

## Preface

I am honored to write a preface for The Jamestown Foundation's new edition of *Unmasking Terror: A Global Review of Terrorist Activities*. The book provides U.S. policymakers with a generous selection of reliable analyses and unique interviews. Equally important, it gives them a feel for the immense geographical breadth of the terrorist phenomenon. Why are these contributions important? Simply put, such information is not always readily available from the U.S. Intelligence Community. This may sound strange given the size and budget of that Community, but the truth is that one large component in the world of intelligence sources is largely ignored by policymakers—open-source/media information. Having spent nearly 25 years in the CIA, I am certain there is no truer Washington truism than, “If it's not stamped secret, it's not important.”

In no area is the Intelligence Community's failure to exploit a source of information more troubling for America's national security than in the field of terrorism. Indeed, almost every day you can hear the result of this failure when senior policymakers fall short in describing jihadists' motivation for war against America and the West. Some policymakers claim, for example, that America is attacked for its values, freedoms, and liberties, and not for its policies and actions in the Islamic world. The essays and interviews in *Unmasking Terror* make clear that, at least in the minds of many jihadist leaders, U.S. actions are considered a *casus belli*. In this area, *Unmasking Terror* will give policymakers food for thought by providing them with the words of the enemy. It likewise serves as a non-official channel through which the enemies' words and philosophy can be presented, thereby avoiding a situation where it is all too likely that policymakers would sense—and resent—an attempt by government analysts to criticize U.S. policy.

In this way, *Unmasking Terror* helps to fill the gap in the Intelligence Community's inability to comprehensively exploit open-source intelligence and analysis. Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, their allies, and their supporters are not only lethal enemies, they are enemies who want America to know what U.S. actions they are angry about, why they are angry with them, and what they intend to do in response. To date, in America's war against al-Qaeda, there has been no important issue that has not been openly discussed by bin Laden or his associates in the Arabic print and electronic media. Notwithstanding this reality, policy considerations and debates within the U.S. government—and I have extensive, first-hand experience in such deliberations through November 2004—are seldom if ever informed by this information. The only open-

source data that seems to attract policymaker attention are claims of responsibility for attacks that occur after the fact, such as al-Qaeda's claim for the July 7, 2005 bombing in the UK. This information, of course, adds nothing to the debate on how to preempt attacks, formulate a strategic response to Islamic extremism, or understand the enemy's motivation.

*Unmasking Terror's* non-partisan tone and diversity of contributors provide policymakers with a set of concise and easily digestible "doses" of fact-based analysis drawn from indigenous sources. The articles allow policymakers to see that the Islamic extremist movement around the world—while not a united juggernaut—shares common views of the world and, particularly, common negative views of U.S. foreign policy. The articles also make explicitly clear the pivotal role of Islam in forming the ideas and motivating the actions of al-Qaeda and others who believe their faith is under attack and must be defended. I can assure you that for reasons of bureaucratic politics and political correctness, these twin realities are not flowing from the Intelligence Community to senior policymakers.

Finally, while policymakers are the main audience for *Unmasking Terror*, I believe the book will be extraordinarily valuable to the all American citizens. While policymakers have the ability to read a sliver of Arabic open-source information, ordinary citizens have no such option. After a decade of speaking rather profusely in public, for example, the first full translation of a speech or statement by Osama bin Laden to be made widely available to Americans was his pre-election speech of October 31, 2005. Quite simply, American citizens have no material at hand with which to understand their enemies' motivation and fierce determination to win.

In this environment, *Unmasking Terror* and The Jamestown Foundation's regular terrorism journals, *Terrorism Monitor* and *Terrorism Focus*, give Americans the chance to read the enemies' words and think for themselves. In essence, the Foundation's mode of operation is best described in the popular phrase as "We report, you decide." In this day and age, this approach is a much-needed gift to Americans.

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