

LESSON 1: DEFINING TERRORISM

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- Any observations or questions regarding the assigned readings for today?

– Martha Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in Howard and Hoffman (eds.) *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, p. 42-53.

– Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, p. 1-41.

DEFINING TERRORISM

Terrorists are crazy dudes blowing stuff up . . .

DEFINING TERRORISM

- Definitions
 - Many
 - Ambiguous
 - Are terrorists "freedom fighters"?
 - Matter of perception?

CRIMINAL DIMENSIONS

- Both terrorism and organized crime:
 - involve rational actors defying societal norms
 - target a broad range of victims
 - use similar tactics such as kidnapping and assassination
 - operate secretly and require illicit funding sources
 - are criminalized by a government/regime
 - seek to coerce others through fear
 - pursue power

DIFFERENCES

- Most terrorists claim their attacks
 - Send a message through violent acts of symbolic significance that gains maximum attention to a cause
- **Victims** are a small subset of broader **target**
 - Often attack innocents or non-combatants
 - Usually seek psychological trauma
- A form of political violence

"Terror is violence with distinctive properties used for political purposes both by private parties and states." – *David Rapoport*

"Terrorist organizations have a political objective that they seek to obtain through violence or the threat of violence." – *Louise Richardson*

POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

- **Desire for political change**
 - Most terrorist groups are organized by type of change they want to achieve (e.g., ethnonationalist, left-wing, environmental extremist, anti-abortion)
 - Even religious extremist terrorist groups have some political aspects to their agenda
- **Terrorism is typically non-state in character**
 - (Note the separate but related topic of state terrorism, for whom political change is usually not desired)
 - States can terrorize, but they are not considered “terrorists” by most definitions

TERRORISM: KEY TERMS

Frequency	Concepts/Themes	Frequency	Concepts/Themes
83.5%	Violence, force	21%	Arbitrariness; impersonal, random character
65%	Political	17.5%	Civilians, noncombatants, neutrals, outsiders as victims
51%	Fear, terror emphasized	17%	Intimidation
47%	Threat	15.5%	Innocence of victims emphasized
41.5%	(Psychological) effects and (anticipated) reactions	14%	Group, movement, organization as perpetrator
37.5%	Victim-target differentiation	13.5%	Symbolic aspect, demonstration to others
32%	Purposive, planned, systematic, organized action	9%	Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence
30.5%	Method of combat, strategy, tactic	9%	Clandestine, covert nature
30%	Extraneity, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constraints	7%	Repetitiveness; serial or campaign character of violence
28%	Coercion, extortion, induction of compliance	6%	Criminal
21.5%	Publicity aspect	4%	Demands made on third parties

Source: Alex P. Schmid, Albert J. Jongman, et al. *Political terrorism: a new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories, and literature* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, Transaction Books, 1988), p. 5-6.

10 CHARACTERISTICS OF TERRORISM

1. The demonstrative use of violence against human beings;
2. The threat of (further) violence;
3. The deliberate production of terror/fear/dread/anxiety in a target group;
4. The frequent targeting of civilians, non-combatants, and innocents;
5. The purpose of intimidation, coercion, and/or propaganda;
6. The fact that it is a method, tactic, or strategy of conflict waging;
7. The importance of communicating the act(s) of violence to a larger audience;
8. The illegal, criminal, and immoral nature of the act(s) of violence;
9. The predominantly political character of the act;
10. Its use as a tool of psychological warfare.

A. P. Schmid (2005). "Terrorism as Psychological Warfare," *Democracy and Security*, Vol.1, No.2, p. 140.

TERRORISM: KEY TERMS

- Vision
- Power
- Ideology
- Ideological Resonance
- Radicalization
- Defending the defenseless
- Root Causes
- Facilitators
- Enabling Environment
- Grievances
- Duty
- Self-Sacrifice
- Vanguard
- Truth
- Strategy
- Tactics
- Insurgency
- Retribution
- Moral Disengagement
- Learning Organization
- Leaderless Resistance
- Counterterrorism
- Anti-terrorism
- Hard Power
- Soft Power
- Influence Warfare
- Asymmetric Warfare
- Psychological Warfare
- Resilience
- Deradicalization
- Disengagement

DEFINING TERRORISM

Primary Types/Categories

- Left-wing/Communist/Marxist
- Ethno-nationalist (separatist)
- Right Wing
- Environmentalist/Animal Rights
- Religious Extremist

Should know several examples of each . . .

RELIGIOUS TERRORISTS

- Ideologies are **supremacist** (believers assume superiority over non-believers) & **absolutist** (you are with us or you are an unbeliever or an enemy “an infidel, an apostate”)
- “God is on our side – we are acting on the desires of a diety” (audience is thus not necessarily human; “we are unconstrained by man’s laws”); rewards in the afterlife

Example of a Final Exam question:

- Describe some challenges faced by a democratic government when responding to this type of terrorism.
 - Moral, ethical, legal?
 - Strategic, tactical, operational?
 - Specific examples?