

**Milosevic, Marko and Rekawek, Kacper, eds. 2014. *Perservance of Terrorism: Focus on Leaders*. Amsterdam: IOS Press, 154 pp. \$ 135 (Hardback).**

In the last decade, numerous scientific and strategic studies have been conducted with the focus on the role of leaders in terrorist groups. Simultaneously, counter-terrorist policy of various states focused on leader-elimination as a method of combating terrorism. These two developments are clear indicators of both theoretical and practical relevance of the leader-focused terrorism research. This publication represents therefore useful effort to gather papers that would synthesize the most developed academic debates and practical obstacles this important aspect of research on terrorism is currently facing.

The book *Perservance of Terrorism: Focus on Leaders* is consisted of 13 papers and an editorial introduction. Based on the criteria of their topics and aims, we can roughly divide papers into two main groups. The first group is focused on the basic methodological, epistemological and conceptual questions of crucial importance for any research in this field. The first paper, written by Asta Maskaliunaite, is focusing on the methodological issues in the contemporary research on terrorist leaders, which represents a good introduction for all further papers. This is followed by Karolina Libront's article which addresses the fundamental problem of defining terrorism and terrorist act. Afterwards, Peter Marton's paper debates the utility of the academic approach in comparison to the strategic approach to terrorism. The last paper in this group is Xavier Raufer's short analysis of quantitative data that raises the important question of whether terrorism still represents a significant threat for European security.

The second group is consisted of various case studies that use different approaches and concepts in the research on terrorist leaders. Such a structure facilitates the reading of the book, makes it logically more coherent and works almost as a short textbook on the subject. However, it remains partly unclear why the editors decided to include two case studies that do not belong to this topic. Marko Babic's very well written article about the Political Islam on the Western Balkans is actually not focusing on leaders at all. Ljupcho Stevkovski's article is the similar example of an article that does not precisely suit the topic of this publication, since it mainly address the role of the security sector, and particularly intelligence in the fight against terrorism in Macedonia.

A number of case studies presented in this book include historically well-known events such as the rise of the Red Army Faction in Germany and the cult of its leadership, as well as the most contemporary issues, such as the leadership change in the Al Qaeda of Islamic Maghreb. However, the vast majority of the cases are closely related to Islamic

terrorism. Critics might argue that putting too much emphasis on the Islamic roots of contemporary terrorism while simultaneously missing the opportunity to include cases of the most important Western terrorism, such as Ku Klux Klan, or Jewish terrorism in the British Palestine after the Second World War, actually represents a case of Orientalist discourse. In such a rendering, oriental religious fundamentalists are routinely framed as terrorists, while extremists based in the West are omitted from the analysis. Such an orientalist approach could be justified only to a certain extent by the fact that the most important contemporary terrorist groups in terms of size, power and activity are actually advocates of Islamic fundamentalist doctrines.

Several papers in this collection include studies of leader-elimination as an instrument in counter-terrorist combat. This is very useful for reader, having in mind many states rely on this practice, with the special emphasis on the US drone strikes and other methods of leader-elimination in the War on Terror. However, this book unfortunately does not cover other less lethal policy approaches to leader-focused counter terrorism. This is probably a consequence of the US-imported bias that there are no negotiations with terrorists. The only partial exception is the study of Tome Batkovski and Rade Rajkoceviski, who included the case of negotiations with Albanian terrorists in Macedonia in 2001.

However, some forms of direct or indirect negotiations of state actors with terrorist leaders are common in many conflicts around the world. Therefore, it could be useful to further develop the psychological, ideological, and other methods of studying the leaders, and try to apply this knowledge for further development of the variety of non-coercive measures designed to combat terrorism. It would be very useful, especially for the decision-makers, to compare the efficiency of this non-coercive approach with the dominant leader-elimination approach, and avoid the bias that leader-elimination is the only way.

Moreover, it would be very useful to address the role of leaders in preventing the development of terrorism. While leader-elimination might be helpful for the disintegration of the group, the roots of terrorism by default survive the elimination of terrorist. They are usually structural and deep rooted. An approach that would include the study of the conditions that produce terrorism with aim to discover its causes and fight terrorism in its roots would require much wider study than the one focusing on leaders. However, this type of individual level of analysis might be very useful in these studies as well. Therefore, future studies on terrorism should focus more on the causes of terrorism, than on the fighting consequences. Despite several above-mentioned gaps, this publication presents worthy material and might be very useful for both academic and policy audience interested in the subject of terrorism that for all the enormous research that has been conducted so far remains both puzzling and fascinating.

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