



Terrorism: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

By Joseba Zulaika

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In counterterrorism circles, the standard response to questions about the possibility of future attacks is the terse one-liner: “Not if, but when.” This mantra supposedly conveys a realistic approach to the problem, but, as Joseba Zulaika argues in *Terrorism*, it functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy. By distorting reality to fit their own worldview, the architects of the War on Terror prompt the behavior they seek to prevent—a twisted logic that has already played out horrifically in Iraq. In short, Zulaika contends, counterterrorism has become pivotal in promoting terrorism.

Exploring the blind spots of counterterrorist doctrine, Zulaika takes readers on a remarkable intellectual journey. He contrasts the psychological insight of Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* with *The 9/11 Commission Report*, plumbs the mindset of terrorists in works by Orianna Fallaci and Jean Genet, maps the continuities between the cold war and the fight against terrorism, and analyzes the case of a Basque terrorist who tried to return to civilian life. Zulaika’s argument is powerful, inventive, and rich with insights and ideas that provide a new and sophisticated perspective on the War on Terror.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a brilliant book - a rich and insightful theoretical analysis. Zulaika presents an in-depth critical and cultural deconstruction of what terrorism means symbolically, how it is used in political discourse, and how it is applied by the U.S. government as a means of manufacturing consent for violent policies of counterterrorism." - Jeffrey Sluka, author of *Death Squad*"

About the Author

Joseba Zulaika is professor of Basque studies and codirector of the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. He is the author or coauthor of many books, including *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism*.

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