The Strategic Implications of Terrorism

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Concept and Typology

Terrorism is a special form of political violence. It is not a philosophy or a political movement. Terrorism is a weapon or method which has been used throughout history by both states and sub-state organisations for a whole variety of political causes or purposes. This special form of political violence has five major characteristics:

- it is premeditated and aims to create a climate of extreme fear or terror;

- it is directed at a wider audience or target than the immediate victims of the violence;

- it inherently involves attacks on random and symbolic targets, including civilians;

- the acts of violence committed are seen by the society .in which they occur as extra-normal, in the literal sense that they breach the social norms, thus causing a sense of outrage;

- and terrorism is generally used to try to influence political behaviour in some way: for example to force opponents into conceding some or all of the perpetrators demands, to provoke an over-reaction, to serve as a catalyst for a more general conflict or to publicise a political or religious cause, to inspire followers to emulate violent attacks, to give vent to deep hatred and the thirst for revenge, and to help undermine governments and institutions designated as enemies by the terrorists.

Terrorism is a very broad concept. [1]. The role of typology is to sub-divide the field into categories which are more manageable for research and analysis. One basic distinction is between state and factional terror. There is of course a very considerable historical and social science literature on aspects of state terror.[2]. In view of the sheer scale of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and mass terror that have been and are being committed by regimes, this is a more severe and intract~ble problem for humanity than the containment

and reduction of factional terror by often very tiny groups. And it is important to observe that historically state terror has often been an antecedent to, and, to varying degrees, a contributory cause of, campaigns of sub-state terrorism. And once regimes come to assume that their ends justify the means they tend to get locked into a spiral of terror and counter-terror against their adversaries.

Another important distinction is between international terrorism, involving the citizens of two or more states, and domestic or internal terrorism which confines it's activities within the borders of a specific state or province. Terrorism analysis based entirely on international incident statics cannot provide an accurate picture of world trends in terrorism because it excludes well over ninety percent of terrorist activity around the globe.3. A further complication is that almost all prolonged domestic terrorist campaigns have an 'international dimension. In most cases their leaders expend considerable effort seeking external sources of political support, cash, weapons, safe haven, and other useful assets, from friendly governments and political. movements as well as from their own diasporas.

A particularly useful way of mapping the different types of sub-state terrorist groups active in the contemporary international system is to classify them according to their underlying political motivation or ideological orientation.4. No broad categorization can do full justice to the variety and complexity of the modern phenomena of terrorism but a comprehensive review of the social science literature on terrorism reveals abundant evidence of currently active groups involved in terrorist activity motivated by one or more of the following: nationalism, separatism, racism, vigilantism, ultra-left ideology, religious fundamentalism, millenialism, and single-issue campaigns (eg. animal rights, anti-abortion). To obtain a useful preliminary map of the main types of terrorism in the world today we need to add to this list of sub-state terrorisms the phenomena of state terror and state sponsored terrorism. Although the ending of the Cold War and the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact communist regimes dramatically reduced the number of states involved in the routine use of regime terror and state sponsorship of terrorism for both domestic and foreign policy purposes it by no means eradicated these forms of terrorism. In view of the wide range of terrorist players and motivations our brief analysis of major trends in terrorism must avoid the dangerous reductionism involved in some of the recent American attempts to characterize the whole phenomenon of terrorism on the basis of trends in international terrorism against American targets, and wmd terrorism,5 which thankfully still remains a potential threat rather than a trend. I am not arguing that we should ignore or neglect the challenges of international terrorism or the possible dangers that might ensue if a terrorist group or state were to attempt to emulate the example of the Aum Shinrikyo's Tokyo nerve gas attack and to do this with greater technical competence. I am suggesting simply that it is dangerous to

focus obsessively on a single type of terrorist threat. And with regard to wmd terrorism, I shall argue later that this is still a low probability threat even if potentially of high consequence. Terrorism researchers and analysts and counter terrorism policy makers need to be able to understand the much broader trends in terrorism and their possible strategic implications and impact both for their own societies and for the international community, and the relative significance of specific trends or types of terrorism in global terms.

The Effectiveness of Terrorism as a Strategic Weapon

There is abundant evidence from recent history to show that terror has worked as a weapon for ruthless dictators in achieving strategic goals. For example, Stalin and his successors were able to use the Soviet apparatus of state terror to maintain themselves in power for half a century.[6]. The Serbs used mass terror with devastating effect in their campaigns of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.[7] They succeeded in changing the entire demographic map of the region irreversibly. If it had not been for NATO's efforts Milosevic would have been able to achieve similar results by ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.[8].

For sub-state groups lacking the powerful resources available to ruthless regimes the weapon of terrorism has a far less successful track record in winning strategic goals. It is certainly the case that in the period of post-Second World War anti-colonial struggles terror proved an extremely effective weapon against British and French colonial rule.[9] It could be said to have played the primary role in causing British withdrawal from the Palestine Mandate, the Canal Zone, Cyprus and Aden. FLN terrorism, proved the decisive weapon in ultimately forcing the French to withdraw from Algeria. However, in all these conflicts the circumstances were uniquely favourable for those struggling to overthrow colonial rule. Britain and France were weakened economically and militarily after six years of world war. Their citizens had no stomach for maintaining control over distant colonial dependencies, especially when it risked the lives of their young soldiers. The whole international and UN climate was opposed to the continuation of colonial regimes. In most cases the British and French governments were already intensively engaged in negotiating withdrawal from their colonies and handing over power peacefully to new nationalist governments. Last but not least, in most of the countries where they found themselves confronting insurgent terrorism they proved unable to obtain even the minimum level of support and co-operation from the indigenous populations so vital to gathering intelligence and capturing and ultimately defeating the rebels.

These anti-colonial struggles are nevertheless the exceptions that prove the rule. There is no other clear case in modern times of a democratic government or a dictatorship being overthrown using the primary weapon of terrorism and substituting a government of the

terrorists' own choice.10 It appears that dictators have been sufficiently ruthless to suppress such challenges by force. Modern democracies have been able to benefit from the fact that the overwhelming majority of their citizens see the democratic government as legitimate and are willing to rally to its support in opposing any terrorist challenge.11

In view of terrorism's poor track record in winning strategic goals it is necessary to ask why terrorism has become the most ubiquitous form of political violence in our times.12 An important part of the explanation for this is that terrorism has proved a low cost, low risk, cost effective and potentially high yield means of winning useful tactical objectives for its perpetrators, such as massive publicity, securing the release of large numbers of terrorist prisoners from gaol, and the extortion of considerable sums to finance the purchase of more weapons and explosives and the launching of a wider campaign.

A second explanation for the continuing appeal and spread of terrorism as a means of struggle is that its more sophisticated and clever leaders and planners know that although it is unlikely to work as a strategic weapon in isolation it can be extremely effective as an auxiliary weapon or in combination with other methods in a longterm strategy. For example, the IRA's leaders who recently came within an ace of getting their political wing's leaders appointed to the power sharing government in Northern Ireland without having decommissioned a single bullet or an ounce of Semtex must have concluded that the strategy of the Armalite and the ballot box does work after all. There is a real danger that by treating terrorist political fronts as if they were normal political parties a democratic government will unwittingly allow the terrorists to win by the back door access to the power they have so long sought but failed to gain by the bomb and the gun alone. The battle to defend democratic principles and values and the rule of law is not simply a task of physical security: it must also be fought and won at the political and moral level.

A final point I wish to make about the strategic effectiveness of terrorism as a weapon is that there is evidence in recent years suggesting that even if it cannot yet succeed in toppling governments and installing its own in their place it can nevertheless have' a very serious political impact in certain situations, with extremely damaging consequences for national and even international security and stability. A notable illustration was the impact of the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin and the Hamas suicide bombs on Israeli politics and the peace process in the Middle East. These events undoubtedly dealt a fatal blow to Labour's chances of winning the key 1996 election. As a result the government of Mr. Netanyahu come to power and because it had a totally different vision of the Peace Process the period of co-operation ushered in by the 1993 Oslo accord almost came to an abrupt end. It was certainly on a life support system, and even now it is going to be extremely hard for Mr. Barak, the new Prime

Minister of Israel, and Mr. Arafat to find a way of overcoming the major obstacles to a lasting peace. It is hard to underestimate the extent of the delay and damage caused by terrorism to the Peace Process.

Major Current Trends in Terrorism

A major trend during the 1980s and 90s has been an upsurge in the number and severity of ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts in which the use of mass terror against the designated 'enemy' civilian population has become a standard weapon for forcing them to flee from their land and homes. 99% of significant armed conflicts in the world today are' intrastate conflicts, the majority with an underlying ethnic or religious conflict at their root. The causes of this upsurge are to be found not only in historical ethnic rivalries and hatreds but also in the structure of the post-Cold War international system. We are seeing the spread of a new world disorder, in which bitter ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts have become the characteristic mode of warfare from the Balkans and the Caucasus to South Asia and Central Africa. Typically these wars are interwoven with mass terror, ethnic cleansing anti a total disregard for the international humanitarian laws of war.

A second significant trend common to both internal and international terrorism is the emergence and consolidation of terrorist groups wholly or in part motivated by religious fanaticism.13 In the late 1970s all active international terrorist groups had secular goals and beliefs, a majority professing some variant of Marxism. By the end of the 1990s no less than a third of all currently active international terrorist groups were religiously motivated, the majority professing Islamist beliefs. It has been argued that religious fanaticism causes a greater propensity for mass-lethality inside indiscriminate attacks, because a bomber who believes he is carrying out the will of God or Allah and waging a Holy War is unlikely to be inhibited by the prospect of causing large-scale carnage. The religious fanatic is also likely to be more susceptible to the idea of sacrificing his or her own life for the cause. However, it is worth recalling that members of secular nationalist terrorist groups such as the Tamil Tigers and the PKK have also carried out suicide bombings.

It would also be wise to avoid exaggerating the religious aspects of many of these groups. For example, although the fundamentalist Islamist groups constantly use religious language and justifications, as for example Osama bin Laden's notorious Fatwa,14 there is a very strong political agenda underlying their campaigns: the GIA demands an Islamic Republic be established in Algeria, Hezbollah wants an Islamic Republic in Lebanon, Hamas wants an Islamic Republic in Palestine, and so on. Moreover, the intensive activity of these groups in attempting to build political parties, where this is permitted by the state, and to create a social base of health, welfare and educational

facilities, belies the idea that these movements should be solely perceived in religious terms.

There are five other major recent general trends at work among domestic terrorist groups in many countries which have been widely observed in the specialist literature: (i) the trend towards huge bomb attacks on city centres, (ii) the trend towards mass-lethality attacks, and (iii) the trend towards attacks designed to inflict massive damage on national economies, either by bombing key financial and commercial districts or by attacking vulnerable key sectors (eg. terrorist attacks on the tourist industries in Egypt and Turkey); and (iv) in many countries there has been a major escalation in hostage-taking for the purposes of extortion against families, companies and governments; and (v) much more extensive and closer collaboration between political -terrorist groups and international organised crime (for example the alliances between the degenerate 'guerrilla' organizations of Colombia and the drug barons).

Postmodern Theory or Reality?: The Debate on the 'New' Terrorism

Some writers on terrorism have delineated what they would argue is a new form of transnational terrorism which, they suggest, is far more complex and difficult to monitor, analyse, and combat than 'traditional terrorism': some claim that this 'new' terrorism is displacing the older forms of terrorism and has now become the major threat.15

According to this account the older hierarchical terrorist organizations with clearly defined commagd structures, permanent cadres of professional terrorists, and links with state sponsors, have now been eclipsed by more amorphous and diffuse loosely connected nuclei inspired by spiritual mentors such as Sheikh Omar Abd-al-Rahman, operating as amateur 'freelance' groups to carry out specific operations. Many obtain their ideas and fuel their hatreds through the Internet. These 'new' terrorists take advantage of extensive private transnational financial support networks of the kind run by Osama bin Laden. They avoid links with state sponsors. For all these reasons they are a very much harder type of terrorist network for individual states and the international community to counter.

There is certainly a considerable amount of circumstantial evidence to suggest that such networks exist. The US authorities appear confident that Osama bin Laden was at the centre of the conspiracy to bomb the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998. However, the US investigative authorities have encountered considerable difficulties in securing eviderice which would enable them to prove beyond doubt bin Laden's precise role in the East Africa bombings. It also appears that bin Laden's relations with the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan are more complex than first seemed. 16

We need much more information before we can confidently evaluate the accuracy of the New Terrorism hypothesis. However, these more recent developments in international terrorism may not be as new as some assume. Transnational terrorism can trace its pedigree at least back to Bakunin and the 19th century Anarchism [17]. Religious fanaticism as a motivation is hardly new, and many groups in the past have maintained their campaigns without the benefit of state sponsorship . [18] Even the idea of 'leaderless resistance', where a movement leaves it to the initiative and judgement of its individual members to carry out attacks as and when they are able on the types of targets already designated in the pronouncements of the group is hardly new. [19]

A close examination of trends in terrorism world~wide does not lead one to conclude that we now confront an entirely new phenomenon of 'post-modem' terrorism in place of the 'old' terrorist regimes and movements of the 1970s and 80s. The regimes using terror against their own populations have been doing so for decades. The ending of the Cold War removed many state sponsors of terrorism from the scene at a stroke, but the currently active major state sponsors have been part of the international scene for between two or three decades. The majority of the secular international terrorist movements active in the late 1990s were established in the 1970s and most of those motivated by religion emerged in the 1980s. It is significant that only two of the active major terrorist groups listed in the US State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1996 were founded in the 1990s: the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria and Harakat ul-Ansar (HUM in Pakistan. All of these groups have known aims, organisational structures and leading activists, and various links. with like-minded organisation and/or states.

It has been claimed that the 'post-modem' terrorist groups do not claim responsibility for their attacks, but as Bruce Hoffman has argued [20], this is by no means a new development. It is also claimed that the 'new' terrorism is more amorphous, more diffuse, and often planned and committed by 'freelance' or 'walk-on' terrorists . [21] Here we must be very careful not to generalise about the terrorist scene generally on the basis of particular terrorist attacks, such as a the World Trade Centre bombing, which displayed some radical departures from the modus operandi more generally employed by terrorist organisations. If one looks at the world of domestic terrorist groups, one is struck by their innate 'conservatism' in terms of choice of tactics, weaponry, targeting and their ability to evolve and to adapt to changes in their environment and intensified efforts by governments to suppress them.

By far the most worrying and significant trend in terrorism world-wide is its growing lethality and tendency towards indiscriminate attacks in public places. Yet even when it comes to the terrorist group's choice of weaponry it is by no means obvious or inevitable that they will decide

to deploy weapons of mass destruction. The discussion of the future of
terrorism in the next section will seek to examine both the factors that
might impel terrorists towards use of weapons of mass destruction
and the very real constraints, disadvantages and dangers involved. In
the real world of terrorism democratic governments and societies are
going to have to deal with both 'old' and 'new' terrorist organisations,
tactics and weapons simultaneously, and we need to be aware of the
continuities in terrorist developments as well as possible lessons from
past experience which may help us to deal more effectively with such
threats in the future.

The Debate about wmd Terrorism

It may surprise those in the media and strategic studies specialists
with little familiarity with the study of terrorism to learn that the
majority of my colleagues remain highly sceptical about the possibility
of terrorists using nuclear, or biological weapons and very doubtful of
the possibility of other groups emulating Aum Shinrikyo's use of a
chemical weapon. In the proceedings of a conference of experts on the
future of terrorism to be published later this year 22 there is not is not
a single paper which concludes that wmd terrorism is other than a
low probability threat. Far from fuelling alarmism they counsel that
there are still powerful constraints and inhibitions working against a
shift to wmd terrorism. They point out that the method of making
nerve gases - and biological pathogens had been known for decades
prior to the Tokyo attack, and that there has been no attempt to
emulate the Aum Shinrikyo attack in the five years since the event.
They make the important point that despite Aum's considerable
investment of expertise and effort they botched their chemical weapon
attack in Tokyo. The Oklahoma bomb, a conventional fertiliser device,
proved far more lethal than Aum's nerve gas attack. Why should
terrorists take risks in handling chemical, biological or nuclear
weapons when this will inevitably increase the danger to themselves
and when they can continue to achieve their terrorist objectives by
using well-tried, low-risk, low cost conventional terrorist weapons?
And would they be likely to risk provoking the huge public backlash
and security crackdown which would surely follow if they attempted a
wmd attack, a crackdown which might well eradicate their
organisation completely?

These undoubtedly constitute, in combination, a powerful set of
inhibitors against future wmd terrorist attacks. But it would be foolish
to totally discount the possibility of such attacks. The Japanese
authorities have not closed down the Aum group, and in any case how
can one be absolutely sure that Aum is the only group prepared to
cross this threshold? There may be a handful of other fanatical cults
or hate groups which simply do not share or respond to the rationality
of self-preservation and collective self-interest and which are driven by
their own private agenda of mass destruction. Wmd terrorism remains
a low-probability threat, but it is so potentially high consequence that

all prudent governments, their intelligence services and their police and military specialists in counterterrorism, must be able to deploy intelligence gathering, proactive measures, crisis management, and post-incident emergency assistance to deal with the spectrum of wmd threats. However, it is equally important to ensure that this contingency planning is not at the expense of resources and expertise to deal with other existing and high probability threats from terrorists using 'conventional' weapons.

Counter Terrorism Strategies for Democracies

The experience of modem terrorism in democratic societies has shown that there are no simple solutions. There are many pathways out of terrorism: some lead in opposite directions, whole others provide alternative routes to strengthening democracy and reducing violence. Let us briefly identify six main possible pathways out of terrorism.

(a) The terrorists solve the problem on their terms: they achieve their goals and abandon the violence as it is no longer seen as necessary. This has only happened very rarely. In a number of colonial independence struggles in the 1950s and 1960s (Palestine, Algeria, Cyprus, Aden) something very close to this did occur. But the conditions of decaying colonialism, provided exceptional opportunities for terrorists which no longer exist in the 1980s: for example, the colonial regimes lacked the will to maintain their control and were gravely economically and militarily weakened by the exertions of the Second World War.

(b) The terrorists perceive the inevitable failure of their campaign, or in any case grow weary of it, and give up their violent struggle without having achieved their goals. An example of this was the abandonment of the struggle by the IRA in Northern Ireland in 1962.

(c) The terrorist campaign may be eradicated within the borders of the State by determined and efficient military action. For example, a draconian military campaign virtually wiped out the Tupamaros'campaign in Uruguay. But this was at the heavy cost of the virtual suspension of democratic government in Uruguay and its replacement by military rule. A frequent effect.of this strategy is to drive the terrorist residue into exile. The campaign may thus be continued abroad, including attacks on the diplomats of the target State, With the terrorist hope of carrying their fight back to their homeland.

(d) A fourth scenario is a political solution on the State's terms which nevertheless makes sufficient concessions to gennine and deeply felt grievances of a particular group that in effect dry up the water in which the terrorist 'fish' swim. There have been a few examples of remarkably successful use of this strategy. It was extremely effective in the case of the South Tyrol (Alto Adige) where the autonomy measure passed by theItalian Senate in 1971 defused a violent

campaign. But in most cases this method has only limited success because there are always 'maximalists' or 'irreconcilables' among the terrorists who refuse to abandon the struggle unless or until their absolute demands are met. Hence, despite the bold and imaginative measures taken by the French and Spanish governments respectively to introduce a real regional autonomy in Corsica and the Basque region, hard-line terrorist gro *Ups in each case have continued to wage violence.

(e) Many democratic states attempt to deal with internal terrorism as essentially a problem of law enforcement and judicial control viewing terrorist actions as serious crimes and dealing with them firmly under the criminal code. There have been some remarkably successful applications of this approach, for example against the early generations of the Red Army Faction in West Germany and against the Red Brigades and other terrorism groups in Italy. In both these cases it is true that the laws and the judicial process had to be strengthened in order to cdpe with -the ruthlessness and cunning. of the terrorists. But it is manifestly the, case that in both countries essential democratic valu es and ,institutions and the rule of law remain intact despite these long and bitter campaigns of terrorists to undermine the State and to provoke it into overreaction. There are often serious residual problems with this approach, however Some terrorists will inevitably succeed in escaping justice by fleeing abroad, as has been the case with many Red brigades and Red Army Faction members who have fled,to France, 'Terre d'Asile'. From their new bases abroad they may then continue to wage violence and attempt to re-build their networks within their home countries. Nor does the problem end when terrorists are successfully apprehended, tried and convicted. As our penal systems are ill-adapted and under-equipped to handle large numbers of imprisoned terrorists, it is all too easy for militant and determined lerrorists, with considerable expertise of covert activity outside gaol, to begin to reestablish their terrorist organisations within the prison system. In addition, using the aid of pro-terrorist lawyers and friends, they can even hope to establish a network outside prison which they can direct, or at least. strongly influence, from inside gaol. Hence the law-enforcement solution by itself is inevitably incomplete. Without additional measures there is the strong likelihood of new terrorist movements recreating themselves from the ashes of the old.

(f) Finally there is the educative solution, in which the combination of educational effort by democratic political parties, the mass media, trade unions, churches, schools, colleges and other major social institutions, succeeds in persuading the terrorists, or a sufficient proportion of their supporters, that terrorism is both undesirable and counterproductive to the realisation of the terrorists' political ideals. This approach is, of course, fraught with enormous difficulties and requires many years of patient work before it yields results. It has rarely been tried on a major scale. However, small-scale experiments in the re-education and rehabilitation of former members of ETA-

military and the Red Brigades indicate that it can be extraordinarily successful in certain cases.

Democratic pathways out of terrorism (d), (e) and (f), are obviously not mutually exclusive. Undoubtedly the most effective policy will be multi-pronged, involving skilfully co-ordinated elements of each. However, with the exception of models (a) and (b), in which the terrorist group itself takes the decision to abandon its violence, there is no sound basis for assuming that the total eradication of terrorism violence from democratic society is feasible. It is part of the price we must pay for our democratic freedoms that some may choose to abuse these freedoms for the purposes of destroying democracy, or some other goal.

It follows that an essential part of democratic effort must be to provide effective pathways out of terrorism for the individual. By so doing we will constantly be aiming to minimise the threat of residual or irreconcilable terrorism which may otherwise slowly regroup and regain sufficient support and strength to launch fresh campaigns of violence. In this constant moral and psychological battle of attrition~ democratic authorities must constantly seek more imaginative ways of enabling individual members of terrorist organisations to make a complete break with their comrades and leaders who, for their part, strive to keep their members under an iron grip.

Individual Pathways Out of Terrorism

The first thing to understand about the problem is the colossal pressure which keeps the individual terrorist bonded to the terrorist group. He or she will have been intensively indoctrinated, literally brainwashed, into seeing the world through terrorist spectacles. They will have been taught to hate everyone associated with government and the legal system, especially the police, with a blind loathing. They will be schooled into suspecting the authorities' every move, habitually disbelieving their every statement, constantly vigilant for new traps or ruses set by the 'enemy'. Moreover, they will have it instilled into them that the only important thing in life is the furtherance of their cause. Every involvement in a terrorist action will further reinforce this and will be rationalised as the dedicated pursuit of justice. They are taught to see every bombing, each shooting, each fresh act of violence against the 'enemy' state, as a heroic act, as the living of the true revolutionary existence. Terrorist violence is thus transvalued in their minds to provide meaning and purpose to their hitherto 'wasted' lives. Once this process of indoctrination and mental bonding to the ideology of the group has reached a certain point it is extremely difficult to even bring the terrorists to question their fundamental ideological assumptions and beliefs, let alone abandon them.

A second major constraint is the individual terrorist's fear of his/her own group. Terror has always been the method used to ruthlessly

control discipline within the conspiratorial world of the terrorist organisation. Kneecapping, shooting in the hand or foot and torture are punishments frequently meted out for relatively minor violations of the rules laid down by the leadership. Major
infractions or repeated disobedience of the leaders' orders usually Mean death. If the individual terrorist is tempted to 'disappear' or is suspected of having gone over to the side of the authorities, the terrorists will try to mete out vengeance on their closest family members. Faced with such deadly threats from their own group, it is little wonder that few of them find the courage to try to break with the past.

Thirdly, even if they can break these bonds, some individual terrorists will be deterred from breaking with their group because of the apparently insuperable difficulties of rehabilitating themselves mi normal society. They will be in constant fear of being handed over to the authorities. In order to get a job, buy a car or obtain a home, they will need false identity papers, and will be in constant fear of their true identity being discovered by their employers and by the police. If he or she wishes to get married, register a birth or death, obtain a passport, open a bank account or acquire social security benefits then these difficulties will be compounded. If the terrorist knows that the normal sentence for the crime(s) of which they have been guilty is severe, say at least ten years' imprisonment, they may calculate that the dangers of leaving the group's protective 'underground' cover and the added risk of arrest outweigh the disadvantages of continued terrorist membership.

Countries such as Italy and the United Kingdom already have some considerable experience of the ways in which these conflicting pressures tug at the emotions and divide the loyalties of those who are hesitating on the brink of turning state's evidence. The 'repentant terrorist' legislation in Italy (which is now being used to combat the Mafia) and the 'Supergrass' system in Northern Ireland, have both provided invaluable intelligence about the operations, membership and plans of their respective terrorist groups. It is notoriously difficult for the police to infiltrate the cell structures of modern terrorist organisations. Hence this type of 'inside information' from informers is often the sole means of securing the information to bring terrorists to trial and to convict them. This experience has also led to an intensification of the terrorist leaderships' attempts to punish and deter those who may seek to betray them, for they know that once such a process gets well under way it can rapidly demoralise and destroy their whole campaign. This underlines the absolute necessity of providing 'supergrasses' with new identities and secure new lives to protect them from assassination by their former comrades.

In spite of this important and fascinating experience, which incidentally has hardly begun to be subjected to any serious research by social scientists, it must be said that our democratic legal and

penal systems remain extraordinarily ill-suited to the specialised tasks of winning over individual members of the terror organisations and setting about their long-term rehabilitation in normal society.

There are many who would deny the need to bother with such efforts. It is easy to pour cold water on theories and policies of rehabilitation which have proved of very limited value in application to conventional crime. Yet there is reason to believe that the terrorist who has been subjected to intensive political indoctrination and conditioned by the terrorist training and way of life is potentially susceptible to determined, skilful and wellplanned reeducation and rehabilitation techniques, if only we could make these available within our penal systems.

It is of course a very important consideration in any rule of law system that there should be no special privileges or discrimination in favour of those who plead political motives for their crimes of violence. According terrorists special status only serves to legitimise and perpetuate their own self-perception as 'freedom fighters' and 'heroes', and simultaneously undermines the general public's confidence in the impartiality and consistency of the judicial system. But why should we not be more innovative and sophisticated in our al)plication of penal policy? The prisons already. have the broad tasks of education and rehabilitation, though few have the resources to do these jobs well. There is already considerably flexibility in reviewing sentences and in the parole system. There is no reason whatever, in principle, why we should not make a more serious effort within the prisons to reeducate and rehabilitate, and to inject the expertise and relatively modest resources necessary to cope with the special problems of terrorist offenders, in just the same way that we make special provision for trying to wean drug addicts away from their addictions. In the long term such measures would make a substantial contribution by significantly reducing the danger of terrorist cells reconstituting within the prison systems and of terrorists returning to their careers of violence when ultimately released 23. Currently.in most penal systems little or nothing is being done to open up these individual pathways out of terrorism. Intense efforts in this field will be required if they are to have any effect, and we should be under no illusion that it will be easy to win back the committed terrorist.

Prophylaxis, Preventive Diplomacy and Efforts towards Conflict Resolutions

So far this study has concentrated on the security policies that have a proven track record in reducing, or in some cases eradicating, terrorist campaigns against liberal states. An effective pro-active counter-terrorism policy based on a high-quality intelligence system and effective co-ordination and professionalism, determination and courage among the police and judiciary may be enough to eradicate ideological groupuscules such as the CCC in Belgium, the AD in

France and the BR in Italy. But they are unlikely to be sufficient to quell the terrorist movement with a genuine base of mass support among an ethnic or ethnoreligious constituency. No truly liberal democratic government can afford to ignore the demands and aspirations of a genuinely popular movement, even if that movement only has the full support of a sizeable minority of the population. The democratic authorities need to defeat the terrorist leadership at the political level by showing that the government is capable of responding imaginatively to the legitimate demands and aspirations of the very social groups the terrorist seek to mobilise.

An efficient democratic government will attempt to remain sensitive to the needs of all sectors of society and take effective action to remedy widely perceived injustices before they fester into full-blown rebellion. It is a common mistake to assume that such injustices are always perceived in purely materialistic terms, such as access to jobs, housing and so forth. Social scientific research suggests that perceived deprivation of civil and political rights, such as downgrading the status of a language, is far more of a danger to stability than purely material deprivation .24

Timely and effective political, social and economic measures should be introduced because of their inherent worth and the degree of popular support they enjoy. At the same time, such measures can have the inestimable advantage of serving as prophylactics against violence, insurrection and terrorism.

In cases of long-standing and potentially bitter and violent ethnic conflicts within liberal democratic states, imaginative policies designed to give fuller recognition and rights to a minority population can be the ' most effective way of preventing or greatly dimishing polarisation and armed conflict. An outstanding example of this method of heading off a potentially bitter and prolonged civil war was the Italian government's 1972 statute granting a considerable degree of autonomy to the German-speaking province of South Tyrol, where terrorist violence was an increasing danger at that time. There is wide agreement that Italy's policy on the South Tyrol issue was pretty effective.

Similarly, the 1978 Statute of Autonomy granted to the Basque region by the Madrid government, appears to have been very successful, and has led to the increasing isolation of ETA-M, which has so far refused to abandon its demands for a totally independent Marxist Basque state. The Statute of Autonomy has not been sufficient to eradicate ETA violence, but it has helped to marginalise it and it has captured the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of Basques. The French have tried a similar approach in their attempts to resolve the Corsican conflict, but so far with little success.

However, attempts to resolve bitter international conflicts which have spawned international terrorism are fraught with even more difficulties and dangers. The current efforts by the Israeli government and the moderates in the Palestinian movement to counteract rejectionist terrorism deserve the widest possible support from liberal democratic countries throughout the world. There is no doubt that the recent barbaric terrorist bomb attacks by Hamas and Isla mic: Jihad were aimed at derailing the peace process. All states supporting the peace process must constantly reaffirm their determination not to allow the terrorists to get their own way and to press on with patient and determined efforts so vital to the long-term security of Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Realistically, in the light of the ideologies and trackrecords of the terrorist groups involved and the despotic Islamic fundamentalist regime that sponsors and succours them, we must expect more desperate attempts to block the peace process. Indeed, the closer we come to a negotiated diplomatic settlement of major outstanding issues, the more likely it is that we shall see bloody terrorist attacks by the maximalist groups who view any such agreements as a betrayal of their commitment to the total eradication of the state of Israel. Similarly, fanatical right wing Israeli groups are likely to use violence to derail the peace process if they see it moving forward to trade more land in the occupied territories in return for peace. Hence, an important part of the strategy for countering international terrorism is to adopt and implement the principle that lone democracy's terrorist is another democracy's terrorist', and to give the fullest possible political and moral support and wholehearted international intelligence, police and judicial co-operation to efforts to defeat terrorism and keep the peace process on. track. Solidarity between Britain, the other EU states and the United States is a vital part of this strategy.

A Principled Response

There is no universally applicable counter-terrorism policy for democracies. Every conflict involving terrorism has its own unique characteristics. In order to design an appropriate and effective response each national government and its security advisers will need to take into account the nature and severity of the threat and the political, social, economic and strategic context and the capabilities and preparedness of their intelligence, police and judicial systems, their anti-terrorism legislation if any, and, where necessary, the availability and potential value of their military forces in aid to the civil power in combating terrorism. The level of response against terrorism in Northern Ireland and the Basque region, for example, would have been totally inappropriate in, for example, the Benelux countries, where experience of indigenous terrorist groups is negligible. The tightrope between underreaction, or toleration of terrorism, on the one hand, and draconian over-reaction, leading to serious infringement of civil liberties, on the other, is pitched at a

different height and angle in each case. It is of course not only the scale and intensity of the democratic states' responses that will vary: the key components of the counter-terrorism strategy must be geared to the type of terrorist threat confronted.

In combating challenges from terrorist movements with some degree of mass support and significant resources the democratic authorities need to win the battle for popular legitimacy and support by showing that they can respond to the basic needs and demands of the population. Popular consent and support are the foundations of effective democratic government. Terrorist groups such as ETA and the IRA have invested huge efforts in political and propaganda warfare, but they have failed to win the electoral support of the etlinic populations they claim to represent. Nevertheless, very often these propaganda .efforts can help to damage democratic processes and institutions even in well-established democracies, and even limited political successes for the terrorist, groups and their front organisations may help to compensate for setback in their battle against the security forces. Against groups which enjoy at least some degree of mass support democ'ratic governments need to wage simultaneously both a security campaign to contain and reduc e terrorist violence and a political and information campaign to secure popular consent and support and to sustain it.

However, it is fallacious to assume that terrorists need mass support before they can perpetrate murder and destruction; as we have already observed, many contemporary terrorist groups are numerically tiny.

Examples of this are the group that carried out the World Trade Centre bombing, and the extreme right wing cell in Israel to which the assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin belonged. Other groups, such as the Aum Shinrikyo in Japan or the extreme right wing terrorist groups in the United States, may have larger numbers of members, but are following a religious or ideological agenda which so totally rejects the existing political. and social order that there is no basis for negotiation with democratic government on political, social and economic demands. No democratic government worthy of the name could enter into political negotiations with the Oklahoma bombers or with those who carried out the nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system.

The appropriate democratic response to murderous terrorist sects of this kind is to deploy the counterterrorism resources of the intelligence and police services and the judicial and prison system to deter and suppress this threat to the innocent. To be successful this strategy demands a unified control of all counter-terrorism operations, an intelligence service of the highest quality, adequate security forces possessing the full range of counter-terrorism skills and complete

loyalty to the government, and last but not least enormous reserves of patience and determination.

There are rarely any easy victories over terrorism. The characteristic features of political terrorism, its undeclared and clandestine nature, and its employment by desperate fanatics, often already on the run from the authorities, imply a struggle of attrition constantly erupting into murder and destruction. Moreover, the terrorists know that security forces in a liberal democracy are forced to operate at mid-levels of coerciveness. judicial restraints and civil control and accountability, all of which are essential safeguards in a democracy, prevent the security forces from deploying their full strength and firepower. These constraints are inevitable and desirable, but they do mean that the task of countering terrorism in a democracy, under the constant scrutiny of the free media, becomes an enormously complex and demanding task. It also means that a serious error of judgement, negligence, or hasty over-reaction, can have very serious long-term consequences. They can provide a powerful propaganda weapon and a recruiting sergeant for the terrorist group, and can severely da miage the government and the security forces in their efforts to main popular legitimacy and support.

High quality intelligence is the heart of the pro-active counter-terrorism strategy. It has been used with notable success against many terrorist groups. By gaining advanced warning of terrorist-planned operations, their weaponry, personnel. financial assets and fund-raising tactics, communications systems and. so on, it becomes feasible to pre-empt terrorist attacks, and ultimately to crack open the terrorist cell structure and bring its members to trial. Impressive examples of this pro-active intelligence-led counter-terrorism are frequently ignored or forgotten by the public, but this should not deceive us into underestimating their value. At the interna tional level, the most impressive example was the brilliant intelligence cooperation among the Allies to thwart Saddam Hussein's much-vaunted campaign of 'holy terror' during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Sadly, such high levels of international co-operation against terrorism are hard to find. Just as the lack of intelligence sharing between uniformed and non-uniformed security agencies often damages national counter-terrorism responses, so international mistrust and reluctance to share information often vitiates an effective international response. The most useful enhancements of policy to combat terrorism ,at the international level need to. be made in intelligence gathering, by every means available, intelligence sharing. intelligence analysis, and threat assessment.

International judicial co-operation against terrorism remains pathetically weak at the global level. In some cases this is due to the absence of extradition agreements between the states concerned: in

others it results from differences in legal codes and procedures. In many cases fugitive terrorists can rely on the protection of a sponsoring or supporting state to provide them with safe haven. Proterrorist states would of course refuse to participate in a convention establishing an international criminal court. Nevertheless, if the US and other states with a common interest in suppressing terrorism were to collaborate in establishing a court many other law-abiding states could be encouraged to join, and strong sanctions could then be placed on those states which adamantly refused to cooperate. After all there is a precedent. The International War Crimes Tribunal which sits at the Hague is, at the time of writing, putting on trial individuals accused of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. Despite the fact that this lacks universal support from the international community it is clearly able to hear cases involving allegations of gross violations of human rights, and observers have been impressed by the great care and rigour displayed by the Tribunal in its extremely difficult and harrowing task. The international community has now agreed, at the 1998 Rome diplomatic conference, to set up an International Criminal Court, but regrettably its mandate does not include international terrorism crimes. In principle there is no reason why an international tribunal to try those alleged to have committed terrorist crimes against human rights should not be successfully established: the prime obstacle is the absence of political will. However, if an international criminal law statute covering terrorism is one day accepted by a majority of member states of the UN it will have enormous practical benefits. The confusion, political abuse, and unreliability of the present extradition process could, in effect, be bypassed so far as serious international crimes are concerned. Small countries would

not be so vulnerable to intimidation by fear of terrorist retaliation in prosecuting members of a terrorist group, and terrorists would have to come to terms with the fact there would be far fewer places to hide from justice. Those pro-terrorist states remaining could then be subject to sanction based on the encouraging precedent of UNSC sanctions against Libya for refusing to render the two Lockerbie suspects for trial. A major advantage would be the concentration of judicial expertise in the handling of international terrorism cases. At present there is enormous variation in the levels of specialist knowledge of terrorism available to national judicial systems. In France, Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere and his fellow special judges handling terrorism cases are able to draw upon a wealth of knowledge and experience of investigating such cases. In countries with little or no experience of terrorism there may be no knowledge of terrorism among members of the judiciary. And in Britain and the USA, where you would expect such expertise to be available, the court procedures and the structure of the legal profession often lead to judges hearing major terrorist cases when they have absolutely no previous knowledge or experience in this field.

Conclusion

Faced with the scenario of terrorism continuing well into this twenty-first century, what are the prospects of the international community achieving radical improvements in its policies and measures to combat terrorism? It would be foolish to be sanguine. So much depends on the quality of the political leaders and their advisers and the moral strength and determination of democratic societies. The true litmus test will be the major democracies' consistency and courage in maintaining a firm line against terrorism in all its forms. They must abhor the idea that terrorism can be tolerated as long as it is only affecting someone else's democratic rights and rule of law. They must adopt the clear principle that 'one democracy's terrorist is another democracy's terrorist'. The general principles of the firm hard-line strategy for liberal democracies in combating terrorism have the best track record in reducing terrorism. We have noted that the threat of terrorism is changing in a number of ways, but we still confront a very wide range of terrorist groups and states. Some of the major principles and measures to combat terrorism which I examined in Terrorism and the Liberal State (1977 and 1986) are still as relevant to the world's terrorism problems at the turn of the century. The major principles are:

o no surrender to the terrorists, and an absolute determination to defeat terrorism within the framework of the rule of law and the democratic process;

o no deals and no major concessions, even in the face of the most severe intimidation and blackmail;

o an intensified effort to bring terrorists to justice by prosecution and conviction before courts of law;

o tough measures to penalise the state sponsors who give terrorist movements safe haven, explosives, cash, and moral and diplomatic support;

o a determination never to allow terrorist intimidation to block or derail international diplomatic efforts to resolve major conflicts in strife-torn regions, such as the Middle East: in many such cases terrorism has become a major threat to peace and stability, and its suppression therefore is in the common interests of international society.

NOTES

1. On the conceptual and typological aspects see the discussion in: Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman et al, *Political Terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories and literatures*, (Amsterdam, 1988); Charles Kegley Jr. (ed.), *International Terrorism:*

Characteristics, Causes, Controls (New york, 1990); Eugene V. Walter, *Terror and Resistance* (London, 1969); Paul Wilkinson, *Political Terrorism*, (London, 1974) (Chapter 1); Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, second edition (Basingstoke, 1986) (part 1) Paul Wilkinson, "Terrorism" in Michael G. Foley (ed.), *Ideas that Shape Politics* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 189-198.

2. See: Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951); Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror* (London, 1968); A. Dallin and C., W. Breslauer, *Political Terror in Communist Systems* (Stanford, 1970); Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge MA, 1964); C.J. Friedrich .(ed.), *Totalitarianism* (New York, 1954); C.J. Friedrich and S.K. Brzezinski, second edition, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA, 1965); B. Levytsky, *The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Service*, 1917-1970 (London, 1971); S. Loomis, *Paris in the Terror*, June 1793 - July 1794 (Philadelphia, 1964); G.A. Lopez and M. Stohl (eds.) *Government Violence and Repression* (Westport Conn. 1986); R.A. Medvedev, *Let History judge* (New York, 1973); B. Moore, Jr., *Terror and Progress in the USSR*, (Cambridge, MA, 1954); B. Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions* (New York, 1981); L.B. Schapiro, *Totalitarianism* (London, 1972); Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956*, (New York, 1973); M. Stohl and G. Lopez (eds.) *The State as Terrorist*, Westport, Conn., 1984); Eugene V. Walter, *Terror and Resistance* (London, 1969).

3. See, for example, US Department of State, Patterns of Global Terrorism (annual publication) (Washington, D.C.); Edward F. Mickolus, International Terrorism in the 198Os: A Chronology of Events (Iowa, 1989); and Bruce Hoffman and Donna Hoffman, 'A Chronology of International Terrorism 1995', Terrorism and Political Violence, 8:3 (Autumn 1996), pp. 87-127.

4 The author developed a typology based on political motivation and political ideology in Terrorism and the Liberal State (Basingstoke, 1986) and in 'Fighting the Hydra: international terrorism and the rule of law', in Noel O'Sullivan (ed.) Terrorism, Ideology and Revolution, (Brighton, 1986), pp. 205-224.

5. For an early US study emphasising dangers of wmd terrorism see Joseph D. Douglass, Jr., and Neil Livingstone, America the Vulnerable: The Threat of Chemical and Biological Warfare, Lexington, MA, 1987. See also; Jessica Stern, Poison's Potential: Why Terrorists Might Escalate to wmd', paper presented at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey institute for International Studies Conference on Wmd Command and Control Issues, 6-8 August, 1997.

6. See for example; A. Dallin and G.W. Breslauer, Political Terror in Communist Systems (Stanford, 11470; M. Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled (Cambridge MA, 1964); and B. Moore, Terror and Progress in the USSR (Cambridge MA, 1954).

7. For a comparative perspective see Albert J. Jongman and Alex P. Schmid, 'Contemporary Conflicts and Human Rights Violations, 1998' Terrorism and Political Violence 11:4, 1999, and the reports of the UN Commissioner on Human Rights and Human Rights Watch.

8. See Amnesty International Annual Report, 1999 and the UN Human Rights rapporteur who made a fact-finding visit to the Province in 1999.

9. 0n the use of terror as a weapon in anti-colonial struggles against British rule, see Charles Townsend, British Civil Wars, (London, 1989); and on Algeria see Alistair Horne, A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962 (New York, 1978).

10.'There are several clear cases where the severe levels of terrorist activity provoked dramatic changes in government, for example when the Uruguay campaign led to emergency rule in 1972, and the 1980 intervention by the Army in Turkey to restore order in the face of a growing challenge by extreme left and right-wing terrorist groups.

11.See discussion in Paul Wilkinson, Terrorism and the Liberal State (Basingstoke, 1986) pp. 119-177.

12.Over half the world's states experience some degree of internal or international terrorist violence involving their citizens or property, annually. Back

13. For a seminal article on terrorism motivated by religious fanaticism, see; David Rapoport, 'Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions', Ainerican Political; Science Revit-uy, (September 1984), pp. 658-667.

14.On Bin Laden's Fatwa, see the valuable commentary by Magnus Ranstorp in Studies and Conflict and Terrorism, Volume 21, No. 4 1998.

15. For a forceful and provocative exposition of this approach, see Bruce Hoffrnan, Inside Terrorisin, (London, 1998).

16. There were conflicting reports in summer 1999 concerning Bin Laden's whereabouts and his status in the eyes of the Taliban authorities.

17. For perceptive insights into Bakunin and anarchism, see E.H. Carr, Michael Bakunin (London, 1961) and Michael Confino (ed.), Daughter of a Revolutionary (London, 1974).

18. For example in the 1970s the Free South Moluccan Youth Movement engaged in a campaign of terrorism, involving international attacks. So far as is known it had no state sponsorship of any kind. And major terrorist groups such as the IRA, ETA and the LTTE (Tamil

Tigers) were established without any help from state sponsorship and have clearly been able to flourish without it.

19. For example this method was adopted by the Revolutionarer Zellen (Revolutionary Cells), an offshoot of the Red Army Faction in West Germany, in its campaign of terrorism in the 1970s.

20. See Bruce Hoffman, Dennis A. Pluchinsky and David C. Rapoport, 'Terrorists Claiming Credit: The Debate', Terrorism and Political Violence, 9: 1, pp. 1- 19.

21. For a full discussion of these aspects see Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism (London, 1998).

22. John Horgan and Max Taylor, 'The Future of Terrorism' Special Issue, Terrorism and Political Violence, 11:4,1999.

23. Some may be tempted to count the Good Friday Agreement prisoner early release scheme in Northern Ireland as an example of this approach. This would be a serious mistake. The release of Loyalist and Republican prisoners under the GFA has been more like a gradual ,amnesty. It has been almost totally indiscriminate, including prisoners convicted of multiple murders, and it has not even been linked to any quid pro quo from the terrorist organizations, such as progress towards the decommissioning of weapons by terrorist organizations.

24. See discussion by Feliks Gross, 'Political Violence and Terror in 19th and 20th Century Russia and Eastern Europe', in vol. 8 of A Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence edited by James F. Kirkham, Sheldon G. Levy and William J. Crotty (Washington DC, 1969), and the author's chapter 'Social Scientific Theory and Civil Violence, in Yonah Alexander, David CarIton and Paul Wilkinson, Terrorism: Theory and Practice, Boulder, 1979.

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