Preface

In response to its rapid territorial gains in Syria and Iraq and due to its brutality and human rights abuses, on September 10, 2014, Barack Obama, then President of the United States gave a speech signaling his wish "to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL." At this moment, Obama added, "the greatest threats come from the Middle East and North Africa, where radical groups exploit grievances for their own gain…."

The U.S. led coalition and allied have been fighting the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq for more than two years. This begs the question: What is it that the US led campaign intends to achieve? Is it defeating the political agenda of the military group called the Islamic State or its "ideology"? If the ultimate aim is to defeat the political aspiration of ISIS in establishing a caliphate, then it would be feasible to characterize the Islamic States' recent retreat from Mosul and parts of Syria as a "degradation" to the Islamic State's military capabilities and thus a partial success in the war on terror.

If the ideological retreat of radical groups however what the U.S. led coalition is trying to achieve in the Middle East, then, it would appear that the Islamic State and its ideology is anything but defeated. It is certainly true that the Islamic State's military capability to defend its territory is depleted. This fact though should not be over celebrated. As early as 2014, al-adnani, the former spokesperson of the Islamic State, made it clear that the "land is not anymore the first priority for the Dawla"

(the Islamic State). Further, while names, such as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, might altogether disappear from the Middle East, already a significant number of less known, but equally radical groups, are ready and eager to take their place. The overwhelming majority of those newly emerged Salafi groups do not publicly approve ISIS's extreme media campaigns nor al-Qaeda international Jihadi agenda. However, to a great extent, most of those Salafi and Jihadi groups are "ideologically", but not necessarily politically, aligned. So much so that the U.S's efforts to build a "moderate" army in Syria to fight ISIS yielded a handful of soldiers at an eye-watering cost of $384 million. Why and how to move forward are the questions this book tries to answer.

Newark, USA — Jamil Ammar
Kearny, USA — Songhua Xu

http://www.springer.com/978-3-319-60115-1

When Jihadi Ideology Meets Social Media

Ammar, J.; Xu, S.

2018, XXIII, 147 p. 29 illus., Hardcover
ISBN: 978-3-319-60115-1