter will be of particular interest to the computational academic community – and, as per the authors guidance, those readers who are not familiar with such computational algorithmic techniques “may skip this chapter without any loss of relevant material.” (p. 49) The succeeding chapters provide valuable and rich data about the IM's tactics, such as bombings, simultaneous and timed attacks, and targeting patterns, such as attacking public sites, as well as the total deaths caused by such attacks. Especially innovative is the chapter on computing policy response options, which are based on the overall conceptual framework’s “methodology and algorithm that are used to automatically generate policy options” in the form of a “mathematical definition of a policy against IM” that has a “high probability of significantly reducing” most types of its attacks. (p. 107) The book's final chapter presents a recommendation to establish an Indian “National Counter-Terrorism Center,” because, among other reasons, a major operational problem in India's counterterrorism campaign is its “lack of a coordinated authority or even a central database of all arrested individuals, suspects, or ongoing operations.” (p. 133) The appendices describe the study’s overall methodology and use of various classes of variables as sources for data collection, as well as a chronological listing of IM's terrorist attacks. V.S. Subrahmanian is a professor of computer science at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he also serves as Director of the Laboratory for Computational Cultural Dynamics (LCCD), where Dr. Mannes serves as a research associate. Animesh Roul, and R.K. Raghavan are prominent India-based researchers on terrorism.

*Routledge Publications*


An insightful and comprehensive assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Union’s response to terrorism, explaining how its numerous institutions conduct counterterrorism in the post-9/11 era, including its attempts to coordinate its member-states’ policies, legislations and threats-related intelligence information sharing. The author’s research is based on a qualitative methodology that draws on numerous interviews, policy documents and secondary literature.

**Claude Berube and Patrick Cullen**, (Eds.) *Maritime Private Security: Market Responses to Piracy, Terrorism*
The contributors to this edited volume, which is one of the first to comprehensively discuss the issue of maritime private security, examine its historical origins and evolution as a private sector contribution to countering piracy, terrorism, and other security-related maritime threats around the world, where governments require the private sector to support and augment their own countermeasures in these spheres.


When this edited volume was published in 1995, it represented one of the first times that the subject of far right-wing terrorism in democratic societies was discussed in a systematic manner, making it a classic in the field of terrorism studies at the time. It is still highly pertinent to the current era. The volume’s contributors discuss subjects such as the role of “split delegitimization” among extremist right-wing groups, and right-wing violence in North America, Scandinavia, Germany, Italy, South Africa, and Japan. The volume's papers were originally presented at a workshop supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin in August, 1994.


An innovative and up-to-date examination of the processes that brought about the end of more than four decades of left-wing and right-wing terrorism in Italy. The book's chapters cover topics such as the roles of Italian legal institutions, anti-terrorist legislation, and prison reform, as well as conflict resolution measures such as conciliation and reconciliation, in ending terrorism. Other chapters discuss the perspectives of former terrorists and victims on these issues. The concluding chapter places the case of Italy in comparative perspective.


The contributors to this comprehensive handbook examine significant components in security studies including theoretical approaches to studying security issues (such as realism, liberalism, critical security studies, post-structuralism, and feminism), contemporary security challenges (such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, state failure, energy security, public health breakdowns), and regional security challenges (such as China’s regional ambitions, conflicts in the Korean peninsula, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Western Balkans), as well as future security challenges (in the form of alliances, deterrence, coercive diplomacy, peace operations, humanitarian intervention, global governance, and crisis management).


A detailed and well-researched examination of the links between criminality and terrorism in South Asia, focusing on the activities of terrorist actors that operate in Indian-held Kashmir (particularly Indian and Pakistani proxies) and Pakistan (particularly Lashkar-i-Taiba, the Taliban, and al Qaida). The concluding chapter discusses the challenges facing Pakistan’s ineffectual management of the terrorist and criminal groups...
that operate on its country and the spillover effects into the neighboring countries.


Considered a classic when it was first published in the mid-1990s, this is a well-written and comprehensive examination of the nature of the terrorist threat during the immediate post-Cold War period by a military man turned academic. The volume's chapters cover topics such as the nature of conflict in the post-Communist world, technological developments in terrorist weaponry and targeting, the role of intelligence in counterterrorism, the nexus between terrorism and criminality, including narco-terrorism, the nature of rural and urban guerrilla warfare, airport and aviation security, and the roles of civil liberties and the rule of law in counterterrorism.


The contributors to this important volume examine the use of terrorism by certain states since the end of the Cold War. The volume's chapters present an historical overview of state terrorism, including current trends, obstacles to international responses against the use of state terror, as well as case studies that focus on Saddam Hussein's use of terror against the Kurds, Indonesia's use of terror against the East Timor separatists, genocidal terror in Rwanda, and the components of an effective international response to state terror. The concluding chapter discusses the contribution of Paul Wilkinson's notion of state terror to understanding the use of such coercive methods in the current period.


The contributors to this edited volume examine the European Union’s (EU) management of counterterrorism in all its dimensions in the post-9/11 era. The chapters cover topics such as the external dimension of the EU’s counterterrorism policies, the United States’ influence in the construction of the EU’s counterterrorism policies and programs, the challenges to the EU’s counterterrorism policies presented by the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice, the EU as a ‘global counterterrorism actor,’ and future trends in the EU’s counterterrorism campaign. This volume was originally published as a special issue of the *European Security* journal.


A conceptually interesting examination of the ineffectiveness of the communicative components of the Bush administration’s counter-terrorist policies towards al Qaida. The author’s conceptual framework on communicators and audiences is applied to examine America’s counter-terrorist communications vis-à-vis al Qaida’s own world-view. The concluding chapters assess whether the right lessons were learned and provide the author’s recommendations for improving the communications components in US counterterrorism against groups such as al Qaida.

This is a reissue of the author’s masterful 1995 account of the Stern Gang (also known as the Stern Group or Lehi), the right-wing Jewish terrorist group that operated during Israel’s formative pre-state period. The volume’s chapters discuss the group’s revisionist ideology, its split from the larger Irgun terrorist group, its organizational formation, its terrorist activities, including political assassinations, and its political activities following independence in the nascent Jewish State.


The contributors to this edited volume examine significant challenges facing Somalia in terms of the fragile nature of its government and the twin threats to its stability presented by terrorism and piracy. Also discussed are proposals how the international community can help stabilize the situation in Somalia, the influence of Kenyan Somalis in Somalia, as well as several areas where Somalia has achieved a certain degree of success, such as in communications and banking. The volume was originally published as a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*.


The contributors to this volume examine significant aspects of the al Aqsa intifada (uprising) by the Palestinians against continued Israeli rule in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which began around September 2000. The chapters provide conceptual frameworks on the linkage between terrorism and civil war, the causes of Jewish settler vigilante terrorism against the Palestinians, the attitude among Palestinians towards political reform, the role of the peacekeeping force in Hebron in attempting to prevent conflict escalation, attitudes towards the intifada by Jordan and Egypt, the role of Hizballah as a ‘shadow actor’ in the intifada, and an assessment of the intifada’s political and military effectiveness. The volume was originally published as a special issue of the journal *Civil Wars*.


A highly interesting comparative analysis of the use of what the author terms “network governance” to effectively and comprehensively respond to and recover from catastrophic terrorist incidents. The author uses the cases of major terrorist incidents in New York, Bali, Istanbul, Madrid, London, and Mumbai to illustrate how a networked response system could have vastly improved the responses by the authorities in mass-casualty emergency situations.


The contributors to this important edited volume assess the effectiveness of the United States’ counterterrorism assistance to West African states. The volume’s chapters cover topics such as a general overview of U.S. counterterrorism, Sub-Saharan Africa as an additional front in U.S. counterterrorism, how West Africa perceives U.S. counterterrorism, the implications of the crisis in Nigeria’s Niger Delta region, the Mauritanian military and U.S. counterterrorism, West Africa regional security and U.S. counterterrorism, and the consequences of U.S. counterterrorism for West Africa.

**Peter Lehr, (Eds.), Violence at Sea: Piracy in the Age of Global Terrorism.** New York, NY: Routledge/Lloyd's
The contributors to this highly authoritative edited volume examine the full magnitude of the threats to global security and commerce presented by maritime piracy within the broader context of international terrorism. The chapters discuss issues such as the major ‘hot spots’ of piracy in Somalia, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Straits of Malacca-South China Sea, and the militant groups that engage in maritime piracy, as well as international legal and naval responses to the threats of piracy. The concluding chapter assesses future trends in the evolving threat of maritime terrorism.


This well-organized and well-written textbook provides a comprehensive overview of terrorism in all its dimensions. The chapters cover topics such as the history and evolution of terrorism, defining and classifying terrorism, terrorists’ strategies, tactics, weapons, and targets, the roles of state sponsors and other supporters of terrorism, religious, ethnic, nationalistic, left- and right-wing bases of terrorism, prominent terrorist groups, countries with multiple crises of terrorism, the components of counterterrorism, and future trends in terrorist warfare.


A highly authoritative and balanced examination of the relationship between preventive detention of suspected terrorists and international human rights law within the broader context of counterterrorism. The volume's chapters cover topics such as defining preventive detention, examples of the use of preventive detention in the United Kingdom in general and Northern Ireland in particular, the right to personal liberty in international human rights law as a legal framework for the consideration of state preventive detention laws (including in a state of emergency), and legitimate and illegitimate purposes of preventive detention. The concluding chapters present a model law for the detention of suspected terrorists within a criminal law framework, including a discussion of instances in which preventive detention can be used for legitimate purposes.


The contributors to this edited volume examine what they term the ‘culture of control’ that has been instituted in several democratic countries as part of their counterterrorism campaigns. The chapters cover topics such as the roles of pre-emptive policing and the use of intelligence in counterterrorism, the creation of a ‘culture of suspicion’ in community surveillance, the use of extraordinary measures in legal proceedings, and how the media may be used as information ‘proxies’ for government authorities. Australia and the United States are employed as case studies to illustrate the contributors’ arguments. The concluding chapter discusses best practices in protecting human rights during periods of emergency for counterterrorism campaigns.


In this paperback edition of the originally published 2003 book, the author examines the state of far right-
wing extremism at the time, including the effectiveness of the U.S. government’s response to this threat. Far right-wing extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, the militias, American Renaissance and White Aryan Resistance are profiled. This book’s assessments are still pertinent in light of the resurgence of far right-wing extremist groups in the current era.


The contributors to this edited volume are critical of what they term the ‘orthodox’ terrorism studies approach, which they claim uses ‘shoddy’ research and lacks academic independence because it is sometimes closely identified with government counterterrorism agencies. To remedy these perceived shortfalls, the volume’s chapters cover topics such as an assessment of their own findings since 9/11, the roles of drones in counterterrorism, the reliance on ‘false positives’ in the UK’s preemptive counterterrorism measures, an assessment of the UK’s attempts to reach out to ‘suspect communities’ (e.g., the British Irish and Muslim communities), and a concluding discussion of whether the category of ‘terrorism’ improves or impedes our intellectual understanding of a certain type of violence (p. 121).


The contributors to this edited volume assess the contributions of ‘warrior-scholars’ who had developed significant theories that shaped the doctrine and practice of counter-insurgency (as well as counter-terrorism) over the years. These ‘warrior-scholars’ include Charles E. Callwell, David Galula, Roger Trinquier, Moshe Dayan, Frank Kitson, David Kilcullen, and David Petraeus.


An insightful account of how terrorism, even in its nihilistic variety, is a strategy by a weaker group as a violent means to achieve its objectives. Thus, in the authors’ view, even relatively small-scale attacks that are able to inflict a psychological impact on their targeted audiences can be considered to be successful from the terrorists’ idiosyncratic perspective. The authors note, however, that true success for a terrorist group involves ‘gaining legitimacy’ for their cause by “exploit[ing] the emotional impact of the violence to insert an alternative political message in order to seek to broaden support, often through the media and political front organizations.” (p. 95) The authors conclude that effective counterterrorism, as a result, requires identifying their terrorist adversary’s motivations, intentions and modus operandi in order to respond to them with specific and tailored countermeasures, including effectively incorporating civil liberties into such campaigns.


The contributors to this highly interesting edited volume draw on the discipline of psychology to explain the origins of extremism and terrorism, the nature of governments’ responses to terrorist attacks, and how to break the cycle of terrorism through effective utilization of conflict resolution approaches. The chapters cover topics such as the psychology of extremism, group identity and the roots of terrorism, the roots of the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Rwanda, and the roles of schools, universities, the media, leaders, and others in helping to break the cycle of terrorist violence. The concluding chapter synthesizes the findings and
offers recommendations for new thinking on these issues.


The contributors to this edited volume examine how the phenomenon of terrorism impacts the daily lives of its affected populations, many of whom become internally displaced refugees. What makes this volume special is its focus on the impact of terrorist conflicts on the populations outside the West, in particular the Philippines, South Africa, East Timor and Aceh (Indonesia), and Fiji, although it also covers some Western theatres of terror such as Italy.


The contributors to this innovative volume in intelligence studies examine the history and evolution of the intelligence cycle, including alternative ways of conceptualizing the intelligence process. The volume’s chapters cover topics such as the move from the intelligence cycle to Internet-based intelligence, and using the intelligence cycle in the corporate world and in intelligence-led policing. The concluding chapter discusses applying intelligence theory to broaden the focus of the intelligence cycle, for instance in being able to use intelligence methods not only to identify and thwart impending terrorist plots but to “help focus work to prevent radicalization and enhance community cohesion.” (p. 143)


A highly interesting account of the history of the two primary Irish republican terrorist groups, and the impact of certain developments in their histories on how their differing political beliefs and armed militancy evolved over the years.


This is one of the most comprehensive and indispensable collections of academic scholarship, bringing together seminal analyses published on the history of modern terrorism. The collection’s 85 chapters are organized around the editor’s widely adopted notion of the ‘four historical waves of modern terrorism’ (which is discussed in Chapter 64 in Volume IV), with the four volumes corresponding to each of the successive four waves. As explained by the editor, “A number of recurring themes are examined, such as the rise and fall of organizations, changes in purposes and tactics, counter-terrorism, civil liberties, international contexts and geographies” (Vol. I, p. xxvii). With so many new developments occurring since the collection’s 2006 publication in terrorism, counterterrorism and the academic literature on these issues, it is hoped that a fifth volume will eventually be published that will cover the fifth historical wave of terrorism. The compiler is the founder and principal editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence*, the most highly regarded journal in the field of terrorism studies. The only drawback to this series of four volumes is its astronomical price which places it beyond the budget of students who would profit most of it.

The contributors to this edited volume comprehensively examine all the significant issues that need to be addressed in securing an Olympic event from potential terrorist attacks. The volume's chapters discuss the history of terrorist threats against Olympic games, beginning with the 1972 Munich Olympics, the types of terrorist threats that need to be considered by security planners, al Qaeda's possible intentions to attack an Olympic event, and understanding terrorist target selection, as well as the response measures that need to be considered, such as securing the transport system, implementing an effective surveillance security system, the role of the private security industry in securing such sites, the challenge of inter-agency coordination in managing all aspects of security, and future trends in terrorist threats against the Olympic games. The volume was written with an eye on the Olympic summer games in London in 2012, where security was both costly and effective.


An account of the effectiveness of multilateral responses to terrorism by international organizations such as the United Nations, and the conditions that facilitate or hinder individual states to cooperate in defeating the terrorist threat. With the introductory chapter laying the groundwork by defining and analyzing the nature of multilateral counter-terrorism, the book's chapters discuss issues such as historical precedents for such cooperation, which began with the League of Nations' cooperation in countering anarchist terrorism, and its evolution in the form of the United Nations from 1945 to 2001, and then following 9/11 to the present day. The concluding chapters discuss future trends in multilateral counter-terrorism, including possibly moving beyond the UN.


A highly original, conceptually innovative examination of the psychological impact of terrorism on its intended victims, particularly a targeted society's civilian population. Also discussed are how such targeted publics respond to the terrorist attacks and the measures governments need to adopt to build up their populations’ resilience to terrorism. The chapters present an overview of the various disciplines utilized in the study of international relations, psychiatry and psychology. They also analyze case studies of Israel and the Scud missile attacks during the 1991 Gulf War, Aum Shinrikyo's March 1995 Tokyo sarin attack, al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks, the September 2001 anthrax attacks, and Israel and the Second Palestinian Intifada. The final chapter discusses the study's key assumptions, evidence from two further cases, the contribution of the study's findings to key fields, and policy recommendations.


The contributors to this edited volume examine the effectiveness of counterterrorism campaigns by governments around the world in the post-9/11 era. The chapters cover topics such as responses to radicalization into violent extremism and terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa, and the counterterrorism campaigns by America, Australia, India, Israel, Russia, the United Kingdom, as well as various Southeast Asian governments.

First published in 1990 when it became a classic in the field of counterterrorism studies, it remains an indispensable analysis on how to understand the terrorist threat and the components that constitute effective counterterrorism. The volume's chapters discuss the nature of the terrorist threat in terms of its motivations, aims and strategies, and the components of counterterrorism in terms of the philosophical foundations for the use of force, counterterrorism's direct (active) and indirect (passive) measures, the resources and capabilities that need to be assembled to counter terrorism, and the factors required for effective decision-making and crisis-management. Numerous case studies are provided, such as a comparative survey of counterterrorism campaigns by the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.


First published in 2006, this comprehensive handbook consists of essays written by academic experts in the field on various aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism, an A-Z glossary of major terrorist groups and incidents, maps of terrorist conflict zones, statistics on different types of terrorist incidents (by region, target and tactic), and a select bibliography. Although now dated, the handbook remains indispensable as a reference resource with its essays on the history of modern terrorism, the evolution of terrorist weapons and tactics, ethnic-based terrorism, left- and right-wing terrorism, religion and terrorism, state terrorism, and counterterrorism.


A conceptually innovative comparative examination of the effectiveness of counterterrorism campaigns by the United Kingdom and the United States in the post-9/11 era. The volume's chapters focus on three policy instruments in their counterterrorism campaigns: the use of intelligence, law enforcement and military measures.


A highly interesting account of the formative origins of United States’ counterterrorism during the Reagan administration in the 1980s. The volume’s chapters discuss significant milestones in the development of U.S. counterterrorism, beginning with the 1979 Iranian revolution’s mobilization of Lebanese Shi’ite elements, which eventually led to the U.S. involvement in the Lebanese civil war, the formation of the influential Bush Task Force on Combating Terrorism, and America’s pre-emptive strikes to counter the Libyan regime’s engagement in terrorism. The concluding chapter assesses the legacies of some of those counterterrorism policies with current American campaigns.


Drawing on the author’s extensive field research, this is an important conceptual and empirical account of the crucial role of negotiating with terrorists as a way of transforming terrorist violence into more constructive non-violent ways to achieve their objectives. The case studies of talking to terrorists in Northern Ireland and in Mindanao are employed to demonstrate the author’s thesis.

This book is an innovative application of sociological research to examine terrorism in all its manifestations. The volume's chapters discuss how the sociological approach contributes to the study of the origins of terrorism, the violent ‘dispositions’ that create terrorists, the roles of groups in mobilizing individuals into terrorism, the processes of group dynamics that sustain terrorist groups, the rationale behind terrorist attacks and targeting, and how terrorism ends either through defeat or disengagement by a group’s members from terrorism. Numerous case studies examine these issues.


Although published in 2008, the recent escalation of the domestic terrorist threat in China’s Xinjiang region makes this book’s comprehensive, authoritative and detailed analysis highly relevant to the current era. The volume’s chapters discuss the nature of the Islamist insurgency in Xinjiang, the components of China’s counterterrorism campaign, including its waging of the ‘war of ideas’ to reshape society in Xinjiang, and an assessment of the strategic and tactical effectiveness of China’s overall response measures.


A highly insightful and original account by a veteran academic analyst about the relationship between democratic governments and the origins and management of politically-motivated terrorism that threatens them. The volume’s chapters discuss the history of terrorism against democratic states beginning in the 19th century, as well as during the ‘third wave’ from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, the use of terrorism in the Arab Spring, which began in 2011, and the relationship between terrorist violence and democratic governments’ rule of law, which is posed as a question of “If democracies are vulnerable to terrorist violence, what changes, if any, do they have to make in order to cope with this danger?” (p. 79) The author’s conclusion is pessimistic: “terrorism in the first-wave democracies may approach something like the ‘cost of doing business’, while terrorism in the more recent democracies may be symptomatic of serious problems that place the democratic order itself in jeopardy” (p. 103).


This is a comprehensive and authoritative introductory overview of terrorism and counterterrorism, drawing its material from a variety of sources. This updated and revised edition is divided into three parts: characteristics of terrorism (e.g., defining terrorism, motivation for terrorism and terrorist conflicts around the world), significant terrorist conflict zones (e.g., jihadi insurgents, the United Kingdom, Israel, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Spain, Algeria, Germany, and Italy), and the components of counterterrorism (e.g., ethical and legal issues, campaigns and strategies).


Part of the publisher’s new series of concise “thinking frames” on significant current issues, this monograph discusses the sociological basis of terrorism, the nature of counterterrorism, what the author terms ‘the business of security’ (i.e., the ever-growing ‘counterterrorist-industrial complex’) and the ‘terror of empire and the empire of terror.’ Although one may not agree with some of the author’s assumptions, the critical
issues that are raised are worth considering.

About the Reviewer: Dr. Joshua Sinai is the Book Reviews Editor of 'Perspectives on Terrorism'. He can be reached at: Joshua.sinai@comcast.net.