

The Multi-Faceted Nature of Terrorism: An Introduction¹

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Synopsis: As an introduction to the present volume the wide-ranging nature of terrorist activity, over time and place, is briefly reviewed. Terrorism is multi-faceted and, as a consequence, no one explanation, theory or discipline will ever fully account for all terrorist activities. However, the psychological and social psychological processes that lead any given person to commit a terrorist act tend to have been under-represented in the terrorist literature. This is doubtless in part due to the difficulty of conducting studies that engage directly with those individuals who carry out terrorist acts. Consideration of the actions of the individuals involved makes possible the understanding of terrorism as a process that people move through. At every stage questions emerge about how and why given individuals get drawn into, or leave, terrorist groups. But because some form of terrorist activity will always be with us understanding the many faces of terrorism and the psychological processes underlying it, should help to reduce its prevalence and mitigate its impact.

The Wide-ranging Nature of Terrorism

Acts of violence with political objective have always been with us. From the fight against Roman domination of Judea by Zealots in the 1st century, through the assassins in the 13th century who were a breakaway faction of Shia Islam, to

¹This chapter draws heavily on (Canter, 2006) where a fuller account of the psychology of suicide bombers is given.

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the Fenians in the 19th century, who challenged British rule in Ireland, to the anarchists at the start of the 20th century, who contributed to the start of the Great War and through their writing articulated the notion of 'the propaganda of the deed', there have always been groups who sought to have an impact on public opinion and the stability of governments through attacks on people or buildings that were seen as being of political or ideological significance.

The emergence of nation states almost inevitably gave rise to forces that tried to challenge or overthrow those states by violent means. Thus by the late 20th century well over 150 different terrorist organizations were known to exist around the world. The US State Department currently lists more than 50 such organizations as being active.

The longevity and number of terrorist groups indicates that terrorism is likely to be diverse and varied. So the present-day popular assumption that acts of political and/or ideological violence are likely to be related to Islamic belief systems is far from being valid. Indeed many books on terrorism written before 11 September 2001 made no mention of Islam or jihad at all. Even the most elementary review of terrorist activities will show that people of all religions, and none, men and women, people under occupation in tyrannies and living freely in democracies, people who have clear and those who have vague objectives, have all participated in some form of terrorist activity. The challenge therefore is to determine whether there is any core to terrorist activity or if indeed the whole concept is too amorphous to be of any academic or practical value.

A Definition

The variety of events that may be considered terrorist is so diffuse that some focus is required on how they may be identified. But as with most concepts that have had more currency in public debate than in academic discourse this is not a straightforward task. It is therefore of value to proffer one of the clearest definitions, even if only to help clarify questions that it raises. Richardson (2006) chose to define terrorism in terms of seven characteristics that any act must have in order to attract that label, as briefly listed in Table 1.1.

The central idea behind this definition is that the acts of violence are a political strategy carried out by groups that are not themselves an established state. From this perspective the strategy is very much aimed at carrying actions that have symbolic, propaganda significance. In Chapter 6 the most obvious example of this, the little known 17N group in Greece, has all the characteristics that Richardson requires to call it terrorist. Although, importantly even in a group so dedicated to a Marxist mission, the close kinship ties within the group raises the question of how significant politics is for all those involved.

Table 1.1. Seven crucial characteristics for terrorism
(based on Richardson, 2006)

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1. Politically inspired
 2. Violent or threatens violence
 3. Communicates a message
 4. Act and victim symbolically significant
 5. Carried out by sub-state groups
 6. Victim is different from the audience
 7. Deliberate targeting of civilians
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Richardson's definition, however, will tend to rule out, for example, kidnap for ransom explored by Phillips in Chapter 11 because it has no obvious symbolic or overtly political objectives, even though in many cases it may link into terrorist activities. Similarly, Russell's account in Chapter 12 of the authoritarian leader of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, cannot portray him as a terrorist leader in the sense that he is a head of state and not part of a sub-state group, although he clearly emerged out of terrorist attacks on Russia and much of his leadership is rooted in his violent past. Thus, as Gupta and his colleagues make clear in Chapter 7 it is naïve to separate out the states that promote terrorism and the criminal activity that underwrites it if we are to understand its development and underlying processes.

So although Richardson's (2006) seven-point set of criteria does provide us with a clear understanding of what is at the heart of terrorist activity, we need to have a grasp of all the other faces this activity can take on if we are to have a full picture. The idea of a devoted, integrated group of people who make a strong, clear political statement through acts of violence may be the stereotypical vision of terrorism, but all the emerging information indicates that, like all stereotypes, it helps to know what we are looking for, since its existence in some pure form is exceedingly rare. The nature of the 'enemy' that terrorist groups identify may not even be as obvious as one would expect. This is brought home particularly in Borgeson and Valeri's account in Chapter 10 of how some of the fiercely Christian Aryan Nations groups in the US are willing to co-operate with radical Islamists against some perceived common foe.

Difficulties in Studying Terrorists

The many difficulties in uncovering the truth about the actual people involved in terrorism cannot be overestimated. The only people available for interview, if access can be gained to them, are those who have been detected or captured,

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frequently through failure to achieve their goals. These people may not be representative of the possibly more determined individuals who succeeded in carrying out their violent acts. Even if access can be gained to these people what they tell the security services is unlikely to be made public and what they tell the few researchers who have gained access (e.g. Merari, 1990; Soibelman, 2004) is likely to be distorted by their own view of their failure and the current incarceration in which they find themselves. However, as Speckhard (2006) shows from her interviews with the families and associates of Chechen suicide bombers, it is important to attempt to get some understanding of the social and psychological processes involved in these outrages even if there is inevitable bias in the information obtained.

It is also important to point out, as Horgan (2005) does in some detail, that gaining access to people involved in or associated with any form of terrorism may be dangerous, and is often a lengthy drawn out process. It is therefore understandable that most researchers are reluctant to follow this path and rely instead on secondary and tertiary sources. This is one of the reasons why public understanding of terrorists is often so misinformed, making it prey to the political distortions that Danis and Stohl explore in Chapter 13.

Statements made by terrorists, notably those by suicide bombers recorded for broadcast after their death, suffer from similar difficulties. Merari (1990) suggests that the preparation of such a statement is part of the process by which the bomber is tied into the intended act. By committing him/herself to the action in writing or on video it is much more difficult to back out at a later stage without a tremendous loss of face.

Schooling in the appropriate rhetoric for making such a statement is likely to be drawn from the writings and lectures of the leaders of terrorist movements as discussed by Sarangi and Canter in Chapter 3. A clear example of this is the widely broadcast tape of Mohammad Sidique Khan (2005), one of the 7/7 London bombers. This is clearly a paraphrasing of the writings of Osama bin Laden and his apologists. It is therefore difficult to gauge from such broadcast material how totally it captures the psychology and personal perspective of the individual making the statement. Furthermore, it would be expected that such statements would claim international significance and grand motivations for the suicidal act rather than belittling it by reference to personal frustrations or individual experiences.

We must also be careful about generalizing from what is known about the psychology of one set of terrorists to all others. Most information comes from very limited sources, typically the IRA or Palestinian terrorists. The changing world scene and evolving social processes also mean that there is unlikely to be one psychology of the bomber that is valid for all places and all times.

Despite the many difficulties in obtaining detailed information about the processes by which a person becomes a terrorist, the slowly growing series of studies can be put alongside what is known about other acts of violence and

of suicide, to sketch a picture of how people find their way into these activities and what may lead them out.

Explanations of Terrorism

Is deprivation a direct cause of terrorism?

In his review of the psychological causes of terrorism Moghaddam (2005) makes clear that “material factors such as poverty and lack of education are problematic as explanations of terrorist acts” (p. 162). He quotes Coogan’s (2002) account of the IRA as giving no support to the view “that they are mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and unemployable” (p. 162). The Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs reported in 2003 that captured al-Qaeda terrorists were not typically from impoverished backgrounds and had reasonable levels of education. Indeed accounts of the people who carried out the 7/11 attacks on New York and Washington showed that they did not come out of refugee camps, ignorant and lacking education (Bodansky, 2001). So a simple-minded analysis proposing that acts of terrorism are the first stages of a people’s revolution, being the actions of a down-trodden proletariat that has no other means of bettering its lot, does not have much empirical support.

Indeed any equation of terrorism with acts of revolution as a response to a repressive state needs to be treated with great caution. The concomitant idea that if people are given at least some limited material comfort then they are unlikely to want to overthrow their regime also needs careful evaluation. This was the view expressed so amusingly by George Orwell (1933) when he wrote:

It is quite likely that fish-and-chips, art-silk stockings, tinned salmon, cut-price chocolate (five two-ounce bars for sixpence), the movies, the radio, strong tea, and the Football Pools have between them averted revolution.
The Road to Wigan Pier, Chapter 5.

Just as it is a great over-simplification to propose that deprivation and oppression provoke acts of terrorism, so the proposal that no one who lives in relative comfort would be willing to take up a cause that violently challenges the status quo must also be questioned. The search for the origins of terrorism of any sort as being fundamentally in material deprivation is not likely to prove successful.

A slightly more sophisticated argument would be that although an individual has some material comfort, if they live within a repressive regime the deprivation of their liberty is the source of their terrorist zeal. This view is also difficult to support from the facts. As Youngs (2006) makes clear in his analysis

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of the influence of political repression on the prevalence of terrorism, there is little correlation between relative degrees of political repression and 'radicalism'. He compares various Middle Eastern countries, India and China and the source of revolution in other areas of the world to show that, if anything, repressive regimes serve to keep terrorist activity under control and that those who wish to attack civilians benefit from the freedoms associated with democracy.

To account for the greater dissatisfaction and related violence in less repressive regimes it is fruitful to consider the widely explored issue of 'relative deprivation'. Walker and Smith (2002) review over 50 years of study of how people tend to compare their own experiences with those of others that they know about, and assess their personal deprivation relative to those other experiences. This subjective relativity has been taken to explain many paradoxes such as why working women are more willing to accept disadvantageous pay differentials than would be expected (Crosby, 1982), because they compared themselves with other women rather than men; or the lack of impact of the removal of apartheid on inter-racial attitudes in South Africa (Duckitt & Mphuting, 1998), because the racial groups still made comparisons within their own groups.

Relative deprivation has also been elaborated by distinguishing between personal experiences and experience perceived to be shared by a social group (Smith & Leach, 2004). These are mainly somewhat artificial, laboratory-based experimental studies because it is so difficult to establish clearly what an individual's view of the experiences of a social group is. Nonetheless they do indicate that when a person's identity is closely associated with membership of a particular group then the belief that the group as a whole experiences certain deprivations can have a significant influence on that person's levels of dissatisfaction beyond their own personal comparisons. These complexities thus help to point towards the need to consider the individual psychological processes and how an individual makes sense of his/her experiences rather than relying on some notion of the objective, material situation the person is part of.

Mental illness and suicide bombing

The psychological explanation of suicide bombing is particularly difficult to fathom. It seems to go against all notions of self-preservation unless the person was out of contact with reality. As a consequence one common view about the psychology of suicide bombers is that they must be 'mad' in some sense of being severely mentally disturbed. However, even an elementary consideration of the July 2005 bombings in London would make clear that the perpetrators could not have been insane in the usual sense of being out of contact with

reality, drugged or even highly trained fanatics. The New York aeroplane hijackers similarly indicated a determination and coolness of purpose that is not compatible with a psychosis or other extreme form of mental illness. This accords with the reviews of both Silke (2003) and Moghaddam (2005), who make clear that there is no evidence at all that suicide bombers are overtly mentally disturbed. The five failed Palestinian suicide bombers that Soibelman (2004) had interviewed showed no signs of mental illness and were able to discuss many matters with their interviewers in an apparently rational way. But then, the incidence of overt mental illness in another homicidal group that challenges our understanding of sanity, serial killers, appears to be no greater than in the population at large, such that it is very rare indeed for insanity to be used as a defence (Hickey, 2005). Neither are those possibly more bizarre acts of spree killing, in which a number of people are killed in one onslaught, as in the Columbine School shootings in 1999, or in Hungerford in 1987 or Dunblane in 1996, committed by people with any obvious psychotic illness (Canter, 1995). With hindsight their acquaintances may claim they were strange people who did not relate well to others, but people with diagnosed mental illnesses are far more likely to hurt themselves rather than anyone else.

Far from being disturbed there is some evidence that those recruiting people to commit these atrocities go to some pains to exclude people who may be mentally unstable. Merari (1990) claims that only a minority of all those who volunteer to be suicide bombers are selected to do so. This is understandable in military terms. A person who was mentally unstable could not be relied upon to focus and follow through with the desired objective and so would weaken the whole operation and put disclosure of its methods at risk.

Brainwashing?

The graphic metaphor for clearing a person of previously held beliefs, washing their brains, in order to insert some alien set of perspectives, has become a further explanation of how people could turn from reasonably well-adjusted citizens to violent terrorists. This perspective puts people such as Osama bin Laden and the Hamas leader Sheikh Yassin in roles that have only ever been demonstrated clearly in George du Maurier's fictional story of the control of the opera singer Trilby by the manipulative Svengali. Many other studies show that in real life it is difficult to demonstrate the possibility of such quasi-occult powers (cf. Heap and Kirsch, 2006 for a review of these issues).

This view of the influence of terrorist leaders also implies a very strong hierarchy, very similar indeed to what would be expected in a rigid military structure. In general, however, as with all illegal groups (Canter & Alison, 2000), especially those spread over a wide geography, it is not possible to maintain the top-down discipline that is de rigueur for a standing army.

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Instead, what Atran (2004) calls a “hydra-headed network” is much more likely to be the norm. The evolving structure of such networks is well illustrated in Chapter 8 by Mullins, and how it can develop into something not far from a business when it involves frequent kidnap activities as described in Chapter 11 by Phillips.

In a detailed study of the al-Qaeda network Sageman (2004) shows just how complex and self-generating terrorist networks can be. These loose networks come about partly because illegal organizations face such challenges to preserving the identification and communication processes that are crucial for the effectiveness of legitimate ones (as Canter, 2000, discusses) that they have to rely on other ways of operating. The indications are that they survive by encouraging and supporting small, independent groups, over which they have very little direct control (Atran, 2004). But this requires that the groups are very much self-defined and self-motivated, rather than being fiercely manipulated by some charismatic leader.

One important implication of this mechanism of autonomous, self-generating groups as a mechanism for carrying out terrorism is that it can be traced back at least to the writings of 19th-century anarchists such as Michael Bakunin (cf. Anarchist Archives, 2006) who saw revolution emerging out of spontaneous secret societies who combine together to overthrow the status quo. The intelligentsia were to articulate the disquiet and aspirations of the masses who would then find their own ways into revolution.

The role of religious ideology

If it is not some particular guru who brainwashes followers, then it has often been thought that it is a general religious ideology that is drawn on to formulate destructive intentions. The fact that all the London and USA attackers were Muslim and that Palestinian suicide bombers are typically Muslim too has led to the assumption in many quarters that there are some inherent seeds in Islam that provide the basis for suicide bombing. Certainly as Sarangi and Canter explain in Chapter 3 there are streams of thought that do interpret the Quran as endorsing violence against non-believers. But the dominant Islamic tradition is nonetheless extremely tolerant.

Even when considering suicide bombers there is nothing new or particularly Islamic about them. There is the ancient Jewish exemplar in the biblical account of Samson bringing the temple down upon the Philistines as a way of escaping from his own degradation and death at their hands. In modern time, as the widely quoted report by Gunaratna (2003) documents, suicide bombing is certainly not limited to Muslim terrorists. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has carried out many suicide bombings in Turkey is anti-religious, drawing on Marxist-Leninist ideology, but with a very strong

nationalist, rather than religious, orientation. What Gunaratna (2003) calls “ethno-nationalism”, rather than religious doctrine, is what drives the Tamil Tigers to carry out suicide bombings in Sri Lanka and India.

Of course, the most well-known use of suicide as a military means was by Japanese pilots in World War II. This had nothing to do with either a challenge to state oppression or Islam. Yet its parallels to recent suicide bombings has been recognized by some European newspapers referring to these attacks with the Japanese label of ‘kamikaze’, literally meaning the wind (or spirit) of God.

The use of military personnel as self-destructive missiles in World War II may teach us something of the processes by which people think themselves into this desperate final act. In his detailed study of “Japan’s suicide samurai” Lamont-Brown (1997) reveals that Japanese military leaders were initially reluctant to use this tactic that was so wasteful of trained pilots and aeroplanes, but that towards the end of the war they saw no other way of preventing the American fleet from landing troops on Japanese soil. A special airborne ‘Divine Thunderbolts Corps’ was therefore established. The pilots in this corps were initially drawn from well-trained airmen, who came from strongly nationalist families. They saw themselves as upholding the honour and traditions of their families. But as the war progressed young men with very limited training, from working class backgrounds, were drafted in to carry on the attacks.

The early suicide pilots endorsed a mythology of devotion to the Emperor, who was regarded as a god, such that it was an honour to die in his service. They believed they would be reincarnated as cherry blossom in the nationalist Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, such that this flower became their symbol. Those who came after them appear to have been more directly motivated by the dishonour of failure and the pride their family would feel in their success. The shame that would be brought on their family if they came back alive was regarded as unbearable. Certainly through the names of the squadrons, their symbols and rituals the pilots believed that they were ‘divine wings’ wreaking a terrible toll on the enemy. In fact, once the US Navy got over the initial shock of such apparently senseless attacks, kamikaze assaults proved to be futile in stopping the advance of the US military on Japan. But the determination the Japanese showed to fight to the last breath may have been influential in the decision to drop the atom bomb.

There are doubtless some parallels in present-day suicide bombing, notably a conviction in the great significance of their actions and the often quoted belief in rewards in the after-life. Perhaps of more significance, similar to ‘non-military’ suicide, is the view that there was no other way for Japan to defend itself against a greatly superior military force. However, the fact that all five of the failed July 21st London bombers were caught alive without any further violence shows that the British situation is very different from the Japanese. For those London suicide bombers, at least, life was preferable to ‘honourable’ death.

The kamikaze pilots also show us that the concept of ‘religious zeal’ needs to be treated with caution. The Shinto tradition of which they were a part claimed it was honourable to die protecting the emperor. This has analogies to the Quranic claims that “whoever fights for the cause of God, whether he dies or triumphs, on him we shall bestow a rich recompense” (4:72, Quran – Penguin translation by N. J. Dawood (2003), p. 68). But they are both very different types of belief systems. The tradition of the Japanese emperor as a god was greatly diluted after the war in a way that it is difficult to imagine happening to beliefs in the Prophet and his teachings. It seems more feasible to think of the religious ideology as a skeleton that can be fleshed out in accordance with the experiences and self-image of any given individual.

However, as with any reference to a broad ideology you cannot blame an idea for the people who hold it. Many millions of people endorse fundamentalist Islam without interpreting it as meaning they should commit acts of self-destructive violence. The religion may offer up a belief system on which potential suicide bombers can draw, but it cannot be accounted as the primary cause for their actions. To understand the processes that give rise to suicide bombing, as with all other aspects of terrorism, we need to consider the processes of which the individual is a part and the cognitive and emotional processes within the individual that give rise to a commitment to acts of terrorism.

Terrorism as Process

In his earlier writing Horgan (2005) has developed the important argument that terrorism is not an act but a process of which a person is a part. Moghaddam’s (2005) ‘staircase’ model of terrorism makes a similar point of a person entering into and becoming part of an ever more involving commitment to violence for political or ideological ends. The framework for this is a mixture of first, recognition that the group with which the terrorist identifies is distinct from and threatened by some other external group and, secondly, that there are culturally remembered or experienced causes of grievance that are nursed by the group to which the terrorist belongs. In Chapter 5 Ross reviews the power of these grievances by examining three very diverse terrorist groups in different parts of the world. He emphasizes in particular the roles these grievances play in keeping the group in existence over many years. The grievances become a way of specifying the special, distinct identity of the group and what fuels its antagonism to those who the group see as their enemies. An important point here is that it is not the deprivation or other degrading experiences themselves that are seen as the central cause of acts of violence but the interpretation of these to generate a profound sense of grievance.

The grievance, however, only has to give rise to a few people acting violently before the explosive mix of emotional turmoil and direct experience draws others into the destructive cycle. In Chapter 2 Ferguson and Burgess show how for many people it is the psychological consequences of being part of violence that itself can set up a continuing process of terrorist aggression. For these individuals the world becomes framed in terms of its potential for bloodshed. This has long-term consequences that the authorities ignore at their peril. It can mean that even after the apparently successful peace process, as in Northern Ireland, there are still many people for whom the precipitating factors, direct experience of violence and perceived grievance have not gone away. The possibility of the violence re-emerging will thus still be present for at least a generation.

The perception of grievances and associated routes into terrorism need not be as direct as in Northern Ireland as Williams' case study in Chapter 4 illustrates. Faheem Khalid Lodhi was well established in Australia as an architect without any personal experiences to lead him into acts of violence. It was indirect contact through people he interacted with in his original homeland of Pakistan that seemed to open the way for him to prepare a terrorist attack. There are many parallels here to other terrorists and would-be terrorists in Britain, Spain and the USA. They start to define themselves in terms of a particular social group that is itself defined in terms of feelings of outrage and frustration for which terrorist acts become the focal outlet.

This process of identification with a particular, violent group can take many and often unexpected forms and is currently certainly not limited to jihadi factions of Islam. Borgeson and Valeri in Chapter 10 describe a Christian group that is given little coverage in most reviews of terrorism but which has been responsible, directly or indirectly, for a number of atrocities, most notably the Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh. The FBI has certainly identified their network as a terrorist threat that is nationwide across the USA. There are clear parallels to other loosely connected groups that oppose many aspects of the country in which they reside, but of particular significance is how much these groups are defined by a hatred for a common enemy. In the case of the Aryan Nations this has been most overtly the perception of Jewish and various ethnic minorities as diluting and degrading the Christian purity of nations.

As Borgeson and Valeri illustrate, this focus on a perceived enemy has led some of the leaders of the Aryan Nations to seek alliances with groups, notably al-Qaeda, whom many would regard as an obvious adversary for such a militantly Christian group. They define themselves so directly in relation to a common enemy that it reduces the feeling of hatred towards a symbolically less significant enemy. This demonstrates how much of the social psychology of terrorist groups is embedded in the rhetoric of who they are against rather than what their primary objectives are. This can result in the actions of these groups becoming ever more removed from any obvious ideal, or from clear

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objectives. Their actions centre on survival and their continued definition as a distinct entity.

Such flexibility in allowing their actions to be acceptable to them, provided they facilitate the group's existence, means that the fundamental criminality of their actions can readily overlap with what is more commonly thought of as organized crime. As Vishnevetsky shows in his fascinating account of youth gangs in Chechnya in Chapter 9, organized crime may be the route into terrorism for some individuals. This accords with the issues explored in Chapter 7 by Gupta and his colleagues. They show that distinguishing between terrorists and organized criminals is indeed difficult. There are, however, important albeit subtle differences that need to be determined in order to deal appropriately with the somewhat dissimilar challenges they pose to the social order.

The spread of interactions between terrorism and organized crime is also paralleled in the ways in which terrorist acts drift into state structures, being covertly or overtly supported by national authorities. In this regard the actions of Chechen leader Shamil Basayev, who masterminded the Budennovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan suicidal, hostage-taking raids, as acts against Russian control of Chechnya, would place those actions outside of Richardson's (2006) definition of terrorism. However, most of the processes that can be recognized in the more obviously terrorist groups were present in these violent attacks. This perspective on the Chechen terrorist attacks within Russia is especially useful to explore because it seems that the removal of Shamil Basayev and his replacement in Chechnya by another warlord, Ramzan Kadyrov, has changed the nature of the relationship between Chechnya and Russia.

Kadyrov seems to have achieved a more equitable relationship with the Russians by coalescing what Russell in Chapter 12 describes as the "needs" of the Chechens with the "greed" of those he needs to manage the country. Interestingly this includes weaning the Chechens of the Wahhabi approach to Islam which Basayev used to legitimize his actions, and instead to support the less aggressive Sufi tradition which had been dominant in Chechnya in earlier times. Thus Kadyrov's activities serve to show the importance for any insurgent groups of how the appropriate actions for dealing with their grievances are interpreted. The less attractive aspect of Kadyrov's dominion is its illustration of how generations of insurgency against oppression provide a landscape in which vicious, totalitarian rule can take root and prosper, suffocating the rule of law.

The Social Psychology of Terrorism

The organizational and economic processes that become an integral part of the survival of terrorist activities, their overlap with organized crime and evolution into tyrannical states inevitably have a form and life of their own that

is often undervalued when people write of isolated insurgent groups carrying out single atrocities. Where certain types of criminality are endemic, whether that is due to ideological commitment or criminal greed, then structures emerge that maintain and develop those crimes. These structures can help the criminal activity expand into something much more recognizable as a business. This is particularly true of terrorist groups for whom frequent kidnapping can become a major part of their activities. In Chapter 11 Phillips shows how the requirements of repetitive kidnapping lead to the need for many features that would be recognized in any business, although 'warehousing' and 'selling on' take more chilling meanings than in the conventional world of commerce. A particularly important consequence of this is that once such a 'business model' is in place it can have a self-sustaining quality that may mask the original ideological or political intentions.

The processes revealed when considering state-supported terrorism, as in Chechnya, and the integration with violent crime and such business-like spin-offs as kidnap for ransom draw attention to the complex but significant social processes of which terrorism is inevitably a part. In recent years there has been growing interest in modelling the networks of contacts to which the interactions between terrorists give rise. This may have been of more theoretical value, because of the interesting mathematics it makes possible, than of real practical benefit and has tended to treat terrorist networks as fixed in time. Mullins' examination in Chapter 8 of the growth of the foiled 'Millennial Plot' to bomb Los Angeles airport in 2000, and the 9/11 attack, is therefore salutary in showing that these networks are dynamic entities. They develop and change in various ways, although it is interesting to see that the foiled plot always had a less stable structure than the one that caused such destruction to the Twin Towers and the Pentagon.

Reporting Terrorism

The evolving complexity of terrorist groups with their many tentacles and strands into other areas of illegal activity whilst still professing an ideological or political set of objectives, however vague those objectives may be, makes it extremely difficult for journalists wishing to give a direct, simple coherent account of terrorists and their actions. It is therefore understandable that mass media accounts of terrorist actions will rely heavily on official statements, but these in themselves will inevitably be oversimplified with strong political biases. In the most technical chapter of the present volume, Chapter 13, Danis and Stohl illustrate the possibilities for careful content analysis of newspaper reports. These analyses show the difference in US and UK reporting and how those differences are themselves influenced by the outlet for these reports.

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Given that terrorism is fundamentally about making deeds speak, the way in which these deeds are reported and commented upon is crucial to the eventual impact of such acts of violence. However, the differences described in Chapter 13 do alert researchers to the need to get behind mass media reports to uncover the many different and interlinked faces of terrorism.

The Future

The dynamic, evolving and multi-faceted nature of terrorism indicates that it will be an ever-changing menace. It is therefore timely that Sharp Parker, in Chapter 14, reviews what is known of cyberterrorism and its potential. We should remember that just as the kamikaze pilots of World War II presaged the flying of airplanes into the Twin Towers, so the various computer threats that daily plague every one of us have to be taken seriously as possibly open to abuse by insurgents. It is well known that terrorists are already well versed in the use of the Internet to recruit, plan and co-ordinate. The widespread prevalence of Internet-based crime also provides a warning of the opportunities that are possibly available. The particular challenge here, as Sharp Parker points out, is that the international nature of many violent movements directly maps onto the globalization of the Internet. Therefore an international response is especially important in tackling this potential challenge.

Countering the Psychological Precursors to Terrorism

The heart of any attempts to undermine the central psychological processes that feed terrorism has to be to break down the simple division into the terrorist group and the rest. So many commentators draw attention to this issue of social identity that it is remarkable that politicians and educators are not more robust in their overt attempts to undermine any such simple-minded dichotomy. Indeed there are so many processes that support the distinction espoused by terrorists between 'us' and 'them' that without a major campaign to erode its distinctions the divisions are likely to become stronger and simpler.

What major public figures seem to underestimate is that the ingroup/outgroup division can all too readily be the skeleton which can be fleshed out with a heroic narrative enlivened by justifications for violence. Anyone who has seen the anodyne Danish cartoons of the Prophet that have been cited as the cause for violence and bloodshed around the globe will immediately realise that the cartoons themselves were of far less importance than the narrative in

which they were embedded that presents 'the West' insulting 'Islam' and the importance of revenge against such insults.

The human process of categorization is so fundamental that we are usually not aware that we are doing it. This lack of awareness is particularly dangerous when the categories are arbitrary and naïve. In the current climate there is a remarkably simple-minded notion of 'ethnicity' that colours far too many debates. As Marks (2002) amongst many others has made exceptionally clear, there is no biological basis to race and even less to any notion of 'ethnic' group. In broad terms, the closer together any two people live the more likely they are to share genetic material. So there will be some similarities within any population, but despite the superficial distinctions of skin colour or nose shape the major differences between people are in their attitudes and culture, not in their biology.

Any attempts to define individuals in terms of single characteristics, be it religion, country of birth, 'ethnicity', 'race' or even football team supported, rather than any of the many other ways they can be identified serves to foster the basis for the Samson syndrome (Canter, 2006). Education that unpacks the many different overlapping narratives that characterize human history has to be at the forefront in the fight against terrorism. Intending terrorists need to be aware that we are not all Philistines.

Disengagement

Part of the process of disengagement from terrorism, then, is to enrich the understanding of all those involved in the complexities of identity. But the intricacies of the social processes in which any individual is embedded make this more difficult. Both Horgan in Chapter 15 and Moghaddam in the concluding chapter discuss the difficulties of disengagement for people whose whole life and subculture have embraced terrorism. In their different ways these two experts show that the problems of disengagement are integrally linked with the processes that lead people into terrorism initially. These can be the bonds of family and kinship so clearly revealed in Kassimeris' case study of the 17N terrorist group in Chapter 6, or the broader ideological links that Williams discusses in Chapter 4. But as Moghaddam expresses so graphically these are people already well up a staircase who have to find a way down.

They can be helped to avoid entering the processes of terrorism in the first place by setting in motion psychological, political and cultural processes that recognize that terrorism is indeed a many-headed beast. No one discipline can claim to provide an understanding of how groups will emerge that wish to carry out symbolic acts of violence against the state. As is revealed throughout the chapters of the present volume the psychological distinctions that underlie

these atrocities are integrated into social and organizational processes. They can only be undermined and their power reduced by dealing with all the different faces of terrorism.

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