

DHP P244: MODERN TERRORISM & COUNTERTERRORISM
 DR. JAMES JF FOREST

Lesson 3: Contemporary Radicalization

HISTORY REVIEW

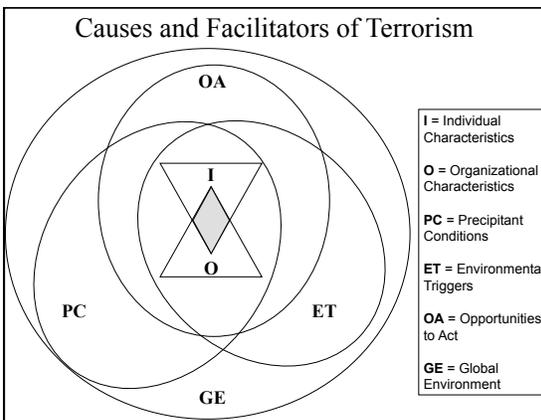
- Importance of historical understanding
- Waves: ideologies, groups, technologies, finances
- A History of Revolutionary Change
 - Mao, Fanon, Guevara, Marighella
 - How are revolutionaries and rebels portrayed in literature, movies, legends, etc?
 - Can the terrorist emulate that perception?
 - Relevance for radicalization?

WEEK 3: RADICALIZATION

- Hoffman
- Eidelson
- Byman
- Forest
- Brachman
- U.S. Senate report
- Significant Current Events?

THEORY

- A Theory of Terrorism? No such thing
- Theories, however . . .
 - Theories about where, why, etc. (e.g. enablers, facilitators)
 - Theories about who, how, why, etc. (e.g., recruitment, radicalization, ideological resonance)
 - Theories about terrorist group behavior (e.g., learning, using suicide bombings, WMD, etc.)
 - Theories about combating terrorist groups (e.g. disengagement, deterrence, obliteration, etc.)



POLITICAL GRIEVANCES

- Corruption among political and economic elites
- Oppressive, authoritarian regimes that stifle civil liberties
- Marginalization, favoritism/discrimination, institutionalized exclusion (e.g. Ethno-nationalism, cf. Byman)
- Injustice (real or perceived)
- Political disagreements (e.g. reconstruction, *Roe vs Wade*)

Most often, many of these conditions coincide, creating a cumulative effect of animosity toward those in power
 Ted Robert Gurr (1970): "As legitimacy declines, people rebel"

V: "Words will always retain their power

Words offer the means to meaning
And for those who will listen,
the enunciation of truth . . .

And the truth is, there is something terribly wrong with
this country isn't there?"

Evey: "You really think that blowing up Parliament is going
to make the country a better place?"

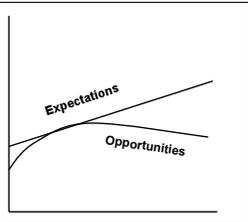
V: "There's no certainty, only opportunity . . . blowing
up a building can change the world."



SOCIO-ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES

- Plato and Aristotle:
"Economic factors are fundamental in the outbreak of violence."
- Marxism:
"War is a mechanism for maintaining inequalities in a struggle for control of raw materials and markets."
– Violence is an inevitable outcome of capitalism
- Poverty (Blomberg, et al)
- Widespread economic disparities (often tied to corruption)
- Lack of government investment in education, public infrastructure
- Unequal barriers to social, educational and economic opportunities
- Changing demographics (youth bulge); job, resource demands
- Globalization (Benjamin Barber, "Tribalism and Globalism")

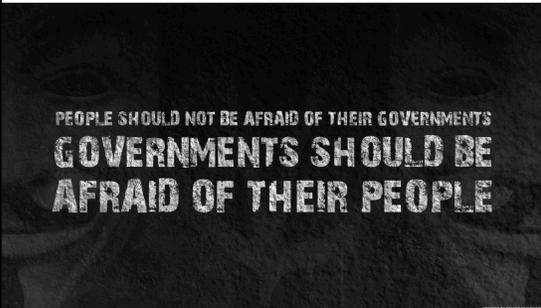
POLITICAL & SOCIOECONOMIC



- Aspirations/expectations vs. opportunities
– Regime unable or unwilling to change/improve
- Political, socio-economic conditions offer fertile ground, but do not always lead to emergence of terrorism

Contextual relevance plays a critical role in ideological resonance

BREAK



RESEARCH ON "WHO"

A basic proposition:

- Terrorism is the direct result of an individual's **choice** influenced by a combination of factors and perceptions about the world around them.

"The roots of terrorist activity lie in the mind . . ."
- Gordon McCormick, 2003

RESEARCH ON "WHO"

Various explanations offered:

- Religious fanaticism
- Poverty
- Ignorance
- Revenge for personal suffering
- Brainwashing
- Psychopathology



None of these "explanations" are supported by significant data

RESEARCH ON "WHO"

Research on psychology of terrorism indicates:

- The inability of psychopathology to explain terrorism
- The absence of any clear personality profile
- Common themes of trauma, injustice, and alienation provide strong motivational "push" factors for involvement in terrorism
- The allure of personal status and other rewards (e.g. excitement) proved a powerful "pull" factor
- The reduction of moral restraints on killing (e.g. Bandura's "moral disengagement" research)

Data sources include:

- Over 25,000 scholarly articles published since 1971
- Police records; interviews with incarcerated terrorists

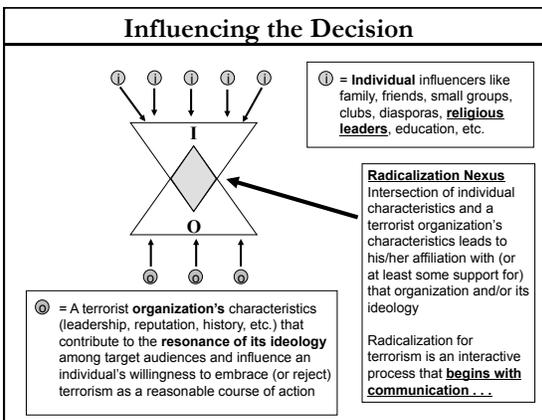
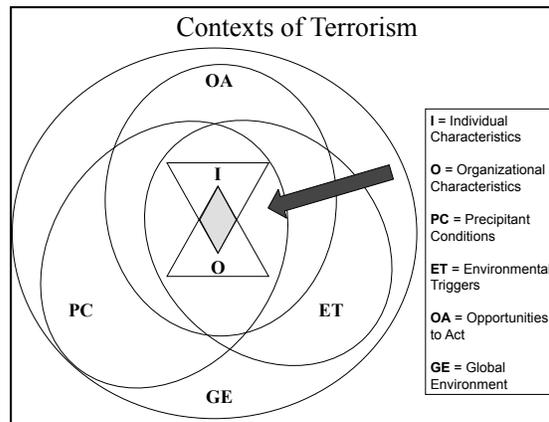
LaFree & Ackerman, 2009

RESEARCH ON "WHO"

- The most common result of research indicates a pattern of "normalcy"— the absence of any unique attribute or identifier that would distinguish one individual from another
- "Terrorists are . . . rarely mad, and very few suffer from personality disorders" (Andrew Silke)
- "Many of the personal traits or characteristics . . . are neither specific to the terrorist nor serve to distinguish one type of terrorist from another." (John Horgan)
- "30 years of research has found little evidence that terrorists are suffering from psychopathology." (Clark McCauley)

RADICALIZATION AS A PROCESS

- Radicalization for terrorism is an interactive process that begins with communication
 - Pathway, staircase: *steps or stages in the process*
 - Individually specific processes; context is key
 - Often, personal relationships are critical
- Radicalization is rooted in information, beliefs and perceptions, and interpretation



COMMUNICATION

- Ideology and ideological resonance

Terrorists seek to influence at least 3 primary audiences:

- Victimized locals and terrified observers elsewhere in the target country (and perhaps even worldwide)
- Sympathizers (including potential funders)
- Themselves & each other (in-group cohesion)

Terrorist radicalization as product of choices influenced by **whomever and whatever help us interpret the world around us.**

SHAPING PERCEPTIONS

- Think about how you have formed your view of the world, and your place within it.
 - Who in your life has influenced your perceptions the most?
 - What if your “influencers” were considered “extremists” by others”? Would you know?

INFLUENCERS: IDEOLOGICAL ENTREPRENEURS

- Influencing perceptions through words and images is a core mission of any terrorist group, (or any group seeking to confront or counter terrorist activity)
- Individuals who become adept at communicating a given ideology in a way that “connects” with a broad audience are an invaluable asset to terrorist groups
- Influencers tend not to carry out attacks themselves but focus on inspiring others




THE CENTRALITY OF IDEOLOGY

Ideological themes from Lesson 2:
 Mao – Inferior numbers can overcome govt. forces
 Guevara – Vanguard
 Fanon – Violence as necessary for liberation
 Marighella – Urban warfare has greater impact

5 beliefs that propel groups toward conflict (Eidelson):

- Superiority
- Injustice
- Vulnerability
- Distrust
- Helplessness

In what kinds of terrorist ideologies do we see these themes represented?

TERRORIST MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Perception management is central to Al-Qaida’s war against the West

- AQ has its own media branch (as-Sahab); audio, video distribution
- Leadership clearly describes network’s doctrine, strategy (and even some tactics) in its Internet and news media articles

- Attacks are filmed and uploaded to the Internet complete with ideological spin even before the commanders can even give a full report on the incident

“We are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. We are in a race for hearts and minds of our umma” [the global community of Muslims]. . . We must get our message across to the masses . . . This is an independent battle that we must launch side by side with the military battle.

- Ayman al-Zawahiri

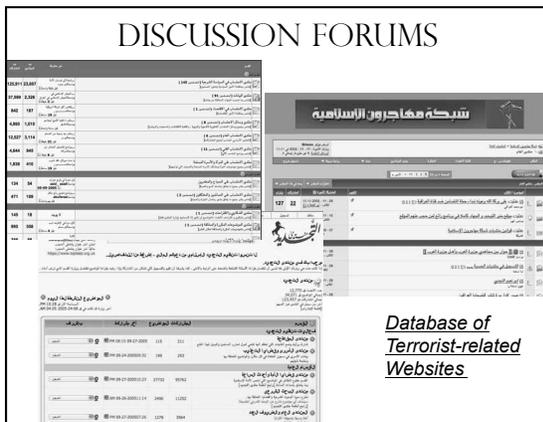
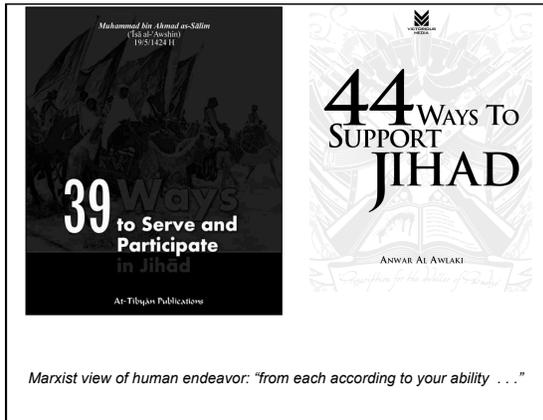
FROM MEDIA TO INTERNET

The Internet has come to replace traditional media as the main conduit for influencers to communicate with their intended audiences
(However: no substitute for personal interaction)

Websites, blogs, videos, e-mail are used for:

- Propaganda, recruitment, radicalization and indoctrination
- Music, video games, other forms of entertainment can have ideological purposes
- Training and guidance (in strategy and tactics)
- Fundraising (soliciting donations) & “friendraising”
- Operational communications with cells, leadership
- Target surveillance, intelligence gathering
- Identification, exploitation of online vulnerabilities





INSPIRE MAGAZINES

- Making the ideology more accessible to the masses
- Tips on how to use encrypted communications
- How to get to a training camp, what to expect, what not to bring with you
- The importance of the buddy system
- "How to build a bomb in your mother's kitchen"

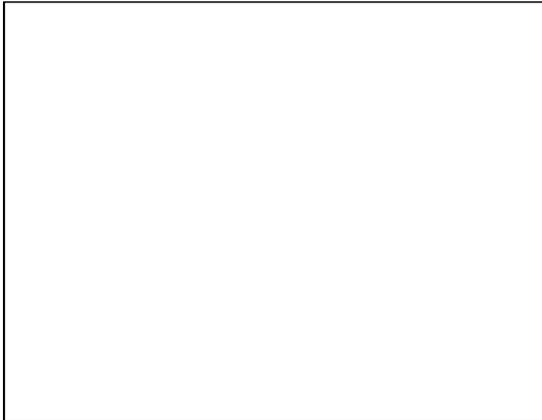
SUMMARY

- Radicalization is viewed as a product of dynamic interactions between ideas and people, framed and influenced by many contextual factors and by personal relationships
- Ideological entrepreneurs have many tools to spread their ideology, but the ideas must resonate among the target audience

Some possible exam questions:

- What does our understanding of the intersection between political and economic conditions suggest about the likelihood of terrorism in the future? Where and why?
- What are some key attributes of *effective* ideological entrepreneurs?

QUESTIONS?



BACKUP SLIDES

A THEORY OF BELONGING

- Borum suggests, "membership in a terrorist group provides a sense of identity or belonging for those personalities whose underlying sense of identity is flawed" for whom "belonging to the terrorist group becomes ... the most important component of their psychosocial identity."

Borum, R. (n.d.). Psychology of Terrorism. Report for the Counterintelligence Section, Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency

AQ & GLOBAL SALAFISTS

Data on 172 members of the global Salafi movement:

- Little or no relationship between poverty or religious devotion of individuals and their reasons for joining terrorist networks
- Typically, individuals in their mid-20s, relatively more education, many from more privileged backgrounds than average citizens
- Often, the compulsion to join terrorist groups evolves through friendship and kinship networks; radicalization often occurs together
- Many are first-generation or second-generation immigrants struggling to assimilate into new (Western) surroundings
- Bottom line: small group dynamics significant for recruitment and mobilization

Sageman, 2004

ETA MEMBERS

- Data on 614 convicted members of ETA
- Statistical significance among variables like social ties, age, politicization, perceived prestige
- Earlier cadres often industrial or service workers, but "student" became predominant "occupational" status variable
- "... Militancy was perceived as a much more exciting option than any other form of political engagement."
- Small number of towns provided the bulk of ETA recruits

Reinares, 2004

THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY

- What is "The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism"?
- What do ethnic terrorist groups have in common?
- How do they differ from other terrorist groups?
- What does Byman suggest a country should do, and not do, when dealing with ethnic terrorism?

POST-PIRA DISSIDENTS

- Data on 662 individuals involved in dissident activity (roughly ½ considered "political dissidents", meaning no evidence of violent behavior)
- Mostly CIRA or RIRA members, large majority of whom are from Republic of Ireland, not Northern Ireland; 98.5% male; 62% were employed while members of the dissident group
- Age 21-30 largest age cohort (i.e., no personal experience with "The Troubles")
- Majority of those incarcerated were convicted of funding-related criminal activity (including robbery) rather than for direct attacks against civilians

Horgan, 2012

MEDIA AND TERRORISM

A symbiotic relationship between terrorists and the media:

- - Terrorists seek to communicate to and influence audiences
- - News organizations seek dramatic stories to increase their readership and ratings

Media as a "showcase" for terrorism (Combs, 2007)

- Demonstration and communication effects
- Organizational Learning effects

UK HOUSE OF COMMONS

Radicalization defined as "the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."

The following groups are particularly vulnerable to radicalization:

- young people and people from lower income and socio-economic groups;
- those who distrust Parliament and who see a conflict between being British and their own cultural identity; and
- those who perceive discrimination, experience racial or religious harassment, and have a negative view of policing.

Radicalized individuals come from a wide range of backgrounds: recent research described them as "demographically unremarkable".

UK House of Commons, *Roots of Violent Radicalisation*, (Feb. 6, 2012)