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# 1. Introduction to the *Handbook of Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Post 9/11*<sup>1</sup>

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'The fact is something has changed very dramatically. . . This country is different today and it's going to be different than it ever was for many years to come', so thought Donald Trump, at that time a New York property developer, in a television interview on the morning of 11 September 2001.<sup>2</sup> Nearly 20 years later, these words still ring true. Much has changed, both in the outlook and psyche of the United States and the developed Western world more generally. It can be debated whether the events of 9/11 were the precise cause of these shifts, but, in the collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center on that bright September morning, future historians could not have been given a more dramatic symbol of a new epoch.

Over the two decades since 9/11, the optimism that accompanied the end of the Cold War and the idea that history had ended has evaporated. The belief that America was the sole hyper-power, that a new world order would see the inexorable spread of market capitalism, along with liberal democratic political convergence, has also vanished. Volumes from the early 1990s with titles such as *The End of History*,<sup>3</sup> holding out the prospect of the triumph of liberal democracy and a socially progressive imperium, have been replaced by works with titles such as *The Age of Anger* and *The Suicide of the West*,<sup>4</sup> now primarily available for download from Amazon. The most profound sign of the times is perhaps that Donald Trump, the property developer turned politician, was elected US president on a platform that explicitly repudiated much of the post-Cold War, and indeed, post-9/11 consensus.

Permeating the new era of uncertainty, insecurity and identity politics has been the incoherence that characterized the Western response to 9/11. Arguably, the election of Donald Trump was a delayed reaction to many of the failings in policy that began to reveal themselves over the 15 years following the events of September 2001. The failings were many and complex.

## WAR AGAINST. . . WHAT?

The intellectual confusion surrounding how to think about what the events of 9/11 signified was evident in the terminology employed in its aftermath. The most telling of these, of course, was the term 'global war on terror' (also termed 'global war on terrorism'), which became the frame through which the United States and Western democracies more generally responded to the 9/11 attacks. The 'global war on terror' implied that a transnational scourge had been loosed upon the world. But what was this phenomenon – terrorism – that commentators spoke of in terms of a threat to civilized, rational order?

US President George W. Bush, in the days following 11 September 2001, spoke of terrorism as an independent force on the world stage. In his address to Congress on 20 September, he stated that the American administration would go after 'terrorist groups with global reach'.<sup>5</sup> He did not employ the phrase 'global war on terror', which was coined by the news networks fol-

lowing the his speech, but the phrase subsequently dominated public discourse. Commentators and government officials would, thereafter, routinely speak of an amorphous ‘terrorist threat’.<sup>6</sup>

As an abstract noun, ‘terror’ denotes a condition of extreme fear. Terrorism, by extension, is the intentional creation of this condition. Logically, therefore, as an abstract noun, it has no evident tangibility. It certainly does not reveal itself as having any necessary identity or subject. Thus, to speak of a global war against terrorism is from the outset problematic. How can an actor wage a war against an abstract noun that defines no enemy, no threat, no means and, most significantly for policy making, no realizable political or military objective?

From such semantic confusion mistakes grow, because when we examine the evolution of the war on terror in policy terms, we can determine that words were not being employed in any accurate or meaningful sense. Instead, in the aftermath of 9/11, the word ‘terrorism’ and its related forms like the ‘war on terror’ were being used as euphemisms to describe, or rather to avoid describing, the actual threat being confronted, namely, violent Islamic jihadist groups like al-Qaeda and its various affiliates and later offshoots around the world. As Albert Camus observed, ‘to name things wrongly adds to the misfortunes of the world’.

Examining the language of terror is important because it reveals the analytical incoherence that led to misguided policy and later disillusion, which reveals itself in contemporary anxiety where the existential survival of Europe or ‘the West’ is now in question. Of course, the euphemistic and generalizable global war on terrorism was not the only intellectual and political problem. As an object of inquiry, ‘terrorism’ has been a feature of analytical and academic endeavour since the late 1960s when scholars and commentators had their attention drawn to the upsurge in the activities of violent, mainly sub-state, groups that were campaigning for a variety of political ends. The groups we associate with this era are those irredentist movements like the Irish Republican Army, the Basque nationalists of ETA, Palestinian militant organizations, along with their Marxist or Maoist revolutionary confreres like the Red Army Faction in Germany, Sendero Luminoso in Peru, the Red Brigades in Italy or the Japanese Red Army, though there were many more like them across the globe.

It was largely from this era and the growth of a body of study concerned with analysing these trends that terrorism emerged as an omnibus term that covered a spectrum of violent activity – shootings, bombings, targeted assassinations, plane hijacking and kidnapping – which established the foundations of later terminological confusion. There was no intrinsic reason that any of this activity was inherently ‘terrorist’ in nature. Like nearly all acts of coordinated violence, such actions, irrespective of whether they were explicitly intended to create fear, or created fear as a by-product, were primarily intended as a form of political communication, signalling and messaging (‘we will inflict costs on you, until you do what we want’).

In that respect, the violent acts that were associated with ‘terrorism’ were, and indeed, are, indistinguishable from those that routinely characterize understandings of the means of warfare. Yet, they became increasingly confused in the popular and the official mind as actions uniquely imbued with negative moral connotation. Terrorism as a value-neutral term might have been employed helpfully to investigate actions – tactics – that were designed explicitly to engender a psychological condition of fear. Instead, it began to be applied in ways that were to distort its utility. Acts of violence that had no necessary or objective connection with creating a condition of extreme fear were designated as immoral and illegitimate. Terrorism became a pejorative term. Those who used, or were labelled as using, the methods of ‘terrorism’ were held to fall below standards of acceptable ethical conduct. Both the methods and the ends to which they were directed were condemned.

The problem is that when a word becomes subject to implicit normative biases about its intrinsic value, it imposes an ethical judgment on an otherwise value-free term. When this occurs, it undermines the utility of the term as an impartial tool for assessing the activities of political actors, as well as compounding it with the separate task of evaluating ethical conduct. The ascriptive moral undertones that permeate the notion of terrorism render the term malleable in ways that exacerbate the difficulties of imposing some kind of intellectual rigour upon the phenomenon it attempts to capture. In particular, linking terrorism to ethics leads to the assumption that anyone labelled a ‘terrorist’ inhabits a realm of either criminality or psychopathology. Terrorism is thus projected as existing outside the sphere of rational action.<sup>7</sup>

Presenting terrorist acts as symptomatic of aberrant and abnormal behaviour deems them devoid of political meaning. Comprehending ‘terrorism’ is consequently reduced to the study of a distinctive set of mental or behavioural disorders. The propensity to consider terrorism as irrational conduct best understood through the behavioural disciplines of psychology and psychiatry has constituted a dominant discourse in the field since the inception of terrorism studies.<sup>8</sup> In the post-9/11 age, distinguished as it has been in Europe by suicide bombings and lone actor attacks, it remains a popular, if questionable, approach to the study of the phenomenon: questionable, because such an approach rests on unfalsifiable claims to detect the pure motivation of individual behaviour, while actively discounting the political religion that adherents to militant forms of Islamism invariably cite as providing the rationale for their actions.

## HOME AND AWAY: THE DILEMMAS OF INTERVENTION

In practical foreign and domestic policy terms after 9/11, the terminological inexactitude implicit in the global war on terrorism reveals itself even more starkly. If, in the aftermath of 9/11, the US response manifested itself in a policy of ‘war against terrorism’, then it necessarily involved the use of armed force. At the same time, the long-term endeavour to destroy the supposed scourge of terrorism globally involved a war on multiple fronts, and these might require not violence but a range of political and ideological measures to interdict or contain violent jihadist activists.

What the United States and other Western nations ended up with, then, was a problem of how and where to intervene around the globe in order to confront the transnational, ‘terror’ threat. It was not simply a problem of priorities about where to intervene, given the profusion of violent Islamist-linked conspiracies extending from the Middle East, to Central, South, Southeast Asia and Africa. The problem was further exacerbated by the increasingly uncomfortable realization after 9/11 that much of the source of jihadist planning emanated from within Western democracies, those very nations that now proposed intervening elsewhere in order to curtail the threat.<sup>9</sup> How could Western states prosecute the global war on terrorism externally and at home? The answer, which became evident, was only with a great deal of incoherence.

Hence, when it came to prosecuting the war on terrorism abroad, successive US administrations both before and after 9/11 assumed that the jihadist threat could only be sustained with the backing of state sponsors. In this understanding, the US and its Coalition allies naturally thought they could play to their strengths, which consisted in the technical facility to wage a high-tempo war that enabled the quick and efficient attainment of military objectives. The conduct of US and Coalition forces against Iraq during the Gulf War of 1990–91 reinforced

this viewpoint. The first Gulf War highlighted the effect of force transformation, underway since the 1980s, that emphasized speed, manoeuvrability, precision and lethality.<sup>10</sup>

The promise that force transformation capabilities held out were that war conducted by advanced Western states would always be proportional and containable within politically acceptable boundaries. Wars would be short. Targeting would be devastating and accurate. Wars would also be casualty-light both on one's own side and to non-combatants on the enemy's side. Such capabilities fused with a progressive conviction in the democratic end of history to encourage a doctrine of pre-emption and liberal intervention. More precisely, ousting authoritarian regimes that might aid or support movements like al-Qaeda could positively recalibrate the political geography of large parts of the globe, but particularly the Middle East. The progressive ideology underpinning this belief was that the people, once liberated from tyranny, would discover the joys of the market and liberal democracy.

The prosecution of the war on terror abroad was, according to this vision, premised on the assumption that both war and politics were largely matters of rational technique. Superior technical war-fighting skills targeted the centres of power of a hostile regime, decapitating the government via precision-guided munitions, at minimal cost. Such was the agenda that the US administration and its allies post-9/11 pursued in their long war against 'terrorism'. It assumed that al-Qaeda's base of operations could be methodically squeezed. By removing enemy regimes at a low and acceptable cost, the political remedy would inexorably follow, again at minimal cost. Because the prevailing liberal orthodoxy assumed that there were only immoral leaders and wicked regimes, whilst the 'people' and their cultures were ethically neutral and benign, it followed that removing illiberal regimes would permit the people, with external aid and guidance, to find their way to a liberal end of history. The problem, however, was, they did not.

The first iteration of the war on terror thus saw Western forces destroying the Islamist Taliban regime in Afghanistan, where Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda movement had been based, in October 2001. In conjunction with the forces of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, American airpower and the insertion of US and British special forces, destroyed al-Qaeda's mountain redoubts and displaced the Taliban from power with impressive efficiency. US casualty figures for the entire operation barely extended into double figures. The mission was declared over a few months later.

The success of US forces in removing the Taliban influenced and reinforced ideas about how to deal with Iraq after 2001. The Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, although defeated in the 1990–91 Gulf War, remained in place, obdurate and bellicose. Iraq, moreover, was widely suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction. Saddam had already shown a proclivity to use chemical weapons against Iran during the Iran–Iraq War in the 1980s and against his own Kurdish population. He was thought to have a wider interest in the acquisition of nuclear and biological weapons capabilities. Saddam's unpredictability in the eyes of the West led to suspicions that he might intrigue with al-Qaeda and be prepared to provide them with weapons of mass destruction. For the US, and a number of its Coalition partners such as the UK, Saddam had to be overthrown. Although the US lacked on-the-ground allies in Iraq like the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, the US sought once again to utilize its high-end war-fighting superiority. Beginning in March 2003 and with a mere 150 000 troops, the US, along with a smaller British force operating from the south, swept the Iraqi regime from power.

## THE FALL OF THE WAR ON TERROR

If the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq epitomized Western military prowess, it was followed by a slow but remorseless descent into political disillusionment as the fault lines in US and European thinking about the so-called war on terror began to assert themselves.<sup>11</sup> The central problem was not one of military technique. It was one of politics. If war is seen primarily as a technical exercise in the application of force only, then this omits the crucial ingredient that gives war its purpose. The issue was that while the West could use its vastly superior technology to remove failing regimes, this did not in itself answer the political question: what comes next? What alternative structures of governance do you put in place? What kind of society do you try to engender? What responsibilities do you now have as an occupying power?<sup>12</sup>

In the months and years after the invasions, it became clear that such questions were subordinated to those of military technique. The Americans did have a kind of political vision for the future, but as outlined, this was largely based on the proposition that in the aftermath of the removal of authoritarian regimes, the natural inclination of people would be to reorganize their societies along more democratic lines, instituting relatively free and fair systems of governance.

In the case of Iraq, the destruction of the regime and the suppression of Saddam's former ruling Ba'ath Party removed all the structures of existing authority – the police, the armed forces and government ministries. With civil society non-existent and few occupation troops to hold the state together until alternative structures of power could be constructed, Iraq descended into chaos. Disaffected and now unemployed former Ba'athists, many ex-members of the Iraqi army, began launching attacks against the occupying forces. Sunni and Shia religious rivalries, previously kept in check by Saddam's repressive rule, broke out in a bitter sectarian struggle. Al-Qaeda fighters were drawn into the failing state's sectarian fragmentation, waging a ferociously violent campaign.

In a not dissimilar fashion, Afghanistan also slid into lawlessness and violence, once again arising from the same flaws in progressive, liberal assumptions of a 'global war on terror'. The Taliban may have been removed from power, but the remnants retreated into its Pushtun heartlands, notably Kandahar and Helmand provinces, where they launched an insurgency against the central government. The violence and instability spread across the country. The corruption and ineptitude of the post-Taliban government resulted in its increasing unpopularity, while the United Nations-mandated International Security Assistance Force, designed to stabilize Afghanistan and move it towards a democratic future, proved inadequate to the task. Reconstruction efforts were undermined and civil authority deteriorated. Afghanistan was in danger of the Taliban making a comeback.

Prosecuting the war on terror abroad therefore proved much harder than expected. Although the Americans eventually stabilized the civil conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan, this involved a much greater commitment of force levels on the ground from 2007 onwards. In both countries, Coalition forces squandered blood and treasure for only marginal improvements in the political situation. Moreover, the ideology of liberal interventionism and its geopolitical consequences appeared increasingly in the eyes of its critics as a quasi-imperial enterprise in nation building and a commitment to seemingly endless war.<sup>13</sup> US military involvement in Afghanistan still continues and is now the longest war in American history.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, the penchant for recasting the global order by ousting unsavoury regimes led to further misguided efforts, particularly during the period of the rather brief Arab Spring.

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi was assassinated in Libya in 2011 with Western support, while in Syria, the West half-heartedly backed forces trying to overthrow the government of Bashar al-Assad. In both cases, Western interventionist proclivities saw each country dissolve into civil war, leading to a resurgence of jihadist activity, and creating large refugee flows into Europe. In the case of Syria, the result of Western interference inspired the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), drew US forces, again, into the fray, and enabled Russia to regain geopolitical influence via intervention on the side of Assad. In effect, over less than two decades, the war on terror created more geopolitical instability, and most ironically of all, yet more terror.

## AN AWKWARD REALIZATION: ‘THEY’ ARE ‘US’

If waging the war on terror abroad was more difficult and ultimately unsustainable than anticipated, it was no less so when Western governments were confronted with the inconvenient truth that the war on terror also had to be conducted on the home front. External military interventions to interdict al-Qaeda sanctuaries, along with other plans to deal with rogue regimes that existed along the ‘axis of evil’, were met by an upsurge in jihadist suicide bombings and al-Qaeda-linked conspiracies in many Western cities, which were home to diasporic populations.

What became apparent, however, was that many of these assaults were planned and executed, not by foreign nationals, but by native-born citizens. As one commentator declared in the aftermath of the suicide attacks on the London Underground system in July 2005, which claimed the lives of 52 people, the realization began to dawn that it was not ‘us against them’, because “‘they’ are also ‘us’”.<sup>15</sup>

The dilemmas posed by the lack of a clear ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy began to manifest itself in the idea of a ‘home-grown threat’. How to tackle this threat was all the more difficult for policy makers, arising, yet again, from the progressive cosmopolitan ideology that had gradually taken hold of the governing classes after the end of the Cold War. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the subsequent collapse of the bipolar world order, the liberal end of history thesis declared that the West was leading the world into a post-ideological condition. A cornerstone of this thesis was the politics of cosmopolitan multiculturalism, which considered that different communities could live alongside each other, celebrating their diversity, and with only the weakest of attachments to national identity or a wider public morality.

## SECULAR LIBERAL OLYMPIANISM MEETS IDEOLOGICAL CERTAINTY. . . AND LOSES

Of course, the belief in a post-ideological age was itself an ideological construct: it was the ideology of secular modernity that held that the world was moving towards a post-national and post-religious condition that would see the harmonious convergence of different faiths, nations and races in multicultural moderation, increasingly governed by supranational structures like the European Union and the United Nations, presided over by an enlightened technocratic elite. That this was a recipe for policy incoherence was hardly surprising. For when it came to trying to understand the reasons for the growth in ‘home-grown terrorism’, the political

establishment and media commentariat could not comprehend why anyone living in a secular society could motivate themselves to launch attacks against their fellow citizens based on an exclusive and non-negotiable religious identity.<sup>16</sup>

The inability to contemplate the reality of violent Islamist assaults from within their cosmopolitan societies inspired progressive Western elites to deny any link between faith and violent action. This led to a familiar mantra following the latest jihadist attacks, proclaiming that they were not connected with Islam. Politicians, not known for their grasp of the finer points of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), like British Prime Minister David Cameron, would announce that ‘Islam was a religion of peace’,<sup>17</sup> while President George W. Bush, apparently an avid reader of the Koran, quoted an appropriately bland *surah* (chapter) proclaiming that ‘Islam is peace’.<sup>18</sup>

Questionable though such claims were, they were also damaging for any coherent policy response, not least because they manifestly contradicted what jihadist activists explicitly stated to be their motivation, namely to overthrow the decadence of secular modernity in the name of a higher truth.<sup>19</sup> In analytical and policy terms, this confusion in post-ideological politics led to a bizarre mix: tolerating the intolerant on the one hand, combined with heavy-handed authoritarian interventions on the other. Commentators who accepted the post-national, secular, orthodoxy sought alternative explanations for the recourse to violence by what was a fanatical sect. Academic and media analysts blamed home-grown terror on everything from deprivation, family problems, prisons, mental health through to discrimination and oppression at the hands of Islamophobes and the alienating consequences of Western foreign policy.<sup>20</sup> This liberal Olympian perspective, assumed, somewhat patronizingly, that it knew the jihadist mind better than the jihadists themselves. From the academically fashionable critical perspective, there was one overarching explanation for home-grown terrorism. It was all our own fault.<sup>21</sup>

In public policy terms, waging the war at home also required a range of responses that focused on hardening security measures – concrete barriers around public buildings, more rigorous security checks at airports – along with strengthening legal measures, greater intelligence cooperation and programmes aimed at ‘deradicalizing’ potential recruits to the jihadist cause. For liberal democratic societies, whatever the managerial necessity of these initiatives for health and safety, invariably they came at a price: greater inconvenience to the public, more surveillance of the private realm, less room for freedom of thought and expression. At worst, post-national, secular, multiculturalist ideology served only to reinforce alienation among minority ethnic and religious communities, cementing their sense of otherness, while causing either bemusement or resentment, along with a feeling of exclusion amongst majority communities who often did not share the progressive commitment to multiculturalism and social perfection.

## GLOBALIZATION AND TERROR: THE RISE OF JIHADI COOL

The paradoxes of globalizing liberal secularism were not lost on Islamism’s own ideologues. What liberal Olympianism perceives as the enlightened promotion of difference, Islamist thinkers saw only, in the words of Egyptian theorist Sayyid Qutb, ‘hideous schizophrenia’.<sup>22</sup> For Islamists, Western tolerance is merely weakness, while secularism is a form of spiritual death requiring Islamic salvation. Thus, while the contemporary Islamist finds liberal multiculturalism feeble and deracinating, it is nevertheless, wonderfully useful all the same.

Globalization also facilitated new methods of funding that were difficult to police. Combined with social media, globalization also saw groups linked to jihadist conspiracies adopting after 2003 a cyber-profile that was often more effective and sophisticated than many technologically advanced Western states could match. This was particularly true in the case of ISIL. Social media facilitated the global reach of such movements, while magnifying and exaggerating the scale of the threat.<sup>23</sup>

It was vital, as a more cosmopolitan, third-generation jihadism recognized, to work the Western democratic political process for purposes of infiltration and manipulation of the population. From this perspective, imam Anwar al-Awlaki's online strategy promoted the infiltration of the military, police, civil institutions, and, of course, secondary and higher education, where Western multiculturalism proved particularly congenial to the promotion of the 'Trojan Horses' of the purified politically religious programme.<sup>24</sup>

In the evolution of jihadism since 9/11, the Islamist ideologist increasingly discriminated between military strategy, media strategy and the planning for the effects of these strategies in the aftermath, for example, of a successful attack, such as Paris in 2015, or successive London attacks in 2016, or failed ones, in Melbourne also in 2016, to justify it.

The Internet meanwhile provided the medium. The ISIL online journal *Dabiq* presented jihadism as cool, and the actions of foreign fighters recruited from Europe and North America a source of inspiration that gave meaning to otherwise meaningless lives – a simplistic but evidently persuasive appeal to young Muslims unconvinced by the secularism of Western modernity.

Al-Awlaki, an American graduate of Yemeni background, radicalized in London, and his successors, like the former West Sydney male stripper and boxer turned zealot, Feiz Mohammad, or failed Melbourne rapper, Neil Prakash, also known as Abu Khalid al-Cambodi, used social media to brand the ISIL product. ISIL considered this aspect of their movement so important that in August 2014 they formed the Anwar Al-Awlaki Brigade to promulgate the message and recruit online. The Brigade's media awareness is attuned to Western sensibilities. Segueing off a L'Oréal advert, for instance, a 2015 recruitment message targeting young Western women runs 'Cover Girl, No, Covered Girl Yes. Because you're worth it'.<sup>25</sup>

The politics of identity and multiculturalism enabled 'cool jihad' to take root in Western societies, making its appeal attractive to an educated diaspora. In the words of one commentator: 'Second- and third-generation Muslims are without the don't-rock-the-boat attitude of our forefathers. We're much sassier with our opinions, not caring whether the boat rocks or not'.<sup>26</sup>

In this context, women also found in terror (i.e., jihadism) congenial role models post-9/11 as much as angry, 'rock-the-boat' young men, who had nothing to lose but their designer clothes and welfare subsidies. The global jihad movement developed its online capacity not only to project its ideology but also packaged it for Western consumption. Whether it was the transgressive violence of a University of Westminster graduate such as 'Jihadi John' (Mohammed Emwazi) or a 14-year-old schoolboy from Blackburn, UK grooming an attack in Melbourne on ANZAC Day 2016, myth and symbolism proved vital to the action and its message. The flow of young second-generation Muslim men and women, brought up in secular, Western, multicultural societies, to ISIL attested to the success of the messaging. Western governments seemed as shocked by the cultic appeal of ISIL as they were surprised by the rapidity and lethality with which it achieved de facto authority over vast swathes of Syria and Iraq.

The ultraviolent messaging effectively contrasted a liberal multicultural belief in life and the pursuit of happiness with a cult of death. This was not necessarily a reversion to barba-

rism, as liberal opinion makers often asserted. As early as 2004, in the wake of Madrid train bombings, Islamists demarcated a pluralist secular world order from their brand of apocalyptic chiliastic millenarianism with the formula: ‘You love life, we love death’. This slogan went through several mutations, with phrases like ‘The Americans love Pepsi, but we love death’.<sup>27</sup> In essence, however, this thanatic aesthetic defines itself against a secular, Western, Enlightenment belief in life.

As the Italian philosopher Umberto Eco observed, in a different ideological context, fascism is political necrophilia.<sup>28</sup> A taste for killing and martyrs is its purest expression. Islamism in its totalitarian absolutist form is similarly obsessed. It means, as the slickly produced ISIL video of the Jordanian pilot Lieutenant Kasaesbeh’s immolation on the Internet demonstrated, adoring and serving death.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, this beatification of violence is as telling as the non-negotiable, politically religious commitment. Indeed, to love death as jihadism does is to say that it is beautiful to receive it and to risk it, and that the most beautiful and saintly love is to distribute it. This death wish is evident today across the Middle East and amongst those seduced by its online appeal in the West. It is a form of political nihilism made possible by the sacralization of violence.<sup>30</sup>

While the West floundered in its response to jihadism, this book also shows that authoritarian or illiberal regimes, whether in the Middle East, Asia or Russia, adopted a more robust, intolerant, zero-sum approach to the jihadist threat. Because of the somewhat solipsistic Western preoccupation with its own recent Muslim diaspora, and the jihadist problem that emerged after 9/11, the illiberal approach to domestic and international terror is either dismissed or ignored. Yet it is increasingly evident that authoritarian regimes have less difficulty with the polymorphous threat that non-state violent actors pose than Western liberalism. This is in part because these states emphasize a corporatist attachment to the party or a commitment to an inclusive nation state. They also, as a number of chapters in the book demonstrate, have little time for dissent and no time for tolerating the intolerant. The Western obsession, however, with its own experience and response to jihadism only receives attention when an incident, like the Mumbai attacks in 2008, threatens to escalate into interstate warfare that might damage the geopolitical order.<sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Terrorism both as a concept and as an object of study, as this Introduction has suggested, is both complex and multidimensional. The contributions contained in this book cannot in themselves seek to cover all these dimensions, let alone resolve any of the extant theoretical, definitional and practical policy dilemmas that they highlight. What this *Handbook* can do, though, is outline the various directions in which informed scholarship and research is advancing. A collection of this nature can also illustrate, throughout the pits and troughs of the past 20 years since September 2001 – the post-9/11 epoch – that thinking about what this notion of ‘terrorism’ constitutes, and how it manifests itself on the ground, in reality and in actual events, and its consequences, continues to affect quotidian life in many parts of the world, including, and perhaps especially, in what we understand, for now, as the modern democratic West. In that sense, the analysis contained in these pages observes how dramatically politics and geopolitics has changed and how different our world has indeed become over the past two decades.

## NOTES

1. While we have tried to be as consistent as possible throughout the book with regard to the spelling of names of people, organizations and places, in British, European, Australian, American and Asian English, as in other fields, there are variations in the spelling of terms relating to the world of terrorism and counterterrorism between the chapters.
2. Donald Trump, interviewed on *9 News*, 9 September 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXbZ9WWjzYY>, accessed 10 December 2018.
3. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
4. Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (London: Penguin, 2017); Jonah Goldberg, *Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism and Identity Politics is Destroying American Democracy* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2018).
5. 'Text: President Bush addresses the nation', *The Washington Post*, 20 September 2001, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress\\_092001.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html), accessed 10 December 2018.
6. For an illustration, see HM Government's, 'Terrorism and national emergencies' web pages at <https://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency>, accessed 14 October 2018.
7. See David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith, 'The commentariat and discourse failure: Language and atrocity in Cool Britannia', *International Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2006): 1077–118.
8. See Albert Parry, *Terrorism from Robespierre to Arafat* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1976), 35. See also Tori DeAngelis, 'Understanding terrorism', *American Psychological Association* 40, no. 10 (2009): 60.
9. See, for example, Peter Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* (New York: Crown, 2016).
10. For an assessment, see Steven Metz and James McKievit, *The Revolution in Military Affairs and Conflict Short of War* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 1994).
11. See Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts and the Failure of the Great Powers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011); John L. Cook, *Afghanistan: The Perfect Failure* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2012); Theo Farrell, *Unwinnable: Britain's War in Afghanistan, 2001–2014* (London: Bodley Head, 2017).
12. Celeste War Gventer, David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith, eds, 'Minting new COIN: Critiquing counter-insurgency theory', in *The New Counter-insurgency Era in Critical Perspective*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 9–31.
13. Bing West, 'After a decade of counter-insurgency, eliminate nation-building from US military manuals', in Gventer et al., *The New Counter-insurgency Era*, 232–9.
14. Barry R. Posen, 'This 9/11, end the Afghanistan War', *USA Today*, 20 September 2018, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/09/10/9-11-end-afghanistan-war-editorials-debates/1261227002/>, accessed 14 October 2018.
15. Irwin Steltzer, 'Letter from Londonistan', *Weekly Standard*, 1 August 2005.
16. David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith, 'Greetings from the cybercaliphate: Some notes on homeland insecurity', *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (2005): 925–50.
17. Quoted in Steven Erlanger, 'David Cameron calls on Muslims in Britain to help end extremism', *New York Times*, 20 July 2015. Cameron was to later qualify his phraseology, stating in November 2015: 'It is not good enough simply to say Islam is a religion of peace and then to deny any connection between the religion of Islam and the extremists. Why? Because these extremists are self-identifying Muslims'. Prime Minister's Office, 'Lord Mayor's Banquet 2015: Prime Minister's speech', 16 November 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/lord-mayors-banquet-2015-prime-ministers-speech>, accessed 2 October 2018.
18. George W. Bush, "'Islam is peace" says president', *The White House Archives*, 17 September 2001, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html>, accessed 28 September 2018.
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