

retained despite the fact that Greg Fealy admits that these salafi jihadists constitute “a tiny minority of the Islamic community” (p. 354). The only justification for such long extracts could be the fact that much of Western and Australian thinking about Islam in South-East Asia centers on terrorism, and the editors must have the sponsors (the Australian government) of this volume in mind.

Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia has been made possible by generous grants from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through the Australian Committee for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific at the Australian National University. There is much to commend in this book. The book will enable government officials, security analysts and journalists to understand the ideologies, motivations, language and objectives of the key actors and main Muslim groups in Southeast Asia. However, the attention given to liberal Muslim groups indicate that liberal Islam is seen as a potential resource for cushioning the Muslim world from its more militant and fundamentalist interpreters. The liberals are moderate intellectuals and acceptable to the West. However, they have not been able to cultivate grassroots networks and are perceived as those in cahoots with Western governments to destroy Islam.

Countering Terrorism: Can We Meet the Threat of Global Violence? By Michael Chandler and Rohan Gunaratna. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2007, pp. 236. ISBN 13: 978-1-86189-308-6.

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Global terrorism is a threat to all nations of the world and the fight against it is the most defining challenge of the twenty-first century. Much has been written on this subject and much more are expected. *Countering Terrorism* is the latest and it is avowedly and unabashedly anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim. It attempts to identify issues of current and future terrorist threats, their durability, and pathways out of

violence. The thirteen chapters of the book clearly portray the attitude of the authors toward terrorism, which in this book is associated with “Islam.” According to Michael Chandler and Rohan Gunaratna, the trans-national Islamist terrorists are growing. “The transnational Islamist extremist terrorist (sic) is adept at recruiting in one theatre, training in a second theatre, planning and preparing attacks in a third theatre and striking in a fourth” (p. 14). It probes the events of September 11, 2001, the Madrid bombings, and deadly strikes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine and elsewhere.

The authors contend that the terrorists behind the London “7/7” attack did not come from outside the UK but were born and raised in England. The authors caution that “an increasing number of young Muslims, both male and female, have become more radicalized by the action of the US and its allies in Iraq and also in Afghanistan” (p. 12). Six years after 9/11, terrorist activity has actually increased. They argue that terrorist networks span the globe and are more powerful than ever. The threat has increased in the Middle East and spread both eastwards into Asia and westwards across Europe.

The global terrorism has undergone profound developments after September 11, 2001 events. Al-Qaida has transformed from a group into a movement. Iraq has become the new land of *jihād*, and Muslims worldwide are angered by the US invasion of Iraq. However, the authors did not mention that Muslims are equally angered by the US invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. The authors try to shock the West by revealing that al-Qaida, “the most hunted terrorist group in our history,” is a lesser threat compared to its associated groups. “In place of one al-Qaida, the core group built and led by Usama bin Laden, we are now confronted by many al-Qaidas” (94). They argue that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s Tawhid wal Jihad has an expanding network in the Middle East and the West. They present a “much bigger threat to the US, its allies and friends.”

The authors argue that 9/11 presented the international community an opportunity to cooperate and collaborate against global terrorism. That opportunity has been missed. Reactive measures by individual governments have not appreciably reduced the terrorist threat even five years after 9/11 (p. 52). The response to terrorism has been slow, piecemeal and to a large extent far from effective. Some countries, despite international criticism, disregarded

universally accepted humanitarian norms when handling the prosecution of terrorist suspects. In this era of rigid security and U.S.-led wars on multiple continents, countries are at odds about how to deal with the ever growing threat of terrorist acts. The authors lament that long-term visionary policies have been held hostage to short-term political expediency, and thus the international community—and particularly the United States—has squandered an opportunity to combat terrorism with a united and powerful force. Thus what should have been a watershed moment in international relations vanished as effective long-term policies were shunned in favour of short-term political expediency.

It must be emphasised that the book does not discuss the terrorists of all kinds. It discusses only those extremists who “have been free to preach and ferment aggression towards the Jews, the United States and its allies” (p. 10). For obvious reasons, the writers did not include Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, Indian terrorists in Kashmir or Chechens in Russia. They discuss the threat posed by Iran’s non-cooperation over nuclear enrichment issue but not about the North Korean Nuclear programme. They applaud democracy but show no appreciation for Muslim majority countries and leaders of Islamic parties in Algeria, Pakistan, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Tunisia for their belief in democratic procedures and dogged determination to fight terrorism. The efforts of the Muslim countries against terrorism went unnoticed.

The authors did not take into account pathological personality disorders or other psychological explanations for terrorists killing people. Rather, they argue that the terrorists got alienated from the society and are encouraged by the inspiration of *jihād*. As they are isolated from the rest of the society, the terrorists are transformed into fanatics and eager to kill people. Clearly the authors are suffering from what is known as Islamophobia.

After an evaluation of ineffective “War on Terror” policies, Chandler and Gunaratna offer proposals for future dealings with global terrorism. The first requirement to understand the threat and to deal with it is to define it. International communities and bodies are unable to reach any agreement because there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. Most states and regional bodies committed to tackling international terrorism have adopted

definitions of their own. Moreover, the loophole exists because of those “Islamic states” that wish not to ratify or accede to “terrorist convention.” These Islamic states “want the door kept open for groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah to continue with (terrorist) attack against Israel” (p. 205). With regard to finance, the authors explain “many Muslim humanitarian organizations or charities, with their head offices in the Saudi Kingdom, have knowingly or unwittingly been abused downstream to provide financial support to terrorist organizations” (p. 9).

The authors further argue that Islam is medieval and hence it “needs to be adapted to the twenty-first century” (p. 211). Islam is in a state of crisis. “It seems that all the goodness, enlightenment and humanistic aspects of the religion have either been lost or forgotten in the current turmoil” (p. 211). Muslims must learn to tolerate. But, they rightly point out that “tolerance is not a one-way street.” If Muslims want ear from others they should also lend theirs to others. They have to learn to tolerate and respect each other’s beliefs. Therefore, the authors contend, it is wrong for Muslims to be sensitive about cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by the Danish Newspaper *Fylland-Posten*. “It may be blasphemous for Muslims to produce image or characterizations of the Prophet Muhammad. But there is nothing of that nature stipulated in Christianity” (p. 212). Such sermonizing obviously is partial.

The authors also mention, in passing, about addressing the main issue in countering terrorism, i.e., Palestine. According to the authors, it is crucial to find a “durable solution to the situation between Israel, the Palestinians and Lebanon and Hezbollah” (p. 219). It is clear that an important source of deep resentment all over the Muslim World originates from illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine, inhuman and ruthless suppression of the Palestinians and unconditional American support to the atrocities committed by Israeli authorities. These issues deserve more space than a few sentences provided in the book.

There are other strategies considered by the authors to counter terrorism. One, the UN Security Council should take more responsibility. Where necessary, it should impose sanctions for non-compliance and make sure that they are effectively implemented. Moreover, a reorganization of the present resolutions is needed to

provide for a special organization focusing on countering terrorism. The authors did concede, however, that this process and procedure might not work as states give priority to their national interest. Two, we must train practitioners both in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency, as well as in conflict-resolution and conflict management: there needs to be a move towards non-conventional approaches to traditional security concerns, especially regional conflicts. Three, at the national level, traditional “barriers” between departments, agencies and services, all of whom have a part to play in dealing with the threat, need to be adjusted to enable much closer working arrangements. Moreover, the classification of intelligence and information also requires close observation. Finally, a multi-pronged approach against a multidimensional threat has to be developed. Therefore, there is need to establish a smaller organization, for short to medium term, comprising experts from those countries with the resources, skills and exposure to terrorism, mandated to work on behalf of the United Nations. It should be formed from and with the support of NATO and EU member states. The authors also suggest including one or two participating states from South and/or Southeast Asia such as Australia and Singapore.

However, the best way forward is to have a coalition of the willing and able – “a coming together of those nations that are both interested in tackling the threat and have the resources, capabilities and, above all, the political will to make a collaborative effort a success” (p. 220). The formation of such a group should not be “hindered by the political correctness and posturing that emanates from New York” and it should work within the legal framework found in international conventions and appropriate UN resolutions. The authors argue that the UN must adapt itself to play the leadership role in a world facing the global terrorism. The question is how to make the UN adapt and who will do it? In the absence of operational dimensions, these proposals tantamount to nothing but sermonisation.

In sum, *Countering Terrorism* is clearly written and focused. It pleads for a concerted, coordinated and collaborative effort from the international community within the framework of the UN. This is possible if the members of the UN do not give primacy to their national interest. Given the anti-Islamic rhetoric, it is unlikely to be warmly received by the Muslim community.