



## Terrorism and Counterintelligence: How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection (Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare)

By Blake

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Protecting information, identifying undercover agents, and operating clandestinely; efforts known as counterintelligence; are the primary objectives of terrorist groups who hope to evade detection by intelligence and law enforcement officials. Some strategies work well, some fail, and professionals tasked with tracking these groups are deeply invested in grasping the difference.

Discussing the challenges terrorist groups face as they multiply and plot international attacks, while at the same time providing a framework for decoding the strengths and weaknesses of their counterintelligence, Blake W. Mobley offers an indispensable text for the intelligence, military, homeland security, and law enforcement fields. He outlines concrete steps for improving the monitoring, disruption, and elimination of terrorist cells, primarily by exploiting their mistakes in counterintelligence. A key component of his approach is to identify and keep close watch on areas that often exhibit weakness. While some counterintelligence pathologies occur more frequently among certain terrorist groups, destructive bureaucratic tendencies, such as mistrust and paranoia, pervade all organizations. Through detailed case studies, Mobley shows how to recognize and capitalize on these shortcomings within a group's organizational structure, popular support, and controlled territory, and he describes the tradeoffs terrorist leaders make to maintain cohesion and power. He ultimately shows that no group can achieve perfect secrecy while functioning effectively and that every adaptation or new advantage also produces new vulnerabilities.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Blake W. Mobley has written a groundbreaking study on how terrorist groups collect intelligence. He vividly portrays terrorist group dilemmas and weaknesses, as well as their ability to foil the security services of their adversaries.

(Daniel Byman, Georgetown University, and research director of the Saban Center at The Brookings Institution)

With the strategic defeat of al Qaeda in sight, *Terrorism and Counterintelligence* offers a timely analysis of the vulnerabilities of terrorist organizations, which will speed their demise.

(Graham T. Allison, director of Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs)

Counterintelligence remains a stepchild in the study of intelligence, despite the fact that every organization, including NGOs, does it in some form whether or not they use the language. Blake W. Mobley's book is a welcome addition to the literature on this subject, all the more so because it looks at the counterintelligence of terrorist groups. He combines solid scholarship with an insider's sense for how the world actually works. His framework—organizational structure, popular support, and controlled territory—applies well to terrorist groups. Slightly adjusted, it could also apply to other groups as well, including NGOs.

(Gregory F. Treverton, director, RAND Corporation's Center for Global Risk and Security and vice chair of the National Intelligence Council)

A well-researched and compellingly argued book that sheds original light on a perplexing and heretofore often misunderstood subject.... Highly recommended.

(Choice)

*Terrorism and Counterintelligence* is an intellectual rollercoaster that shows the ups and downs of the biggest and most prominent terrorist groups the world has dissected so far and leaves the reader with a renewed sense of the power and control these groups have on traditional society.

(Ross W. Clark, Penn State University *Parameters*)

#### Review

A vast literature on terrorist groups exists, though not much scholarship directly addresses the counterintelligence issue. This book fills that gap. The coverage is thorough and accurate, particularly in tracing the evolution of various terrorist movements. Anyone reading this book will come away with a better understanding of the terrorist phenomenon.

(John McLaughlin, Distinguished Practitioner in Residence at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and former deputy director and acting director of the Central Intelligence Agency)

#### About the Author

Blake W. Mobley is an associate political scientist with the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California. Before joining RAND, he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency as a counterintelligence analyst in the Middle East and Washington, D.C and specialized in non-state actor counterintelligence issues. He received his Ph.D. in political science from Georgetown University, his M.P.P. from Harvard University, and his B.A. from Stanford University.

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