

The Threat From Within: Recognizing Al Qaeda-Inspired Radicalization and Terrorism in the West

By Phil Gurski



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This textbook examines what drives Al Qaeda-inspired radicalization to violence, how to detect it, and how to confront it. The chapters discuss behaviors and ideologies that are observable and tangible in radicalized individuals or those on the path to violent radicalization. These behaviors are drawn from a variety of cases, such as planning acts of terrorism, traveling to join terrorist groups, or participating in violent jihadi conflict outside the country. The main case study is Canada, and each chapter features many examples that range from Ted Kaczynski (the "Unabomber") and Anders Breivik in Norway to Tamerlan Tsarnaev and Damian Clairmont, a Canadian citizen who died fighting in Syria. The text begins by introducing general concepts, such as terrorism, extremism, and radicalization, before presenting contributing factors to those embracing political violence. A comprehensive list of behavioral indicators that someone is becoming a violent extremist is provided, followed by a look at what is being done



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Editorial Review

Review

The book is not a tell-all. No secrets are revealed. Instead, Gurski draws on his more than three decades as a Canadian intelligence analyst to demystify the national security issue that is preoccupying governments everywhere. (*The National Post*)

This is an interesting conceptual and empirical examination of the pathways of radicalization into terrorism in Western countries, with a special focus on Al-Qaeda type groupings and the lone wolves they inspire, including those that operate in Canada. The author, a recently retired veteran analyst in Canadian intelligence, is well positioned to discuss these issues, including the application of practical methodologies to analyze them. . . .Although the book was written before the emergence to prominence of the Islamic State (IS/ISIL) as the most lethal expression of Al-Qaeda-type Jihadist terrorism facing Western countries, the author's excellent analysis also can serve to understanding and countering it better. (*Perspectives on Terrorism*)

The Threat From Within could not be timelier as the threat of home-grown Islamic terrorists continues to grow. It gives unprecedented insight in the world of Islamic radicals. This book will also help peace-loving parents to detect the seeds of radicalism in their children before it is too late. The experts, policy-makers, and members of law enforcement will hugely benefit from it. This book is suited for a wide audience as it is written in a very enjoyable way. (The Washington BookReview)

Phil Gurski is a recognized authority on homegrown extremism in the West, merging a long experience as an intelligence officer on the front lines of Canada's war against terrorism with a sophisticated scholarly approach. His book, rich in both detail and analysis, is an absolute must read for both experts in the subject and students alike. (Lorenzo Vidino, director, Program on Extremism, George Washington University)

A timely look at the drivers of radicalization to violence that many scholars are trying to understand, this book benefits from the decades of experience Gurski has had as a Canadian intelligence official dealing, at a very granular level, with issues of national security and terrorism. We should listen to what he has to say. (Amarnath Amarasingam, author of Pain, Pride, and Politics: Social Movement Activism and the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in Canada)

About the Author

Phil Gurski served for more than 30 years as an analyst in the Canadian intelligence community. In 2001 he joined CSIS where he was a strategic analyst, specializing in homegrown Al Qaeda-inspired terrorism and radicalization to violence. In 2013 he moved to Public Safety Canada as a Senior Strategic Advisor on Canada's Countering Violent Extremism policy.

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