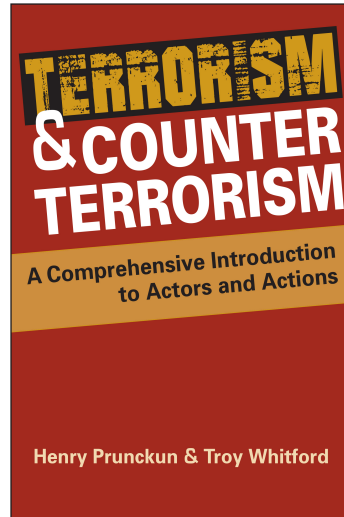# Terrorism and Counterterrorism: A Comprehensive Introduction to Actors and Actions

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Contents

Part 2   Counterterrorism

1

Introducing Terrorism and Counterterrorism

Shoppers had entered the Big C Supercenter looking for bargains, regular groceries, and perhaps that little treat that might be awaiting down an aisle. Nothing distinguished this Tuesday from any other shopping day—customers inspected a stack of brightly colored plastic containers and black plastic chairs displayed at the Supercenter's entrance as they made their way through the glass sliding doors.

Then, at 2:10 P.M. on May 9, 2017, someone set off firecrackers inside the store. Customers were evacuated—this area of Thailand had experienced acts of political violence before. A decades-long Malay Muslim separatist insurgency had been waged in the province, as well as in the provinces that bordered Malaysia—Yala and Narathiwat. Since 2004, it had been reported that the violence resulted in more than 6,500 deaths. There had been indiscriminate bomb and grenade attacks on tourist hotels, discos, bars, shops, marketplaces, and government offices (see Figure 1.1). So, the store evacuation was part of a routine response plan.

But the first set of minor explosions were not the objective of the attack; they were a diversion. The attack came minutes later when a pickup truck loaded with explosives and gasoline detonated while customers gathered outside. There was a fireball; thick black smoke billowed from where the truck was; wreckage was strewn for hundreds of feet. When the debris stopped falling and noise settled, sixty people lay injured, four seriously.

Figure 1.1   Thai Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) Squad disarming a bomb on a motorcycle in the south of Thailand.

The subsequent investigation discovered that the bombers killed a canvas vendor and stole his truck, which they used in the attack. Later, six people were arrested: an Islamic teacher and four followers, and a local administrator.

Terrorism has become an almost daily occurrence. Using social media, acts of terrorism can be viewed on smart phones within minutes of their occurring, and mainstream news media provide the world with photographic evidence of terrorists' deeds. We have seen air travelers murdered; ocean cruise liners taken hostage; embassies, department stores, office buildings, and shopping and entertainment spots bombed; people walking along city streets run over; and the list goes on.

As unique as these crimes may appear in the context of what society recognizes as crime, the threat posed by terrorists is by no means new, nor are the ways it is carried out innovative. Terrorists can be traced back to the Roman occupation of Palestine. However, the present-day terrorist phenomenon has attributes that make it different from its historical predecessors. Social and technological changes have influenced the effectiveness of terrorist operations. And the terrorists' philosophies have evolved; their tactics have been perfected, and they have developed new tactics for striking at their targets.

It is obvious that terrorists do not engage their political opponents in combat on a declared piece of turf. To the terrorist, the battlefield can be an urban area, a plane on an international flight, a ship on the high seas; it can be a diplomatic mission in a foreign country, or a

crowded shopping center. The terrorist's battlefield can be anywhere and everywhere, wherever a perceived advantage can be gained over a political opponent. They choose the target, the place, and the timing of the attack. But what is terrorism?

Terrorism Defined

The terrorist phenomenon can be described in an almost endless stream of examples, yet a universal definition that can be used as a yardstick to gauge these various acts of violence is less than agreed. The definitions in the literature, which are numerous, show a diversity of political and philosophical views, and these views have given rise to scholars contesting these definitions in a wide-ranging, and sometimes tense, debate.[1]

Reports in the media likewise appear to reflect something beyond what one would expect to be an objective criterion for assessing events involving these types of violence. Many media reports demonstrate varying attitudes to the phenomena and tend to use interpretative ethical and evaluative judgments and observations; for example, "an evil act," "a cowardly deed," "immoral behavior," "senseless destruction."

"The problem of defining terrorism [and hence, a terrorist] is compounded by the fact that terrorism has recently become a fad word often applied to a variety of acts of violence which are not strictly terrorism."[2] For instance, the term "terrorized" has even been misused by the media to refer to those who have witnessed traffic accidents, or communities that have experienced the murder of a local (among many other possible examples). These are upsetting events, for sure, but are these people really *terrorized* by them?[3] Or could it be argued that these media reports are trying to juxtapose an upsetting event with that of a politically motivated attack on innocent people to attract the reader's attention?

The meaning given to terrorist phenomena extends beyond the world of sensationalized journalism and into the realm of geopolitics; even governments cannot agree on what is or what constitutes an act of terrorism. These differences mainly revolve around the issue of what constitutes the political motives that distinguish terrorism from other forms of violence. Take, for instance, the situation in northern Iraq on the Turkish border in 2017. The United States viewed the Kurds as an ally in fighting Islamic State, whereas the Turks labeled them terrorists.

Martha Crenshaw has pointed out that crafting a "'neutral' definition of a method rather than a moral characterization of the enemy [is a dilemma], since the use of the term is not merely descriptive but as currently understood deprives the actor thus named of legitimacy. Since the early use of the term in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it has not been possible to escape a pejorative connotation."[4]

Even the distinction between a political extremist and a terrorist has been debated. Bruce Hoffman argued that many people "harbor all sorts of radical and extreme beliefs and opinions, and many of them belong to radical or even illegal or proscribed political organizations. However, if they do not use violence in the pursuit of their beliefs, they cannot be considered terrorists. The terrorist is fundamentally a *violent intellectual,* prepared to use and indeed committed to using force in the attainment of his goals."[5]

One could view the disagreement about how terrorism is defined by the issues involving the perpetrators and their political use of violence (e.g., people labeled as terrorists may see themselves as freedom fighters), the victims (e.g., victims may be seen by the perpetrator as supporters of their oppressors), and the legitimacy of the methods of attack (e.g., indiscriminate violence may be argued to be part of an asymmetrical conflict).

Returning to the example of the Kurds, one can wonder if they are terrorists, America's allies, or simply a nation in pursuit of state recognition. Therefore, a definition of terrorism should not be dependent on the perpetrator's ethnicity, religion, or cultural background, though these factors may influence perpetrators in thinking in such a radical way (known as radicalization).

Defining terrorism is not just an ideological debate; it is the foundation on which state policy is formulated (e.g., counterterrorism policy). Defining a person or group as a terrorist bestows upon the state the ability to confront the perpetrators in a way that common violent criminals cannot be confronted. A definition that misses its purpose could result in a less than perfect policy. This, in turn, could lead to responses by the state that are ineffectual in dealing with the threat. It could also affect the way a state aids other states in addressing the problem, because there may be a disconnect between the policies of these states.

"All terrorist acts are crimes. . . . All involve violence or the threat of violence, often coupled with specific demands. The violence is directed mainly against civilian targets. The motives are political.

"The aims of terrorism and guerrilla warfare may well be identical; but they are distinguished from each other by the means used—or more precisely, by the targets of their operations. The guerrilla fighter's targets are military ones, while the terrorist deliberately targets civilians.

By this definition, a terrorist organization can no longer claim to be freedom fighters because they are fighting for national liberation or some other worthy goal. Even if its declared ultimate goals are legitimate, an organization that deliberately targets civilians is a terrorist organization. There is no merit or exoneration in fighting for the freedom of one population if in doing so you destroy the rights of another population."[6]

The actions are generally carried out in a way that will achieve maximum publicity. . . . And finally the act is intended to produce effects beyond the immediate physical damage."[7] As an example of a working definition of terrorism, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines it according to the Code of Federal Regulations (28 CFR, sec. 0.85), which states: "The unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."[8] The US Department of Defense defines terrorism as: "The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instil fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political."[9]

Despite the debate, common ground is found in that terrorism is violence directed against a government (via innocent victims) as opposed to aggression that emanates from a state's military. In this way, the act is political. Although terrorism has individual victims, these are civilians, not military personnel, because terrorists are conducting an assault on society itself. This is an important distinction in identifying terrorist acts. It is accepted that in conventional warfare—state versus state—terror is a natural by-product of the battlefield. However, the generation of terror on the battlefield is not the prime intention of the military engagement. Combat operations are intended to bring one's forces within range of the other's in such a

rapid escalation and concentration that they overwhelm the opposing force, thereby destroying or severely disrupting the opposition's command, control, communication, and intelligence (C^3I) structure. The fear of terror experienced by the combatants is not the determining factor as to whether the conflict will result in victory. Warring military forces represent nation-states; terrorists lack the legitimation to use violence that is provided by constitutional and international legal authority.

Although the acts of warring states and terrorists may both be politically inspired, it is important to highlight this political focus to distinguish between not terrorism and war but terrorism and other forms of violence. The crimes of murder and assault are among the most feared acts of violence but are not related to terrorism per se because of the characteristics just discussed (take, for instance, the mass murder in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017).

In sum, the factors of violence (or threat of violence), political motivation, and civilian victims are what differentiate terrorism from other forms of violence and define it as such.[10] "Any action . . . that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or noncombatants, when the purpose of such act, by nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing an act."[11]

Purpose

The purpose of terrorism is to achieve a political goal. Unlike other forms of *political action*—say, lobbying politicians by email and letter writing, organizing petitions, or participating in election campaigns—terrorism is a type of *direct action*. Unlike forms of direct action that society accepts—labor strikes and peaceful demonstrations—terrorism goes beyond these forms of protest by employing violence, or the threat of violence in what is termed violent political action. Violence is used to instill fear that can be manipulated to the terrorists' political ends. Rather than kill a lot of people, as in a conventional conflict, terrorists want a lot of people watching.[12] "Terrorists [use] what has become known as [Sun Tzu's ancient Chinese] doctrine of 'kill one, frighten ten thousand' as their lever in this mismatch of strength of force. This could be argued to be the first pillar in the philosophy of terrorism. It allow[s] an undermanned and under-

resourced opposition to engage a much larger opponent to catalyze for political change."[13] Still, some scholars have argued that terrorists have access to modern weapons and knowledge to build improvised systems that can kill more people. Attacks using these weapons and methods generate enormous public outrage, so that "many of today's terrorists want a lot of people watching *and* a lot of people dead."[14]

The drive to use violent political action has been attributed to several factors, including (1) situational factors, such as social or economic factors, or certain events, in a person's life that influence them to see authority as the enemy (e.g., seeing a news report of an air strike that killed people in the country of their ethnic origin); (2) strategic aims, such as political autonomy (e.g., separatists) and historical grievances (e.g., the 1915–1923 Armenian genocide); (3) disruption of government processes (e.g., peacekeeping or nation-building missions in foreign countries); (4) provocation of a reaction that legitimizes grievances (e.g., anti-Muslim immigration polices); and (5) erosion of democracy and personal freedoms (e.g., to impose stricter security). The outcome sought is to destabilize governments by creating unrest that will lay the foundations for political conditions that are necessary for terrorists to exercise some level of control over the country's government.

Tactical and Strategic Objectives

The objective of using fear is to reach either a tactical goal or a strategic position, or both simultaneously. Tactical objectives are goals of an immediate nature, requiring only short-term planning. An illustrative example of a tactical terrorist operation is the June 14, 1985, hijacking of TWA Flight 847 from Athens. The hijackers were members of the militant organization Hezbollah. Hezbollah demanded the release of seventeen Shiite terrorists being held in Kuwaiti jails. Kuwait had incarcerated the terrorists for their part in a series of bombings in December 1983. The tactical objective was therefore the release of Hezbollah members.

In contrast, strategic goals are long-term positions that have a broader scope. An example of a strategic goal can also be seen in this 1985 incident: the hijacking of the TWA flight could have been used by Hezbollah as part of a larger campaign to increase its influence on Kuwait or to have its political stature as an organization recognized.

In many cases, the distinction between tactical and strategic objectives is difficult to distinguish. The Kuwaiti hijacking could have fulfilled both objectives concurrently; however, not all operations have this duality. Some may have only a single focus—for instance, the March 1969 bombing of the cafeteria of the Hebrew University by members of the Democratic Popular Front. The incident was "a warning aimed at the Jewish intellectuals to open their eyes to Zionism and to turn them from it."[15]

Taxonomy of Terrorism

The term *terrorism* is used in a range of contexts with little effort to distinguish between the various taxonomical categories. To some extent this can contribute to the definitional confusion—if there is no separating of the various categories of terrorism, trying to understand one act of political violent action may not make sense when applied in another context.

A taxonomical analysis of terrorism shows that there are four classifications: domestic, transnational, international, and state. Understanding these categories can help place a terrorist incident into conceptual framework that will allow better analysis.

Domestic Terrorism

Domestic terrorism is characterized by a country's national or permanent resident carrying out a political violent action within that nation. Of course, it can be carried out by a group, organization, or movement, but these entities need to comprise members of the target nation and the target of their action needs to be located within the nation's borders. The informal term *homegrown terrorist* has been used to describe this category of terror. To demonstrate what this might look like in practice, let us examine two cases, one historical and one contemporary.

The Weather Underground was a militant left-wing group that operated in the United States in the late 1960s and 1970s with the aim to overthrow the government. It comprised radical American college students and its targets were symbols of US political power. Several bombings were attributed to the group, including the June 14, 1975, bombing of Gulf Oil's international headquarters in Pitts-

burgh, Pennsylvania; the May 31, 1974, bombing of the Los Angeles office of California's attorney general's office; the June September 23, 1974, bombing of the New York office of the Latin American division of International Telephone and Telegraph; and the August 30, 1971, firebombing of two California prison system offices. Weather Underground's political ideology was influenced by Lenin's theory of imperialism.

The other case is the September 17–19, 2016, bombings in New York and New Jersey by Ahmad Khan Rahimi of Elizabeth, New Jersey. It was alleged that Rahimi detonated three homemade bombs. He was alleged to have used a pipe bomb in an attack at Seaside Park, New Jersey, on September 17, and a pressure-cooker bomb in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City. Other explosive devises were discovered that day in New York. The next day, several devices were found at a train station in Elizabeth, New Jersey—one of which detonated early on the morning of September 19. The bombings resulted in thirty-one people wounded, but no one was killed. Investigations showed that Rahimi's actions were influenced by a politically interpreted Islamic ideology.

Transnational Terrorism

Transnational terrorism is characterized by an incident that takes place in multiple jurisdictions. For instance, an attack might be planned in one country with the group's members being trained in another country, and when the attack is carried out, its political message is intended to meet the group's strategic objective, which is global in nature.

As a way of contextualizing this, let us examine the case involving the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) (which was also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or simply the Islamic State), which sought to establish a caliphate that would traverse the political boundaries of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Because its goal was to create an Islamic state—a strategic position to create a supranational world order—and the group's members were recruited from many countries, this case reflects this category of terrorism. In addition, its victims were also global—by way of example, four American citizens were beheaded in 2014, as well as a French citizen, two British citizens, and eighteen Syrian Arab army soldiers. Moreover, some of the people who lived in the countries occupied by ISIL were

displaced, killed, or enslaved. Overall, this example demonstrates what is referred to as transnational terrorism.

International Terrorism

Although the terms *transnational* and *international* may be confused and taken as meaning the same, they represent different concepts. International terrorism is direct political violence orchestrated in one country by perpetrators who are not native or inhabitants of that country. The test here is that the perpetrators are not domiciled in the target country. The 1986 bombing of the La Belle discotheque in Germany by Libyan terrorists demonstrates this. The targets were the US service personnel who frequented the venue. From a US point of view, this was a case of international terrorism because the bombing was an attack on the nation (via its military) in a foreign country.

State Terrorism

State terrorism refers to nations whose rule is founded in widespread fear and oppression. It is the use of political violence by a government against its citizens. It is not the use of terror by a state that promotes third-party actors to carry out attacks, as in the case of state-sponsored terrorism. It is the type of terrorism that spawned the other categories of terror—it originated in the French Revolution of 1793, during which, under Robespierre and the Jacobin government, thousands of people were executed.[16] This period has come to be known as the Reign of Terror.[17] At the time, terror was viewed as a necessity for suppressing civil disquiet. Since that time, dictatorial regimes have exhibited, to varying degrees, hallmarks of state terror. For instance, Saddam Hussein used terrorist methods against the Kurdish population in Iraq's north: torture, murder, rape assignation, forced displacement, and poison gas.

Typology of Terrorism

Now that we understand the taxonomical categories that constitute terrorism, let us look at the types of terrorism. We can do this by constructing a typology. It is important to point out that one codification that is not included in this analysis is that of civil disorder, which is

sometime termed civil unrest, even though it is a form of collective violence that disrupts society's normal mechanisms.

Civil disorder is characterized by riots, sabotage, destructive public protest, forceful demonstrations, marches, and sit-ins. This can be conducted in opposition to community social, economic, religious, or political problems. Civil disorder replaces peace and security with a breakdown in social order. It is a criminal offense in most jurisdictions. In cases where law enforcement officers are unable to quell the disturbance, martial law can be declared, and soldiers can be deployed to keep the peace. This form of protest is different from civil disobedience, which is predicated on the philosophy of nonviolence. And it is different from terrorism. The scholarly literature identifies six types of terrorism.

Political Terrorism

Political terrorism is violent behavior that is intended to generate fear through asymmetrical confrontation with the state, but not necessarily by engaging its law enforcement or security service apparatus. It is done with the express purpose of making a political statement. This type of terrorism is characterized by indiscriminate attacks on people and iconic targets that are not connected with the perpetrator's grievance, but by using these targets as a way of making the terrorists' message heard. This type of terrorism may comprise left-wing groups, right-wing groups, and issue-orientated groups.

Religious Terrorism

Religious terrorism bears all the characteristics of political terrorism, but it bears a religious message instead. It instills fear and targets noncombatants to leverage coercion over the state. The goal is religious in nature—which is nevertheless a form of political thought—such as establishing an Islamic caliphate.

Limited Political Terrorism

This could be called separatist terrorism because it is characterized by a revolutionary ethos; limited political terrorism refers to acts of terrorism that are committed for ideological or political motives, but that are not part of a concerted campaign to capture control of the

state—perhaps to gain, say, regional autonomy. This type of terrorism would fit with the attacks that have been perpetrated by Basque Homeland and Liberty (ETA) in Spain in support of autonomy for the Basque region.

Lone-Actor Terrorism

Lone-actor has been called "lone-wolf" terrorism in the news media but could also be termed "individual" terrorism because it is characterized by individuals who have no formal connectivity to a terrorist entity. They act alone, largely of their own volition about target selection, timing, and tactics. It is a solitary type of terrorism, though these individuals may be connected to political causes or religious beliefs; this is likely to be a one-way transmission of information— from the outsider to the lone actor.

State-Sponsored Terrorism

State-sponsored terrorism fits under an umbrella of what has been referred to as low-intensity conflict. This applies to various forms of warfare that do not draw armies into direct confrontation. It is used by states and subnational entities to assist third parties to use political violence against the state's enemies. It is warfare by proxy, using terrorist tactics internationally.

In an era where warfare with a power such as the United states, or with a coalition country such as a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally, the costs of escalating a direct confrontation can be prohibitive. Nonetheless, supporting a terrorist group to wage a low-intensity conflict with a large, better militarily equipped country permits the supporting nation to avoid the repercussions that would come in a direct confrontation by allowing it to wage an undeclared clandestine war. Support can be in the form of money, logistics, arms and explosives, training, intelligence, false documents, communication equipment, technology, or whatever is needed to carry out an attack.

Whether a terrorist act is state-sponsored terrorism may be difficult to establish. Investigations may not be able to determine whether a state was involved. Or it may take years to gather enough evidence to establish beyond reasonable doubt the state's involvement, as was the case with Libya's involvement in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. The reasons states have resorted

to this form of foreign policy are many, but mainly these states see terrorism as just another means for conducting foreign relations.[18] Generally, they have designs to destroy and undermine the authority of democratic states, in particular the United States.[19] The use of terrorists as agents of their foreign diplomacy entails low risks, and it is an association that the employing state can deny in public.

Criminal Terrorism

Criminal terrorism could be also called quasi-terrorism because the violence perpetrated resembles that of political terrorism. However, the violence (or threat of violence) occurs during the commission of a crime. The modalities and techniques may be like those of political or religious terrorism, but the perpetrator's intent is not to produce reactions in the wider population. An example is where an armed felon enters a bank and takes several hostages during his escape.

This type of terrorism can also include perpetrators who suffer from pathological issues. Take for instance the case of the shootings at Columbine High School in 1999 in Colorado, during which two psychologically disturbed senior students killed twelve fellow students and a teacher, and wounded twenty-three others, for no obvious reason other than a deleterious choice.

Another example of criminal terrorism is what is called narco-terrorism, because it allows political, religious, and other types of terrorists to obtain funds by selling illicit drugs. It also refers to criminal gangs that use violence to intimidate law enforcement and civilian populations in the areas where they operate. Mexican drug cartels have used kidnapping, robbery, extortion, and murder, at times burying victims in mass graves. In Colombia, Pablo Escobar used assassination as a method to intimidate politicians and law enforcers not to interfere in his narcotics-trafficking enterprise.

Impact on Society

International terrorism is a phenomenon that governments around the world have come to dread. Since the end of World War II there have been hundreds of terrorist groups operating worldwide, each pursuing its own political or radical religious agenda. Likewise, the cases involving terrorism are seemingly endless. There have been aircraft

hijackings, hostage takings, embassy and department store bombings, and assassinations of political leaders and diplomats.

The dilemma of how to deal with the problem has been grappled with by political leaders of nearly every nation. Combating this continuing stream of terrorist events has proved a troublesome political issue for democratic governments, especially when trying to protect their citizens and commercial interests overseas. Governments can usually enact legislation to guard against terrorism at home, and develop their domestic law enforcement agencies to detect and deter events on their soil. Governments can also exercise a large amount of control when resolving domestic events, such as hostage situations that have already unfolded. However, when faced with an event overseas—especially one that uses novel approaches—far from their geographic sovereignty, governments are vulnerable. By way of example, post-9/11 terrorism[20] has seen the use of women as terrorists and the recruitment of Western foreign fighters in the Middle East.

Women as Terrorists

Looking at the issue of women in terrorism first, this period in history saw Islamic extremist groups use gender as a means of recruitment. Groups like ISIL targeted women with propaganda to entice them to join their ranks. At the center of the campaign was the message of women as victims, which was intended to stir feelings of dissatisfaction with Western gender norms—for example, the message that Western societies do not respect Muslim women.

Social media played a large role in arguing that the West's view of Muslim women was one of a life of oppression in Islamic society. Photographs were circulated on the Internet depicting Muslim women being sexually assaulted in Srebrenica in 1995. Other photographs showed Israeli troops dealing forcefully with Palestinian children—scenes that were emotionally inciting with no promotion of dialogue that discussed the complexity of these situations. The campaign appeared to have had some success, because in mid-2017 reports showed that one in five ISIL members were women. Other reports showed that these women soon became dissatisfied and sought to exfiltrate themselves from these extremists. Some women were more successful than others, but those who did return to the West were disillusioned with their experience in the cause they served. Many then spoke out against the ideological propaganda of such groups.

Western Foreign Fighters

The mass recruitment of women in terrorist campaigns was part of the wider phenomenon of Western foreign fighters. Many of the people fighting in places like Iraq and Syria in the years 2011 to 2018 were from the West. Some joined because they too were influenced by the dynamics of gender, but rather from a male perspective—reports show that some of these recruits were driven by the desire to protect Muslim women and children, not because they wanted to escape poverty or other economic considerations. Thousands of foreign fighters from Europe, North America, Asia, Australia, and elsewhere are known to have become soldiers in jihadist groups such as ISIL and al-Nusra. It is a matter of public record that these recruits fought in conflicts in Afghanistan and Somalia, but in greater numbers in Iraq and Syria. Some died in combat and some, like Western women recruited to these groups, returned to their native countries.

The holding of radical political views by citizens is not necessarily an issue for a state's security services, but a person who holds these views and has been trained as a "soldier," and has fought in combat, is a different matter. As such, Western governments have, on the one hand, passed laws dealing with the return of foreign fighters (revoking their citizenship, and penalizing offenders with prison sentences) and, on the other hand, have implemented deradicalization programs in schools and universities to challenge extremist ideologies, as well as implemented programs to help terrorists who have denounced beliefs that led them to support violence, and to help them reintegrate into Western society.

Roots of Terrorism

"Terrorism is at least partly a reaction to the particular political, economic, and historical context within which potential terrorists exist."[21] For instance, the catalyst for right-wing terrorism is different from that of eco-terrorism. Nevertheless, terrorism is the use of fear to control the behavior of a civilian population by placing pressure on government authorities to make social or political changes. It seeks to make governing difficult or impossible by causing political destabilization. It has been argued that an act of terrorism is a subjective act.[22] The adage "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" acknowledges this view.

For perpetrators of terrorism, this view seems to condone their violence. Terrorists hold the freedom fighter belief that helps them justify their actions. For terrorists, society cannot be reformed through existing conventions, such as ballots or debate; it requires violence. Terrorists argue that the state itself is the violent party and can only be countered in the same way. Terrorists see their cause has having a higher purpose and moral standing than those of the state.[23]

The philosophy of terrorism does not entertain the possibility of coexistence between the group and society. Rather it seeks to destroy society.[24] This stance makes it difficult, if not impossible, to negotiate with the group. Nonetheless, this absolutist perspective can change over time. In some instances, the terrorist's cause can take on a more moderate political perspective to achieving its objectives.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the conflict in Northern Ireland is a case in point. After decades of terrorism, through its political wing—Sinn Fein—the IRA sought a compromise through a political solution. However, compromise likely developed because the organization transformed into several political groups. Such transformation is possible when the main group gains recognition from the state or the international community; it can then seek to orient itself toward playing a role in the state's political apparatus. Such a shift often indicates that violence is no longer effective or that its resources or community support have been exhausted.

Ideology

Ideology is central to terrorism. But the ideologies are as diverse as the groups that employ terrorism. In many instances ideologies and the actions undertaken may seem at odds with each other. What is common is the belief that violence will achieve a group's objectives. Building upon the notion that the society the terrorists are attempting to transform is corrupt or immoral, they often will not display compassion for the members of that society. This is particularly a problem for alt-left groups that have emerged in the twenty-first century. Propagating platforms of equity for minority and socially disadvantaged groups and promoting the protection from violence against those minorities, alt-left groups commit acts of terrorism against others who simply disagree with their ideology.

Ideology is stronger than organizational structures. People have committed themselves to an ideology, a social outlook, or a cause without having to become a formal member of an organization. The rise of social media and other forms of Internet communication has given rise to so-called armchair activists, people who share opinions and subsequently serve as a conduit for spreading an ideology.

There is nothing inherently problematic about the spread of ideas. However, individuals who move beyond discussing ideology to direct action using violence are troubling. In some ways the lack of organizational structure means oversight of a group is more difficult. From a terrorist perspective, the lack of organizational structure can be effective in encouraging lone-wolf attacks because the ideology is strong and alluring.

Historically, the ideologies underpinning terrorism have been centered on challenging governments or seeking separatism. A few notable examples include Guy Fawkes, who was part of the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605, during which Fawkes tried to bomb the British Parliament to remove the Protestant monarchy. Incidentally, it is Guy Fawkes's image that is used by the political activist/hacktivist group Anonymous. In 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by an organization known as the Black Hand, which was part of a larger effort to create an independent Serbian state.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anarchist ideology proved a dominant antagonist to existing governments and social order. Particularly strong in Europe, the ideology called for the abolishment of governments in favor of cooperation to rebuild society. Anarchists of this period believed that their cause could be best furthered through violent political action. Anarchist attacks include the assassination of Russian tsar Alexander II in 1881, the assassination of French president Marie-François Sadi Carnot in 1894, and the bombing of the Greenwich Observatory in London in 1894. In 1901, US president William McKinley too was assassinated by an anarchist.

As a contemporary analogy, anarchists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were viewed as a threat to national security in the same vein as ISIS or al-Qaeda in the early twenty-first century. Renowned author Joseph Conrad even explored the political dimensions of anarchism and terrorism in his 1907 novel *The Secret Agent*.[25]

Social Darwinism has sometimes been adopted by terrorist groups to justify racially based terrorism. Stemming from Charles Darwin's observations of natural life, some racially orientated groups

have conveniently interpreted "survival of the fittest" to mean a collective struggle of one group against another.[26] White separatist terrorists such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) have historically used Social Darwinism as their ideology to justify terror.

Anarchism and Social Darwinism are still apparent in the ideologies of some contemporary groups, but as society changes new ideologies have emerged. The advent of environmental issues and reactionary movements to globalism, technology, and animal experimentation has spawned new terrorist organizations and lone-wolf terrorists.

Eco-terrorism is based on environmental ideology that uses ecological degradation as the justification for widespread attacks on people and property. Groups such as Earth Liberation Front have been prominent in this regard. Opponents to using animals for medical research, such as the Animal Liberation Front, have targeted individuals and organizations associated with animal experiments, as well as industry sectors that indirectly support medical testing. They have been responsible for causing millions of dollars of damage.

Ted Kaczynski, the so-called Unabomber, conducted a series of terrorist attacks against sections of American society over a twenty-year period on the justification of his own self-developed ideology, which he expressed in his manifesto, *Industrial Society and Its Future:*

> [I] therefore advocate a revolution against the industrial system. This revolution may or may not make use of violence; it may be sudden, or it may be a relatively gradual process spanning a few decades. We can't predict any of that. But we do outline in a very general way the measures that those who hate the industrial system should take in order to prepare the way for a revolution against that form of society. This is not to be a *political* revolution. Its object will be to overthrow not governments but the economic and technological basis of the present society.[27]

Theory

The strategies and tactics used in military combat operations are absent in terrorist engagements. Terrorism relies not on superior position, forces, or weaponry but on the ability to produce a disproportionate amount of fear—terror—in the opposition, thereby overwhelming and incapacitating them. Terrorism's principal purpose is to frighten people, as opposed to killing or injuring them, although terrorists usually inflict grievous bodily harm or kill people indis-

criminately to achieve this end. In contrast to conventional warfare—that is, aggression conducted under the auspices of some specific legal doctrine—the victims of terrorism are those people who are frightened (society itself), not necessarily those who are injured.

The purpose of terrorism is to divide the mass of society from the state's elected incumbent authorities. Through fear, terrorists hope to create a process of disorientation that will lead to the undermining of the social structure. Fear, it is hoped, will lead to a situation where society loses confidence in its elected leaders, spreading confusion that is intended to create frightened individuals who are concerned with personal survival rather than solidarity and cooperation. The purpose of terrorism is to substitute society's independence with insecurity and distrust. If the targeted state's law enforcement or military forces are shown to be inept in dealing with the terrorists, the terrorists will have achieved their objective. There is a long-standing Chinese proverb that summarizes the situation: "Kill one, frighten ten thousand."

Justification for Terrorism

The justification for terrorism is subjective. Earlier in the chapter, we highlighted how terrorist actions of some are rationalized as freedom fighting—characteristically by "intellectuals of the democracy-left" for what has been referred to as "'a culture of excuse and apology' for acts of terror that has risen in parts of the academic and organizational left."[28] But it is a problematic phenomenon that makes terrorism difficult to outright condemn, and this issue has attracted much debate.[29] Take as an example former South African president and apartheid activist Nelson Mandela. He is often seen as a savior by the international community, having jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. But early on he broke with the African National Congress (ANC), which supported nonviolence,[30] and cofounded an armed branch of the ANC known as Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). "He later pleaded guilty in court to acts of public violence, and behind bars sanctioned more, including the 1983 Church Street car bomb that killed 19 people."[31] Given the broad consensus that he was fighting for a just cause, few today would view him as a terrorist, considering his later emphasis on reconciliation, humanitarian work, and social justice, but wasn't he a terrorist at the

time of the Church Street bombing? It could be argued that the concept of terrorism is made complex because of the philosophical and political influences that are injected into what should be an objective debate.

The United Nations (UN) has grappled with the justification of political violence. It recognizes the rights of people to pursue national liberation or self-determination specifically when under colonial or dictatorial racist regimes. In recognizing the legitimacy of these types of struggles, it may also be interpreted as accepting political violence. Where the United Nations makes political violence justifiable is when there is a clear distinction between civilian and armed combatants. Further, attacks can be directed only toward military objectives.[32] It is inferred by the United Nations that targeting civilians and nonmilitary targets constitutes terrorism. Given this perspective, one may argue that an indiscriminate military bombing of cities or towns may also be an act of state-sanctioned terrorism.

Given the UN's understanding of terrorism within the context of international law and the problem of subjectivity in justifying acts of terror, it is not surprising that it is still based on a public opinion interpretation to decide if a terrorist act is justifiable. What constitutes a legitimate target for a group struggling for self-determination or national liberation is still open to debate.

While the justification for terrorism tends to be subjective, there are instances where terrorists have developed ideology based on weak political arguments or erroneous religious interpretations. Some notable weak political arguments are evident in terrorist thinking based on race. For instance, white supremacists believe that by nature of their skin color they are superior to other groups and therefore should be the dominant group. Religions have created some of the most psychotic foundations for terrorist actions. Poor interpretations of religious texts have caused some groups to launch terrorist attacks to bring forth an apocalypse. Others have applied selected sections of a religious text but failed to understand these passages' full meaning. Take the term *jihad,* which has been used by many self-described Islamic terrorist groups. For the most part, Islamic terrorists argue that Allah has given them a mandate to kill non-Muslims, and even other Muslims, in what they would view as a defense of the faith. However, jihad is more complex. Some theologians refer to it as the struggle within one's self to be a good Muslim.[33]

An Unjustifiable Act

Despite the complexity inherent in justifying terrorism, it remains intuitively unjustifiable. If the political motive is removed, it becomes apparent that its methods are indefensible; it becomes a criminal act. But it is unlikely it will ever be solely examined from a criminal perspective. So, to establish what acts are justifiable from what are unjustifiable, it is necessary to place terrorism into a theoretical framework that allows closer ethical analysis. In this regard, Just War theory can provide such a framework.

Just War theory sets conditions for armed conflict to be morally justified and the conduct for individuals in war. There are conditions that must be met to assess if the choice to go to war is just: "1) the war must have a just cause; 2) it must be fought with the right intentions; 3) the harm caused in war must be proportionate to the good achieved; 4) it must have reasonable prospects of successes; 5) it must be initiated and waged by a legitimate authority; 6) individuals must discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate targets and attack only legitimate targets—this means no harm to non-combatants; and 7) harm caused through war must be proportionate to the military advantage gained."[34]

Applying Just War theory to terrorism shows that terrorism fails to be justifiable. An illustration are the tactics of Boko Haram. The Nigerian-based terrorist group formed during the 1990s with the aim to introduce sharia (Islamic) law to Nigeria and establish an Islamic state in West Africa. In April 2014, Boko Haram terrorists stormed a boarding school in Borno, Nigeria, kidnapping 276 teenage girls and subsequently forcing some to marry the terrorists. Boko Haram began releasing a few of the schoolgirls two years after their capture. In 2018, the terrorist organization committed a similar attack, storming a girls' school and kidnapping a further 110 girls.[35] By choosing to focus its terror attacks on young girls, Boko Haram could be easily criticized for not adhering to Just War principles. While the group may believe it has a just cause and is fighting with the right intentions (both conditions are highly subjective), it lacks legitimacy. It certainly did not distinguish between military and non-military targets. Kidnapping young civilians had no military advantage. It was simply to instill fear into Nigerians by showing deficiencies in the state's security forces.

Another case of a clearly unjustified terrorist attack took place in Nice, France, in 2016. On this occasion a terrorist drove a truck through a crowd on Bastille Day, killing seventy-seven people. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. Like with the Boko Haram terrorist attacks, there is no rationale that could be used to justify this attack. There were no military targets, nor was there any military advantage; the only purpose was to create fear and a sense of insecurity among the people of France.

Through the lens of Just War theory, one can appreciate that there is no justification for terrorism. It is almost inconsequential if the terrorist believes they are fighting a just war or fighting with the right intensions.

Counterterrorism

Governments address unacceptable behaviors by enacting legislation that makes them crimes. Usually, a crime is punished by a fine or imprisonment. But just because a law is enacted does not mean that the behavior will cease. Although there are many criminological theories that explain why people commit crimes, in general the theory underpinning the rule of law is that it sets a standard for the communities to abide by and acts as a deterrent for those who are contemplating doing otherwise. It also serves as a way to isolate those who persistently commit crimes and to effect punitive retribution for pain and suffering caused to victims.

The responsibility for preventing and controlling crime is passed to a police force, which can take many forms depending on the scope of the jurisdiction covered by the law—from local parking inspectors to officers of a nationwide policing agency, with a wide range of agencies and law enforcement, regulation, and compliancy laws in between.

Regarding the crime of terrorism, the policies, laws, strategies, and tactics are not usually called crime prevention or crime control; they are referred to as counterterrorism. This is a term that encompasses all measures to prevent and control terrorism by law enforcement and intelligence agencies, as well as the military. These measures include both defensive measures[36] and offensive measures. As a guide, defensives measures aim to prevent and deter events, whereas offensive measure preempt and respondent events (see further discussion in Part 2 of this volume).

Study Questions

1. Explain the difference between terrorism and war.
2. Describe the four types of terrorism and explain the difference.
3. Explain what is meant by *guerrilla warfare* and give an example.
4. Explain what is meant by "kill one, frighten ten thousand."
5. Explain the theory behind terrorism. As a tactic, describe what it is trying to achieve.
6. Reflecting on the debate in the literature, explain if there is ever a justification for terrorism.
7. Discuss the significance of ideology for a terrorist organization.
8. Explain why the United Nations and other international bodies have difficulty in defining terrorism.
9. Political violence is not necessarily the domain of extremist groups, but why do they choose it over other avenues for political change? Discuss.

Learning Activities

1. In some political circles, the terms *terrorism* and *terrorist* are still debated. Given the lack of scholarly agreement, argue either for or against the continued use of these terms.
2. Undertake a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) that assesses terrorism in terms of its ability to meet the strategic objective of political/social change. Using a case study of a terrorist attack (one of your choice), identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the group that committed the attack. Drawing on the findings of your analysis, discuss why the group's strategic goals were or were not achieved. What are the impactions of your conclusion for policy?

Notes

1. Lukasz Kamienski, "Defining Terrorism: Issues and Problems," in Frank Shanty (ed.), *Counterterrorism: From the Cold War to the War on Terror,* vol. 1 (Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2012), 7–12.

2. Brian Michael Jenkins, *The Study of Terrorism: Definitional Problems* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1980), 1.

3. Compare more appropriate synonyms, such as frightened, shocked, alarmed, appalled, scared, startled, and dismayed.

4. Martha Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism: Causes, Processes, and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2.

5. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* rev. and expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 38, original emphasis.

6. Boaz Ganor, "Terrorism: No Prohibition Without Definition," October 7, 2001, https://www.ict.org.il/Article.aspx?ID=1588#gsc.tab=0.

7. Jenkins, *The Study of Terrorism,* 3.

8. US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Terrorism 2002–2005* (Washington, DC, 2017).

9. US Department of Defense, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC, 2017), 234.

10. These elements of terrorism are captured in 22 U.S. Code § 2656f(d)(2): "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."

11. United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change: A More Secure World—Our Shared Responsibility* (New York, 2004), 52.

12. Brian Jenkins, "International Terrorism: A Balance Sheet," *Survival* 17, no. 4 (July–August 1975), 18.

13. Henry Prunckun, "The First Pillar of Terror—Kill One, Frighten Ten Thousand: A Critical Discussion of the Doctrinal Shift Associated with the 'New Terrorism,'" *Police Journal: Theory, Practice, and Principles* 87, no. 3 (2014).

14. Brian Michael Jenkins, "The New Age of Terrorism," in David G. Kamien, *The McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 119, emphasis added.

15. From a transcript of an unpublished taped interview by Bill Hillier of *Peace News* (London) with a ranking member of the Democratic Popular Front in London on May 16, 1969: "Democratic Popular Front: We Are Marxist-Leninists," in John Gerassi (ed.), *Towards Revolution,* vol. 1 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 235.

16. Bernard Lewis, "The Isma'ilites and the Assassins," in Marshall W. Baldwin (ed.), *The First Hundred Years: A History of the Crusades,* 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

17. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française,* 5th ed. (Paris: Académie Française, 1798), 3,187.

18. Ariel Merari says: "Terrorism is useful for its sponsors as long as it does not become counter-productive in strategic and political terms. As a rule of thumb, the state sponsors of terrorism wish to remain below the threshold of punishment that is set by the states against which terrorism is directed. In this sense, it is the target countries of state-sponsored terrorism that determine the scope and form of this kind of warfare by their responses or lack of responses to it." Quoted in Brian L. Davis, *Qaddafi, Terrorism, and the Origins of the U.S. Attack on Libya* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 171.

19. For instance, Qaddafi had for some time promoted the downfall of all democracies, not only that of the United States. He wanted to replace democratic structures with what he called the "Third Universal Theory." Qaddafi's theory rejected capitalism and communism, constitutions and man-made laws, political parties, and representative democracy. To this end, Qaddafi made it clear that he wanted to see the ultimate demise of the United States. Qaddafi said: "Parliaments are the backbone of traditional democracy prevailing in the world today. Parliament is a misrepresentation of the people and parliamentary systems are a false solution to the problem of democracy." He went on to say: "This is an obsolete structure. Authority must be in the hands of all of the people." Muammar Qaddafi, *The Green Book* (Tripoli: Green Book World Center for Research and Study, 1980), 9–12.

20. Scholars such as Willard M. Oliver have argued that the events of September 11, 2001, resulted in governments adapting enhanced domestic security measures. This policy shift has manifested itself in a new age of policing, the era of homeland security. Oliver argued that over the centuries, policing has proceeded through three eras: the political (1840–1930), the reform (1930–1980), and the community (1980–2001). These developments in policing, Oliver posited, are based on four policing models: traditional, community, problem-oriented, and zero-tolerance. Willard M. Oliver, "The Fourth Ear of Policing: Homeland Security," in *International Review of Law, Computers, and Technology* 20, nos. 1–2 (2006). Other scholars include a fourth model: intelligence-led policing; see for example Jerry H. Ratcliffe, *Intelligence-Led Policing,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

21. Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Sources of Contemporary Terrorism," in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes (eds.), *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 20–21.

22. Arthur Garrison, "Defining Terrorism: Philosophy of the Bomb, Propaganda by Deed, and Change Through Fear and Violence," *Criminal Justice Studies* 17, no. 1 (September 2004), 259.

23. A. Parry, "Terrorism: From Robespierre to Arafat," cited in Garrison, "Defining Terrorism."

24. Muhammad Kamal, *The Meaning of Terrorism: A Philosophical Inquiry,* NCEIS Research Paper 1, no. 1 (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2008).

25. Born Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski on December 3, 1857, Conrad was a Polish British writer who has been regarded as one of the greatest English-language novelists. "Conrad" was his third Polish given name, but he anglicized it as well as his first name to form his writer's identity of "Joseph Conrad." See Jeffrey Meyers, *Joseph Conrad: A Biography* (New York: Scribner's, 1991).

26. Richard Weikart, "The Origins of Social Darwinism in Germany, 1859–1895," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54, no. 3 (July 1993), 469.

27. Theodore Kaczynski, *Industrial Society and Its Future,* unpublished manuscript (1995), 1, emphasis added.

28. Michael Walzer, "Five Questions About Terrorism," *Dissent* 49, no. 1 (2002), 9.

29. See for example Walzer, "Five Questions About Terrorism," 5–11.

30. Elleke Boehmer, "Postcolonial Terrorist: The Example of Nelson Mandela," *Parallax* 11, no. 4 (2006).

31. Andrew Bolt, "The Dark Side of Nelson Mandela," *Herald Sun,* December 8, 2013.

32. United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, Human Rights Terrorism, and Counter-Terrorism, *Fact Sheet* no. 32 (2008).

33. *The Quran,* translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1934), 4:74–76, 202 and 17:33, 703.

34. Jonathan Parry, "Just War Theory, Legitimate Authority, and Irregular Belligerency," *Philosophia* 43 (2015), 177.

35. Tara John, "Boko Haram Has Kidnapped Dozens of Schoolgirls, Again: Here's What to Know," *Time,* February 26, 2018, http://time.com /5175464/boko-haram-kidnap-dapchi-schoolgirls.

36. The purely defensive side of dealing with terrorism is sometimes referred to as anti-terrorism. See Hank Prunckun, *Scientific Methods of Inquiry for Intelligence Analysis,* 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 283.