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INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL  
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

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## Editorial Note

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# Terrorism under the Communist Banner

**W**e are happy to release the July 2014 (Volume 6, Issue 6) issue of the Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis (CTTA) at [www.cttajournal.org](http://www.cttajournal.org) and [www.pvtr.org](http://www.pvtr.org). This issue offers in-depth analyses into leftist oriented political violence and terrorism by examining certain communist groups in the past and the present.

Franck Emmanuel Marre evaluates the current peace talks between the Colombian government and the Marxist guerrilla group, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, better known as FARC. Marre underscores the need for a comprehensive solution to the Colombian conflict which would include context-specific measures of transnational justice in relation to crimes committed by FARC, threats posed by other militant groups such as Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and Bandas Criminales (BACRIM) and the pervasive drug production and trafficking which drive conflict and lawlessness in Colombia.

Andreas Wimmer discusses the newly emerging militant leftist groups in Indonesia, which comprise the People's Democratic Party (Partai Rakyat Demokrat/PRD) and associated Marxist groups as well as anarchist and eco-terrorist groups. Wimmer highlights the dynamics of interaction between the leftist radical groups and Islamists in Indonesia, which indicate an erosion of specific ideological narratives.

Daniela Irrera reviews the evolution of the Red Brigades in the Cold War era and the counterterrorism strategy adopted by the Italian state against the group. A strategy based upon effective law enforcement and intelligence gathering through the establishment of a special counterterrorism unit, and sustained by a broader political will, led to the elimination of the Red Brigades – the study of which is valuable to countries facing similar threats today.

Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis is a monthly journal of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. The CTTA is circulated among 13,400 subscribers.

**Editor**

Arabinda Acharya, Ph.D.

**Associate Editor**

Iromi Dharmawardhane

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## Submissions and Subscriptions

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# Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis

**L**aunched in 2009, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis (CTTA) is the monthly journal of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR). Each issue of the journal carries articles with in-depth analysis of topical issues on terrorism and counterterrorism, broadly structured around a common theme. CTTA brings perspectives from CT researchers and practitioners with a view to produce policy relevant analysis.

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# FARC's Facade and Other Major Obstacles to a Genuine Peace in Colombia

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Franck Emmanuel Marre

*Colombia has witnessed an unprecedented turn of events since 2012; never has the government gone so far in peace talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), better known as FARC. Yet, never have the Colombian public been so sceptical about these ongoing negotiations.*

Under the Juan Manuel Santos Calderón government, the socio-economic situation in Colombia has steadily improved. Colombia's economy expanded 4.3 percent last year and was the second fastest growing economy in Latin America. Exports and foreign investment increased; inflation slowed to a six-decade low; unemployment fell to its lowest level in more than a decade. No major political scandal tainted Santos' mandate unlike for President Uribe and President Samper, his predecessors. Furthermore, two of FARC's top commanders Guillermo León Sáenz Vargas, a.k.a. Alfonso Cano (alias) and Víctor Julio Suárez Rojas, a.k.a. Mono Jojoy (alias), were eliminated by the Colombian military under Santos' leadership.

However, although Santos won the elections on 15 June 2014 and was re-elected for a second term in office, opinion polls show the increasing unpopularity of the Colombian President. Indeed, the favourable rating for Santos in May 2014 was only 38%, compared to 57% four years earlier. This poor score is attributed to the disapproval of the majority of Colombians towards the government's ongoing peace talks with the FARC, while the country continues to experience a high level of insecurity due to the violence perpetrated by militant groups. According to the Justice and Peace Unit of the Attorney-General's Office, FARC has killed more than 30,000 Colombians since 1994, and is accused of extrajudicial executions,

bombings, political kidnappings and kidnappings for ransom and involvement in the illegal drug business, among other crimes.

The FARC and Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), both Marxist guerrilla movements, began their respective armed struggle in 1964, and have been classified as terrorist organizations by the United States and the European Union in 2001 and 2002, respectively. Although FARC overtly claims that it aims to put an end to social, economic and political inequalities in Colombia by establishing a Marxist-Leninist state, both groups have lost all credibility due to their engagement in terrorist and criminal activities. The socialist ideology which they still promote is nothing more than a façade to mask these activities.



**Figure 1 – President Juan Manuel Santos was re-elected as Colombia's president on the 15 June 2014 with a 51 percent majority vote, despite growing public opposition towards his government's peace talks with the FARC Marxist guerrilla movement.**

*Image source: AP (Agencia de Prensa), [http://www.radiomundial.com.ve/sites/default/files/imagecache/400xY/images/santos\\_9.jpg](http://www.radiomundial.com.ve/sites/default/files/imagecache/400xY/images/santos_9.jpg)*

### **Nature of the Peace Talks with FARC**

President Santos opened-up negotiations in September 2012 with the FARC. He sought an end to the conflict by securing a peace agreement with the group on the premise that “eradicating the guerrillas by using the military was unrealistic and that it would take 50 years or more to do so.” The FARC has weakened militarily over the past ten years, but their capacity to cause harm remains intact. Santos' policy is in sharp contrast with the approach taken by his predecessor, President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, who advocated strong military measures against the “FARC terrorists” and launched an unparalleled counter-offensive. Uribe's Democratic Security Policy made homicides, kidnappings and terrorist attacks by FARC decrease by as much as 50% and the strength of FARC fighters to drop from an estimated 18,000 in 2001 to about 9,000 in 2010 by the end of his term. FARC's strategic fronts were also eradicated from the Departments of Cundinamarca, Tolima and Vichada and were partially eradicated from the Departments of Antioquia, Meta, Guainía, Vaupés, Guaviare and Putumayo (Colombia is divided into 32 departments and one capital district). Cundinamarca was of paramount importance for the FARC as Bogotá is the capital of Colombia, as

was Antioquia, in the north-west of the country, one of the richest and most industrialized departments in Colombia with a strategic mobility corridor to the Caribbean.

The Colombian government and FARC have adopted a common negotiating agenda based on five points as part of the present peace talks: (1) land and rural development including land reform, (2) demobilization, transitional justice and participation in politics, (3) drug trafficking, (4) disarmament and (5) restitution for conflict victims. The discussions are expected to culminate in a final peace agreement to end the conflict. So far the government and FARC have come to an agreement on the first three out of the five areas. However, details of these discussions and the contents of the proposed peace agreement between the government and the FARC have remained a secret. Confidentiality is to be kept until all five points in the agenda have been successfully achieved.

No previous government has reached such a level of success in their negotiations with the FARC. Although the proposed peace agreement represents a significant breakthrough, the road to



Figure 2 – Peace talks between the Santos Government and the FARC in Havana, Cuba on 25 August 2013: Jorge Torres Victoria, a.k.a. 'Pablo Cata-tumbo' (alias), leader of the FARC's Central High Command (left); Luciano Marín Arango, a.k.a. 'Iván Márquez' (alias), commander of the FARC's Northwest and Caribbean blocs (middle); Jesús Santrich, leader of the FARC's Central High Command (right)

Image source: Colprensa, <http://www.laopinion.com.co/demo/images/2013/ago/25/paz025.jpg>

peace is paved with major hurdles and thus, scepticism is rampant among Colombians. The talks were also meant to last no more than six months from when they began in October 2012, but have to date spanned more than one and a half years, with two out of the five negotiating points, disarmament and restitution for conflict victims, still to be broached.

### Obstacles to a Sustainable Peace:

#### **Public Opposition: Dilemma between Justice and Peace and FARC's Insincerity**

All the armed groups in Colombia, including FARC, have violated international humanitarian law on countless occasions for decades. Although the international community actively supports the talks, pressure is likely to come on the Colombian authorities to veto an amnesty for the FARC leaders who are guilty of crimes against humanity and (other) war crimes. Moreover, the demobilization program for the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia/ AUC) right-wing paramilitary group in 2005 set a negative precedent that cannot be disregarded. For example, the Justice and Peace Law which framed this demobilization

program was severely criticized for its excessive leniency for permitting five to eight year prison sentences, even for those who had committed the most grievous crimes.

It is clear to Colombian civil society that a peace process with FARC will not be successful if context-specific measures of transitional justice are not adopted. However, the growing sense amongst Colombians is that the current government is likely to grant amnesty to FARC's leaders, and that their numerous crimes will remain unaccounted for. Several heated debates led by Senator (and former President) Álvaro Uribe Vélez, who is strongly opposed to the peace talks with FARC, also took place in parliament in 2012 and 2013 on this issue. Uribe and his supporters are not at all inclined to

allow the guerrillas to exert any political clout through participation in Colombian politics after causing so much harm to the country for decades.

Additionally, observers draw attention to the grave criminal and terrorist offences which continue despite FARC's promises to the contrary during peace negotiations, such as kidnappings, extortion, drug production, extrajudicial executions, bombings and the use of gas cylinder mortars and landmines against the military and civilians, violence against indigenous people and forced recruitment of child soldiers including as child suicide bombers. These circumstances have served to intensify the feeling of exasperation among Colombians, not to mention discredit the ongoing negotiations. FARC's sincerity and determination to disengage from the conflict and the lucrative drug business are being increasingly questioned by Colombians and politicians opposed to Santos' talks, and they are showing their impatience for the negotiations to be concluded.

Critics also point out that the two previous peace talks with the FARC led by the Colombian government in 1982 and 1998 have set negative precedents. FARC indeed cheated and took

advantage of the governments' goodwill to expand its fronts as well as geographic territory in strategic areas – a tactic followed by many terrorist and extremist groups in the world. They emphasize that the present talks offer absolutely no guarantee that FARC is genuinely committed to total disengagement.

Also, the demobilization process with the former right-wing paramilitary groups in 2005 was only partially successful, as 15% of militants refused to lay down their arms and formed a splinter group known as the *Bandas Criminales* (BACRIM) or 'Criminal Bands'. The same may happen with FARC.

Moreover, if amnesty is granted for FARC's leaders, its low and middle-ranking cadres could be swept into the top of the hierarchy of power within the group, encouraging them to continue the armed fight. Such an eventuality would be a major setback for President Santos' peace negotiations, and would delegitimize future peace efforts with other armed groups in Colombia as well.

### **Power and Presence of the Many Militant Groups**

Although peace talks with the FARC have gained extensive media coverage, they should not be the tree that hides the forest. Indeed, the 50-year-old Colombian conflict consists of many criminal and militant actors who hold sway over the national territory and forge complex and ever-changing ties. President Uribe hammered home in 2002 that it is crucial to regain occupied areas, establish the rule of law and win the hearts and minds of local populations. And yet, twelve years later, the exercise of the state to regain legitimacy and sovereignty on a territory as large as Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia together (Figure 3), has



**Figure 3 – Geographical presence of FARC, ELN and BACRIM in Colombia in 2013**

*Source: Semana (2013), [www.semana.com/](http://www.semana.com/)*

been of limited effectiveness. The armed groups continue to control many regions of Colombia where they prosper with impunity.

Despite the peace talks with the FARC, the fighting has continued unabated with the group still having the means to cause extensive damage, inflicting about 2,400 casualties and 2,100 attacks per year to Colombian security forces. FARC's operational capability and its command and control structure have remained largely unchanged for the past ten years (FARC's leaders who were neutralized were immediately replaced by others). Only their modus operandi has changed: the FARC can no longer deploy hundreds of fighters to carry out large-scale attacks on security forces as they did from 1995 to 2002 due to the reduction in forces; instead the army is plagued by daily attacks by smaller guerrilla units. Thus, the FARC has opted for a return to classic guerrilla warfare since President Santos took power in 2010. Constant harassment and the extensive use of anti-personnel mines, thus giving an impression of power and invincibility, aim to demoralize the army. The war

of attrition appears to have no end in sight, although the FARC's ranks have declined from about 18,000 fighters in 2002 to 8,000-9,000 at present, as previously mentioned.

The Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), a 2,000-strong group, has recently increased military operations against the security forces and have multiplied their attacks on infrastructure such as oil pipelines and electric power lines in order to gain a stronger position to negotiate, should talks with the Colombian government take place. Also to be reckoned with are the *Bandas Criminales* (BACRIM), a right-wing mafia-like paramilitary group with thousands of members. BACRIM is primarily involved in drug trafficking and extortion. They do not have a political agenda like FARC and ELN (or like AUC did in its time). As a 12,000-member strong group, BACRIM's grip on the Colombian regions (Figure 3) is also considered one of the biggest threats to security.

The geography of the Colombian conflict has changed little since Santos came to power in 2010 as police and army coordinated operations had already significantly reduced the territorial control of militant groups from 2003 to 2009. The occupied areas are mostly high value zones as they offer either a strategic geographical location offering mobility corridors and border proximity or are conducive to highly lucrative activities such as illegal mining and drug production and trafficking. Although convergence among FARC, ELN and BACRIM have been reported in some of these activities mainly in the Caribbean coast, the Pacific region, the border with Ecuador and the Eastern Llanos (Figure 3), these criminal or armed groups compete with each other to impose their domination through violence and terror. This further deteriorates security and increases volatility in these regions. However, BACRIM is known to make sporadic tactical alliances with FARC and ELN, former enemies, in order to boost their illegal

activities in areas which BACRIM shares control with these two groups (Figure 3).

### ***The Drug Business: Key Driver of Lawlessness in Colombia***

The common denominator of all the lawless groups involved in the Colombian conflict is drug production and trafficking. The profits they can reap from it are so colossal that the drug business has become one of the key drivers of conflict.

Drug trafficking has become a very lucrative business for traffickers who make huge profits. For

example, one kilogram of coca paste produced in the Colombian forest costs about US \$750 in Colombia, and converted into cocaine, the price is about US \$1,200/kg. Reaching Mexican ports, the price is US \$5,500 to 7,000 per kilogram of cocaine. If it arrives in Central America, the price of one kilogram of cocaine is about US \$10,000. Upon reaching the US-Mexican border, the price is US \$15,000 per kilogram of cocaine. Once in the US, the wholesale price

is US \$27,000 or more for one kilo of cocaine – at this point the original kilogram of cocaine would have also become two kilograms, as the cocaine sold is no longer pure as the traffickers add several chemical substances to make business even more profitable. The retail price of this kilo of 'cut cocaine' in the US is about US \$330, 000 – multiplying the original profits more than 440 times. The profits made in the heroin trade are even more massive. Enormous profits also inevitably generate a high level of violence between traffickers and Colombian armed groups in each group's efforts to control the drug business.

'Plan Colombia', the counter-narcotics program developed with the US, has cost more than US \$13 billion to date since it began in 1998, but it has been a resounding failure. In fact, all the counter-narcotics measures implemented in Colombia have been ineffective since the time of American

**“The common denominator of all the lawless groups involved in the Colombian conflict is drug production and trafficking.”**

President Ronald Reagan's 'War on Drugs' which began in 1981. Although 1.5 million hectares of coca and poppy crops were eradicated in fifteen years, Colombia remains the world's top cocaine producer since 1975. Although coca leaf and cocaine production have decreased since 2004, 52,000 hectares were cultivated and about 300 tons of cocaine were produced in Colombia in 2013. This is because drug production has shifted to other remote areas, border regions and even neighbouring countries such as Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela. Peru, for instance, has become the world's top coca leaf producer since 2012, with an estimated 61,000 hectares of coca crops. Moreover, farmers are forced to cultivate coca leaves or poppy as they cannot survive economically by only growing licit crops. This explains why the crop-substitution policies included in Plan Colombia have failed so far. Further, state counter-narcotics crusades including the extensive chemical eradication of coca crops (of more than two million hectares since 1999) have sparked anger among coca growers, who as a result have given more support to FARC and ELN. The aerial spraying has also caused controversy as serious health problems among the affected populations and irreversible damage to the Amazonian ecosystem have been observed.

As long as the core of the problem, drug production and trafficking remain unresolved, the drug business will continue to fuel armed conflicts. This is notably the case in Colombia, Mexico and Peru as well as in countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Drug trafficking criminal groups have deeply impacted the security of Colombia. For example, Pablo Escobar, the notorious Medellín Cartel's drug baron, declared a 'total war' against the Colombian state from 1984 until his death in 1993, killing more than 10,000 people, a period known as '*narcoterrorismo*'. The illegal drug trade has also truly poisoned Colombian politics. For example, on multiple occasions, former President Uribe was accused of collaborating with

the Medellín Cartel in the 1980s. Earlier in 1994, the Drug Cali Cartel financed President Samper's political campaign which marred his term in office.

Thus, even if a successful peace deal takes place with the FARC, Colombia's criminal and terrorist landscape would remain complex, violent and tightly intertwined with drug production and trafficking. War has become a business and a way of life for guerrillas and criminal groups, and the grip that terrorist, insurgent and criminal groups have on Colombia is inversely proportional to state sovereignty. Colombia most likely will not be able

to put an end to the armed conflict without extensive and sustained international help based on long-term social and economic programs for the people, especially in areas presently reliant on drug production.

**“ ... farmers are forced to cultivate coca leaves or poppy as they cannot survive economically by only growing licit crops. ”**

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**Franck Emmanuel Marre** teaches Geopolitics at Alliance Française de Singapour and is a Visiting Professor at the Universidad Cooperativa, Colombia.

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# The New Indonesian Marxists: A New Jihad in the Making?

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Andreas Wimmer

*Although the topic is still new, the emergence of militant leftist groups in Indonesia is a reality. Lacking definition and due to various political and practical reasons, the militant Marxist, dubbed 'fundamental socialist', People's Democratic Party (Partai Rakyat Demokrat/PRD) and affiliated groups have not yet been classified by Indonesian authorities as terrorist groups, although their members have been on a trajectory of militancy for some time.*

## **The People's Democratic Party and Other Indonesian Militant Leftist Groups**

Classical Marxist doctrinal teachings refer to the violent socialist revolution it espouses as the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (or the working class), and focuses on the mobilization of farmers and students to seize power from the bourgeoisie (the capitalist ruling class which owns most of society's wealth and means of production). There is however little research on the contemporary neo-Marxists and affiliated anarchist, eco-militant and other leftist groups which have appeared in Indonesia since the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998. There could be a nexus between the post-1998 '*reformasi*' violence pursued by the new Marxists and the historical Marxist movement of the pre-1965 period. The Indonesian government in the post-*reformasi* period has worked mainly towards countering the jihadist threat, while leftist militant violence has been largely ignored and classified as 'communal violence'.

The People's Democratic Party (Partai Rakyat Demokrat/PRD), which leads the militant leftist movement in Indonesia, was originally set up by seven student activists in 1993 as an anti-dictatorship movement. In April 1996, the PRD became a political party in Sleman, Jogjakarta and Central Java, and was modeled on the old Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) with substructures for farmers, workers and students. The Australian Democratic Socialist Party (now Socialist Alternative) played a key role in introducing the PRD to the Australian and international left.

However, after multiple failures to capture parliamentary power during the 1999, 2004 and 2009 general elections, the PRD became politically irrelevant. Since the coalition between the

Star Reformation Party (PBR), the United Party for National Liberation (Papernas) and the radical PRD lost all its seats in 2009, the PRD radicals were expelled by the moderates. The PRD called this move “parliamentary idiocy” quoting Marx, and stated that according to the communist doctrine it follows, the Indonesian parliament can never be the “main edifice” for the defence of the ordinary people’s interests. Later in 2009, the PRD fractionalized, and multiple splinter groups such as the Committee for the Politics of the Poor-PRD (Komite Perjuangan Rakyat Miskin-Partai Rakyat Demokrat/KPRM-PRD), ‘The Red Rats’ (Tikus Merah) and the Peoples Workers Party (Partai Rakyat Perkerja/PRP) sprung up.

The newly reconstituted PRD stated that presidential elections are a “contest between pro-people policies versus pro-capital ones.” The 7<sup>th</sup> PRD Congress held in Salatiga, Central Java in 2010 defined the PRD’s organizational objectives as: to engage in “advocacy of the marginalized to orchestrate political change’, to nationalize the country’s natural resources and to depose the pro-capitalist regime.” The PRD’s Chairman, Agus Jabo Priyono, has called for “either using methods parliamentary or extra-parliamentary” to return to political power by 2019. Agus Jabo Priyono, long-time leftist activist, is reported to have served a jail sentence for his role in the in the 1998 (premature) detonation of a bomb in the Rusun Tanah Tinggi apartments – a bomb which was meant to set off at the Indonesian parliament building.

After the 2010 congress, in an attempt to capture political power, PRD made a strategic decision to splinter into a number of groups: (1) National Farmers Union (Serikat Tani Nasional/STN) with its Riau Farmers Union (Serikat Tani Riau/STR) which is a part of the STN, (2) National Students’ League for Democracy (Liga Mahasiswa

Nasionaluntuk Demokrasi/LMND), (3) Poor Peoples Union (Serikat Rakyat Miskin Indonesia/ SRMI), (4) Front for Workers’ Struggle (Front Nasional Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia/ FNPBI) and (5) People’s Cultural Network (Jaringan Kerja Kebudayaan Rakyat/JAKER). It can be noted that JAKER was founded in 1998, and is a descendent of the People’s Cultural Organization (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakjat/LEKRA) – the literary and social movement associated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

Militants in the groups regularly engage in some form of violent demonstration or attack under the pretext of popular grievances, such as the need for land reforms, indigenous rights and (Article 33 of the 1945 constitution) to nationalize all natural assets. Although such

incidents are portrayed as communal violence, in actuality they are orchestrated and executed by PRD fronts with ever-changing names. Attacks have been carried out against government offices and private companies, and also include the murder of a forestry concession worker - the case of the 2011 ‘Riau murder’ – discussed in detail later in the article.

In 2013, the *Australian Socialist Alternative* wrote that the Indonesian PRD identified itself with “Trotskyism and the Marxist tradition of ‘socialism from below’,” and that their inspiration was also drawn from Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez, Bolivia’s Evo Morales and Australia’s Marxists. However, the PRD and their supporters do not constitute a pure Marxist or Trotskyist movement, but one which mixes Blanquism – as well as Islamist militarism and anarchism.

Louis Auguste Blanqui is largely forgotten by those studying radical discourses, his philosophy overshadowed by that of Marx, Lenin, Engels,



Figure 1 – Main Indonesian Marxist/ communist groups

Trotsky, Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara and other more famous communist luminaries. Blanqui believed that socialist revolution should be delivered by a small group of highly organized and secretive conspirators to establish a (temporary) dictatorship by force to bring in change, rather than through a popular movement. Activists in the PRD and LMND have stated in interviews that such a ‘direct action’ militant cell called Sepuluh (‘The Ten’) exists. No details are yet known about the leadership or role of this specialized group or its structure, but activists claim that Sepuluh is responsible for the acts of arson and other violence carried out on behalf of the Marxist movement.

Indonesian authorities do not know how to cope with the emergence of the new radical Marxists, and the government is presently unable to grasp the exact nature of the militants within the PRD structure. Dubbed by the Indonesian Office for National Unity, Politics and Public Protection as ‘fundamental socialists’, the term understates the PRD’s ideology of ousting a democratically elected government through violence.

### **Violence in Riau: Evidence of (a Jihadist-inspired) Militant Marxism**

More than two years after the murder of the 30-year-old forestry worker in Riau on 13 July 2011, the state court in Bengkalis, Sumatra in Riau Province found Yannas, a.k.a. Anas bin Mahlil (alias), guilty of premeditated murder and sentenced him to 16 years’ imprisonment on 31 October 2013. Six months later, on 30 April 2014, the court also found Muhammad Riduan guilty and sentenced him to 16 years of imprisonment. Although remorse was cited as one of the reasons for Riduan not to receive the death penalty that he was initially faced with, he has displayed no contrition during subsequent interviews and continued to justify his actions as “*jihad fi sabilillah*” or “war in the cause of God”.



**Figure 2 – PRD leader in Riau, Bambang Aswandi posing with a weapon**

*Source: Author’s collection*

At the time of the killing, Muhammad Riduan was a member of the PRD and also the Chairman of the STR. However, it was attempts to sabotage a local oil company which resulted in the arrest of Riduan in February 2013 and his subsequent imprisonment for eighteen months. Shortly after this verdict, the police began further investigations into the 2011 murder of the forestry worker which led to Riduan, Yannas and fourteen others being charged for the homicide. On 27 June 2014, a pro-PRD website announced the arrest of an STR member, Syahwan, in connection with the murder. The Chairman of the Central Committee of the PRD in Riau, Bambang Aswandi (Figure 2) was also briefly detained in connection with the murder, but later released.

The murder of the forestry worker came after arson attacks on the company’s equipment. The murder is seen as the culmination of violence which has occurred in Riau since 2009 targeting multiple local private companies, under the pretext of a popular resistance. During Yannas’ trial, Riduan stated that the motive for the murder was to terrorize the government and a logging company and the government. Riduan viewed the Indonesian government’s decision to suspend operations of the company after the murder as a

'success'. The trial also revealed that the accused had been involved in detailed planning, preparation and logistics' prior to the execution of the killing. The forestry concession worker was shot with homemade converted primitive, muzzle-loaded air rifles. After he was shot, the victim was set on fire along with the nearby excavator in an attempt by the attackers to conceal the murder. An attempt was also made on the life of a second worker, but he managed to flee the scene and alert the authorities.

The murder in Riau is significant not only for the motive, i.e. to terrorize the government and the private company (under contract by the government), but for the Marxist infrastructure that was created in some of the villages in Riau prior to the killing, replacing democratically elected village heads with PRD leadership committees. Security posts were also erected in some villages to control access and movement to and from the communities, claiming that this was to prevent an 'attack' against the people. The creation of a phantom enemy is a common theme within Marxist groups, as in other terrorist and extremist groups.

In a 2014 interview, the founder of the PRD in Riau considered the murder premature, "stupid and too early." Although this statement implies the PRD leader's non-involvement, it suggests that the PRD is open to violence in the future, as asserted as a part of its strategy in the 2010 PRD congress.

Throughout 2011 and 2012, PRD and STR groups in Riau were responsible for six arson attacks against excavators and government offices. In May 2012, there was an attempt by ten PRD/STR activists to commit public suicide in protest against "the state siding with capitalists" in front of the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, although this was thwarted by the

authorities in time (Figure 3). This incident is noteworthy as it depicted farewell banners, speeches and the creation of a martyr image, not unlike in jihadist groups. Suicide is not a typical Marxist modus operandi.

There is a close relationship between militants in different groups in Indonesia attributed to long-standing kinship and school ties, especially in Riau. For example, the imprisoned Riduan, (former) leader of the STR and member of PRD, claims in his online writings that he was formerly a member of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), a group aiming to unify all Muslims in a global caliphate. He later joined the Islamist Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and then Walhi (Friends of the Earth), before joining the PRD and STR. His pursuance of a Marxist/communist direction within the militant spectrum, while previously belonging to Islamist and eco-militant groups, shows that this may have likely been due to the influence of friends and school ties, and not exclusively limited to his belief in a radical socialist ideology.



Published on Jul 4, 2012  
Detik-detik proses pelepasan 6 (enam) orang warga masyarakat Pulau Padang Kabupaten Kepulauan Meranti Propinsi Riau yang akan melakukan aksi "Bakar Diri" di depan Istana Negara Republik Indonesia di Jakarta pada Selasa (3/7/2012).

**Figure 3 – PRD/STR suicide team farewell public speech on 3 July 2012, Pekanbaru, Riau protest against the Indonesian government supporting industry.**

Source: "Tumpah Darah Pulau Padang", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odI4VqxT8iQ> (KBR Gurindam; 4 July, 2014).

Also, Islamist groups such as splinters of the 'Muslim Student Association-Assembly to Save the Organization' (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi/ HMI-MPO) participated in PRD demonstrations in Riau (members of the jihadist Darul Islam in Sulawesi formed the HMI-MPO). The HMI-MPO's presence in Riau is yet to be fully understood. A 2014 University of Indonesia study found evidence of jihadists switching to Marxism and vice versa, indicating that the dynamics within the radical groups in Indonesia are changing, while specific ideological narratives may be eroding.

### Anarchists: The Militant Marxist Urbanites

Although the Indonesian anarchists are not a part of the PRD or affiliated leftist groups, they have been responsible for several attacks on 'bourgeois power' representation. In "Indonesia's New Anarchists" published in July 2013, Dominic Berger noted that between 2011 and 2013, the Indonesian anarchists were responsible for eleven arson attacks against banking institutions and one arson attack against a primary school.

The Indonesian faction of the US-founded 'EarthFirst!' eco-terrorist group, Earth Liberation Front (ELF), has claimed responsibility for at least five arson attacks between June and September 2013. Listed by the US as a terrorist group since 2011, the Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI)-Indonesia – which is part of the Greece-based Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei group – issued an "international call for direct action against all property and symbols of society, eco-destroyers, fascists, military and our enemies." Warnings of 'more-violence-is-yet-to-come' have since appeared on Indonesian anarchist websites.

Thus, rather than classifying these groups as 'insurrectionary anarchists', they should be seen as part of the growing Marxist-jihadist collaboration. In September 2013, the FAI-Indonesia praised the jihadists for their "brave choice" in carrying out "violent jihad". Berger notes that urban anarchists are fearful of Marxism being given a "social stigma too hot for the masses," preferring to call it 'anarchism', a more exciting, anti-authoritarian alternative to groups like the PRD or jihadist groups at this moment in time (not that anarchists are necessarily ideologically opposed to Marxist or jihadist groups).



Figure 4 – Jakarta May Day Demonstrations 2013  
Source: Author's collection

In early 2010, the Indonesian Executive Director of Friends of the Earth, presently based in the Netherlands, suggested on the social media site "Taktik Militansi" ("Militant Tactics"), that decapitation and hanging bodies from meat-hooks was the appropriate

punishment for "corruptors", a term commonly used to refer to Indonesian industrialists or corrupt officials (he also posted a graphic photograph of a victim of a Mexican drug war who was decapitated and hung from a meat-hook).

### Settling the Indonesian Past and Planning for the Future

Communism remains a sensitive topic in Indonesian politics as socialism is advocated by some circles in Indonesia. The 2014 presidential elections have indicated that the demand for political recognition of Marxism continues. For example, in early July, a local website (kabar7.com) ran a story that presidential candidate Joko Widodo (Jokowi) of the Indonesian Democratic Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan/PDIP) will legalize communism if

if elected. However, following the attack against *TVOne* on 3 July 2014 for claiming the PDIP was linked to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), this story was removed from the website.

In the event that provisions for the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia/PKI) members are considered by some sympathetic officials of the incoming administration, it is likely to be misread by militants within the PRD to mean that communism is still a viable form of government. Factions such as the LMND and SRMI as well as labour unions espousing revolutionary doctrine are ever poised for action. Eka Syahdrudin, PRD's Deputy Political Director in South Sumatra announced in mid-June 2014 that the PRD's agenda included "independence" and that the Palembang PRD is planning to hold discussions in villages, factories and universities to begin a mass campaign for national independence (from foreign "colonists"). It seems that the PRD is no longer looking to integrate into the Indonesian political milieu, but is rather adopting a more revolutionary agenda. Its trajectory in recent years indicates that more violence is to be expected from the PRD.

By understanding the political motivations, ideologies and ties between of the militant leftist groups, the new Indonesian administration and security forces will have an opportunity to counter the embryonic Marxist militant structures in the post-2014 presidential election period. Dismantling the groups through prosecution of its leaders and members, as done with the successful prosecution of Muhammad Riduan, should continue. This requires investigation into the activities of PRD, its associated splinter groups, other militant groups and supportive political actors, leftist civil society groups and foreign donor organizations connected

to the PRD such as the Ford Foundation, Climate Works Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.

Neutralizing the PRD will thus require overcoming political inertia and initiating dialogue on the rather taboo topic of Marxism in Indonesia, as well as a firm understanding of the root causes as to why a fairly outdated, violent political movement is attracting the disenfranchised. A failure to recognize the threat posed by the emerging radical leftist groups will result in the development of a new militant movement under a populist Marxist banner, which will have the potential to be as violent in Indonesia as the one by the jihadist groups.

“ Neutralizing the PRD will thus require overcoming political inertia and initiating dialogue on the rather taboo topic of Marxism in Indonesia ... ”

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**Andreas Wimmer** is a Director at the German Asien Research Centre, Germany. He obtained a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies and Counterterrorism from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore, and is currently pursuing his Ph.D.

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# Learning from the Past: Case of the Red Brigades in Italy

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Daniela Irrera

*Red Brigades, the relatively short-lived but lethal group was extremely sophisticated and embodied many features of contemporary terrorist organizations. The counterterrorism measures adopted by the state to crush the group may be useful to countries which are presently battling terrorists.*

The Red Brigades, known as Brigate Rosse (BR) in Italy, was one of the most influential armed groups in Europe. Founded in 1970 and active until the early 1980s, the Red Brigades had 400 to 500 full-time members throughout this period, along with an unidentified number of supporters. The Red Brigades was structured around a violent socio-revolutionary ideology, and was the most menacing radical group in Italy's post-WWII history. Thus, the group contributed to shaping Italy's national security platform in terms of the counterterrorism strategy developed to overcome it.

Details about the group have remained shrouded in mystery and thus its ideology and actions have often sparked animated scholarly debate. This article takes on the perspective that while the group's origin lies in the insurrectionist tradition, that it was nurtured by the Italian extreme left and the Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano/PCI), which were legacy of a global trend at the time. The Cold War period (late 1940s to early 1990s) continues to be a pertinent context for studying various forms of terrorism and political violence. The ideological tension and economic and social cleavages, explain the birth and development of several terrorist and extremist groups all over the world at this time, notwithstanding national self-determination issues, which were the primary drivers of conflicts in the post-Second World War period.

## **Evolution of the Red Brigades**

In Italy, as in many other Western European countries, left-wing political violence in the 1970s was rooted in the massive upsurge of the student movement at the time as well as the workers' struggle of 1968–69, particularly in their respective frustration arising from the failure to produce social and political change. The Italian Communist Party was founded in 1921,

and played a major role in organizing the resistance movement during the fascist period and the World War II period. The relationship of the Italian Communist Party with the Soviet Union was however, controversial, as the former was more oriented towards a European version of communism. In 1970, the Italian Communist Party sought cooperation with the Italian Socialist Party (Partito Socialista Italiano/ PSI) and the Christian Democracy party, and gradually entered mainstream politics with the aim of changing the capitalist political establishment from within. This strategy created an acute sense of abandonment among the majority of the party supporters, i.e. workers and students and members of other left-wing movements such as Lotta Continua and Potere Operaio.

Since the Red Brigades was founded in 1970, the group profited from the international communism backed and nurtured by the Soviet Union in the context of the Cold War. As noted by Roberto Bartali, the Red Brigades was in touch with other communist groups, such as the Red Army Faction (RAF) in Germany and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Some of the leaders of the Red Brigades had connections with Czech intelligence and also visited Czechoslovakia several times to receive arms from other terrorism sponsors (Czechoslovakia played a special role during the Cold War, especially since it produced the explosive Semtex which was used extensively by many militant communist groups).

Renato Curcio, a leftist student from the University of Trento in Trento, an Italian city located in the Adige River valley in Northern Italy, and his wife, Mara Cagol, along with Mario Moretti and Alberto

Franceschini represented the first leadership of the group, which was marked by a sophisticated and cultivated origin. In the beginning, strategies and operations of the group were discussed in open assemblies in which all members had the right to express and contribute to deliberations, in the classical example of participatory democracy. These practices strengthened a sense of belonging among the members and legitimised the movement among the people. The ideology held that the fight was against the state because it was an imperialist collection of multinational corporations. All members were expected to play an active role in the fight – the founders and the newly recruited alike.



**Figure 1 – Renato Curcio, leader of the Red Brigades, during his trial after Moro's murder in Milan (1978).**

*Image source: L'Onda del Sud, <http://www.ondadelsud.it/?p=7545>*

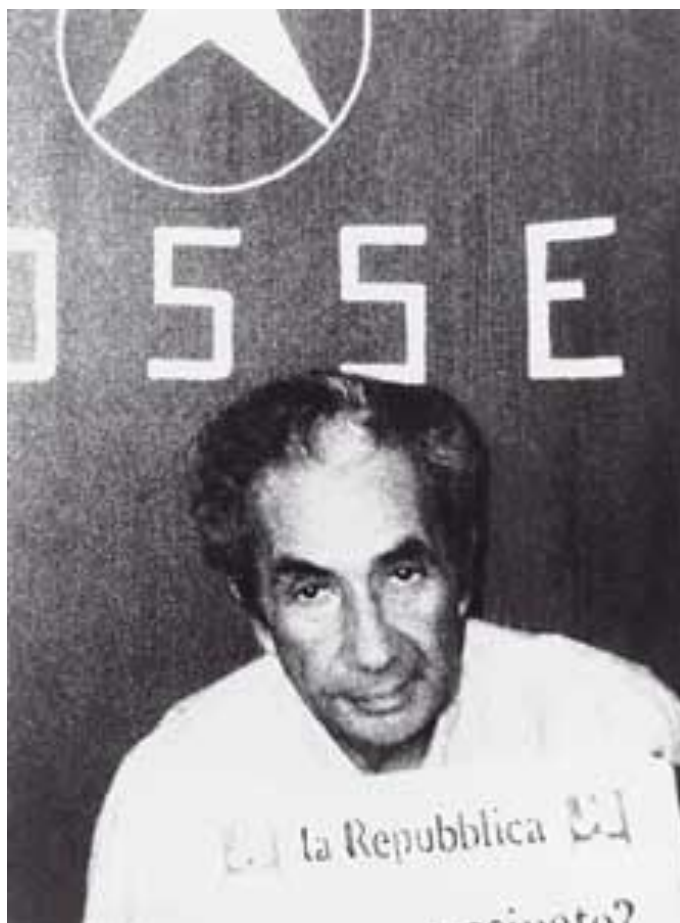
The organizational structure of the Red Brigades was hierarchical, and consisted of three levels – columns, brigades and cells – serving under the command of the Strategic Directorate which comprised of the above-mentioned four leaders. There were at least six columns – in Milan, Genoa, Turin, Rome, Naples and the Veneto Region. Columns consisted of several brigades, with three to five members in each brigade.

Every brigade had under its command a cell of no more than ten members. The brigades operated in a clandestine manner. This was a defining tactic of the Red Brigades which permeated the whole organization, i.e. one brigade was not aware of the operations of another brigade, and in many cases, not even the respective members. It took several years, until the mid-1970s, for Italian law enforcement agencies to understand that they were facing a structured terrorist group destined to become a palpable threat.

Initially, the attacks by the group were relatively low-level, mainly consisting of burning cars owned by business executives and damaging corporate properties. Gradually, the tactics evolved to include frequent kidnappings of corporate heads and right-wing trade unionists. Over the years, the group indulged in increasing use of armed assault and assassinations for greater impact and visibility. According to the Global Terrorism Database of the University of Maryland, the Red Brigades was responsible for 220 attacks in the period 1973-1994 which killed 223 people, including representatives of the Italian government, law enforcement officers and business people (this includes attacks by the Red Brigades Communist Combatant Party group which emerged in the 1990s). The Red Brigades mainly used firearms and explosives in their attacks. The group obtained these weapons – produced by rogue states – from the international market.

### A Counterterrorism Strategy to Beat the Red Brigades

Earlier, Italy was not prepared to face terrorist violence. In 1974, a right-wing judge in Genoa, Mario Sossi was kidnapped by the Red Brigades. The government tried to negotiate with the group but was unsuccessful, and subsequently Mario Sossi was killed by the Red Brigades. Following this incident, a new and specialized anti-terrorism unit was established under the name of 'Antiterrorism Special Nucleus' (*Nucleo Speciale Antiterrorismo*), headed by General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, who had a career in the Army and was also a Prefect (state representative of a province). This unit was provided with special and broad powers which required no prior judicial approval for actions taken. General Chiesa adopted the strategy of using informants to infiltrate the Red Brigade cells. The effective intelligence gathering in this manner eventually enabled the state to capture the primary leaders of the group, including Renato Curcio. One of the informants, Silvano Girotto, played an essential role in providing information to the unit about the Red Brigades, their agenda and details of meetings. On 8 October 1974, Curcio and Franceschini were arrested in a spectacular



**Figure 2 – Mr. Aldo Moro during his imprisonment by the Red Brigades in 1978 (made to hold up the well-known Italian newspaper, *La Repubblica*, to show that he was still alive)**

*Image source: 30 Giorni, [http://www.30giorni.it/articoli\\_id\\_17407\\_l3.htm](http://www.30giorni.it/articoli_id_17407_l3.htm)*

operation in Pinerolo, a small city near Turin, where they were expected to meet Girotto. After serving their prison sentences, Curcio and Franceschini live freely and lead normal lives today. Renato Curcio spent 22 years in prison from 1976 to 1998 (although he received a custodial sentence in 1993 which allowed him to work outside). Alberto Franceschini spent 18 years in prison from 1974 to 1992, but in 1983 he dissociated from and condemned the Red Brigades and its ideology, and as a result was given some benefits and released before the end of his term. On the other hand, Curcio never repented his role in the Red Brigades nor did he renounce its ideology.

In 1975, the Reale Law was adopted to strengthen anti-terrorism measures. Under this law, police officers were provided with broader powers,

allowing them to interrogate a suspect immediately upon arrest in order to gain sufficient evidence to establish probable cause and charge the individual with a crime, all within 48 hours. The anti-terrorism unit heavily utilized the Reale Law to arrest and charge members of the Red Brigades. This strategy – which had similar features to the one developed by the British government to fight against the Irish Republican Army (IRA) – was extremely efficient in weakening the group. However, these initial successes led the Italian government to believe that the group was defeated – a fatal mistake which led to the disbanding of the special anti-terrorism unit and the rise of the most violent phase of the Red Brigades towards the latter years of the 1970s. The termination of the special anti-terrorism unit in 1976 also came as a result of growing criticism against the unit, as it was perceived to be too independent and free from legal constraints, especially with regard to the ways in which General Chisea manipulated and conducted the arrests of Curcio and Franceschini using informants.

On 16 March 1978, the Red Brigades kidnapped Aldo Moro, former prime minister and then leader of the Christian Democracy and one of the most eminent political figures in the country at the time. He was subsequently murdered by the group. This represented a turning point for both the Red Brigades and Italy. Although the Red Brigades had already been responsible for several violent attacks in previous years targeting Italian law enforcement agencies as well as the political élite, the kidnapping of Aldo Moro made the Italian government and public realise the veritable threat that the group represented to the democratic political institution of the country.

Scholars supporting the so-called theories of conspiracy (such as Sergio Flamigni in his 2003

book *La tela del ragno*) argue that the group was used by Moro's enemies within his own political party, the Christian Democracy, and that since its inception, the Red Brigades had been infiltrated by the Christian Democrats themselves. These theories have however been discredited because of the lack of empirical evidence. Nevertheless, Moro's murder created an impetus within the Italian political establishment to develop a strong determination to fight the Red Brigades.

During this period, the Red Brigades had reached its zenith as a force against the state. They had profited from their cooperation with the Soviet Union over the years. Additionally, the Red Brigades was able to establish functional relations with other subversive non-state actors such as criminal cartels. As Margaret Atwood affirms in *Terrorism in Perspective* (2002), in the early 1980s, the group formed a short-term alliance with the Camorra, a powerful criminal organization based in

Naples aimed at kidnapping a Christian Democrat regional politician, Ciriaco De Mita, in exchange for which the Red Brigades reportedly received a US \$1 million commission. It was again a combination of law enforcement and intelligence measures, sustained by a broader political strategy, which led to the elimination of the group. The counterterrorism strategy included a robust media campaign aimed at detaching the populace from the ideology of the Red Brigades (while Moro's murder had already caused a gradual but steady erosion in support from the workers and followers in the Communist Party). There was also increased funding for payments for informants, which allowed police to map the networks of the Red Brigades and identify its remaining members. The Reale Law was used to arrest and charge all known members of the Red Brigades, so as to prevent future attacks by or a re-emergence of the group.

“ ... the Red Brigades was able to establish functional relations with other subversive non-state actors such as criminal cartels. ”

### Later Developments and Impact

At the end of the Cold War, in the early 1990s, a group claiming to be a successor to the Red Brigades, the Red Brigades Communist Combatant Party (Brigate Rosse Partito Comunista Combattente/ BR-PCC) claimed responsibility for a new series of targeted attacks and kidnappings and created chaos in the public. The group killed Massimo D'Antona in 1999 and Marco Biagi in 2002. They were both consultants to the Ministry of Labour. Despite the kidnappings and political assassinations, the BR-PCC was fundamentally different from the original Red Brigades as it did not have a large social following. Moreover, the historical social and political contexts in which the Red Brigades had developed as a political actor no longer existed, weakening the sway of radical groups within mainstream Italian society.

However, the BR-PCC held the same ideology as its predecessor in terms of its adherence to the Marxist doctrine. It also emulated the same organizational structure based on columns, brigades and cells. The BR-PCC is no longer considered an active group. This group was primarily a rudimentary attempt to revive the radical communist movement. Once again it was the counterterrorism strategy developed in the 1970s based on intelligence gathering through infiltration and swift prosecutions which led to the elimination of the BR-PCC. The most important leaders of the Red Brigades Communist Combatant Party (Nadia Desdemona Lioce and Roberto Morandi, among others) have been captured and prosecuted. One of the leaders, Cinzia Banelli, has agreed to cooperate with the state and is presently working undercover for the Italian authorities. This counterterrorism strategy has also served as a model for European and other countries affected by terrorist groups.

**“... a terrorist group is fundamentally an organization embodying an organizational strategy, organizational structure, the ability to adapt to local and international environments ...”**

Terrorist organizations continue to carry virulent ideologies as they did during the time of the Cold War, may be even more powerful ones, such as those based on ethnicity, religion and territory. However, the example of the Red Brigades in Italy demonstrates, firstly, that a terrorist group is fundamentally an organization embodying an organizational strategy, organizational structure, the ability to adapt to local and international environments and the inclination to form strategic partnerships with other (non-state) actors to achieve set objectives – all of which must be recognized if a group's operations are to be dismantled in full. Secondly, it shows that an effective counterterrorism strategy based on intelligence gathering and strong law enforcement measures, as part of a comprehensive political approach, are integral to eradicating terrorism, as these kinds of terrorists are more than a public order problem – they undermine national security, democracy as an institution and political stability at all levels.

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**Daniela Irrera** is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Catania, Italy. She was a Visiting Professor at the Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore in March 2014.



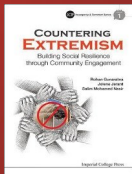
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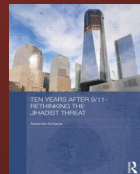
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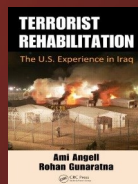
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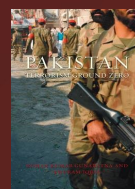
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