

Resources

Counterterrorism Bookshelf: 8 Books on Terrorism- & Counter- Terrorism-Related Subjects

Reviewed by Joshua Sinai

So many books are published on terrorism- and counterterrorism-related subjects that it is difficult to catch up on a large backlog of monographs and volumes received for review. In order to deal with this backlog, this column consists of capsule reviews and tables of contents of eight recently published books.

Counterterrorism – General

Aki J. Peritz, *Disruption: Inside the Largest Counterterrorism Investigation in History* (Lincoln, NB: Potomac Books/An Imprint of University of Nebraska Press, 2021), 400 pp., US \$ 36.95 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6401-2380-9.

This is a fascinating, authoritative, and extensively researched account of how the British intelligence and security services succeeded in thwarting al Qaida's local terrorist cell (with directions from the terrorist group's headquarters in Pakistan) from carrying out its spectacular 'mega-plot' to bomb several airliners *en route* from England to North America in 2006. The book is highly recommended as a best practice case study in counterterrorism against Jihadi groups such as al Qaida and its Western cells. The author is a veteran U.S.-based journalist in national security who previously published a co-authored book on the counterterrorism campaign to kill Usama bin Laden.

Table of Contents: List of Illustrations; List of Major Characters; List of Abbreviations; Author's Note; The Killer beside You; Baker's Boy; Triple A; Recruits; Ali's Evolution; Incident on the Tube; Bang/Fizz; The Rosewater Solution; Glimmers; The Dilemma; Rendezvous in Lloyd Park; Pattern of Life; Wedding Videos; Probe; "Today's Date Is September 12, 2001"; Sarwar's Hole; Transatlantic Tensions; Skin Infection; Our Citizens, Our Planes; It Fell out of My Pocket; The Railway Crossing; Fellowship Is Life; Scramble; The System Worked?; Rashid Rauf's Second Chance; The Twisting Road; A Fine Balance; Appendix 1: Codenames and Nicknames; Appendix 2: Operations.

Alex P. Schmid (Ed.), *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness* (The Hague, The Netherlands: ICCT Press, 2020/21), xxix + 1,278 pp. [Small hardcover print edition 2021; ISBN: 978-9-0903-3977-1, [free E-book edition 2020 at: <https://icct.nl/handbook-of-terrorism-prevention-and-preparedness/>]

Edited by Alex P. Schmid, the Editor-in-Chief of *Perspectives on Terrorism*, and published by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, this massive and comprehensive handbook features contributions from more than 30 experts in the field of terrorism and counterterrorism. The handbook has 35 chapters (with six by Prof. Schmid, and a large bibliography by Ishaansh Singh), covering six parts: an overall analytic framework, how related fields can contribute lessons for prevention, how to prevent radicalization into terrorism, measures to prevent terrorist activities (such as procuring weapons and activities on the Internet), preventing terrorist attacks, managing the consequences of terrorist attacks, and a conclusion that compares some of the contributors' findings with analysis and recommendations of the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (which is reproduced in the last chapter's appendix). The editor of the handbook was Officer-in-Charge of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC and is currently a Research Fellow at ICCT.

Table of Contents: Frameworks for Analysis; Introduction: Purpose and Organization of the Handbook;

Terrorism Prevention: Conceptual Issues (Definitions, Typologies and Theories); **Part I: Lessons for Terrorism Prevention from Related Fields**; De-Exceptionalizing the Terrorist Phenomenon: Lessons and Concepts: from Conflict Prevention and Transformation; Contributions from the Military Counter-Insurgency Literature for the Prevention of Terrorism; ‘Killing Them to Save Us’: Lessons from Politicide for Preventing and Countering Terrorism; **Part II: Prevention of Radicalization**; A Criminological Approach to Preventing Terrorism: Situational Crime Prevention and the Crime Prevention Literature; At the Crossroads: Rethinking the Role of Education in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism; Prevention of Radicalization to Terrorism in Prisons: A Practical Guide; Prevention of Radicalization to Terrorism in Refugee Camps and Asylum Centers; Preventing Terrorism from Students of Extremist Madrasahs: An Overview of Pakistan’s Efforts; Prevention of Radicalization in Western Muslim Diasporas; Prevention of Radicalization on Social Media and the Internet; Prevention of Recruitment to Terrorism; **Part III: Prevention of Preparatory Acts**; Prevention of Terrorist Financing; Prevention of Cross-Border Movements of Terrorists: Operational, Political, Institutional and Strategic Challenges for National and Regional Border Controls; Prevention of the Procurement of Arms and Explosives by Terrorists; Prevention of CBRN Materials and Substances Getting into Terrorist Hands; Prevention of (Ab-) Use of Mass Media by Terrorists; Prevention of (Ab-)Use of the Internet for Terrorist Plotting and Related Purposes; The Role of Intelligence in the Prevention of Terrorism (Early Warning – Early Response); **Part IV: Prevention of, and Preparedness for, Terrorist Attacks**; Prevention of Low-tech, Lone Actor Terrorist Attacks: The Case of the United States, 1970s – 2019; Prevention of Gun-, Knife-, Bomb- and Arson-based Killings by Single Terrorists; Prevention of Bomb Attacks by Terrorists in Urban Settings: Improvised Explosive Devices; Prevention of Kidnappings and Hostage-Takings by Terrorists; Preventing Suicide Attacks by Terrorists; The Terrorist Threat to Transportation Targets and Preventive Measures; Layers of Preventive Measures for Soft Target Protection Against Terrorist Attacks; Prevention of Terrorist Attacks on Critical Infrastructure; Cyber Attacks by Terrorists and other Malevolent Actors: Prevention and Preparedness. With Three Case Studies on Estonia, Singapore and the United States; Prevention of Lasting Traumatization in Direct and Indirect Victims of Terrorism; **Part V: Preparedness and Consequence Management**; Prevention of Public Panic in the Wake of Terrorist Incidents; Prevention of Major Economic Disruptions Following Acts of Terrorism – The Case of the Bali Bombings of 2002 and 2005; Prevention of Revenge Acts and Vigilantism in Response to Acts and Campaigns of Terrorism; Prevention of Human Rights Violations and Violations of International Humanitarian Law while Fighting Terrorism; **Conclusions**; Terrorism Prevention – The UN Plan of Action (2015) and Beyond; General Bibliography on Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness.

Counterterrorism – Countering the Funding of Terrorism

Jessica Davis, *Illicit Money: Financing Terrorism in the 21st Century* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2021), 240 pp., US \$ 49.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-6263-7982-4.

This is an important, authoritative and comprehensive examination of the role of funding in terrorism at organizational, cell, and individual levels. To examine these issues, the author collected data on 55 terrorist organizations, 18 plots, and 32 attacks (p. 6). This data was utilized to generate findings on how terrorist groups at the organizational and operational levels procure funds to finance operations, to recruit and train operatives, purchase weapons, maintain safe houses, and conduct their attacks – all the while attempting to obscure these funds from being monitored by counterterrorism services. In the concluding chapter, the author points out that “Counterterrorist financing involves five main approaches: criminalization and law enforcement, military force, intelligence, financial exclusion (including sanctions and asset freezes), and regulation of the private sector” (p. 225). Effectively countering terrorist financing, the author concludes, involves awareness of the “continuous cycle of adaptation and counteradaptation” by all the actors involved, with “counterterrorism financing tools” adapted to the shifting new realities of how finance is conducted by illicit actors (p. 228). The book’s analysis is usefully accompanied by numerous tables and figures. The author is president and principal consultant at Insight Threat Intelligence, Ottawa, and had

previously served as senior strategic analyst at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS).

Table of Contents: Financing Terrorism; Part 1: Raising Money; Finding Donors; Using and Abusing Organizations; Designing Business Models; Making Crime Pay; Part 2: Using Money; Deploying Funds; Managing, Storing, and Investing Funds; Moving Funds; Obscuring Funds; Part 3: New Frontiers; Stemming the Flow of Funds; Old Methods, New Technologies.

Counterterrorism – Countering Violent Extremism

Ajit Maan (Ed.), *Dangerous Narratives: Warfare, Strategy, Statecraft* (Washington, DC: Narrative Strategies, 2021), 188 pp., US \$ 45.00 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-5788-1281-6.

As the volume’s editor insightfully highlights in the introduction, “Narrative directly impacts the threat environment whether in a physical conflict zone, or in terms of the effects of radicalization, or the interference of foreign governments in domestic politics. Therefore, dominating the narrative space should be a priority” (p. vii). In another important insight, the editor explains that narrative warfare “is not a struggle over information; it is competition over the *meaning* of information” (p. viii). To examine these issues, the volume’s contributors, who are leading experts in the field, discuss the role of narrative in physical (kinetic) warfare, how China and Russia weaponize narrative in their kinetic and non-kinetic (i.e., information operations) warfare, how narrative was weaponized in the Balkan wars in the 1990s, how narrative needs to be utilized by police agencies in the United States to improve community policing, and how the ‘soft power’ of narratives needs to be employed in pursuit of government foreign security campaigns. The editor is Founder and CEO of Narrative Strategies and Professor of Practice in Politics and Global Security at Arizona State University.

Table of Contents: Introduction, Part 1: Narrative in Kinetic Warfare; Narrative and War; Narrative Leads Kinetic Warfare; Part II: Weaponized Narrative – Case Studies; How China’s Narrative Collapses Decision-Making and Creates Combined Effects; How Russia’s Narratives Reorient Decision-Making and Creates Combined Effects; Narrative IS Strategy; Myths, Memory and Ethnic War in the Balkans: Weaponizing the Kosovo Battle Narrative; Structuring for Success in Narrative Engagement; Re-Writing the Narrative: The Path Forward for Policing; Rethinking Strategy and Statecraft for the Information Age: Whose Narrative Wins.

Robert J. Bunker and John P. Sullivan (Eds.), *Criminal Drone Evolution: Cartel Weaponization of Aerial IEDs* (Indianapolis, IN: Xlibris/A Small Wars Journal – El Centro Anthology, 2021), 302 pp. US \$ 19.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-6641-1142-4.

The contributors to this important anthology examine the evolving use of weaponized unmanned aerial systems (UASs – drones) by criminal narco-trafficking cartels and gangs in countries such as Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela, as well as along the Mexican-United States border. The anthology’s 22 chapters discuss issues such as the evolution of the utilization of drones by narco-trafficking organizations in cross-border smuggling, remote detonation of IEDs, and reconnaissance, as well as future trends in drone technology and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) among criminal actors. Robert J. Bunker is Director of Research & Analysis, C/O Futures, LLC and is a Senior Fellow with Small Wars Journal-El Centro. John P. Sullivan served as a Lieutenant with the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department and is a Senior Fellow with Small Wars Journal-El Centro.

American Foreign Policy Council, *World Almanac of Islamism 2021* [Fifth Edition] (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), 950 pp., US \$ 135.00 [Hardcover], ISBN: 978-1-5381-5399-4.

The 2021 edition of the *Almanac*, as explained by the editor, is intended to examine the current state of the Islamist political religious-political movements worldwide and its impacts on the societies and governments where they operate. Some of the volume's findings include the impact of the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, with governments' responses, such as lockdowns, business closures and social distancing serving to "diminish the mobility of local populations, [making – JS] it more difficult for Islamist actors to organize and mobilize (p. 3). In the long term, however, the editor notes, in vulnerable nations such societal restrictions have "the very real potential to provide Islamist ideology with added appeal, and to give Islamist actors new avenues for recruitment and action" (p. 4). The *Almanac* is recommended as an authoritative, comprehensive, and detailed reference resource for understanding the current activities of Islamist movements worldwide. Ilan Berman, the volume's chief editor, is Senior Vice President of the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, DC.

Table of Contents: World Overview; The Americas; Middle East and North Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa; Europe; Eurasia; South Asia; East Asia and Oceania; and Global Movements.

Counterterrorism: Military Warfare

Gideon Avidor (Ed.), *Mission Command in the Israel Defense Forces* (Dahlonga, GA: University of North Georgia Press, 2021), 386 pp., US \$ 19.99 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-1-9407-7176-2.

The contributors to this edited volume examine Israel's military strategy by focusing on the relationship between mission command and command and control in warfare. Real world scenarios that utilized mission command deliberations are discussed by the contributors, who were serving officers in those missions. With the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) fighting six conventional wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982 and 2006, the volume also discusses what are referred to as "campaigns between wars," which the volume's editor explains are threats presented by terrorist organizations, which are fought "on a low tactical level of limited operations nature" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (pp. viii-ix). The military warfare practitioner-based insights provided by volume's contributors make it an important resource for military strategists, public policy and academic specialists on these issues. The editor, a retired IDF Brigadier-General, had commanded tank brigades and divisions in several wars and also served as commander of the IDF's School of Armor.

Table of Contents: **Section 1: Theory;** Command Systems and Control: Combat Leadership and Ground Forces Mission; Command; Mission Command: Between Theory and Practice; Fighting Terrorist Acts from the Sea; Mission Command and Intelligence: A Built-In Paradox; **Section 2: An Army is Born;** Mission Command Follows the Army Built-Up; "They did it their way": Mission Command in the I.D.F. 1949–1956; **Section 3: Leaders Talk;** A Quick Guide for the Junior Officer; Leading and Command; Mission Command Culture; Reflections of a Staff Officer; The Challenges of Educating and Training I.D.F. Officers; Directed Command and Mission Command; Hypocrisy: Mission Command in the Age of the Strategic Corporal; The Commanders' Independence; Mission Command and Logistics: Why is it so difficult?; Mission Command on the Tactical Level; **Section 4: Mission Command Put to Test;** First Missile Boat Battle; The Battle of Beirut, 1982; The 35th Paratrooper Brigade in the Battle over Lebanon, 1982; The Northern Commander in the Second Lebanon War, 2006; Command and Leadership in Operation "Defensive Shield"; Junior Command in the Gaza Strip; An Infantry Battalion Commander in Lebanon, 2006; From Surprise to Knockout: The Battle of Wadi Mabuk; **Section 5: Mission Command Over the Horizon;** Mission Command and Non-linear Warfare; The New Dimension in War - Virtual Warfare; **Terminology.**

Meir Finkel, *Studies in Generalship: Lessons from the Chiefs of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2021), 368 pp., US \$ 29.95 [Paperback], ISBN: 978-0-8179-2475-1.

This is a highly insightful and in-depth account by a retired Brigadier-General in the Israel Defense Forces of the roles of the IDF's Chiefs-of-Staff throughout Israel's history since independence in 1948. The performance of the Chiefs-of-Staff is examined in six significant areas: how they identify change in the strategic environment, how they understand the military domains facing the country, how they manage crises that might erupt with their generals during wartime, how they manage the rehabilitation of their military after a non-victorious war (such as following the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 2006 Lebanon War), how they lead the transformation of their forces' organizational formation, and how they manage the relationships with the country's political leaders. With regard to the prescription of lessons from the Chiefs-of-Staffs' management of warfare, which also apply to counterterrorism, the author writes that a risk management approach needs to be implemented, with contingency plans formulated to close gaps "in a low priority scenario" in order to avoid low probability scenarios from escalating into larger threats (p. 266). The author is the current head of research and former director of the Dado Center for Interdisciplinary Military Studies/IDF J3.

Table of Contents: Foreword by H.R. McMaster; Preface; Glossary and Abbreviations; Introduction; Identifying Change; Developing Familiarity with all Military Domains; Losing Trust in a Wartime General; Rehabilitating the Army after a Botched War; Leading Change in Force Design; Building Relationships with the Political Echelon; Conclusions; Appendix A: Tenures of IDF Chiefs of Staff; Appendix B: Prime Ministers, Defense Ministers; and Generals.

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