



Terrorism and Global Insecurity: A Multidisciplinary Perspective

Klint Alexander

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This book examines the issue of terrorism and global insecurity from a multidisciplinary perspective in an effort to answer one of the most challenging inquiries of our time: how to win the war on terror. To many western observers the war on terror is the logical consequence of an inevitable clash between the forces of political extremism, religious fanaticism and globalization. From this perspective, the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq may be only the beginning of a larger global conflagration pitting the conventional armies of wealthier, democratic states against more mobile, clandestine groups who operate across national borders. To these observers, to win the war, the terrorist movements must be destroyed and no enclave is off-limits. To others, the war on terror appears endless, uncertain, hostile, and unaccountably irrational, threatening to undermine the very fabric of the nation-state system and international law. From the latter standpoint, winning the war on terror through the use of military force is as unrealistic as attempting to prevail in a struggle against hate or racism by military means. Terrorism, of course, is much more complex than genocide or invading one's neighbor; but if the concept is placed in a proper multidimensional framework, certain rules, patterns and logic become apparent. Specific topics of the chapters in this book provide analyses of critical aspects of terrorism and global security from vantage points of scholars in various disciplines. Psychological factors that affect the individual's perspective and shape the mind of the terrorist are explored by trained psychologists. The threat of nuclear destruction as the end game for terrorism is considered in chapters by scientists who have thought deeply on the subject. Importantly, too, the foundations of terrorism that are formed from religious and cultural beliefs as immutable misconceptions are considered by sociologists with their dire implications. Other chapters address the role and adaptability of international law and institutions, such as the United Nations, in dealing with terrorism. In particular, legal scholars examine the implications of recent tribunal decisions and judicial actions that attempt to expand the scope of human rights law in the war on terror. Finally, selected papers discuss the factors that influence terrorism and global insecurity in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia and any possible redress of the conflicts in these regions. Important to this book is the idea that a multitude of factors must be considered to fully understand the causes of terrorism. It is not enough to say that the war on terror can be won by defeating the enemy on the battlefield. The war on terror is waged on many fronts and, therefore, understanding the role of history, geography, politics, poverty, religion, culture, oil, nuclear weapons, ethics and the rule of law is essential to addressing the abstractions of true threats. To this end, perspectives of scholars from around the world have been combined to present a comprehensive view of the problem in the modern world. It is our hope that this book will be useful as a guide for those in positions of governmental authority to rethink the current approach to the war on terror and consider the multidimensional aspects which give rise to the problem of terrorism in the twenty-first century. In that vein and in the overall context, this book reflects a commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship in the firm belief of the role of education and discourse in upholding a higher moral order in international relations.

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