IRAN AND ITS NEIGHBORS:
Iran's New Iraq
Ray Takeyh

A Stable Structure on Shifting Sands: Assessing the Hizbullah-Iran-Syria Relationship
Abbas William Samii

LIBYA'S NEW DIRECTION:
Libya's Nuclear Turnaround: Perspectives from Tripoli
Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer

The Changing Libyan Economy: Causes and Consequences
Ronald Bruce St John

From the Myth of European Union Accession to Disillusion: Implications for Religious and Ethnic Polarization in Turkey
Deniz Gökalp and Seda Ünsar

Islam and Europe
Book Review Article by Jørgen S. Nielsen

Mark N. Katz:

Remez argue in this book that Iran played a much larger role in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War than has been previously acknowledged. Far from seeking an outbreak of this war or benefiting by its occurrence, Ginor and Remez suggest that Moscow deliberately provoked the conflict in Egypt. Further, it seems that the Egyptian forces were too quickly and the intended Soviet military personnel was not wanted by the Egyptian leadership. The authors’ revelations about the May 1967 MiG-25 over flights above Dimona lays a plausible basis for their argument that the Soviets were preparing to bomb Israeli nuclear facilities. The authors also reveal that landing parties of Soviet military personnel had been deployed on Soviet naval vessels in the Eastern Mediterranean in preparation for raids on Israel. The authors admit, though, that the purpose of these raids (that were not carried out) is not at all clear. In the usual Soviet fashion, this would not be revealed even to commanding officers unless and until they were actually launched.

What surprised me is that Ginor and Remez did not even explore the possibility that these landing party missions (either in whole or in part) could have been tasked to seize Dimona. If Moscow believed that there really was a strong possibility that Nasser’s forces would overrun Israel, it would not have wanted Egypt to seize its nuclear weapons program. Moscow might even have calculated that the Soviets capturing Dimona would have been preferable to America and the West than Cairo doing so, if the latter seemed imminent. But whatever Moscow’s original intentions for these landing parties, they became moot when Israel defeated Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian forces so quickly and the intended Soviet raids did not have the expected presence of Arab forces on Israeli territory that would have provided cover for them.

This book has already provoked strong controversy — especially the chapter in which the authors claim that Soviet actions contributed to the Israeli attack on the USS Liberty. There is undoubtedly much more about the lead-up to the June 1967 War that is yet to be learned from the archives of secretive governments. I must concur, though, with Sir Lawrence Freedman’s judgment that Ginor and Remez have presented such a strong case for their argument that “the onus is now on others to show why they are wrong” (Foreign Affairs, September/October 2007).

Mark N. Katz, Professor of Government and Politics, George Mason University.

He has written extensively on Moscow’s foreign policy toward the Middle East.


Reviewed by Clark McCauley

What is the importance of Islam for understanding Muslim suicide attacks? At one extreme is the view that suicide attacks are the expression of a fanatic strain of Islam; at the other extreme is the argument that such attacks are the expression of desperate politics — the warfare of the weak. In the first view, Muslim suicide terrorism cannot be understood without understanding Islam in all the complexity of its competing sects and schools. In the second, Muslim suicide
terrorism can be understood with the same concepts and mechanisms that make sense of Tamil Tiger terrorism in Sri Lanka or PKK terrorism in Turkey. The three books reviewed here offer a mix of political and religious analyses, with Hafez heavier on the politics than Cook and Allison.

Hafez's take on Palestinian suicide bombers is neat, clean, and brief. Chapter 1 offers a quick survey of explanations of suicide terrorism. Chapter 2 presents results from a database of Palestinian suicide attacks. Chapters 3-5 examine organizational, individual, and cultural motives for such attacks. The concluding chapter summarizes policy implications.

The three appendices are useful contributions in their own right. Appendix A lists suicide bombings in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza between September 1993 and February 2005. Hafez generously offers access to this database to other researchers. Cases are listed by date, including information about the group sponsoring the bomber, number of bombers, number of victims, name, and, where available, the age of each bomber. Appendix B provides English translations of the "last will and testaments" of four bombers, each document posted shortly after the attack on the web site of the sponsoring organization (two for al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and two for Izzedeen al-Qassam Militias). Appendix C provides organizational profiles for these and other groups that deploy suicide bombers.

Hafez argues persuasively for a distinction of levels of analysis: Palestinian suicide attacks are a strategic choice for the groups deploying suicide bombers, an act of personal and religious redemption for the bomber, and an expression of Islamic revivification and nationalist fervor in a culture that venerates martyrdom and martyrs. All three levels are required to understand Palestinian suicide attacks.

The three levels are indeed useful, but perhaps not so neatly divisible as represented. Two of five failed suicide bombers quoted on pages 49-50 seem to have had strategic motives. One says, "I believe the operation would hurt the enemy... Also [a] successful mission greatly influences society. It raises the morale of the people." Another says "I know the bombing will hurt the Israelis and prove to them we are still ready to fight... The most important thing was that we should make an operation in the heart of Israel after the [Israeli military] penetration in order to prove that we were not influenced by the military attack." There is no doubt that personal redemption is important for many suicide bombers, but perhaps many also participate in the strategic goals of the group that sends them.

In sum, this little gem of a book about suicide bombers in Palestine is a very useful addition to any course on terrorism. In contrast, Hafez's book about suicide bombers in Iraq is not as tight and tidy a package, though it offers a wealth of interesting ideas and observations. At least a few of the many highlights deserve to be mentioned here.

Hafez's identification of Sunni insurgent groups in Iraq between 2003-2006 is, itself, a notable contribution. These groups are bewildering in their variety; they use multiple names at different times and in different locations. The listing of these groups and their aliases in Appendix 1 is an essential scorecard with which to track insurgent players in Iraq.

In addition Hafez provides what must be the most reliable identification of suicide bombers in Iraq from 2003 until February 2006 when his data collection ended. Appendix 2 lists names and origins for 99 male and three female suicide bombers: 44 from Saudi Arabia, eight from Italy, seven from Kuwait, seven from Iraq, six from Syria, three from Libya, three from Jordan, two from Belgium, two from France, two from Spain, two from Egypt, and one from each of Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Britain, and Turkey. Country of origin is unknown for 17. The data came from jihadi web sites, including martyrdom videos. Many readers will wish that the listing had included more information about the backgrounds of the bombers (e.g., age, education) and about the characteristics of the attacks (e.g., solo vs. multiple suicide attackers, ethnicity of targets).

Most suicide bombers in Iraq have never been identified. Hafez indicates that there were 514 suicide attacks in Iraq between 2003 and August 2006, as against only 102 identified bombers. Presumably the number 514 is the denominator of percentages pre-
know the bombing will hurt and prove to them that we are still ... The most important thing could make an operation in the after the [Israel's military] pendency to prove that we were not the military attack." There is personal redemption is important for suicide bombers, but perhaps participate in the strategic goals that send them.

is little gem of a book about suicide in Palestine is a very useful any course on terrorism. In the book about suicide bombers as tight and tidy a package, a wealth of interesting ideas is. At least a few of the many here to be mentioned here. Utilisation of Sunni insurgent between 2003-2006 is, itself, banal. These groups are bizarre; they use multiple times and in different layers of these groups and their jihadi is an essential scorecard for insurgent players in Iraq. Hafez provides what must be the identification of suicide bombers in Iraq from 2003 until February 9th collection ended. Appendices and origins for 99 male and female bombers: 44 from Saudi Arabia, seven from Kuwait, six from Syria, three from Jordan, two from Belgium, two from Spain, two from both each of Lebanon, Tunisia, and Turkey. Country won for 11. The data came sites, including martyrdom donors will wish that the listwise information about the bombers (e.g., age, education characteristics of the vs. multiple suicide attackers).

Bombers in Iraq have never hafiz indicates that there attacks in Iraq between 2006, as against only 102 . Presumably the number nato of percentages presented in bar charts and pie charts to show the patterns of these attacks. For instance, only 15% of suicide attacks have targeted coalition forces; the most common targets are Iraqi security forces (44%) and civilians (23%). Over half of all of the suicide attacks (58%) are not claimed by any insurgent group. The latter result is surprising, given that suicide attacks had in the past often been claimed by more than one group.

Of attacks that were claimed, al-Qu'ida in Iraq (AQI) claimed about 75%, Ba'athists claimed about 12%, and Ansar al-Sunnah claimed about 12%. It is a striking result to find Ba'athists, along with AQI and Ansar al-Sunnah, as one of the top three groups claiming suicide attacks. The Ba'athists are secular Iraqi nationalists, whereas Ansar are Islamist revolutionaries seeking a Sunni version of the rule of the mullahs in Iran, and AQI are jihadi Salafists seeking to unite all Muslims in a new caliphate. What does it mean that secularists have turned to suicide attacks?

Suicide terrorism, Hafez suggests, is the weapon of the weakest factions of the insurgency — the jihadists and the Ba'athists. Neither of these groups can depend on any popular appeal; their only hope of influence is in destabilization and chaos. In contrast, the major Sunni factions, who want to restore as much as possible of the previous Sunni hegemony in Iraq, have broader support and no shortage of trained militants. They do not need the shock power of suicide attacks to inflict heavy damage on Shi'a, Kurds, and, until summer 2007, Sunnis who collaborate with coalition forces.

Of course the example of the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) in Sri Lanka already has demonstrated that religious motivation is not necessary for suicide attacks. Indeed Robert Pape has suggested that suicide attacks are associated with nationalist struggle against foreign occupation. But Hafez argues that a nationalist struggle cannot explain why 98 of 102 identified suicide bombers in Iraq came from outside Iraq.

Instead, Hafez offers a "push-pull" theory to explain the motivations of foreign volunteers. He suggests that they are pushed from their countries of origin by the new pressure on radical Islamists that accompanies the war on terrorism. And they are pulled by a culture of martyrdom in which Western domination of Muslims is a humiliation that only can be redeemed by the ultimate personal sacrifice.

From a psychological perspective, the culture of martyrdom that draws foreign volunteers to Iraq might itself be interpreted as a new form of nationalism. Jihadi Salafists identify with an Islamic umma that transcends state borders, a nation in which religious identity converges with political identity. From this perspective, at least the AQI suicide attackers in Iraq can be seen as part of a nationalist resistance to the foreign occupation of Muslim lands.

Finally, Hafez provides a very interesting graph of the number of suicide attacks in Iraq by month, from March 2003 to August 2006. The chart indicates that peaks in suicide attacks tend to occur in association with two kinds of events. First, suicide attacks tend to increase after major counterinsurgency operations, presumably to show that the operations did not succeed. Second, attacks tend to increase during or after political developments that might suggest a return to normalcy (e.g., the election of the new Iraqi parliament in December 2005), again presumably to show the continuing power of the insurgents. This is a striking demonstration of the dynamic political competition that links terrorist attacks with state responses.

It is interesting to note that the graph of all insurgent attacks (including suicide attacks) does not look like the graph of suicide attacks alone. More might be made of the comparison of suicide attacks with conventional attacks; indeed, the book is full of ideas for analysts and researchers working on suicide terrorism.

Like Hafez, Cook and Allison examine both politics and Islam in order to understand suicide attacks. Although their title is more general, they focus mostly on jihadi suicide attacks with only occasional reference to martyrdom operations by the Tamil Tigers and other groups. They agree with Hafez about the importance of the distinction between organizational motives and individual motives, and they unpack much of the same history of conflicting views and interpretations of Islam.
A unique contribution of the book by Cook and Allison is the beginning of an analysis of successful suicide attacks that are not repeated despite continuing terrorist capacity and no government concessions. The authors suggest that these are failed attacks from the perspective of the organization sending the bombers, and point to several examples including Bangladesh and Morocco. Bangladesh experienced two jihadi suicide attacks in late 2005, and none since. Morocco suffered a coordinated attack of multiple suicide bombers in 2003, and then no more such attacks until 2007. It would be useful to know more about when suicide attacks do not work for the organization employing them.

Another valuable contribution is a database of 61 fatwas regarding the legitimacy of suicide attacks. These come from 15 Muslim countries, four non-Muslim countries, and al-Qaeda. The fatwas agree with most of the Muslim world that Palestinian suicide terrorism against Israelis is indeed martyrdom, with less support for martyrdom operations that kill Muslims. The examples given suggest that the fatwas appeal as often to political as to religious arguments. Readers may wish that translations of these fatwas had been made available as an appendix.

Also worth noting is the recognition, shared by Hafez, that most radical Muslims are not violent. Many Salafis try to keep clean of the world rather than trying to change it. Salafis who want change usually go to education, missionary work, and social work. It is important in responding to suicide terrorism to recognize how few are those who are dangerous — not least to avoid generating new grievances by overreaction.

Finally, there are two chapters about mass media representation of suicide attacks on television and on the Internet. Here Cook and Allison show that news coverage of suicide attacks has changed between 1995 and 2003: CNN and NBC reported about a quarter of such attacks before 9/11 but reported about 60% after 9/11. Qualitatively, explanations of suicide attacks are rare on television, and the rare attempts at explanation tend to favor political over personal motivations. To the extent that the response to terrorism in a democracy is conditioned by public views of the problem, further analysis of terrorism in the media may be warranted.

Taken together, the three books represent a strong second wave of research on suicide terrorism. All three recognize that the motives of suicide bombers can differ from the motives of the organizations that send them. All three emphasize the need to include personal, political, and cultural factors in order to understand suicide bombing. Compared with earlier books about suicide terrorism, all three studies profit from the authors’ expertise in Arabic language and the religion and culture of Islam to enrich analysis with translations of original documents and websites. The result is a substantial improvement in our understanding of the phenomenon.

Perhaps the next wave of research will illuminate some major uncertainties remaining: given broad acceptance of suicide bombing as martyrdom in the Muslim world, and broad acceptance of the view that the war on terrorism is a war on Islam, why do so few become suicide bombers? How does this kind of radicalization occur? What can be done to prevent or reverse radicalization? Hafez, Cook, and Allison agree in suggesting better use of Islamic arguments against suicide and killing of civilians, but it is possible that radical religious interpretations are less cause than rationalization of a tactic originating in political desperation.

Dr. Clark McCauley, Professor of Psychology, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010, McCaule@brynmawr.edu


Reviewed by Richard Schofield

In many ways, The Three Occupied UAE Islands is a difficult product to assess. There is no mention of the author on the front cover of a book whose purpose is