

Countering Terrorism – Can we meet the threat of Global Violence?
Michael Chandler and Rohan Gunaratna.
Reaktion Books 2007.

Since the terrorist attacks on America of September 11th 2001 there has been an avalanche of books on Islam and terrorism in general and Islamist terrorism in particular: Into this canon Countering Terrorism must be added.

For those who have done no reading into the subject this is an excellent introduction to a deeply disturbing and threatening field; for those who have there is a considerable amount of repetition, particularly of background material on Al-Qaida and aspects of the invasion of Iraq, but there are also some valuable insights and ideas.

Countering Terrorism is divided into 13 chapters, considering, inter alia, the nature of current and future terrorist threats, the significance of Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan and the role of the United Nations. The chapter on Afghanistan is especially interesting, as Michael Chandler was the chair of the UN group that monitored sanctions against the Taliban and al-Qaida and knows his subject well.

On concluding the book the reader is left with a deep sense of foreboding at the way the terrorist threat is likely to develop and of how few glimmers of hope may be discerned in the various areas of conflict that have done so much to create the situation in which we now find ourselves.

It is hard, having completed Countering Terrorism, not to shake off a sense that this will blight our lives for the foreseeable future.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh