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Boaz Ganor. *Global Alert: The Rationality of Modern Islamist Terrorism and the Challenge to the Liberal Democratic World.* Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare Series. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. Illustrations. xiii + 218 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-17212-7; $34.99 (e-book), ISBN 978-0-231-53891-6.

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The threat of Islamist terrorism has gripped the world. Leaders and strategists from around the globe are scrambling to fully understand the Islamist terrorist threat and, moreover, what they can do about it. In *Global Alert: The Rationality of Modern Islamist Terrorism and the Challenge to the Liberal Democratic World*, Boaz Ganor skillfully details the basic fundamentals of radical Islamic terrorism, explains the rationality of Islamist terrorist actions, shows how liberal democracies may actually fuel radical Islamic terrorism, and concludes with concrete steps nations can take as they develop their doctrine and strategies to counter Islamist terrorism.

Global Alert is an easy read and is written for academics, politicians, strategists, and concerned citizens looking to better understand the Islamist terrorist threat and, ultimately, to take actions to counter it. The book context is 180 pages and broken down into eleven chapters. In chapter 1, Ganor attempts to âbridge the gapâ between understanding and countering modern Islamist terrorism (p. x). He provides a definition of âterrorismâ and explains how todayâs Islamist terrorists view modern liberal governments. Chapter 2 discusses how modern Islamist terrorists exploit todayâs liberal democracies, including a discussion on terroristâs use of the liberal media. Chapter 3 takes the reader on a small journey full of mathematical formulas to discuss the challenges of proportionality and international humanitarian law which handcuffs liberal democratic nations from fully taking action against radical Islamic terrorists. Chapter 4 tackles the reasons and examples nation-states, like Iran, sponsor and harbor Islamist terrorists. Chapter 5 introduces the reader to a new concept many may not be familiar with: the hybrid terrorist organization. In short, a hybrid terrorist organization keeps one foot in the political process and the other firmly planted in the arena of violent terrorism. In chapter 6, Ganor explains the risks to the liberal democratic nation in supporting hybrid terrorist organizations. He cites the problems and apparent risks the United States presents when they encourage radical Islamic terrorist groups to lay down their weapons and join the political process to solve their grievances. Ganor also asks if liberal democracy is the solution to or the reason for terrorism. Chapter 7 debunks the notion that Islamic terrorists are wild, crazy, and irrational. On the contrary, Ganor lays out a clear argument on the rationale of modern terrorism. Chapter 8 expands on his argument that modern Islamist terrorists are rational actors by providing the causes and goals underlying Islamist terrorism. Chapter 9 further supports Ganorâs argument of rationality by highlighting modern terrorist groupsâ thought process when planning future attacks. Ganor calls modern Islamist terrorists âlearning organizationsâ which constantly adapt to the target nationâs response and the changing battle space (p. xii). In chapter 10 , Ganor uses Hamas as an example to further support his argument that modern Islamist terrorists are rational actors. Finally, in chapter 11, Ganor provides a comprehensive wrap-up of his main points and arguments and, most important, provides leaders and strategists a foundation to build on as they develop strategies and policies to deal with modern Islamist terrorism. Ganor concludes his book by providing eight principles that may be helpful in shaping national strategy and doctrine.

In *Global Alert*, Ganor sets out to show the rationality of modern Islamist terrorists. He argues that modern terrorist organizations do indeed have a method to their madness and, for the most part, analyze the risks and benefits before conducting terrorist attacks. He does concede that, although rational in their thought process, the rationale of the actions and behavior of Islamist terrorists is subjective and left to the eye of the beholder. In simpler terms, their actions seem rational to the terrorist but wildly irrational to the victims and target nations. However subjective the rationale may be, it is critical for national leaders to understand how modern Islamist terrorists think and act as they set out to establish national policy to counter them. *Global Alert* makes this task easier.

Ganorâs argument that the principles of liberal democracy may actually make hybrid terrorists more dangerous is profound and eye opening. For years, Western politicians have stood on the platform of universal democracy. They claim that democracy is the key to solving modern terrorism. Nations, like the United States, attempt to convince terrorist organizations to stop the violence and instead take part in the political process to solve their grievances. This sounds reasonable, assuming the terrorist organization fully steps into the political arena and fully abandons violence. However, this is often not the case, and thus liberal democracies create hybrid terrorist groups that straddle both arenas simultaneously using both politics and violent terrorist actions to achieve their goals. Ganor further highlights the risks of inviting terrorist organizations into the political limelight. By doing so, nations add legitimacy to the hybrid terrorist organization, which then begins to garner greater popular support than other moderate political parties or figures. Nations are left dumbfounded when their plan backfires and the extremist hybrid terrorist organization, now turned political party, gains popular support and threatens the existence of the liberal democracy the nation was trying to protect and preserve.

In addition to offering an insightful perspective of the nature of modern Islamist terrorism, Ganor makes sound recommendations that modern liberal democratic nations can use as they establish doctrine and policy to counter Islamist terrorism. His eight principles are checklist ready and can easily guide the establishment of national security strategy. He concludes his book in a motivational form by stating that defeating modern Islamist terrorism is possible, but will require Western liberal democracies to examine their own actions in light of modern terrorism, strive to see the terrorists perspective (in other words, avoid viewing the Islamist terrorist actions through a Western lens), and understand the rationale of the terroristsâ actions. By doing so, there is a way to address the threat of modern Islamist terrorism.

Global Alert is a must read for national security professionals, political leaders, academics, and any citizens who simply want to better understand the rationale and threat of modern Islamist terrorism. Ganorâs extensive experience with the Israel-Palestine conflict places him in a perfect position to teach others about the modern Islamist terrorist threat and, more important, to make sound recommendations to counter the threat. *Global Alert* not only deepens the pool of literature but also can be the life ring Western democracies reach for as they continue the fight against the growing threat of modern Islamist terrorism.

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