

# In the Shadow of Swords: On the Trail of Terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia

Sally Neighbour

Reviewed by Tony LeRay-Meyer

Sally Neighbour has written a worthy contribution to research on the evolution of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the targeting calculus behind the attack in Bali. Her book also places JI coherently within both a regional and global context, and is one of the few works that includes analyses of the 'Islamisation' and 'radicalisation' of key JI players. Neighbour also brings 'us' an awareness of the kernel of JI—the life and networks of the Indonesian exiles in Malaysia. Clive Williams has rightly noted, 'if you only ever intend to read one book about JI and Bali, this is the one I would recommend'.

Neighbour, a reporter with ABC TV's *4-Corners* program, is a highly experienced journalist who has worked as a correspondent in East Asia and travelled extensively in Southeast Asia. Her motivation to investigate JI was both personal and philosophical, and began on assignment within hours of the Bali bombing observing first hand the scenes along Legion Street, Kuta Beach, and in the 'chaotic corridors' of Denpasar's Sanglah Hospital. Soon after, she attended a sermon in Solo, Central Java, given by the alleged spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Bakar Bashir. His words, the first response to Bali, were directed at the 'West': 'between you and us there will forever be a ravine of hate'. Sally Neighbour asked herself the crucial question, how had it come to this? As with Jason Burke's book on al Qa'eda, *Casting a Shadow of Terror*, she addresses the critical question—why?

The genre of 'tracking' organisations and networks can often be weighed down in complexity, especially in the trails of names, aliases and associations. The detailed books by Rohan Gunaratna and Sidney Jones are cases in point. One of the key strengths of Neighbour's book is that the journalist in her is never far beneath the surface, resulting in a narrative style that is both authoritative and eminently readable.

Her basic premise was to discover 'what was the 'ravine of hate' and why did it evolve? The book is structured to sequentially analyse the key JI players and their motivations and contribution to the movement. This sequential structure is particularly effective but the scope of the book is perhaps too broad, especially where Neighbour's attempts to place the evolution of JI in both its regional and global contexts is covered too lightly.

She also attempts to place JI and its undercurrent of Muslim humiliation in a broader Islamic historical context. To grasp '... this profound sense of grievance it is necessary to delve back 1500 years ... and the rise and fall of the glorious empire that he [Muhammad] founded on Islamic

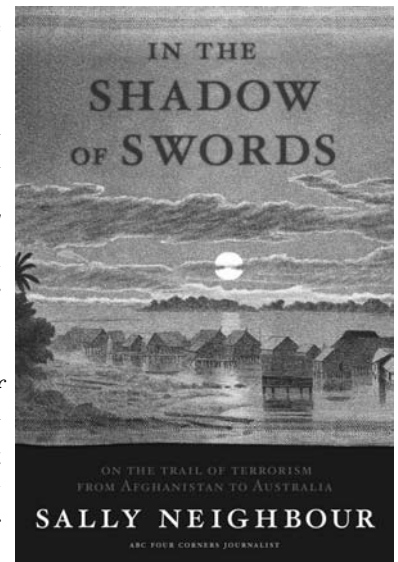
faith'. While some historical context is essential, much of this Islamic history has been well covered by Jason Burke, by Giles Kepel's *Jihad: Trail of Political Islam*, and in John Esposito's *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* and his *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*. Neighbour may have been better just integrating their key findings into her narrative rather than attempting her own

historical summary. The result of her 'skimming' in this regard is the missing of detail or the inclusion of inaccuracies. As an example, the development of the Wahhabist movement in Saudi Arabia is not considered in her historical chapter—'Striving in the Path of God'. While her summary of Islamic history is not a crucial weakness in the book, it is one that may leave an uninitiated reader with an inaccurate understanding of the historical complexity.

Neighbour's research includes primary interviews with members from the families and communities of key JI individuals. Her fieldwork includes visits to these communities, thorough research, the use of court transcripts and a willingness to cite authoritative commentary (such as Sidney Jones from the International Crisis Group). The book's major contribution to the understanding of JI is in its analysis of individual lives and its insights into the personal motivations and development of key JI operatives. Individuals such as Muklas and Amrozi are considered in detail, with an eye-opening view provided of their diverse paths to 'radicalisation'. Neighbour reveals the complex web of personal and/or ideological grievances, and the often profound sense of political dislocation in Suharto's Indonesia. In contrast, recalling the broader sense of grievance felt by many Muslims, her analysis of Dr Azahari Husin reveals an educated and 'Westernised' person whose radicalisation was less spiritual and more motivated by a general 'disillusionment about the plight of Muslims'. For many in JI, the contemporary manifestation of this grievance was Suharto's Indonesia. Neighbour answers the 'how' and 'why' by noting that JI represents both a community of shared grievance and a means of response.

In the *Shadow of Swords* is highly useful for both the intelligence analyst and general reader. Sally Neighbour's insights into the 'why' question provide a path to better understanding both 'who and what' JI is and, crucially, the rationale behind the targeting calculus of attacks such as Bali. Of course this leads to the unanswered questions of 'what next' and 'how to respond' to JI. ♦

Sally Neighbour, *In The Shadow of Swords: On the Trail of Terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia*, Harper Collins, Sydney, 2004, Softback, 374pp., RRP \$29.95.



switch to the Australia edition. current edition: International edition. News. The past 30 years have seen lively controversies in the scholarship on early Islam, much of it emanating from the revisionist work of John Wansbrough in analysing the text of the Qur'an and its possible links with both Christian and Jewish language and thought. This is catnip for Holland, as is the revisionist work by Wansbrough's disciple, Andrew Rippin, and, much more idiosyncratically, by the pseudonymous Christoph Luxenberg, who dares not speak his name. Please see Wikipedia's template documentation for further citation fields that may be required. {{Citation | title=In the shadow of swords : on the trail of terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia / Sally Neighbour | author1=Neighbour, Sally | year=2005 | publisher=HaperCollins Publishers | language=English }}. close Email This Record. Email to: You must be logged in to Tag Records. In the shadow of swords : on the trail of terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia / Sally Neighbour. Book. Bib ID. Request this item to view in the Library's reading rooms using your library card. To learn more about how to request items watch this short online video . Details. Collect From. NL 303.6250959 N397 Copy: NL pbk. Main Reading Room.

Follows the trail of Islamic terrorists, from their origins in the mosques and religious schools of Indonesia, to their terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. Documenting how Australia became caught up in the war on terror, following the Bali bombings, this book looks at how Australia's foreign policy has made it a target. Get A Copy. Amazon. Independent book publishers Text (Australia) and Canongate (UK) form a joint venture. The Text Media Group, purchased by John Fairfax earlier this year, sells Text Publishing to the joint venture partners.[2]. Sydney Morning Herald Literary Editor, Malcolm Knox exposes Norma Khouri and her 'factual' account of honour killings in Jordan as a fabrication.[3]. Mark Rubbo, David Marr and Kerryn Goldsworthy resign as Miles Franklin Award judges in protest at changes to the charter governing the award's administration.[4]. Major publications.Â Sally Neighbour â€” In the Shadow of Swords: on the Trail of Terrorism from Afghanistan to Australia.