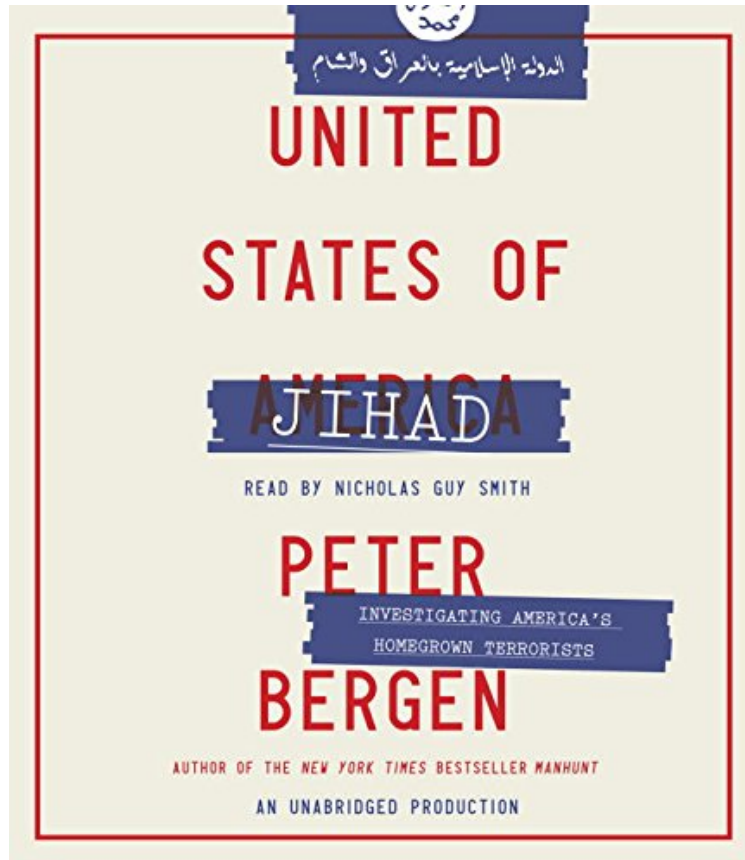


(Read free ebook) United States of Jihad: Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists

United States of Jihad: Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists

Peter Bergen

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Peter Bergen : United States of Jihad: Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised United States of Jihad: Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists:

27 of 29 people found the following review helpful. Homegrown terrorists: how are they created and trained? How do we track and respond? By Opsimath Bergen's focus is homegrown radical terrorists, and what he discovers in his meticulous research flies in the face of many current assumptions. His stories include those of terrorists who travel abroad to join ISIS, those who carry out, or attempt to carry out, attacks within the US, and others who work on recruiting through extensive use of social media. He tracks those who are recruited to team tasks as well as lone wolves. Alternating between stories of individual terrorists and the anti-terrorist response and analysis, he details a profile that psychologists and researchers others have created. Newer thinking contradicts myths such as such as that most terrorists are young, uneducated, and unattached -- actually the majority are slightly older, many are married and

have families including children, and half have at least some university education, most often in the sciences or engineering. The most recent thinking about tracking the background of terrorists: mostly male (although increasingly women are becoming part of jihad), aged between 15 and 35, generally well educated, generally relatively comfortable in their upbringing, many growing up in nonobservant families or other religions. Some kind of trigger -- loss of job, experiencing racism, death of family member, moral outrage about international affairs -- often began the process of radicalization in terms of turning to fundamentalism. However, studies seem to show that it takes fundamentalist views become politicized, and potential terrorists isolating themselves from families, friends, and mosques considered too "liberal," for the process to ramp up. Interestingly, the stage of disaffection often occurs as a direct result of religious radicalization; fundamentalist Islam hugely restricts the types of jobs a believer can take and still be within the bounds of a "true" fundamentalist Muslim, so that some men who held down quite high-paying jobs previously ended up dramatically underemployed with no foreseeable way to progress financially. One final step is bonding with other extremists, either through travel abroad, homegrown activities, or the internet. Bergen has a few stories in which cousins, siblings, or close friends begin the process of radicalization together, but only one goes on to plot terrorist acts or actively join ISIS. The differences in these situations were fascinating; some people actually become unradicalized, and it seems that would be a really fruitful field of study in terms of countering ISIS propaganda and recruitment fantasies. One major chapter focuses on the strategies of tracking and foiling terrorists. Bergen lays out the ways that police departments, the FBI, and other government organizations have attempted to combat potential terrorist threats, pointing out their successes and also their many failures, including discussing both in relation to surveillance and drone strikes. He points out attacks thwarted, attacks that took all officials by surprise, and overly aggressive entrapment and arrest policies which resulted in a dragnet for people who, according to all evidence, were never really a threat. He ends with a potent discussion of the outsize fear of terrorists within the US -- including both an underestimation of the threat of the far right and "historical amnesia" about the the height of terrorist attacks in the US in the 1970s -- and warns of the dangers of anti-Muslim sentiment so prominent in the current political climate. He is not attempting the argue that there is no threat, but merely to say that the threat is greatly overblown by conspiracy theorists, right wing media, rigid ideologies, a lack of historical perspective, and the disparity between expert evaluations of risk and the fears of ordinary people. The final pages of the book, which offer a bit of hope, are too brief for my liking; they focus on Islamic scholars and clerics banding together to condemn violence, religious intervention made in person by real scholars, and instances where parents of terrorists and relatives of victims have come together to speak against both Islamic fanaticism and Islamophobia. I would have liked to see this final section much expanded. There is a huge need for publicizing this type of response to homegrown jihad and not simply focusing obsessively on the acts of terrorism themselves.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A clear and present survey of danger

By Oakley E. Van Slyke

Peter Bergen has done Americans a great service by compiling this record of Americans who commit terrorist acts. The book focuses on attacks by Americans who have become violent after following radical Muslim leaders who advocate violence. This is balanced in many important ways, including: -A comparison to terrorist attacks by anarchists, Christians and others, which equal in number the attacks by Muslims -A comparison to handgun violence, to put the relatively small number of deaths by terrorist attacks of all kinds into perspective

The book is quite current, even including events in December, 2015. I thought I would complain that he had glossed over the normal use of the word jihad in Muslim parlance, but by the end of the book Bergen had handled that subject well. (Jihad refers to any kind of struggle, such as a struggle to do the right thing, a war on cancer, etc.) My only complaint is that he skipped over the greatest acts of terrorism on U.S. soil: the acts by the KKK and others against African American communities in which many thousands have died. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the actual cases of Muslim-inspired violence on American soil.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Local terrorists

By Carol Bojanowski

Interesting information about individual local terrorist incidents. I have a better understanding but not sure it gave me any confidence that these kind of incidence can be detected and stopped. I think it shows how the terrorists take advantage of our freedoms. Some of them were on the FBI radar but not detained for whatever reason. I think our freedom of speech on the Internet is a big factor in the terrorists getting their message that radicalizes Muslims.

A riveting, panoramic look at homegrown Islamist terrorism from 9/11 to the present

Since 9/11, more than three hundred Americans born and raised in Minnesota, Alabama, New Jersey, and elsewhere have been indicted or convicted of terrorism charges. Some have taken the fight abroad: an American was among those who planned the attacks in Mumbai, and more than eighty U.S. citizens have been charged with ISIS-related crimes. Others have acted on American soil, as with the attacks at Fort Hood, the Boston Marathon, and in San Bernardino. What motivates them, how are they trained, and what do we sacrifice in our efforts to track them? Paced like a detective story, *United States of Jihad* tells the entwined stories of the key actors on the American front. Among the perpetrators are Anwar al-Awlaki, the New Mexico-born radical cleric who became the first American citizen killed by a CIA drone and who mentored the Charlie Hebdo shooters; Samir Khan, whose Inspire webzine has rallied terrorists around the world, including the Tsarnaev brothers; and Omar Hammami, an Alabama native and hip hop fan who became a fixture in al

Shabaabs propaganda videos until fatally displeasing his superiors. Drawing on his extensive network of intelligence contacts, from the National Counterterrorism Center and the FBI to the NYPD, Peter Bergen also offers an inside look at the controversial tactics of the agencies tracking potential terrorists from infiltrating mosques to massive surveillance; at the bias experienced by innocent observant Muslims at the hands of law enforcement; at the critics and defenders of U.S. policies on terrorism; and at how social media has revolutionized terrorism. Lucid and rigorously researched, *United States of Jihad* is an essential new analysis of the Americans who have embraced militant Islam both here and abroad. *Washington Post*, Notable Non-Fiction Books in 2016

Selected for the *Washington Post*'s Notable Nonfiction List, 2016 *New York Times* Editors' Choice Mr. Bergen writes with authority and range... His profiles of jihadists... leave the reader with a harrowing appreciation of the banality of evil and an unnerving sense of missteps made by the authorities... Mr. Bergens detailed accounts of terror plots (both executed, foiled or failed) make for chilling reading. MICHIKO KAKUTANI, *NEW YORK TIMES* Excellent... Bergens book is the best one-volume treatment available on the current state of jihad in America. JANET NAPOLITANO, *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW* Peter Bergen is a skilled and sensitive reporter with unparalleled access to the law-enforcement and intelligence communities... He has written what in effect are two books about terrorism. Both are valuable. One is a riveting, thoroughly researched account of the evolving state of the threat as a growing number of American citizens join the ranks of foreign terrorist movements and of how U.S. intelligence and law-enforcement agencies are addressing the constantly shifting threat. The other is a skilled defense of... the Obama administrations anti-terror effort: one that attempts to steer between the perceived extremes of panicky overreaction and a failure to acknowledge how politically and socially devastating terror attacks can be. WALTER RUSSELL MEAD, *WALL STREET JOURNAL* Peter Bergen... one of America's most prominent terrorism experts, makes a compelling and often unsettling case that, in the years since Sept. 11, 2001, Islamist terrorism in the United States has metamorphosed... The transformation of domestic jihadism has not only dispersed the Islamist terrorist threat but in a perverse process of cultural intermingling has partly Americanized jihad itself. The 'soft power' appeal of American culture is often considered to be one of this country's most enduring assets, but the new admixture of jihadi terror and pop culture savoir faire potentially turns this idea on its head... Bergen takes a generally skeptical view of the growth of the post-9/11 national security state and of the fear-mongering about Islam that has increasingly transfixed the darker crannies of American politics. This skepticism, I think, is not only strategically and morally sound but also borne out by the facts. LOS ANGELES TIMES There's drama in the cases Bergen relates... He makes a highly reliable guide on the road to the present day. KARL VICK, *TIME MAGAZINE* A crisply methodical detailing of the types of people and attacks involved in Islam-inspired terrorism here and abroad Bergen knows his topic extremely well. "USA TODAY Disturbing and topical [*United States of Jihad*] is an engrossing and edifying book It is to Bergens immense credit that, without downplaying the threat of Islamist terrorism home-grown or directed at America by groups abroad he refrains from overstating it and attempts to maintain perspective The author deserves kudos for simultaneously recognizing the potential of secular Muslims who are too often ignored to change peoples attitudes. BOSTON GLOBE Bergen pulls you in with snappy, conversational writing... exploding some of the easy assumptions about jihadists in the United States. WASHINGTON POST Bergen, who has interviewed convicted terrorists, their families and friends and people working across the counterterrorism profession, is the most sober guide to the subject one could hope for. But Bergen also has an eye for the human factor, which makes this book, for all its horror, humane. Jihadization is usually a great blow to the families of the person involved, and Bergen presents poignant family portraits. THE GLOBE AND MAIL Gripping There is much to commend in Mr. Bergens important book. Readers will benefit from his astute observations, based on numerous case studies [Mr. Bergen] offers a sobering assessment that should not be overlooked. WASHINGTON TIMES Bergens book provides sobering reading in a feverish U.S. political climate. AL JAZEERA AMERICA Bergen has been at the forefront of reporting on terrorism for more than 20 years. In this innovative and illuminating work... Bergen explores nearly every aspect of terrorist activity, from ISIS use of social media to the FBI's development of behavioral profiles that identify potential terror activists. Both balanced and galvanizing, Bergens meticulous portrait of violent extremism is required reading for anyone who truly wants to understand the nature of the evolving threats from within and without. BOOKLIST (starred review) Bergen calmly and lucidly examines the diverse stories of the more than 300 people in the United States who have been charged with jihadist terrorist crimes since September 11, 2001. His nuanced insights, couched within a series of gripping narratives, offer readers a solid foundation to knowledgeably face the barrage of political opinions being flung about by many Americans this election year Highly recommended for all readers seeking an informed view of current events. LIBRARY JOURNAL There are a number of fine scholars of jihad, but no one matches Peter Bergen in clarity and wisdom, qualities abundantly on display in this valuable book. LAWRENCE WRIGHT, author of *The Looming Tower* and *Going Clear* Nobody burrows deeper into the horrifying world of organized terror, uncovering harrowing stories of near-misses and fatal attacks, than Peter Bergen. And nobody analyzes this fraught subject with such calm, careful rigor. His portrait of the terrorists next door and the agents who hunt them is worthy of *Homeland* except that its all too real. FRANKLIN FOER, author of *How Soccer Explains the*

World Peter Bergen has become one of Americas most important analysts of Islamist militancy and terrorism. Here he again provides a timely, sober study of the diverse and fragmentary character of homegrown violent jihadists. He places the scale of the threat into accurate perspective without minimizing its dangers. Every American should read this book. STEVE COLL, author of Ghost Wars and Private Empire A fascinating and vitally important look at the rise of American jihadists. Brilliantly reported and researched, this is an essential book for anyone who wants to understand why hundreds of Americans have turned to radical Islam. ANDERSON COOPER It is hard to imagine a timelier book than this one. Peter Bergen does what he does besttelling mesmerizing stories that weave together exhaustive research to illuminate a critically important subject. He shows us that the Americans among us who turn to jihad are not who we imagine, suggesting ways in which we can be simultaneously more humane and more secure. ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, author of The Idea That Is America; president and CEO of New America With his latest book, Peter Bergen shows once again that he has become the premier chronicler of jihadism in the twenty-first century. Read it and come away with a new understanding of America and of terrorism. THOMAS E. RICKS, author of The Generals and Fiasco In this incisive book Peter Bergen answers many questions about terrorism that preoccupy Americans today. Why does extremism appeal to some young Muslims in America? What is the nature and scope of the threat? Rich in detail and eminently readable, this unique book explains both the challenge of terrorism and the turmoil in the Muslim heartland that fuels it. VALI NASR, author of The Dispensable Nation; Dean, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins About the Author Peter Bergen is the author of four previous books about terrorism, three of which were New York Times bestsellers. He is CNNs national security analyst, vice president at New America, and a professor at Arizona State University. Bergen has held teaching positions at Harvard and at Johns Hopkins University and is a graduate of Oxford. He lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife, documentary producer Tresha Mabile, and their two children. Find him at PeterBergen.com. From the Hardcover edition.