

# The Emotive & Organizational Contexts of Terrorism

## Fear & Changes in Group Structures of Terror Organizations

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### The Study of Terrorism – Where We Are In The Field

- Key multidisciplinary questions for which we do not have sufficient answers:
  - What are the vulnerabilities of a networked terrorist organization?
  - What are some ideological differences among key terrorist groups, and how can these differences be exploited by counterterrorists?
  - What new approaches for combating terrorism can be developed in an open, democratic society?
  - What is the media's role as a "force multiplier" for both terror orgs. & CT purposes?

## The Study of Terrorism – Where We Are In The Field

Additional multidisciplinary issues requiring further research:

- Evolutions in terrorist strategies, weapons, & tactics
  - The dimensions of terrorism and WMD
  - Future acts of terrorist “judo” / adaptation of learning & technique
  - Information warfare / cyber terror to also include...
  - Electronic warfare
- Potential terrorist group alliances
  - Common ideology?
  - Complimentary goals/objectives?
  - Common enemy / common hatred of a particular policy?
  - Strategic sense (better potential for success by combining forces)?
  - Complimentary strengths? Mutual Gain?
- 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Warfare – strategic surprise & adaptation among orgs.?

How Do Terror Groups Maintain  
Themselves and/or Re-Constitute  
Themselves As Viable, Legitimate  
Political Threats?

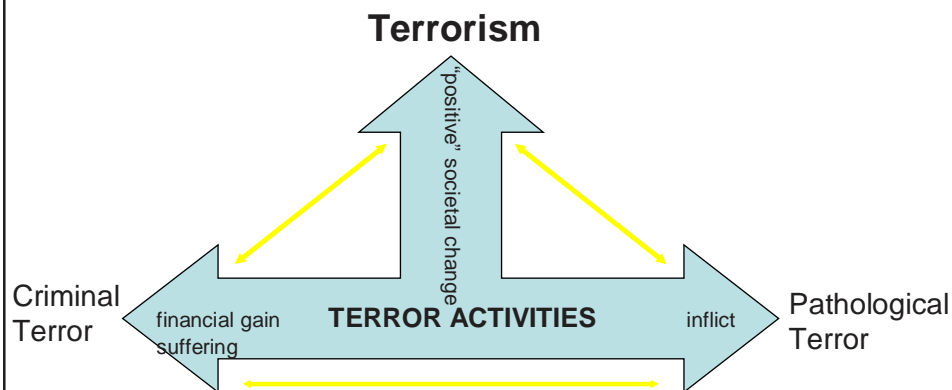
How Do Terror Organizations  
“Walk the Walk & Act in Credible  
Ways?”

Credibility as a key variable of note!

## Motivations for Terrorism - Macro

- Rational
  - Rational Choice Theory
    - When an individual makes a choice after weighing the consequences and rewards of an action or behavior.
    - For example, a terrorist thinks like a business person. The terrorist looks at all options and takes action on the choice that is most cost effective and beneficial to his/her cause.
- Psychological
  - Arises from the individual terrorist's personal dissatisfaction with a government or political system
  - Antisocial behaviors create “US” vs. “THEM”
  - Believe that everyone outside their own group is EVIL
- Cultural
  - Cultures shape values and motivate people to take action

## Micro - Org. & Ind'l Motivational Dimensions



## Trying to “Walk the Walk”

- Between 1970 & 1974, the Weather Underground (and its activists, the “Weathermen”) took responsibility for 12 bombings.
- The New World Liberation Front (NWLF)
  - Formed in San Francisco (1970)
  - Responsible for 30 bombings over next eight years
  - START GTD reports 1 fatality (1978) and 1 injury (1977) over this campaign
  - Claimed to be a “moral” revolutionary group, attacking only “legitimate” targets such as utility companies
  - Considered themselves at war with the establishment
  - Sought to recruit and ally with membership of the SLA and the BP in the SF Bay Area in the mid-1970s.
  - Published a magazine called, **The Urban Guerilla (TUG)**

## Alliances & Staving Off Loss

According to McLellan and Avery (1977) in their book *The Voices of Guns*, the NWLF had engaged in a campaign of more than 10 Bay Area bombings in late 1974 and 1975 alone:

- Aug. 6, 1974: Bomb failed to explode at Burlingame office of General Motors Acceptable Corporation;
- Sept. 3, 1974: Bomb exploded in the San Francisco office of Dean Witter and Company;
- Sept. 13, 1974: Bomb exploded at the Palo Alto office of Dean Witter and Company;
- Sept. 28, 1974: Bomb exploded in a warehouse of an ITT subsidiary in San Leandro;
- Oct. 2, 1974: Bomb exploded in a women's restroom of the ITT-owned Sheraton-Palace Hotel in San Francisco;
- Oct. 30, 1974: Bomb exploded at the Los Altos Hills home of retired ITT president Robert Halleck;
- Nov. 6, 1974: Seven meter maid three-wheeled motorcycles blown up in a Berkeley parking lot;
- Dec. 19, 1974: Bomb exploded in the San Francisco office of General Motors Corporation;
- Feb. 3, 1975: Bomb exploded at the San Jose office of General Motors Corporation;
- Feb. 4, 1975: Double bombing at Pillar Point Air Force Radar Station near Half Moon Bay and the Vulcan Foundry in Oakland;
- Feb. 6, 1975: Pipe bomb exploded at KRON-TV station in San Francisco;
- Aug. 4, 1975: Three NWLF fire bombs exploded in the carport of the Woodside home of Charles de Brettville, chairman of the Bank of California, a director of Pacific Gas and Electric, Shell Oil, Western Union and Safeway Stores, Inc.;
- Aug. 14, 1975: The NWLF claimed credit for bombing of an Emeryville police cruiser.
- By February 1975, the Bay Area was averaging one bombing every 16 days. The NWLF was linked to more than 70 bombings by authorities, mostly in Northern California.

## 1970s Activist Groups, SF Bay Area



## Trying to Walk the Walk

- NWLF's attempts to expand
  - Few new recruits willing to join so they 'expanded' by forming a number of brigades
  - In a final ploy to gain support, NWLF joined up with prison reform movement and allied with Tribal Thumb group
  - This alliance cemented their failure due to association with violent felons; lost all public support
    - Tribal Thumb was a group of militant ex-convicts

## Trying to “Walk the Walk”

- Why many modern terrorist groups fail:
  - In order to have effect, terrorist groups have to be large
  - To become large, group needs popular/political appeal
  - Need a cause that is acceptable to a large segment of the public
  - Most terrorist groups do not have this appeal and thus fail

Two Critical Variables For  
Credibility Among Terror Groups:  
Group Size & Campaign Length

## Group Size & Campaign Length

- Ted Robert Gurr's analysis of terrorist groups
  - Most terrorist actions involve only a few people who generate more noise than injury
  - The majority of successful groups embrace doctrines such as nationalism or religion
  - Large terrorist groups are more successful than small groups

## Group Size & Campaign Length

- Length of Terrorist Campaigns:
  - Most terrorist campaigns end within 18 months of the initial outburst of violence
  - Terrorism is short-lived because it seldom generates support

## Group Size & Campaign Length

- Implications of Gurr's Analysis
  - Conclusions imply that most terrorist organizations are small, short-lived operations
  - IF terrorism is the result of a popular social issue, the power of the group is enhanced
  - Strong support for a group is more important than the actual number of operatives

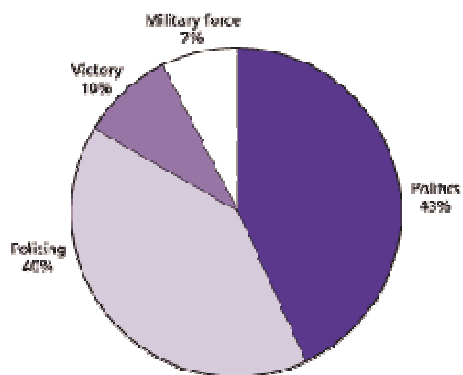
## The 'Sunsetting' of Terror Groups - RAND

How do terrorist groups end?

The evidence since 1968 indicates that terrorist groups rarely cease to exist as a result of winning or losing a military campaign.

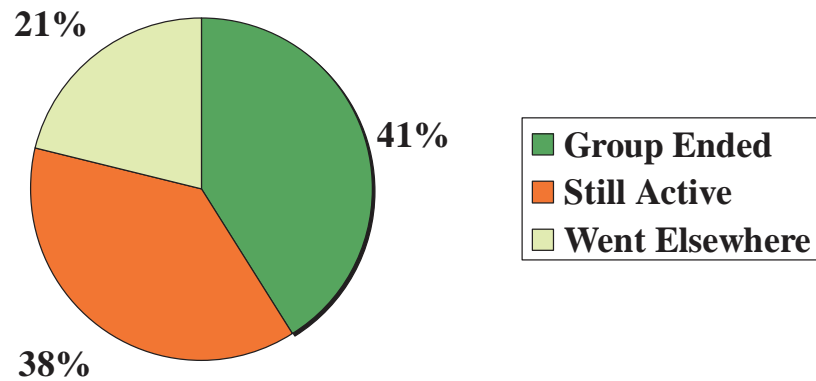
Rather, most groups end because of operations carried out by local police or intelligence agencies or because they join the political process.

This suggests that the United States should pursue a counterterrorism strategy against al Qa'ida that emphasizes policing and intelligence gathering rather than a "war on terrorism" approach that relies heavily on military force.





## Breakdown of 648 Terrorist Groups



Source: *How Terrorist Groups End*, Seth Jones & Martin Libicki, RAND 2008

## How Terrorist Groups End

- Policing (40%)
- Military force (7%)
- Splintering\*
- Politics (43%)
- Victory (10%)

Contributing Factors  
(usually a combination)

- Economic sanctions against supporters
- Target hardening
- Intelligence
- Diplomacy

\*136 of 648 in the study splintered. The group ended, but terrorist activities continued

Source: *How Terrorist Groups End*, Seth Jones & Martin Libicki, RAND 2008

## Group Size is Important

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- Italian Terrorist Groups
  - Between 1975 and 1985, there was a large number of terrorist actions in Italy
  - Only large groups involved in sustained actions/terrorist campaigns
  - Everything else was 'single incident' terrorism

## Group Size is Important

- Hezbollah
  - Serves as example of large successful group
  - Began as political group
  - In 1982, moved to Bekaa Valley in Lebanon
  - Hezbollah is large enough to maintain a campaign, and religion provides common base among its members

## Group Size is Important

- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
  - LTTE is bound by nationalism and ethnic identity
  - LTTE began fighting Sri Lankan government in 1976
  - Claimed to represent Tamil minority
  - May have had up to 10,000 members
  - While defeated, still rumblings of support & activism / activists

## Group Size is Important

- Terrorist Campaigns After WW II
  - Campaigns of large terrorist organizations accounted for majority of world terrorism
  - Large terrorist organizations have prompted governments to employ macropolicies
  - Large groups represent political threats

## Group Size is Important

- Values Vs. Large Base of Support
  - Most terrorists try to hide their most radical positions and sensationalistic violence to appeal to a broader base
  - This can and does ebb / flow with campaigns and with internal and external credibility pressures.

## Creating Terrorist Organizations

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- Pyramid Organization:
  - Support is most common job in terrorist groups
  - Fraser and Fulton's hierarchy of terrorist group:
    - Smallest group at the top is responsible for command
    - Second level is active cadre—people who carry out organization's mission
    - Third level is most important: active supporters
    - Fourth level is passive supporters; largest group

## Creating Terrorist Organizations

- Anthony Burton's Structure of Subunits:
  - Terrorist organizations have two primary types of subunits:
    - Cell
    - Column
  - The most basic unit is the cell. Composed of 4-6 people and specialized as tactical or intelligence section
  - Groups of cells create columns, which are semiautonomous groups with a variety of specialties and a single command structure

## New Models for a New Day: Post Cold War & Post 9/11 Terror Organizations

## New Models for a New Day

- Umbrella Organization
  - Several smaller pyramids gather under sheltering group that
    - Manages supplies
    - Obtains resources
    - Creates support structures
    - Gathers intelligence
  - Sheltering umbrella disassociated from violence, casting a blind eye when semiautonomous pyramid groups take action

## New Models for a New Day

- Organizations that emerged in the 1990s:
  - Virtual organizations were created through computer and information networks
  - Chain organizations linked separate groups with similar philosophies or religions without creating hierarchy
  - Centralized hubs developed to manage or support individual cells
  - “Leaderless resistance”—groups or individuals operating on their own

## New Models for a New Day

- New Organizational Styles:
  - As organizations change, network provides strength
  - Network is supported by larger nonviolent following
    - Motivated by nationalistic, ethnic, or religious concerns
  - Role of force multipliers dominates terrorism

## The Problems of Managing Organizations



## The Problems of Managing Organizations

- Special organizational problems:
  - Secrecy
  - Decentralization
  - Training
  - Internal Discipline
  - Gaining immediate tactical support for operations

## The Problems of Managing Organizations

- Bodansky's types of activities accompanying terrorist campaigns:
  - Intelligence—includes everything from selection/observation of targets to forging of documentation/travel papers
  - Direct logistical network—established to supply terrorists with weapons
  - Support network—for safe houses, transportation, food sources, and medical supplies

## The Problems of Managing Organizations

- Terrorist attacks require political support, planning, organization, and resources

The Individual:  
The Ultimate Small Group

## The Individual: The Ultimate Small Group

- Technology and the individual:
  - A technological structure can be changed into a weapon if attacked
    - Examples: power grid, fuel distribution system, computer network
  - For the first time in history, a single individual can become a lone force of significant destruction

## The Individual: The Ultimate Small Group

- Jessica Stern and the disturbing trend in terrorism:
  - Terrorists motivated by religion are gathering into loose groups with no leader
  - Many groups are virtual organizations held together by ideology and information

## The Individual: The Ultimate Small Group

- Louis Beam
  - A right-wing extremist leader involved with Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nations
  - Believed that a group could not evade law enforcement, so he called for elimination of organizations

## The Individual: The Ultimate Small Group

- “Leaderless Resistance”
  - Extremist groups do not need extensive organizations
    - Only necessary to take action
  - Examples:
    - Green Party extremists in Germany
    - Animal Liberation Front
    - Timothy McVeigh

## The Individual: The Ultimate Small Group

- Lone Wolf
  - In the right-wing fantasy novel Hunter, protagonist (individual) serves as example of how an individual extremist can murder people of color and Jews in the name of White supremacy
  - Eric Rudolph—charged in connection with 4 bombings ranging from 1996 Atlanta Olympics to 1998 abortion clinic bombing

## The Individual: The Ultimate Small Group

- Berserker
  - White defines berserkers as crazed, frightened true believers
  - Can leave a trail of clues