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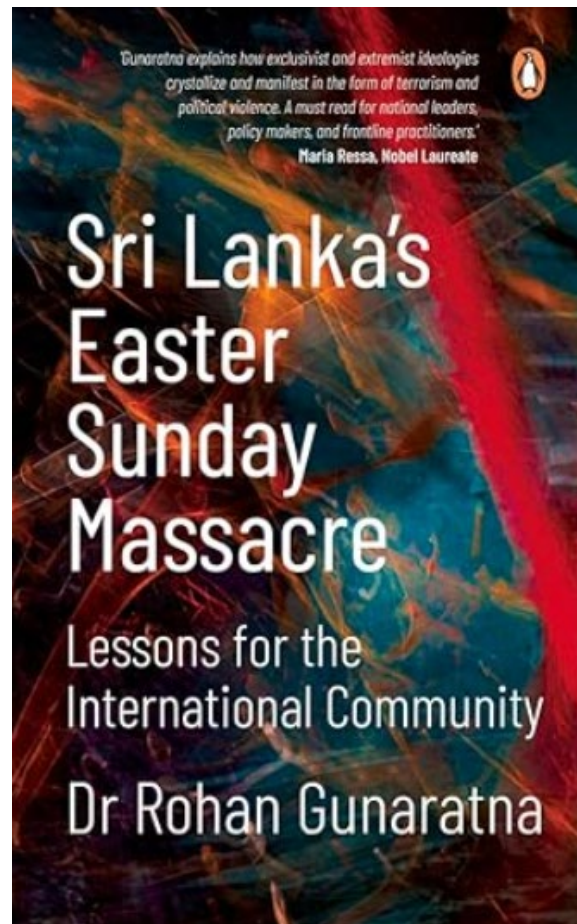
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Security Nexus Perspectives

SRI LANKA'S EASTER SUNDAY MASSACRE: LESSONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

By Dr. Rohan Gunaratna,

Book review by Dr. Lumpy Lumbaca



In his deeply unsettling yet meticulously researched book, *Sri Lanka's Easter Sunday Massacre: Lessons for the International Community*, Dr. Rohan Gunaratna peels back the layers of horror that unfolded on Easter Sunday, 2019, in Sri Lanka. Published by Penguin Books, this isn't just a

recounting of the attacks; it's a chilling exploration of the radicalization process, a stark warning for the international community, and a poignant reflection on the resilience of the Sri Lankan people.

Gunaratna, a recognized expert on counterterrorism, leverages his extensive experience to provide unparalleled access to the attackers' mindset. Through interviews with detainees, investigators, and intelligence specialists, he builds a compelling case that the Easter Sunday bombings were not an isolated incident but the culmination of a long-festering ideology of hate.

The book meticulously traces the roots of the bombings back to the ideology of Salafi-Wahhabism, a puritanical strain of Islam that preaches violence against non-believers. Gunaratna dissects the insidious ways this ideology infiltrated Sri Lanka's Muslim community, exploiting existing social and religious divides. He avoids generalizations, instead focusing on the specific individuals involved, their motivations, and the recruitment tactics employed.

This personalized approach allows the reader to understand the complex cocktail of factors that led to the radicalization of these young men and women. Gunaratna doesn't shy away from critiquing intelligence failures and political roadblocks; his analysis exposes missed opportunities and a lack of interagency cooperation within Sri Lanka's government.

However, *Sri Lanka's Easter Sunday Massacre* isn't just a chronicle of darkness. It also shines a light on the remarkable resilience of the Sri Lankan people. Gunaratna dedicates space to the outpouring of national unity and the unwavering determination to rebuild. He highlights stories of ordinary citizens who risked their lives to help others, exemplifying the power of compassion in the face of tragedy.

The book's final chapters serve as a clarion call for international cooperation in combatting terrorism. Gunaratna provides specific recommendations for dismantling online recruitment networks, fostering interfaith dialogue, and strengthening regional intelligence-sharing mechanisms. His insights, grounded in the Sri Lankan experience, offer valuable lessons that transcend geographical boundaries.

Sri Lanka's Easter Sunday Massacre isn't an easy read. It's a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of religious extremism. However, it's a necessary read. Gunaratna's masterful blend of scholarship and personal narrative exposes the vulnerabilities exploited by terrorism and offers a roadmap for preventing such tragedies in the future. This book belongs on the shelf of anyone concerned with global security, religious extremism, and the enduring power of the human spirit.

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