

Political Violence in the Form of International Terrorism: A Review of Weeks 1 & 2 Lecture & Readings

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Defining Terrorism: Problematic

- State sponsors and rogue groups blur defined terrorist acts
- Potentially politically loaded term:
 - One person's "terrorist" is another's "freedom fighter"
 - Non-scientific, non-empirical
- Hoffman, et al.: "How we define 'terrorism' shapes policy prescriptions to fight the same"
- Implications for international cooperation
- Can be difficult to define ultimately, but we have particular components common to most definitions

On the Internet: Resource Rich



THE WAR ON TERRORISM



Terrorism: Official Definitions

- Title 22, United States Code, Section 2656f(d)
 - “Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - “The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”

Official Definitions (cont'd)

- **U.S. Department of Defense**
 - The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological.
- **The United Nations**
 - Any action intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to carry out or to abstain from any act, cannot be justified on any grounds and constitutes an act of terrorism.”
Source: The Economist 10 September 2005, pg. 32.

Terrorism: A Working Definition

- Use of lethal violence or threat of violence
 - Political motivation (not necessarily exclusively political)
 - Individuals targeted are not directly connected to the political objective—violence is somewhat random
 - Perpetrators are not officially connected to the state
- * *See the discussion in Hoffman here.*

Psychology of Terrorism

- “What is frightening is not the abnormality of those who carry out the suicide attacks but their sheer normality.”
- “[O]ne of the most common motivations for joining a terrorist organization is the desire for revenge or retribution for a perceived injustice.”
- “Terrorists are exceptional demographically: usually males between 15 and 30 years of age.”
- “large-scale military responses to terrorism tend to be ineffective or temporarily to *increase* terrorist activity” [italics in original]

Source: Scott L. Plous and Philip G. Zimbardo (2004, Sept). “How Social Science Can Reduce Terrorism” *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Psychology of Terrorism (cont'd)

Motives/ Objectives

- Causing fear within a targeted audience
- Disrupting normal life
- Damaging infrastructure
- Undermining confidence in government
- Recognition
- Coercion
- Provocation

Terrorist Tactics - Overview

- Bombings
 - Attacks on infrastructure
- Assassinations
- Hostage-taking
- Hijacking
- Arson
- Biological/chemical attacks

Advantages of Terrorism

- Inexpensive compared to the efforts required to suppress it
- Requires little training or equipment
- Appeals to the heroic model of conflict; recruiting is relatively easy in distressed communities
- Sometimes generates good media coverage
- Makes conventional political movements look moderate in comparison

Disadvantages of Terrorism

- Almost never works by itself because the targets do not have political power;
 - Changing governmental policies requires either mass mobilization or elite influence; violence alone is not sufficient
- Tends to alienate the local population through
 - Random attacks
 - Government and international retaliation
- Violates assorted norms of international law and therefore alienates the international community
- Easily degenerates into conventional criminal activity
- Individual ideological terrorist movements typically last only about ten to fifteen years; cycles of terrorism last about twenty

Terrorism: The Start of a Typology

- State “terrorism” (shortcoming of field?)
 - Collective punishment
 - Suppression of dissidents
 - Some do not use terrorism to describe it, but rather prefer ‘repression’
 - State-sponsored use of terrorists, e.g. death squads

State Sponsors of Terrorism (US Dept of State, DoS)

<u>Country</u>	<u>Designation Date</u>
Cuba	March 1, 1982
Iran	January 19, 1984
North Korea	January 20, 1988
Sudan	August 12, 1993
Syria	December 29, 1979

Terrorism: A Typology (cont'd)

- Nationalist
 - Focused upon a certain state/country
 - Purpose is to acquire independence
 - Examples: ETA, IRA, PLO, PKK
- Criminal
 - Drug cartel, mafia(s)

Terrorism: A Typology (cont'd)

- Ideological
 - Anarchist: attempt to overthrow established gov'ts
 - Leftist: aiming to establish socialist/ communist govt
 - Rightist: neo-Nazi or neo-Fascist groups
 - “Religious”
 - 'divinely commanded purposes'?
 - Targeting broad categories of foes

Al-Qaeda Terrorism

- Diffuse organization of radical “Islamic” terrorists
 - 1980s - ‘Afghan Arabs’ v. Soviet force
 - 1990-1 – Gulf War; Saudi decision to allow US troops
 - 1991-6 – Sudan and Al-Qaeda
 - 1996-2002 – Afghanistan
 - 2002-present – Worldwide (Pakistan/Iraq/Indonesia)
- Focus on the USA and “Islamic” governments closely allied with the US (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan)

Al-Qaeda Terrorism (cont'd)



Al-Qaeda Attacks, First Decade

- February 26, 1993 - bombing of the WTC
- October 3, 1993 - killing of US soldiers in Somalia
- June 25, 1996 - truck bomb at Khobar Towers barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia
- August 8, 1998 - bombing of US Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- October 12, 2000 - bombing of the USS Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden
- September 11, 2001 - the WTC, and the Pentagon
- April 11, 2002 - truck bomb near an ancient Jewish shrine Djerba, Tunisia

Al-Qaeda Attacks (cont'd)

- May 8, 2002 - suicide bombing outside Sheraton Hotel in Karachi, Pakistan
- October 12, 2002 - nightclub bombings in Bali, Indonesia
- November 28, 2002 - suicide bomb at the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya
- May 12, 2003 - suicide bombing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- May 16, 2003 - explosions in Casablanca, Morocco
- November 15, 2003 - car bombs at the HSBC HQ in Istanbul, Turkey
- March 11, 2004 - ten bombs explode at a train station in Madrid, Spain

Al-Qaeda & 'Int' l Society'

How does it threaten our international society
(or 'club of states')?

(1) Monopoly of force

- Challenges notion of sovereign state being sole legitimate user of force
- 'less responsible' and 'unaccountable'

(2) Religious caliphate v. sovereign states

- Both territorial and source of legitimacy (divine v. secular)
- State system seen as 'immoral' by bin-Laden (separates Muslims)

Threat to International Society (cont'd)

(3) International Orgs and International Law

- Al Qaeda rejects UN as founded upon 'Western Norms'
- Int Law is man-made law; illegitimate source compared to God's law

(4) Undermining public's trust in state

- We no longer 'feel secure' in our nation-states

(5) Killing Civilians (bin Laden's Feb. 1998 "Fatwah")

'The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies--civilians and military--is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it'

Threat to International Society (cont'd)

(5) cont'd

Two Justifications for Fatwah against civilians

- American electorate democratically supports government policies
- Tit-for-Tat: US military makes no distinction itself

(6) Provokes most powerful member of International Society to overreact and undermine rules

- Get hegemon to conduct un-societylike policies
ie: Detention, torture, invading another sovereign state

Why are these important?

- Challenges notion of sovereign state being the sole legitimate user of force
- International Law is man-made law; illegitimate source compared to God's law
- Undermine public's trust in state: We no longer 'feel secure' in our nation-states
- Get hegemon/most powerful members of Intnat'l Soc to conduct un-society like policies, to overreact and undermine rule

Combating International Terrorism - Strategies

- (1) 'Bush Doctrine' or 'statist strategy'
make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them - President Bush, 9/20/2001

Assumptions

- *States only units with capabilities to support international terrorist groups*
- *State structures can be reformed to combat conditions promoting terrorism*
- *Traditional strategy (interstate war) for a non-traditional problem (transnational terrorism)*

Strategies (cont'd)

- (1a) 'Flypaper'
 - Attract terrorists to one spot and 'fight them there so we don't have to fight them here'
 - Assumes finite amount of terrorists
 - Iraq 2003 to present

Problems:

- May backfire by instead providing 'training ground' for terrorists (CIA analysis, May 2005)
- Moral: placing the war in someone else's country (Counter argument: bringing democracy)

Strategies (cont'd)

- (2) 'Cosmopolitan approach'
 - Terrorism is driven by economic and social deprivation
 - 'the root causes'
 - Poor/loss of state structures

Tactics:

- Nation-building (Somalia, Sudan, etc.)
- Economic aid

Strategies (cont'd)

- (3) Financial connections
 - Eliminating Al-Qaeda's financial resources
 - Also 'energy independence' -removing source of revenue that might eventually be used to finance terrorism
- (4) Police-Clandestine
 - Problem with 'statist' view is that Al-Qaeda is a non-state entity (less structured, less spatially specific)
 - Yet, Al-Qaeda sophisticated/technologically proficient
 - Must match individuals w/ individuals (surveillance)

Mixing Strategies

- Military action
 - But, indiscriminant force becomes counterproductive
- Law-enforcement
 - But, legal processes are slow and do not quickly impede terrorist organizations
- Financial restrictions
- Intelligence