

Book Reviews

Peter R. Neumann. *Old & New Terrorism. Late Modernity, Globalization and the Transformation of Political Violence*. Cambridge, Polity, 2009. 218 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-4376-2.

For those who are new to the field of Terrorism Studies, this is a useful and concise volume which summarizes some of the recent debates in the terrorism research community in a clear and well-structured way. According to the author of the volume - he is Director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) at King's College, London – it was written out of frustration with the academic field of 'Terrorism Studies' which often studies terrorism out of context.

Regarding context, Neumann makes a credible case that *globalization* has been a facilitating factor in the transition from older to newer terrorism. However, he is, to this reviewer, less convincing in his discussion of the contribution of the more abstract *late modernity* to the emergence of 'new' terrorism. 'Old' and 'new' terrorism are illustrated by case studies on the IRA and al-Qaeda which Dr. Neumann discusses in terms of structure, aims and method. He is aware of the limitation of such a comparison and honest enough to ask himself whether the Palestinian Hamas or the late Tamil LTTE should be regarded as 'old' or 'new'. He fails to discuss in any detail other groups than the IRA, the Irish Protestant Loyalists, ETA and al-Qaeda. The *Lord's Resistance Army* in Uganda, for instance, which caused many more casualties than Al Qaeda is not even mentioned and its record contradicts Neumann's claim that "Those who claim to act in the name of Islam have killed more people in the past two decades than any other branch of religiously inspired terrorism" (p.105) .

There are other questionable statements like "...even the United Nation have come to recognize that, for the foreseeable future, international cooperation on counter-terrorism issues will continue to rely on informal, ad hoc forums that involve mostly bilateral contacts" (p.157). If that were fully true, the UN would long ago have abolished most of its 24 bodies in the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat and other parts of the UN system that deal with preventing and countering terrorism. When it comes to policy recommendations, the author calls for more international cooperation (p. 154), the promotion of non-violent forms of expressing any identity or ideology and, somewhat surprisingly, educating the public about the ineffectiveness of terrorist violence (p.160). As to what the future holds, Neumann suggests that the anti-globalization movement and anti-immigrant groups in Western Europe and North America may soon resort to terrorist methods (p. 164).

Regarding the jihadist movement, Neumann is modest enough to conclude that "...it is impossible to make any precise forecasts when the picture is as confusing and contradictory as it seems right now" (p.165). The book covers some of the same ground as Brynjar Lia's magisterial 'Globalisation and the Future of Terrorism. Patterns and Predictions' (London, Routledge, 2005) but cannot match the latter's scope and originality. – *Reviewed by A.P. Schmid (Editor PT)*