Book Description: Emerging Issues in Terrorism Studies

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The current political and social climate fosters heightened divisions among various incompatible world views. Faster dissemination of political propaganda is also widespread via social media and other platforms unlike any other previous era. This current climate has created unique challenges in relation to national and international public security as such a local incident may rapidly become an international crisis. For instance, a civil war in Syria has deeply impacted the politics and social structures of many countries around the world. In this social environment tackling with various types of violent extremism and radical populism have become increasingly challenging. This book argues that the examination of emerging issues in terrorism studies are significant for a number of reasons. First, the findings may inform the policy and decision makers on multifaceted levels, including evidence based policy, and prevention as well as rehabilitation programs. Evidenced based practices have strategic importance in counter terrorism efforts. As observed in the case of 9/11 terrorist attacks, States and communities tend to react ideological violence in an unstructured manner based on the common sense perception of threats. As such, terrorism studies had been considerably amplified with an objective of providing policy makers and practitioners with evidence based findings. Terrorism studies can also be described as a versatile field for collaboration among various fields, from international relations to political psychology and public administration. In line with this understanding, this book compromised of various perspectives on the contemporary issues in terrorism studies.

In the first chapter, Dr. Murat Tınas focused on the nexus between organized crime and terrorist groups. Although, this relation has been subject to discussions

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in the last two decades, the recent terrorist attacks have demonstrated that the combination of shared social networks and environments between terrorists and organized criminals brough a new impetus to related researches. In analyzing this nexus, Dr. Tınas first discusses the evolution of this relationship from theoretical perspective, followed by the examination of the characteristics and the volume of the hybrid nature of criminal and terrorist activities of the PKK and DAESH. This chapter argues that this complex and dynamic relation between terrorist organizations and organized criminal groups transformed into symbiotic nature from ad-hoc alliances in the last decade.

In the next chapter, Dr. Hakan Kıyıcı examined the concept of anti-government extremism (AGE). This can be described as a security risk that has emerged in Western countries in recent years and has the potential for terrorist violence that is similar to al-Qaeda and DAESH. Emerging in the context of far-right groups, AGE is a type of extremism with both national and global ties. Extremist social groups, often orientated towards violence in order to force the withdrawal of a government policy, in a rapid phase try to turn their political agenda into a mainstream movement. AGE can be operationalized as both individualized lone wolf terrorism and as social movements. In recent years, the examination of groups such as Oath Keepers, RIM and RCM has yielded significant findings with respect to demonstrating the highest level of AGE. Accordingly, this chapter provided a discussion on these movements in a comparative manner.

In the following chapter, the exploitation of children by terrorist groups are examined by Dr. Ahmet Demirden. This chapter first briefly reviewed historical perspective on the story of child soldier in the West. In the 18th century children in armed forced represented virtue and noble sacrifice, but in the modern era, the concept of child fighters are legally and morally unacceptable. This perceptual change is in line with innate innocence and vulnerability attributed to children. States and societies in general acknowledge innocence and vulnerability nature of childhood and accordingly children under the age of twelve are deemed that they lack the capacity of criminal intent. However, the exploitation of children by terrorist groups poses unique challenges. On the one hand, more terrorist groups exploit children by making these children carry out acts of violence. On the other hand, we have legal and moral obligations toward these exploited children. Also, some of these children are forced to join terrorist groups while others are groomed over time. Terrorist organizations strive to exploit children with a diverse set of objectives and this process is facilitated by a number of unique vulnerabilities given that children are relatively easier to indoctrinate; they are long term investments; and they can escape criminal prosecution. Further, exploited children fulfill a variety of roles in terrorist groups. Some children are used as front line fighters, while others are treated as slaves or assume support roles. In conclusion, the prevention of child exploitation by terrorist groups should be an international priority.

Dr. Hakan Kıyıcı next analyzed the role of non-state actors in counter-radicalization. Currently, the violent capacity of global terrorism forces States to implement very different policies and methods. With the series of attacks carried out by the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization in the 9/11 and post-9/11 period, the issue of how it reaches individuals and how it channels them into terrorism has led to a change in existing counter-terrorism strategies. With the acceptance of civil actors as gate keepers, the radicalization processes of individuals at risk can be detected at an early stage and thus a risk-reducing strategy in terrorism can be implemented. In recent years, civil society organizations, families and schools have become key actors in the fight against terrorism.

In the final chapter, Dr. Buğra Sarı and Dr. Murat Tınas reviewed the international efforts of combatting terrorism in pandemic environment in the case of NATO. Terrorism has evolved significantly in terms of its nature, goals, tactics, strategies and targets since the end of the Cold War. Compared to traditional groups/structures, the organizational structures of terrorist groups have also changed and they are now loosely organized and transnational. Dr. Sarı and Dr. Tınas evaluated the current state of terrorism in general and the growing threats with the recent pandemic, namely COVID-19. In doing so, they first focus on the evolution of the understanding of security in general and discusses terrorism threats and opportunities in the near future from NATO's perspective. Then, their chapter elaborates on the potential of terrorism in the pandemic environment, with a specific focus on COVID-19 environment as a case study. The chapter finally points out the implications of the recent pandemic for NATO with special reference to counterterrorism.

In conclusion, this book can be described as an exploratory attempt to systematically examine some of the current issues in terrorism studies. The authors strived to demonstrate that such complex research areas as terrorism studies calls for an interdisciplinary approach, for instance, including the perspectives of political science, social psychology, and international relationships. The topics in this book were selected in line with the research interests of the contributing authors. There are of course many other current issues in terrorism studies that could not be including in the scope of this book such as countering the misuse of the non-profit sector for terrorist recruitment and financing, the prevention of terrorist infiltrations among illegal migration routes, and the political and ideological roots of terrorism.