

Book Review

Alex P. Schmid & Garry F. Hindle (Eds.) *After the War on Terror: Regional and Multilateral Perspectives on Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. London, RUSI, 2009. 151 pp.
ISBN: 0-85516-142-6 (pbk.) Reviewed by Anil Karaca.

After the War on Terror is a conference volume, containing a series of evaluations of terrorist manifestations and counter-terrorism strategies from various hotspots around the globe. It highlights current flaws in strategies used to counter terrorism and suggests options for change. Even though this work fulfills its promise, it is not flawless. Policy options are often not supported with enough empirical data and critiques of current strategies also suffer from the same.

The book opens with a clear explanation of ‘what work against terrorism’ by an old hand - David Veness, until June 2009 UN Under-Secretary General for Safety and Security and former Assistant Commissioner of Scotland Yard. International cooperation and a multi-disciplinary approach to counter-terrorism strategies are highlighted as crucial for success. Richard Barrett, the Co-ordinator of the UN Security Council’s al-Qaeda and Taliban Monitoring Team, offers an original analysis of Al-Qaeda, taking credibility, legitimacy and relevance as yardsticks for success for both sides of the conflict. Alex Schmid’s and Rashmi Singh’s chapter “Measuring Success and Failure in Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism” is, in the view of this reviewer, the most significant in the book. They emphasize the importance of developing clear metrics, outlining solid criteria and show that the Bush administration failed to do so. They also highlight some of the problems associated with acquiring high quality data for the empirical study of terrorism. Regional terrorism analyses for Somalia, the Maghreb, the Caucasus and Central Asia constitute major portions of the book. The authors – Max Taylor, Lianne Kennedy Boudali and Ekaterina Stepanova - explain the current crises in terms of local history and question some of the strategies applied by incumbent authorities. The closing article by Abdel Bari Atwan, Editor-in-Chief of *Al Quds Al-Arabi*, the pan-Arab newspaper published in London, offers a detailed political account of al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, also shedding light on the role of India. Atwan also explains the difference between the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Overall, this work provides valuable summaries on the background of various regional conflicts. Perhaps understandably, the volume places Al-Qaida’s role around the globe under the magnifying glass rather than focusing on regional insurgencies and terrorism in their own right. It offers situational analyses rather than a series of comparable case studies – a weakness inherent in the volume’s origin as a series of conference presentations organized by the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) of the University of St. Andrews and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London in 2008. The most powerful element of this book is, in the eyes of this reviewer, that it offers a strong stimulus for new researchers entering the field as its authors are mostly seasoned academics and practitioners in their

respective fields who have much to say to a new generation of scholars and counter-terrorism officials.

About the reviewer: Anil KARACA is a graduate student of the Naval Postgraduate School's Special Operations curriculum, pursuing a MS degree in Defense Analysis on behalf of the Turkish Armed Forces.