

Saggistica Aracne

A great in–depth analysis of today’s jihadi terrorism phenomena. Takes you to a journey from the Salafist jihadi terrorism to *Al Qaeda* and then to ISIS by explaining the inner conflicts inside terrorist organizations and political atmosphere surrounding the countries they are in. Enriched with real life examples of homegrown ISIS inspired and directed terror attacks in the West, *I strongly advise this book to practitioners and policy makers along with anyone who would like to better understand Salafist jihadi terrorism.*

Ahmet S. YAYLA, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University, Senior Research Fellow of the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE), former Chief of Counterterrorism and Operations Division for the Turkish National Police, coauthor of *“ISIS DEFECTORS. Inside Stories of the Terrorist Caliphate”* (2016), written with Anne Spekhard

A study which, in addition to the explanation on the “where, when and how” of terrorism, helps to understand “why”!

Giuseppe CUCCHI, General, former Head of DIS (Italian Security Intelligence Department)

I highly recommend this book, as it fills an important gap in Western knowledge of jihadism. To know what the adversarial propaganda says is a way to prevent and contain its effects, and this is especially true in the case of DIY terrorism.

Ferdinando SANFELICE DI MONTEFORTE, Admiral, Professor of Strategic Studies, former Italian MILREP to NATO and EU, former Commander of NATO Naval Forces Southern Europe and anti-terrorism Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR, and author of several books

A clear analysis, based on scientific data and methodology, of a complex phenomenon. A book for everybody, that can be easily read, studied, and that definitely helps us understand why they are attacking us.

Fabrizio LUCIOLLI, President of the Atlantic Treaty Association and President of the Italian Atlantic Committee

A central theme of this in–depth analysis — a theme that Western audiences need to fully grasp — is that the West is on the periphery of the conflict, a conflict which is internal to what the author calls ‘the jihadist galaxy’. We are not central to this conflict but are being used by it and for it.

Ajit MAAN, Ph.D., President of Narrative Strategies, Author of “Internarrative Identity: Placing the Self” and “Counter-Terrorism: Narrative Strategies”

This essential and up-to-date analysis helps us make sense of the most recent trends in terrorism, like the ‘do-it-yourself’ variety. This enables us to anticipate what we can expect to develop next. Laura Quadarella Sanfelice’s most valuable contributions, in my opinion, are those so often not associated with books on terrorism. Her insightful explanations into the linkages and dynamics between contributing factors, competing organisations and especially the connection between identity and radicalisation are invaluable to those locked in conflict with evolving and lethal adversaries. Whether you work in CT, CVE or related fields, your reading list will be incomplete without Laura’s book on your bookshelf.

Paul COBAUGH, Vice–President, Narrative Strategies, and Co–Author “Soft Power on Hard Problems: Strategic Influence in Irregular Warfare”

Every law enforcement official, policy maker and ordinary citizen who wants to understand the “why” of terrorism must read this essential, insightful and well researched book.

Carlos VAZQUEZ, Ph.D., Senior Consultant in Terrorist Recruitment at the Behavioral Analysis Group and Author of “Apocalyptic Psychology: ISIS’ Secret Weapon”

Dr. Laura Quadarella Sanfelice's book deeply explores the vicious cycle of different ideologically driven insurgency groups in the world. She fully captivates the unique motivational factors, methods of building capabilities and choice of hard and soft targets within local environments. The unique nature in which she breaks down the modus operandi of various insurgency groups makes this edition highly recommended for all frontline practitioners and academics seeking for a sustainable solution to world peace — A must study!!!

David OTTO ENDELEY, TGS Counter Terrorism & Organised Crime Expert
UK/EU/Africa, Founder of Step In Step Out (SISO)

More than just a modern Sun Tzu compilation on terrorism, this book offers a comprehensive view on the western homegrown terrorism in all its dimension: cultural, popular and media. A useful overview of the new youngster generation!

Gérald ARBOIT, Senior Researcher in the French Centre on Intelligence
Research

I am honored to have been given the opportunity of reviewing Laura Quadarella Sanfelice's last edition of "Why we are under attack". In a lifetime, I have had the opportunity to experience historical perspectives of war and conflicts in a more or less global image. Regardless of age, it is important to keep up with developments and cause in a new world image, in order to understand what is happening and the core of terrorism. In this perspective there are countless participants and ideologies. In order to get a more in-depth answer to this complexity, the book "Why we are under attack", written by Laura Quadarella Sanfelice is an excellent occasion. Therefore, I would strongly recommend her book to get an insight view to part of our new world order.

Arne GERRIT HALVORSEN, Associate Editor of "Defence and Intelligence
Norway", Chief Police Inspector and Royal Norwegian Air Force Captain,
Commander of UN and NATO Special Investigation Groups



Picture used by the Islamic State in 2015 to threaten the conquest of Europe through Libya.



Vai al contenuto multimediale

Laura Quadarella Sanfelice di Monteforte

Why we are under attack

Al Qaeda, the Islamic State and the “do-it-yourself” terrorism

Preface by
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Translated by
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Giacchino Onorati editore S.r.l. – unipersonale

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via Vittorio Veneto, 20
00020 Canterano, Rome
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ISBN 978-88-255-0498-9

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I edition: luglio 2017

*To Ferdinando, my husband,
whom I love to folly
and who is always close to me*

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List of acronyms of the principal jihadist groups mentioned

AaS	<i>Ansar al Sharia</i>
AM	<i>Al Mourabitoun</i>
AQ	<i>Al Qaeda</i>
AQAP	<i>Al Qaeda in the Arabic Peninsula</i>
AQIS	<i>Al Qaeda in the Indan Subcontinent</i>
AQIM	<i>Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb</i>
AS	<i>Al Shabab</i>
BH	<i>Boko Haram</i>
IS	<i>Islamic State (former ISIS – Islamic State in Iraq and Sham or ISIL – Islamic State in Iraq and Levant, and before ISI - Islamic State in Iraq)</i>
JaK	<i>Jund al-Khalifah</i>
JaN	<i>Jabat al-Nusra (starting from summer 2016 Jabat Fatah al Sham)</i>

Preface

by AHMET S YAYLA*

Dr. Laura Quadarella Sanfelice provided us with an excellent book shedding light and a road map on today's one of the most significant problems surrounding sociology, economy, international relations and more importantly security and safety of people: terrorism. Dr. Quadarella Sanfelice's work makes it possible to easily understand the topic of jihadist terrorism step by step with ample examples. The framework of the book is equally comprehensive and well structured. Dr. Quadarella Sanfelice enables the reader to cover a wide range of issues related to the subject matter.

In today's complex world, success against terrorism can only be achieved through an understanding of the problem of terrorism as Sun Tzu in the Art of War wrote "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle." A sound counter-terrorism policy and prevention cannot be accomplished without knowing the terrorist organizations in question. From this perspective, anyone, particularly in the Western World, who is dealing with jihadist terrorism will greatly benefit from this book including Law Enforcement Agencies, counter-terrorism officers, military officers and intelligence agents.

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The Islamic State and al-Qaeda have been the major threats to today's societies. Their violent terrorism, unfortunately, has reached to the far stretches of the world. Almost, no nations are immune from their terrorist activities. Even if these terrorist organizations cannot reach to different geographies, as the author explained through her "do-it-yourself" terrorism interpretation, the Islamic State and al-Qaeda can carry out terrorist attacks and activities remotely. With this in mind, Dr. Sanfelice starts her book with presenting the phenomenon of jihadist terrorism including the link to jihadist terrorism and the Arab Springs, the catalyzing effect of internal conflicts in the Islamic World, the characteristics of jihadist terrorism, the competition between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, the objectives of these terrorist organizations and their appeal to the youngsters around the world. This chapter gives the reader a clear idea of Jihadist terrorism and its threats.

The second chapter focuses on the "do-it-yourself" terrorism including the emerging risks from "do-it-yourself" terrorism, its birth and existentiality, the path to "do-it-yourself" terrorism along with the radicalization process involving identity crisis, the appeal of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State for the youth around the world and as a case study, Paris and Brussels attacks. The themes encompassed in this chapter are predominantly of interest to counter terrorism practitioners in their daily practices as Dr. Quadarella Sanfelice provides excellent exposure to the phenomena of "do-it-yourself" terrorism.

In the following sections, more attacks are examined as case studies and more importantly possible future developments are discussed. The author clearly draws a roadmap for the future in regards to possible terrorist attacks in Europe and Italy, the strength of the Islamic State and al-Qaeda in Europe, the dynamics of these two terrorist organizations in the future, and finally a possible merge or deeper conflicts between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

The Islamic State is going to lose the war in the battleground soon. Al-Qaeda is very sinisterly expanding its network around the globe, as the World's attention is focused on the Islamic State. While the defeat of the Islamic State might be great news, it does not mean that their terror will stop. However, the enemy will hide itself making it more difficult to counter the threats coming from this terrorist organization. Furthermore, many youngsters will continue to be radicalized along the way.

Consequently, the fight against terrorism is going to be present for a long time; it needs to be balanced and to address a variety aspects of the problem of terrorism and the agencies and officers dealing with these problems must know with what and whom they are dealing.

I am quite sure that this book will be very beneficial and handy in navigating and assisting the people who are working in the field of counterterrorism and as well as anyone who wants to understand today's most important security phenomena.

Introduction*

In the most recent years, the attacks performed in the West, in the name of a *jihadist* group, or, in any case, of *jihadist* cause, have multiplied so much, that they have made the fear of terrorism to become a constant of our daily life. Feelings of fear, fortunately non yet of terror, are growing in our societies, who live between the worry of being conditioned in the future, if not (for some people) even swept away by the Caliphate, who advances and threatens to reach us, and the present concern that any among our Muslim “neighbors” might transform himself into a suicide bomber.

These are not fully justified fears, also because we must understand the root reasons of *jihadism* and of the radicalization of many youngsters, who live in our societies with a discomfort which, often, we are unable to grasp and interpret, but which has a psychological nature, and we could easily dispel it.

At the same time, we should understand the aims of groups which are, in fact, mainly fighting against each other, and not against us, but which attack us for two orders of reasons: to benefit from the media return of an attack against the West; to force Western countries not to oppose their plan to re-build that Caliphate which is missed by the *ummah* since the end of World War One.

But one among the issues to be understood is that, at present, the clash is mostly internal to the *jihadist* galaxy, polarized as it is between *Al Qaeda* and the *Islamic State* (including the groups affiliated to each among them), two *networks* fighting for the *jihadist* leadership, because their two leaders are rivals.

We, in the West, are attacked *in primis* for the strong media effect that an attack to our towns provokes, with the consequent shift, in favor of the organization which promoted the attack, or which, in any case,

* The opinions expressed in this article belong to the Author and are not necessarily corresponding to those of the Ministry where She works.

lays the claim of paternity, of newly affiliated groups, and of the increasingly numerous *foreign fighters* ready to fight in the crisis theaters.

In the competition which the *jihadist* galaxy is living in, each spectacular attack against those who are fingered out as “infidels”, with the usual shock of the public opinions, which acts as a sounding board, procures certainly new statements of allegiance by terrorist groups spread around the world, causes the defection of others, increases the number of fighters and supporters.

All this, also, in the case of IS procures also new forces which allow it to consolidate itself on the terrain, this acquiring a more stable control on the lands of the self-proclaimed Caliphate.

The West is therefore attacked, mostly, to prevail on the enemies internal to Islam and to achieve the hegemony on the *ummah*, the community of all Muslims. But the visibility of the attacks on the West generates also another phenomenon, with a spiral effect: the so-called “do-it-yourself” terrorism, promoted by *Al Qaeda* and by the *Islamic State*, a phenomenon which is self-fostering, at least in part.

It consists of actions by *homegrown terrorists* and returnee *foreign fighters* who, acting as lone wolves or in gangs, following the directives of a terrorist group, or at least inspired by it, hit our towns in the most unpredictable way, thus representing the true risk for our societies.

We should differentiate, though, between the impressive threats against our civilization, which we see in the videos and in the communiqués of the terrorist organizations, and the real risks of the “do-it-yourself” terrorism, difficult to be understood, prevented, stopped, and which is even more central to the strategies both of *Al Qaeda* and of the *Islamic State*.

Both *jihadist* networks have by now, in fact, openly endorsed the methodology promoted, years ago, by the Imam with double Yemenite and American passport Anwar al Awlaki, who conceived and founded the magazine *Inspire* of *Al Qaeda* in the Arabian Peninsula, and was killed in Yemen by a drone, in September 2011. We could say, instead, that the influence exerted by al Awlaki on the present *jihadist* phenomenon is today stronger than ever.

And precisely what could be dubbed as “do-it-yourself” terrorism represents the cornerstone of this study, analytically developed, starting from the *jihadist* propaganda, and reaching to the study of the bombings