

Foreword

For over a year now, The Jamestown Foundation has been publishing its journal *Terrorism Monitor*, or TM. Its regular issues include first-rate analyses of terrorist organizations located all over the world and their operations, whether regional or global. Publications on terrorism are numerous today, but TM is distinctive in very important ways. This volume, a collection of its first year's articles, provides readers a solid basis on which to judge TM's value, a level of quality that puts it in a class above virtually all others. Here are some of its notable distinctions.

First, it is refreshingly objective. "Terrorism" is a politically loaded word whose ambiguity is rarely clarified. Many countries in the world today support terrorist activities, including the United States. American officials, of course, did not call them "terrorist forces" but other names such as "independence movements" or "freedom fighters." For example, the interim prime minister of Iraq, Iyad Alawi, was supplied car bombs by the CIA to terrorize Saddam Hussein's regime several years ago. The truth about terrorism is that it is a tactic, not an enemy, and the United States, just as most other countries, has employed this tactic.

The very first essay in this volume, *Soft Power and the Psychology of Suicide Bombing*, identifies this normative aspect of "terrorism," setting TM apart from so many such publications that exploit the term to mislead and pull readers to one side or another in a conflict. TM does, of course, take sides by giving special attention to terrorists who attack U.S. interests, a bias Americans rightly share.

Second, TM's reporting scope is broad. It tracks terrorist groups around the world. It also provides a wealth of empirical information about them along with keen analysis. Some of the articles are as informative as classified intelligence reports distributed by the Intelligence Community.

Third, the contributing authors are unusually diverse. Some are foreigners, analyzing groups within their own countries as well as providing critical perspectives on their own governments' policies. Others live abroad, traveling in the areas about which they report. Finally, another kind of useful diversity is found in the interviews of people, some of whom have been involved in terrorist groups or have special access to them. They provide a lot of firsthand information as well as insightful judgments.

UNMASKING TERROR

To be sure, TM does not and cannot cover every known terrorist group. Even the U.S. Intelligence Community has difficulty in doing that in depth. Still, TM's coverage is broad and textured.

Three quite different kinds of readers will profit from this volume. First, the uninitiated will find the articles lively and understandable, not accessible only to experts. Readers of this kind can quickly gain an appreciation for the complexities of the various terrorist groups, their motives, aims, sources of support, and so on. Their reward will be a far more discerning eye for interpreting U.S. counterterrorism policies and operations.

A second class of readers includes those not in government but with more than a passing interest in the topic. In other words, TM is an excellent source for private sector experts and would-be experts, offering them a trove of useful information.

The third class includes both policy-makers and intelligence officials inside the U.S. government. Many of the volume's analytical articles can provide a comparative basis of judging the quality of official intelligence analysis, as well as provide them with a source of information and analysis they may not otherwise receive. Intelligence analysts themselves will find fresh approaches in TM to understanding certain terrorist groups.

The Jamestown Foundation is to be congratulated for this unique volume, and let us hope that it continues publishing TM for the indefinite future.

William E. Odom
Lieutenant General, USA Retired

Introduction

The events of September 11, 2001 laid bare the shocking vulnerability of the United States and its allies to terrorist attacks. In the aftermath of 9/11, America initiated a global response to terrorism that demands intense scrutiny of a wide variety of information on the challenges posed by al-Qaeda and international terrorism.

Three years after the attacks, the need for accurate information and insightful analysis remains great. As the 9/11 Commission pointed out in its August report, "Since 9/11, the United States and its allies have killed or captured a majority of al-Qaeda's leadership; toppled the Taliban, which gave al-Qaeda sanctuary in Afghanistan; and severely damaged the organization. Yet terrorist attacks continue. Even as we have thwarted attacks, nearly everyone expects they will come." Thus, it remains vital to United States' national interests to analyze information outside the confines of political rhetoric. For the past year, Terrorism Monitor has been doing just that. By providing objective, fact-driven analysis, Terrorism Monitor has enhanced U.S. understanding of the continued threat posed by international terrorism.

Jamestown's Terrorism Program

Analyzing and interpreting terrorist threats begins with assessing the indigenous literature and media used by terrorist organizations to propagate their views and plans. In late December 2003, an Arabic web site openly assessed the importance of the upcoming Spanish elections and Spain's vulnerability to a terrorist attack as an important ally of the United States in Iraq and the War on Terror. Three months later, al-Qaeda launched its first full-scale attack on the European continent in the Spanish capital of Madrid, upending an American ally and precipitating Spain's military withdrawal from Iraq. Those devastating bomb blasts demonstrated al-Qaeda's ability to strike with geopolitical precision at the United States and its allies. Had western analysts possessed the Arabic-language expertise to assess documents foreshadowing an attack in Spain, this valuable intelligence could have alerted the policymaking community to the danger in a timely fashion.

To date, no non-profit organization in the United States regularly produces a publication dedicated to assessing the capabilities and intentions of al-Qaeda and its off-shoots, or the geopolitics of the War on Terror. While numerous Washington think tanks periodically produce analytical briefs and special reports on the War on Terror, none of these institutions produce regular

UNMASKING TERROR

reports in a way that would provide policymakers with up-to-date insights into the aims of terrorist organizations. In the non-profit community, only the Jamestown Foundation regularly researches and analyzes the capabilities and intentions of terrorist organizations in a timely manner.

Terrorism Monitor makes full use of Jamestown's unique Research and Analysis (R&A) capacities to bring our readers information that cannot be found elsewhere. R&A of terrorist groups requires linguistic expertise and indigenous contacts. Over the last twenty-five years, Jamestown built an impressive network of in-country analysts, journalists and scholars throughout the world. These experts have made Terrorism Monitor a sought after resource for those wanting an on-the-ground perspective on the latest developments in global terrorism. No other U.S. think tank or research institution in the United States employs this unconventional approach, or can match Jamestown in providing timely information on threats within Russia, Eurasia, and the Greater Middle East.

Much more than just news, however, Terrorism Monitor prides itself as a source of insight into the ideology, structure, and tactics of terrorist organizations. Its in-depth articles address the various aims and motives of terrorist organizations within the larger environments in which they operate. Expert analysis and interviews with regional leaders provides a critical, and often lacking, local component to new developments. Viewing events within a broader regional context, Terrorism Monitor goes beyond just news and rhetoric, provides its readers with a comprehensive view of a particular situation. Furthermore, Terrorism Monitor gives special attention to lesser-known frontlines in the War on Terror, ensuring that emerging threats receive the coverage they deserve.

Regions such as the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, and other parts of Eurasia represent the core of Jamestown's evolving coverage. Terrorism Monitor provides timely, objective, fact-based information from indigenous sources in an effort to improve understanding of areas of conflict and instability in these parts of the world.

Unmasking Terror

Unmasking Terror: A Global Review of Terrorist Activities represents the best of Terrorism Monitor during its first year of publication. Launched on the second anniversary of 9/11, *Terrorism Monitor* has covered a wide range of topics relating to the War on Terror. *Unmasking Terror* is a year-in-review compilation that organizes articles by topic or region, to give readers a deeper understanding of the context surrounding terrorist acts. This format also highlights some of the more unique issues covered by Terrorism Monitor over the past year – issues

that receive little or no attention in the mainstream media, but are nevertheless vital to our understanding of the terrorist threat which the United States faces.

Scott Atran's "Soft Power and the Psychology of Suicide Bombing" sets the stage for a nuanced understanding of terrorism. Atran argues that by looking at local conditions and applying the politics of "soft power" (democracy building, economic investment, etc.), policymakers can start winning the battle for hearts and minds so critical to the success of the War on Terror.

"Preempting and preventing terrorism requires that U.S. policymakers make a concerted effort to understand the background conditions as well as the recruitment processes that inspire people to take their own lives in the name of a greater cause... The tens of millions of people who sympathize with bin Laden, however, are likely open to the promise of soft-power alternatives that most Muslims seem to favor—participatory government, freedom of expression, educational advancement, and economic choice."

But more than just understanding the roots of terrorism, *Unmasking Terror* provides readers with a comprehensive and detailed look at the organizations which promote and use terrorism in attempting to achieve their objectives. *Chapter 1: Al-Qaeda and the War on Terror* takes a multi-faceted look at al-Qaeda, discussing the ideology, aims, and evolution of this infamous jihadist network. In-depth analysis and interviews with leading experts cut through the myth and rhetoric surrounding al-Qaeda and its offshoots, giving readers a clear picture of the enemy that attacked the United States with such brutality on September 11, 2001.

In keeping with *Terrorism Monitor's* aim to provide the necessary local context for understanding terrorist acts throughout the world, *Unmasking Terror* is organized according to geographic areas of importance. Parts II-V each present a region of the world affected by the War on Terror, giving important historical background and political context for terrorist events that have occurred there.

A striking example of the need for local context is the war in Russia's breakaway republic of Chechnya. A nationalist conflict with a centuries-old history, the Chechen war has become subsumed under the rubric of the War on Terror following the atrocities in Beslan, North Ossetia in September of this year. However, as notable Russian scholar Richard Pipes articulated in *The New York Times*, effectively combating terrorism requires historical knowledge and willingness by governments to match their response to terror attacks to the specific situation:

"In his post-Beslan speech, Mr. Putin all but linked the attack to global Islam: 'We have to admit that we have failed to recognize the

UNMASKING TERROR

complexity and dangerous nature of the processes taking place in our own country and the world in general.' Reports that some of the terrorists were Arabs reinforce that line of thinking. But the fact is, the Chechen cause and that of Al Qaeda are quite different, and demand very different approaches in combating them." (*The New York Times*, September 9, 2004)

As well as presenting Terrorism Monitor's extensive analysis of the terrorist events associated with the war in Chechnya, Part II gives an in-depth view of developments on the frontline of the War on Terror. Significant coverage has been devoted to assessing the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan over the past year, both in terms of terrorist events and within the broader framework of international efforts to eradicate terrorist syndicates in the region. Similarly, Terrorism Monitor has been among the foremost publications analyzing events in Uzbekistan and throughout Central Asia. With Jamestown correspondent Igor Rotar stationed in Tashkent, Terrorism Monitor has been able to bring to light critical facets of terrorist attacks in the country often overlooked by the mainstream media and other "open source" intelligence publications. *Unmasking Terror* offers a unique compendium of the events in Central Asia between September 2003 and September 2004, making it an invaluable reference for those interested in the evolution of radicalism in the region.

As can be expected, much of Terrorism Monitor's focus in the past year has been on events in the Greater Middle East. While reporting on current events, *Terrorism Monitor* delved deeply in the complex issues involved in the region, paying particular attention to Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. Analysis covers topics ranging from complex warfare in Iraq to gunrunning along the Yemeni border. *Unmasking Terror* also includes valuable assessments of the Iranian intelligence services and the vulnerability of Saudi Arabia's oil supply. Interviews with leading dissidents and terrorism experts provide an in-depth and well-rounded view of the situation on the ground, giving readers insights into a wide range of topics impacting U.S. operations in the area.

Nor were threats in Asia, Europe or the Americas overlooked in the past year. *Unmasking Terror* presents a sobering assessment of the vulnerability of Southeast Asian sea routes as well as examining China's emerging role in the War on Terror. "Londonistan" by Jamestown Senior Fellow Stephen Ulph reveals the inner-workings of extremist organizations operating in England, while "Who's Who at Guantanamo Bay" gets behind the rhetoric and reticence of U.S. officials, giving a detailed breakdown of the prison populations at Camp X-Ray and Camp Delta.

In all, *Unmasking Terror* is an impressive compendium covering a wide range of topics critical to the success of the War on Terror. With both breadth and depth, *Unmasking Terror* presents readers with a year in review of the most

UNMASKING TERROR

relevant and important developments in global terrorism. We hope that you enjoy this truly unique publication.

Glen E. Howard
President, Jamestown Foundation
November 2004