

Book Reviews

***The ISIS Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement.* By Haroro J. Ingram, Craig Whiteside, and Charlie Winter. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2020. ISBN: 9780197501436.**

The *ISIS Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement* is one of the most important books in the current study of terrorism. There are four advantages of this ISIS book: *The Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement*. First, this book states that a thorough understanding of ISIS terrorism is needed. In general, most people see the emergence of ISIS only in 2014. Indeed, ISIS is famous after the group declared itself as the caliphate in 2014. However, the author of this book states that understanding ISIS terrorism should not be limited to just 2014 when the group declared itself a caliphate for the first time. An understanding of the ISIS phenomenon must be understood comprehensively. The seeds for the emergence of the ISIS movement have emerged from the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the post-US invasion in 2003, Iraq was marked by political turmoil, sectarian conflicts, and security instability. Conflictual conditions allow the development of armed groups in Iraq. ISIS was born from a background of political instability that occurred in Iraq after the US invasion. This can be seen in statements in ISIS documents that call on Sunni community groups to join the ISIS caliphate and fight the Shia group that was in power in Iraq after the US invasion. Where in its various documents, ISIS describes that the United States conspired with Shia groups in dominating Iraqi politics after the fall of Saddam Hussain's regime in 2003.

Second, this book provides a chronological narrative in several systematic chapters. This book sequentially explains the seeds of the birth of ISIS, the heyday of ISIS,

until the defeat of ISIS. More specifically, this book describes the history of the struggle of Abu Mushab Zarqawi with his group *Tauhid wal Jihad*, which continued with the presence of Al Qaeda in Iraq, until jihadist groups in Iraq formed the Islamic State of Iraq. The Islamic State of Iraq group then separated from Al Qaeda, claiming to be a legitimate caliphate institution for Muslims. With this chronological view, readers can see the history of the emergence of ISIS in its entirety. In addition, readers can examine the genealogy of ISIS thinking that consistently comes from the Abu Mushab Zarqawi group. This consistency, for example, can be seen in the priority of attack targets. Abu Mushab Zarqawi admits that the United States is the enemy of Muslims. However, according to Zarqawi, some enemies are more dangerous and must be prioritized in attack operations, namely the local government regime and Shia groups. This genealogy of thinking can be found in the ISIS movement which is more busy fighting Shia groups and local governments than prioritizing attacks on Western objects. This priority is confirmed in various reports in various media owned by ISIS.

Third, the most important thing in this book is that the author has succeeded in translating primary data about ISIS. The author of this book has succeeded in selecting primary sources from among the many available sources and then presenting them systematically. From the translation of primary data provided by the book, we can try to understand more deeply the ideology and strategy adopted by the ISIS group. This is what we do not find in other books that rely on secondary sources in discussing ISIS. This book has a similar pattern to the book entitled *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden* and the book *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah* which also presents primary sources from the jihad movement they lead. But what

distinguishes it from other similar books, *ISIS: The Reader*, this book features critical commentary on each chapter. So, this book combines primary sources and critical comments from the author. From these critical comments, readers can understand the context behind ISIS' statements contained in the primary sources. For example, in the final chapters of this book, it is stated that since 2016 ISIS has ordered its sympathizers to always be patient in the struggle and aggressively carry out attacks wherever they live. ISIS also cites verses from the Koran that tell about the wisdom behind the defeat in war. In his critical commentary, the author of this book explains that ISIS's speeches since 2016 which have more themes of firmness in the struggle and suggestions for global resistance are in line with the defeat of ISIS on various battle fronts in Iraq and Syria. In that context, ISIS leadership figures stated that the caliphate army must carry out attacks on the enemy wherever ISIS sympathizers live. According to ISIS, attacking an opponent in a place where the enemy lives is more frightening than a terror operation carried out in a place where ISIS is in power. ISIS stated that if its sympathizers could not carry out attacks on a large scale, ISIS sympathizers could carry out attacks on a small scale even if only by throwing stones at the enemy. The author of this book explains the fact that ISIS's suggestion to hold global resistance is in line with the increase in ISIS terror operations in various countries.

Fourth, by reading these primary sources, this book presents the fact that the jihadist movement is not monolithic. There is mutual criticism and debate between jihadist movements. In this book, we can see how the debate between Al Qaeda and ISIS is. For example, there are several statements from ISIS figures that criticize Al Qaeda. There are also several statements from ISIS leaders asking Al Qaeda to join together under the ISIS

caliphate. On the other hand, it also describes how Al Qaeda criticizes ISIS, which is considered to have deviated from the jihad method.

ISIS the Reader is a monumental book. By translating primary documents, this book can make it easier for scientists or security forces to explore the latest genealogy of terrorism. This book is useful for scientists and security forces to understand the ISIS terrorist movement and then take policies in fighting terrorism in the future.

Prihandono Wibowo

Lecturer of International Relations Dept.
University of Pembangunan Nasional
"Veteran" Jawa Timur
prihandono_wibowo.hi@upnjatim.ac.id