
Welcome from the Editor

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume IX, Issue 6 (December 2015) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* at www.terrorismanalysts.com. Our free online journal is a joint publication of the *Terrorism Research Initiative* (TRI), headquartered in Vienna (Austria), and the *Center for Terrorism and Security Studies* (CTSS), headquartered at the Lowell Campus of the University of Massachusetts (United States).

Now completing its ninth year, *Perspectives on Terrorism* has over 5,800 regular subscribers and many more occasional readers and visitors worldwide. The *Articles* of its six annual issues are fully peer-reviewed by external referees while its *Research Notes*, *Policy Notes* and other content are subject to internal editorial review.

This issue begins with analysis by Victoria Barber on the relationship between al Qaeda core and other identifiable groups within the so-called “global jihadist movement.” She finds that many groups’ ideological affinity seems to give way to more worldly concerns, and globalization to regional concerns, indicating limited evidence of a truly cohesive global network. Then Dan Koehler looks at how right-wing extremist groups react – emotionally and strategically – when individuals defect from the group. In the next article, Nilay Saiya describes how states that provide religious security for their citizens undercut the ideological narratives disseminated by religious militants (that their faith is under attack), and thus dampening the resonance of their appeal for violent action. Finally, Brett Barnett examines how and why the manifesto of “Unabomber” Theodore Kaczynski has resonated with some radical environmentalists.

Our Research Notes section begins with a piece by Sam Mullins examining how religious converts compare with non-converts in the U.S. and U.K. with regard to involvement in terrorist activities 1980-2013. Next, Joel Day proposes an innovative mixed methods approach to the study of terrorist cultural, ritual and community practices. And in the final piece of this section, Anne Speckhard and Ahmet Yayla provide some preliminary results of their *Islamic State Interviews Project*, based here on a sample of thirteen Syrian IS defectors who spoke about life inside the “Islamic State” and now warn others not to join what they gradually came to see as a totally disappointing, ruthless and un-Islamic organization.

The Resources section features an extensive bibliography by Judith Tinnes on homegrown terrorism and radicalization, and 40 short book reviews by Joshua Sinai. And the issue concludes with a sincere word of thanks to our external peer reviewers; an announcement for the annual TRI Award for Best Thesis; an inventory of Ph.D. theses underway by members of the TRI National/Regional Networks; and a faculty job announcement from the CTSS at UMass Lowell.

This issue of the journal was prepared by the co-editor of *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Prof. James Forest at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, who offers a special thank you to our new Editorial Assistant Jared Mello and to CTSS Co-Op Scholar Danielle Thibodeau for their considerable assistance. The next issue (February 2016) will be prepared in the European offices of the *Terrorism Research Initiative* (TRI) by Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid.