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# WHAT IS TERRORISM?

*Any creative encounter with evil requires that we not distance ourselves from it by simply demonizing those who commit evil. . . . [W]hen it comes to coping with evil, ignorance is our worst enemy.*

—Kathleen Norris

What is terrorism? How can it be defined, studied, and understood? How many incidents of terrorism occur? What areas in the world experience the most terrorism and which the least? What are the most common terrorist tactics and targets? Why do men and women become terrorists? What motivates people to embrace violence and risk their own lives as well as the lives of others?

This chapter discusses these questions, but it does so with an appreciation that they cannot be answered fully or satisfactorily. Although we can shed light on the what, where, how, and why of terrorism, much will inevitably remain in darkness. Human behavior has always been hard to predict, control, and comprehend. Relatively rare behavior, like terrorism, is even harder to understand.

The adversarial and political postures embedded in the practice of terrorism make it unlikely that a universally accepted definition or a widely shared strategy for controlling it will soon emerge. Nevertheless, putting terrorism in perspective is essential, and thus this book focuses on acts of terrorism and their relationship to culture, religion, history, politics, economics, and ideology.

## DEFINITIONS OF TERRORISM

A definition is a precise statement of meaning, and defining the term under discussion is a fundamental principle of philosophy, law, psychology, engineering, and most other realms of human endeavor. Defining terrorism might seem easy, but it is not.

The meaning associated with the word *terrorism* has varied over the years. The word came into the popular lexicon through its association with the French Revolution of 1789 and the ensuing “régime de la terreur.” Characterized by brutal repression, “la terreur” centralized political power in the Committee of Public Safety, thus undercutting the democratic goals that inspired the French Revolution.



PHOTO 1.1 Funeral of Chechens killed in an attack by unidentified terrorists.

The word *terrorism* is still often used interchangeably with the word *terror*, causing definitional confusion and blurring the boundaries between other types of violent behavior and terrorism. Many activities, from wars to rampages by youth gangs to writing science fiction, are meant to strike terror into the enemy (or reader). In this context, the scope of potential definitions is limitless.

Definitions of terrorism are not immutable; they change over time. For example, John Brown, the abolitionist whose attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry further fueled regional animosity and seeded the Civil War, was at one time lionized as a hero. At another time, Brown was condemned as a terrorist; in a still different era, he was seen as a madman (Reynolds, 2005).

A more recent example of the political and ideological nature of the term *terrorism* comes from anti-abortion violence. During the 1980s, the federal government agencies in charge of responding to crime and political violence “were controlled by partisans of the political Right, many of whom sympathized with the goals if not the methods of pro-life extremists” (Jenkins, 1999, p. 112). Thus, anti-abortion violence was labeled simply as a crime. That changed with the 1992 presidential election of William Clinton, after which federal government agencies were more likely to be controlled by partisans of the political left, who had pro-choice ideologies. Anti-abortion violence was then labeled terrorism, thus clearly demonstrating that politics and ideology underscore the definitional process (Jenkins, 1999).

More than a hundred definitions of terrorism exist (Laqueur, 1999, p. 5). Proffered by government officials, scholars, the media, and terrorists themselves, the varying definitions present a bewildering array of approaches to defining terrorism. The difficulty of definition is not new, however. Cooper (2001, p. 881) notes that “there has never been, since the topic began to command serious attention, some golden age in which terrorism was easy to define.”

Yet, no matter how difficult the task, defining terrorism is crucial. In some other areas of contemporary life, definitions and conceptualizations may be purely theoretical and of interest primarily to academics. Scholars need to establish specific parameters for their research, but their definitions may have limited real-world consequences. The definition of terrorism, in contrast,

has very real consequences. Coordinating international counterterrorism operations, for example, requires accepted standards and rules (Deflem, 2006; Ganor, 2006). Arrests, wiretaps, prosecutions, pretrial detentions, and sentencing under terrorist statutes likewise require precise definitional distinctions.

Similarly, labeling someone or something as terrorist has real-world consequences. People and organizations are degraded when labeled as terrorist, and political or religious movements can lose followers and funding as a result of the label. Citizens, even those in a democracy, may be more apt to accept repressive government actions if they are presented in terms of counter-terroring terrorism.

Terrorism is an ideological and political concept. Politics, by its nature, is adversarial, and thus any definition evokes adversarial disagreement. The meaning given to terrorism is part of a person's or nation's philosophy. Thus, the determination of the "right" definition of terrorism is subjective and not likely to be reached by consensus.

Therefore, if you disagree with my position, you are a terrorist; if you agree with my position, you are not a terrorist (Cooper, 2001). Yet, the cliché that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" provides little help in achieving definitional precision (Ganor, 2006, p. 1). Repressive regimes call those who struggle against them terrorists, but those who commit violence to topple those same regimes call themselves freedom fighters. Hoffman (2006) notes that terrorists' organizations are most likely to consider themselves as fighters for freedom and liberation, or as armies or other military organizations, or as self-defense movements, and or even as seekers of righteous vengeance. In an ideal world, politics and ideology would be separated from definition, and it would not matter who does what to whom: Terrorism ought to be defined by the nature of the act itself (Cooper, 2001).

Terrorism is also difficult to define because "there is not one but many different terrorisms" (Laqueur, 1999, p. 46). Separating the tactics of terror from the concept of terrorism is necessary but difficult. The distinction among terrorism, guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, civil wars, riots, and criminal activity is often blurry. Terrorists are not the only ones who use the tactics of terror. Violent and terrifying acts are common to terrorism, but these tactics are also common elements in rapes, murders, and other violent crimes. Yet, despite the definitional difficulties, distinctions must be made among the different forms of violent behavior.

The discussion to follow begins with some of the definitions of international and domestic terrorism offered by the U.S. government. It then turns to the definitions suggested by some of the most eminent scholars of terrorism. Commonalities among definitions are then presented.

### U.S. Government Definitions

The Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives prepares and publishes the United States Code, which codifies by subject matter all of the laws of the United States. The United States Code defines terrorism "*as premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents*" (Title 22, Chapter 38, §2656f). It also specifies that international terrorism is "terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country."

The United States Code does not include regulations issued by executive branch agencies, decisions of the federal courts, treaties, or laws enacted by state or local governments. Regulations issued by executive branch agencies are contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, which defines terrorism as "*the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives*" (28, C.F.R. Section 0.85).

That these two definitions issued by different branches of the federal government are not identical is emblematic of the general problem with definition. Although the United States Code's definition includes the concept of political motivation, it does not mention, as does the Code of Federal Regulations, the purpose of the violent act (to coerce the government and its citizens).

It is difficult to craft a single sentence that covers all aspects of the phenomena of terrorism, and thus it is no surprise that some attempts at definition are inelegant, cumbersome, and bereft of the power of precision. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines international terrorism as violent acts that *"appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping and occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum"* (FBI, 2006). A different definition is offered by the FBI for domestic terrorism: *"activities that involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state; appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States"* (FBI, 2006).

### Scholarly Definitions

Bruce Hoffman notes that terrorism "is fundamentally and inherently political. It is also ineluctably about power: the pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change" (Howard & Sawyer, 2004, p. 4). Hoffman defines terrorism as the *"deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change"* (Hoffman, 2006, p. 41; Howard & Sawyer, 2004, p. 23).

Eqbal Ahmed, an outspoken and highly acclaimed Indian anti-colonialism scholar, noted that the "terrorist of yesterday is the hero of today, and the hero of yesterday becomes the terrorist of today. This is a serious matter of the constantly changing world of images in which we have to keep our heads straight to know what terrorism is and what it is not" (Ahmed, 1998, p. 2). Ahmed identified five types of terrorism: state terrorism, religious terrorism, criminal terrorism, political terrorism, and oppositional terrorism, all of which fit his simple definition of terrorism as *"the use of terrorizing methods of governing or resisting a government"* (1998, p. 5).

Ahmed provided many examples of the shifting nature of the label of terrorism. One relates to an Israeli prime minister, the late Menachem Begin, who was a former commander-in-chief of the Irgun Tsval Leumi, a Zionist terrorist organization. Begin once had had a £1,000 reward issued for his capture (Ahmed, 1998, p. 1), yet he later became prime minister.

Another example comes from 1985, when Ronald Reagan was the U.S. president. Reagan had an audience in the White House with several Afghan Mujahiddin, and afterward he said that they were "the moral equivalent of America's Founding Fathers" (Ahmed, 1998, p. 2). Reagan supported the Mujahiddin because they were fighting the Soviet Union and communism in Afghanistan, but among their supporters was the Saudi-born Osama bin Laden. In 1998, then-President William Clinton launched an unsuccessful missile strike intended to kill bin Laden and his troops in Afghanistan. Thus, the shifting political and ideological climate of the times influences the definition of terrorism; it is both an unstable and a subjective concept.

Jessica Stern argues that terrorism can be distinguished from other forms of violence by only two characteristics: It is aimed at noncombatants and it is intended to instill fear in the target audience. Thus, Stern defines terrorism as *"an act or threat of violence against noncombatants with the objective of exacting revenge, intimidating, or otherwise influencing an audience"* (2003, p. xx).

Walter Laqueur has written extensively on the problem of definition. He argues that a comprehensive definition does not now and may never exist. Nevertheless, he defines it as *"the use of covert violence by a group for political ends"* (2001, p. 79).

Military historian Caleb Carr, noting that terrorism is as old as human conflict itself, makes a strong argument that international terrorism is equivalent to war. Carr places terrorism in the discipline of military history, as opposed to the disciplines of political science or sociology. He states that international terrorism *"is simply the contemporary name given to, and the*

*modern permutation of, warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will to support either leaders or policies that the agents of such violence find objectionable*" (2002, p. 6).

Carr argues that world leaders have generally identified international terrorism as a type of crime, rather than as war, "in an effort to rally global indignation against the agents of such mayhem and deny them the more respected status of actual soldiers" (2002, p. 7). According to Carr, denying that terrorism is the same as war has created a problem: It has limited our government to reactive, rather than proactive, responses to terrorism.

In Carr's view, "our leaders (and we as their citizens) have in the past been, and in disturbing numbers remain, prepared to treat terrorists as being on a par with smugglers, drug traffickers, or, at most, some kind of political Mafiosi, rather than what they have in fact been for almost half a century: organized, highly trained, hugely destructive paramilitary units that were and are conducting offensive campaigns against a variety of nations and social systems" (2002, p. 9).

### Commonalities in Definitions

Some definitions specifically include religious motivations; others include hate, millenarian, and apocalyptic groups. Not everyone agrees that people who employ terrorist tactics on behalf of animals or the environment are terrorists. Several definitions refer only to nonstate actors, whereas others include state-sponsored terrorism. Terrorism by groups is an essential part of several definitions, but some definitions include terrorism by individual actors as well.

Most definitions include violence or a threat of violence. Most also include motivations (e.g., political, religious, economic). Distinctions between international and domestic terrorism are part of some definitions, but not others.

In a study of 109 definitions of terrorism, a group of researchers collapsed the definitional elements into 22 categories. The most common elements were violence or force (84% of the definitions), followed by political motivation (65%), engendering fear or terror (51%), using a threat (47%), psychological effects (42%), and victim-target differentiations (38%). The least common definitional elements included demands made on third parties (4%), repetitiveness or serial violence (7%), and clandestine, covert nature (9%; Schmid & Jongman, 1988).

Finally, H. H. A. Cooper, the author of the first reprint selected to accompany this chapter, defines terrorism as "the intentional generation of massive fear by human beings for the purpose of securing or maintaining control over other human beings" (Cooper, 2001, p. 883). For the purpose of this book, we use Cooper's definition, although like him, we recognize that no single definition will ever be satisfactory to everyone.

## INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM

This section examines incidents of terrorism by looking at the phenomena from multiple angles. Focusing on the where, when, what, and how of terrorism provides an essential background for understanding the dimensions of this type of conflict.

Determining what constitutes terrorism is not easy. The information on the incident may be sketchy, and various interpretations of it may be proffered. Divining the intent of the attackers is not always possible. The overlap between terrorism and other forms of conflict, such as genocide, could affect the criteria used in recording incidents.

The way in which terrorism is counted is linked closely to its definition. An example comes from the U.S. government's official source for terrorism data, the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). For 2005, the NCTC reported that there were 11,100 terrorist incidents, which resulted in 14,500 noncombatants killed, 25,000 wounded, and 35,000 kidnapped. The numbers reported by NCTC for 2005 were much higher than they were in 2004, in large measure because its definition of international terrorism had changed from "involving citizens or territory of more

than one country” to “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets” (NCTC, 2006). The later definition is broader than the former one, thus resulting in many more incidents being counted as terrorism. NCTC has chosen to use 2005 as a baseline from which to measure international terrorism in future years. The NCTC has not noted how it will count terrorism incidents if and when the definition of terrorism is again altered.

NCTC recognizes that the “definition of terrorism relative to all other forms of political violence is open to debate” and that any effort to count the incidents of terrorism “involves incomplete and ambiguous information” (NCTC, 2006, p. 2). Not only are the data often distorted but reasonable people can also disagree about some fundamentals of reporting terrorism. NCTC notes that, for example, on August 17, 2005, about 350 small bomb attacks were carried out in Bangladesh; NCTC counted these as one event, but it might be reasonable to argue that 350 separate incidents should be recorded.

Further complicating the link between defining and counting terrorist events is the high level of underreporting bias, which is directly associated with the political process (Drakos & Gofas, 2006). Scholarly research has demonstrated a connection between the reporting of terrorist incidents and political, economic, and social systems (Eubank & Weinberg, 2001; Li & Schaub, 2004). Nondemocratic regimes without a free press account for a great deal of underreporting. As Drakos and Gofas (2006, p. 715) note, “A considerable number of (nondemocratic, we would stress) countries, for a substantial length of time, seemed to have experienced no terrorism at all.” Thus, if the media do not report on the terrorist event, it will not be counted in official sources.

Another source of data on the incidence of terrorism comes from the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), which is a nonprofit think tank established after the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. MIPT is funded by the Department of Homeland Security, and its team of contributors include, among others, the DFI International, a Washington-based knowledge management company, and the RAND Corporation, a non-profit research institute. MIPT gets most of its data from media reports, which leads to underreporting, as discussed in the previous paragraph.

MIPT’s definition of terrorism, which determines those incidents that it counts as terrorism, is “*violence, or the threat of violence, calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm.*”

MIPT expands on its definition by noting the following:

These acts are designed to coerce others into actions they would not otherwise undertake, or refrain from actions they desired to take. All terrorist acts are crimes. Many would also be violation of the rules of war if a state of war existed. This violence or threat of violence is generally directed against civilian targets. The motives of all terrorists are political, and terrorist actions are generally carried out in a way that will achieve maximum publicity. Unlike other criminal acts, terrorists often claim credit for their acts. Finally, terrorist acts are intended to produce effects beyond the immediate physical damage of the cause, having long-term psychological repercussions on a particular target audience. The fear created by terrorists may be intended to cause people to exaggerate the strengths of the terrorist and the importance of the cause, to provoke governmental overreaction, to discourage dissent, or simply to intimidate and thereby enforce compliance with their demands.

MIPT’s Web site, the Terrorism Knowledge Base at <http://www.tkb.org>, provides data on domestic and international terrorism, specific terrorist attacks, and targets of terrorism, as well as on all known terrorist groups. The database includes interactive maps and biographies on key terrorists and their organizations. It also has a sophisticated analytical capacity that allows users to manipulate the database and display the results pictorially. Although the MIPT database covers 1968 through the present, unfortunately it has limited utility for long-term analysis because the data from 1968 to 1998 reflect only international terrorism, whereas the data since 1998 capture both international and domestic terrorism. As a result, the discussion to follow focuses only on 1998–2006 to avoid comparing the incomparable.

The MIPT data are examined by geographic region, types of tactics, types of targets, and group classifications. Tables 1.1 to 1.4 should be considered as illustrative only because of the

TABLE 1.1 Incidents by Geographic Region, January 1, 1998–November 21, 2006

	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Injuries</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>
Africa	400	7859	2319
East & Central Asia	128	393	164
Eastern Europe	1278	4946	1928
Latin America & the Caribbean	1758	2464	1600
Middle East/Persian Gulf	10363	34769	18433
North America	111	2407	2996
South Asia	4939	17264	7094
Southeast Asia & Oceania	516	3528	1010
Western Europe	2980	1750	397
<b>Total</b>	<b>22473</b>	<b>75380</b>	<b>35941</b>

SOURCE: MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. (2006). TKB Incidents by Region (1/1/98–11/22/06). Retrieved November 22, 2006, from [www.tkb.org](http://www.tkb.org).

many different ways of counting terrorism. Although far from definitive, the data are useful in creating a general picture of the incidence of terrorism.

Table 1.1 examines the frequency of terrorist incidents, injuries, and fatalities by geographic region from 1998 to 2006. During this time, the Middle East and Persian Gulf area have had the highest number of incidents, as well as the most injuries and fatalities. The number of fatalities in the Middle East and Persian Gulf is greater than the total of all the other regions combined. North America has experienced the fewest incidents, but the number of injuries and fatalities are higher in North America than in several other regions. It should be noted that the numbers for Africa do not include the genocides that have plagued that continent; again counting terrorist events depends on the definition used.

Table 1.2 examines the frequency of terrorist incidents, injuries, and fatalities by the tactic employed. Bombings are clearly the most favored tactic of terrorists: More than 80,000 people have been injured or killed by terrorist bombs. The second most commonly used tactic is armed attack, with more than 17,000 people killed or injured through this method. Note the categories of “other” and “unknown”: Many terrorist events are not easily categorized by tactic.

Table 1.3 examines the frequency of terrorist incidents, injuries, and fatalities by the target of the attack. Private citizens have suffered the most at the hands of terrorists: Almost 30,000 noncombatants have been killed or injured since 1998. Police officers have been the second most favored target of terrorists and government officials the third. Note that, although six incidents of terrorism of food or water supply have been recorded, they have yielded no reported injuries or fatalities.

Table 1.4 examines the frequency of terrorist incidents, injuries, and fatalities by group classification. Terrorist organizations motivated by religion have been responsible for the highest number of deaths and injuries since 1998: Over 37,000 people have been victims of religiously inspired terrorism. Nationalist/separatist groups have claimed the second highest body count, with more than 23,000 dead or injured. Although 71 incidents involving environmental terrorists have been recorded, they have yet to result in the loss of life or injury to humans.

These group classifications are tied closely to motives for violence. The discussion to follow centers on three types of explanations for terrorism: collective, individual, and moral. It concludes by offering a useful explanation for understanding the motives of terrorists.

TABLE 1.2 Incidents by Tactic, January 1, 1998–November 21, 2006

	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Injuries</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>
Armed Attack	5600	6988	10103
Arson	778	174	293
Assassination	1682	959	2409
Barricade/Hostage	55	1412	604
Bombing	12451	62591	17793
Hijacking	30	5	26
Kidnapping	1320	118	1137
Other	143	418	115
Unconventional Attack	48	2435	3004
Unknown	366	280	456
<b>Total</b>	<b>22473</b>	<b>75380</b>	<b>35940</b>

SOURCE: MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. (2006). TKB Incidents by Tactics (1/1/98–11/22/06). Retrieved November 22, 2006, from [www.tkb.org](http://www.tkb.org).

TABLE 1.3 Incidents by Target, January 1, 1998–November 21, 2006

	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Injuries</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>
Abortion Related	5	2	2
Airports and Airlines	128	225	98
Business	1828	7851	4529
Diplomatic	393	6505	507
Educational Institutions	542	1339	532
Food or Water Supply	6	0	0
Government	4690	9436	4861
Journalists & Media	439	306	218
Maritime	11	83	32
Military	122	1031	466
NGO	192	178	219
Other	1486	2080	2007
Police	3683	12546	7048
Private Citizens & Property	5030	19667	10041
Religious Figures/Institutions	899	5083	2006
Telecommunication	155	77	63
Terrorist/Former Terrorist	127	75	159
Tourists	96	1180	399
Transportation	1008	6322	2021
Unknown	672	913	348
<b>Total</b>	<b>21512</b>	<b>74899</b>	<b>35556</b>

SOURCE: MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. (2006). TKB Incidents by Tactics (1/1/98–11/22/06). Retrieved November 22, 2006, from [www.tkb.org](http://www.tkb.org).

TABLE 1.4 Incidents by Group Classifications, January 1, 1998–November 21, 2006

	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Injuries</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>
Anarchist	96	6	0
Antiglobalization	86	15	7
Communist/Socialist	2145	3906	2043
Environmental	71	0	0
Leftist	106	112	28
Nationalist/Separatist	2871	16430	6635
Other	76	194	90
Racist	25	14	1
Religious	1966	25715	11477
Right-Wing Conservative	85	12	248
Right-Wing Reactionary	11	8	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>7538</b>	<b>46412</b>	<b>20543</b>

SOURCE: MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. (2006). TKB Incidents by Group Classification (1/1/98–11/22/06). Retrieved November 22, 2006, from [www.tkb.org](http://www.tkb.org).

## MOTIVATION

The “why?” question has preoccupied many scholars from many disciplines for many years. However, two problems plague those who would analyze terrorist behavior (Reich, 1998). On the one hand, analysts often overgeneralize about motivation, ignoring its variety and complexity. Bratkovski (2005, p. 764) has written, for example: “Humankind has always provided a justification for killing and instilling terror in fellow humans.” On the other hand, analysis is also likely to be reductionistic, attributing all or much of terrorist behavior to one or another specific cause. Along those lines, Salij (2005) states that the root cause of terrorism is terrorists’ mistaken beliefs.

## Collective Explanations

General, simplistic explanations have inherent validity, but they lack the specificity that would make them useful for policy or control decisions. Crenshaw (1998b) notes that explanations of terrorist behavior must consider both the individual practitioner and the collective actor, the terrorist group. In turn, both the individual and the group must be seen in relation to society as a whole. Terrorism alters the behavior not only of individuals and collective actors, such as the terrorist organization or the government, but also of the members of entire societies (p. 249).

Some analysts believe that the explanation for when, where, and why people engage in terror is found in the political relationships among groups and the levels of development of those groups. “All this amounts to saying that terror is a strategy, that the strategy involves interactions among political actors, and that to explain the adoption of such a strategy we have no choice but to analyze it as part of a political process” (Tilly, 2005, p. 21). These analysts believe that explanations of terrorism grounded in political relations and group development will serve us far better than systemic explanations that focus on social structures or dispositional explanations that consider individual traits as the starting point for understanding.

In understanding terrorism, we must consider the historical dimension as well. Both the behavior of terrorists and our understanding of their motivation are influenced by historical

context (Crenshaw, 1995). The time and place in which terrorism occurs are relevant to the motivations behind terrorism for many reasons. The socialization of members of a society or subgroup with regard to violence and its justification must be considered. When there is a long violent history, as in Ireland for example, generation after generation of youth have been taught values that support the conflict. The violence in a terrorist act may be a response to a particular offense or part of a sustained, long-term effort. The conflict in Palestine, as another example, has given rise to numerous terrorist groups that have come forward only to fall or splinter and then regroup. In some contexts, terrorist behavior may be linked to nonviolent, legitimate political activities. For example, terrorist organizations may enter candidates in state elections and even control the legitimate political process, as is the case with Hamas in Palestine in 2007. The continuity or discontinuity of the terrorists' campaign is also relevant to motivation. Underlying the Zapatistas movement of the 1990s in Mexico, for example, was the public image of the revolutionary movement for land reform led by Emile Zapata in Mexico in the early 1900s. The opportunities for effective, non-terrorist collective action within the political arena must also be taken into consideration. Chechnyan terrorists, for example, are reacting to their perceived isolation and alienation from the larger, Russian political process. Finally, considering the purpose of the terrorist behavior is basic to understanding. Crenshaw (1995, p. 19) points out that terrorism can develop a momentum that diverts it from its original purpose. Terrorism can merge into a cycle of revenge and retaliation that neither side controls.

This cycle of revenge and retaliation has been called "violence as a logic of action" by Wieviorka (1995, p. 602). He makes a distinction between violence as a method of action performed by those who pursue a specific purpose and are able to abandon terrorism when it no longer appears useful for their purposes, and violence as a logic of action on the part of those who neither foresee nor expect an end to it. In the latter case, terrorist behavior comes to satisfy an insatiable inner need; the means become the end. Wieviorka has shown that a shift to violence as a logic of action is generally the outcome of an ideological process. It involves a break with a commonly held doctrine, religious belief, or conception of history. The shift to violence as a logic of action is also part of social or political distancing. The terrorists lose contact with the class, nation, or community in whose name they claimed to speak. The group no longer represents an actual cause or reference group (Wieviorka, 1995, p. 603). Or as Sprinzak (1998, p. 85) described it, "Ideological terrorism is the simulated revolution of the isolated few."

### Individual Explanations

Miller (2006) explains terrorist motivation as a three-stage process. Stage one begins with unacceptable conditions: "It's not right." Stage two follows with resentment and a sense of injustice: "It's not fair." In Stage three the cause of the injustice is personified: "It's your fault." Though such patterns are evident, it is also evident that only a few of those affected by oppressive social, economic, and historic contexts are actually motivated to become terrorists.

Crenshaw (2000) points out that a psychology of terrorists must take multiple levels of analysis into account. In addition, political terrorism is not simply a product of psychological forces; its central strategy is psychological. Terrorism is at base a vicious species of psychological warfare.

Post (1998) introduces the term "psycho-logic" to describe processes of reasoning that he believes are particular to terrorists. He asserts, "Political terrorists are driven to commit acts of violence as a consequence of psychological forces. In addition, their special psycho-logic is constructed to rationalize acts they are psychologically compelled to commit. Individuals are drawn to the path of terrorism in order to commit acts of violence" (p. 25).

Although most studies do not find that members of terrorist groups demonstrate serious psychopathology, Post and others use the vocabulary of psychiatry in their explanations for terrorist motivation. Freud's theoretical concepts about the importance of early childhood experiences on personality are borne out in their later observations of the behavior of terrorists. For example, Post finds an extremely high frequency among terrorists of a process of externalization

and splitting that is also characteristic of individuals with narcissistic and borderline personality disorders. He believes that externalization and splitting contribute significantly to the uniformity of terrorists' rhetorical style and special psycho-logic (Post, 1998, p. 26).

Externalization refers to projecting onto others one's hatred and devalued weakness from within; in other words, looking outward for the source of difficulties and needing an enemy to blame. Dividing the world into "us" and "them" is the basic manifestation of this process. Seeing a large group of others impersonally as "not like us" enables a worldview that makes violence toward "them" more acceptable.

Splitting is a process that is shaped by a particular type of psychological damage occurring during childhood, which separates good and bad parts of the injured self into "me" and "not me." Splitting shows up in a weakened sense of identity and a need for a cause or group to support one's self-concept (Post, 1998, p. 27). For a person with no identity or sense of self, assuming a role as a terrorist appears valuable and provides purpose to an otherwise meaningless existence.

Kellen (1998) also refers to psychological damage in his explanation of terrorist motivation. He believes that many, but not all, terrorists have experienced a psychological trauma that has two results. First, it makes them see the world in a grossly unrealistic light. Second, it motivates them to extreme violence (p. 43).

Many psychological studies of terrorist behavior focus on a broken family background as the source of trauma (Merari, 1998). Some researchers have shown a high incidence of fragmented families among terrorists, but the field is largely characterized by theoretical speculation based on subjective interpretation of anecdotal observations (Victoroff, 2005).

It is important to understand that any effort to uncover the "terrorist mind" will more likely result in uncovering a spectrum of terrorist minds. Yet mental illness is not commonly found among terrorists. Although terrorist groups are sometimes led by insane individuals and a few terrorist acts might be attributed to unequivocally insane persons, terrorists rarely meet psychiatric criteria for insanity (Victoroff, 2005).

In his review and critique of psychological approaches to explaining the mind of the terrorist, Victoroff (p. 2005, p. 35) concludes that, although terrorists form a heterogeneous group, four traits may possibly be characteristic of "typical" terrorists who lead or follow in substate groups:

1. extreme opinions and emotions regarding a belief system
2. a personal stake—such as strongly perceived oppression, humiliation, or persecution; an extraordinary need for identity, glory, or vengeance; or a drive for expression of innate aggression—that distinguishes them from the vast majority of those who fulfill trait #1
3. low cognitive flexibility—including a low tolerance for ambiguity, distaste for complexity, and disregard for multiple layers of reality—that leads to a very high likelihood of a mistaken sense of causality and a need for blame
4. a capacity to suppress all moral constraints against harming innocents whether due to intrinsic or acquired factors, individual, or group forces—probably influenced by #1, 2, and 3

## Moral Explanations

Motivations for "typical" violence have been studied extensively by Albert Bandura (1973), who is best known for developing social learning theories of aggression. According to Bandura in his later work (1998, p. 163), the motivation to slaughter innocent women and children in buses, department stores, and airports requires a powerful psychological mechanism of moral disengagement. Bandura believes that converting socialized people into dedicated combatants is not achieved by altering their personality structures, aggressive drives, or moral standards. Rather it is accomplished by cognitively restructuring the moral value of killing; that is, by changing the way the person thinks about killing so that killing can be done free from self-censuring restraints

(Bandura, 1998, p. 164). Self-censure and self-sanctions are the internal mechanisms that serve to prevent most individuals from acting violently. Bandura explains that self-sanctions can be disengaged in a number of ways. Terrorists may reconstruct their horrific conduct as serving moral purposes. They may obscure their own role in the violence and deny that their acts are the cause of the carnage. They may distort the consequences of the act by focusing on the good that is to come from it and minimizing the evil done. Terrorists may also avoid self-censure by dehumanizing their victims, considering those who are killed as expendable or collateral damage (Bandura, 1998, p. 161).

The moral value of killing has been the ongoing subject of debate not only among warriors, politicians, journalists, and social scientists, but religious figures also have dominated the study of the morality of violence. Thomas Aquinas is one example of a well-known religious writer whose works have been exploited by terrorists to restructure the moral value of terrorism. In 1894, Max Losen explained that Thomas Aquinas's commentary on the *Magister Sententiarum* in which he noted, "He who kills the tyrant in order to liberate his country is praised and rewarded," has been taken out of context to justify violence against the state. According to Lossen (1894/2004) "Undue weight should not be placed on this single ambiguous passage from a youthful work, at the expense of those others where he declares himself to be firmly opposed to tyrannicide" (p. 27). More recently, Baard's (2004, p. 165) analysis of Aquinas's writings, as applied to the Animal Liberation Front as a form of terrorism, claims, "Anger against a sin is virtuous, whereas anger against the sinner is sinful." Baard interprets this moral observation as legitimizing vengeance against corporations and enterprises. She distinguishes, as did Aquinas, between antecedent anger, which precedes rational judgment and is not good, and consequent anger following judgment, which may be good if it leads to action against injustice. Consequent anger provides energy for action, increasing resolve. Revenge gives us hope and pleasure (Baard, 2004, p. 161).

These examples from the writings of Aquinas show how those who are constructing an image of their terrorist conduct as serving moral purposes have used the writings of familiar religious figures to support an image of their own violence as morally justified. A distorted view of other Christian religious principles has been used to sustain terrorist motivation throughout the world. Meanwhile, Muslim religious figures have played a critical role in Islamist terrorist motivation as well. Following the word of God, as a terrorist sees it, contributes to a sense of ethical superiority. Identifying with religious figures can also provide terrorists with a code of self-sacrifice and support a belief in a higher calling (Martin, 2006, p. 83).

### Useful Explanations

There are serious obstacles to the study of terrorist motivation. Terrorists who are available for study are not likely to be typical because interaction with active terrorist groups in order to analyze motivation is highly dangerous and decidedly suspect. Many materials and publications about terrorists are extreme and sensationalistic. In addition, social scientists lack cross-cultural methods of investigation that would take advantage of the experience of history to develop comparisons and developmental studies (Crenshaw, 2000). These are all formidable obstacles. However, the biggest obstacle to developing a useful explanation of terrorist motivation is the lack of understanding of the value of that explanation. Despite the possibility of global data sharing and the international consortiums that study the causes of terrorism, little progress has been made toward developing an explanation of terrorist motivation that effectively informs public policy.

State leaders and those with influence in global politics seldom concede the essentiality of theory in their day-to-day decisions. Yet, beliefs about motivations and causes of terrorism are critical to the policies and courses of action they recommend. As Crenshaw (1998b, p. 287) notes, "Officials may deny that theory is relevant, but they rely on it constantly, at no time more than during a crisis when they think they have escaped its influence." While denying the influence of political theory, policymakers in law enforcement, the military, and government depend on assumptions about causality at no time more than in the heat of an emergency. Thus, useful theories about terrorist motivation are essential.

As Victoroff (2005) and others conclude, meaningful research is likely to be interdisciplinary, empirical, controlled, ethical, conducted across levels of analysis, and directed at root causes and modifiable risk factors along the entire chain of causality from historical forces to childhood influences to the moment of a terrorist act: "For the purposes of long-term security policy formulation an increased emphasis should be placed on the analysis of the interaction between those psychological, cultural, economic, and political factors that influence uncommitted but impressionable young people to turn toward terrorism" (Victoroff, 2005, p. 35).

## HIGHLIGHTS OF REPRINTED ARTICLES

The two readings that follow, the first of which is on definitional issues and the second on theoretical ones, were selected because of their in-depth coverage of the issues and the unique insights of their well-respected authors. The first reading, by H. H. A. Cooper, stresses the political and ideological nature of the problems of definition. The second reading, by Margaret Crenshaw, explores a strategic theory for understanding terrorist motivation.

H. H. A. Cooper (2001). Terrorism: The problem of definition revisited. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44(6), 881–893.

Cooper defines terrorism as "the intentional generation of massive fear by human beings for the purpose of securing or maintaining control over other human beings" (p. 883). Cooper's theme is similar to that of David Rapoport's reprint in Chapter 2: Both argue that terrorists seek to exploit their opponents' weaknesses. In Cooper's view, "terrorism is a naked struggle for power, who shall wield it, and to what ends" (p. 890). It is thus an extreme form of political coercion.

Cooper addresses the phenomenon of the state as terrorist by noting that the "state's power to wage war to maintain its integrity against external foes . . . turns on the ability to secure the desired result through intimidation. Here lies the road to Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, but we accord the nation-state considerable latitude in these matters. But, there comes a point when the line is crossed and we would say that the state has begun to rule by terror" (p. 885).

Cooper's article was published a few months before the attacks on September 11, 2001; unfortunately many of his dire prophecies have come true.

Martha Crenshaw (1998). The logic of terrorism: Terrorist behavior as a product of strategic choice. In Walter Reich (Ed.), *Origins of terrorism*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Crenshaw wrote this chapter long before 9/11, but her perspective has grown more valuable with time. Charles Tilly reiterated Crenshaw's theme in 2005: "When it comes to terror, the beginning of wisdom is to recognize it as a strategy" (p. 27). Terror is not the outflow of a uniform mentality but a strategy employed by a wide array of actors whose motives, means, and organization vary greatly.

This article was chosen as the exemplar of a strategic theory of terrorism, even though it first appeared in a collection of articles that are psychological in theme. According to the editor of that book, Crenshaw's work was included to balance the perspective of the book and to place its main theme within a realistic context. It is because of the realistic nature of the strategic approach that it was selected for inclusion in this chapter on motivation. We chose this classic article because it is succinct, comprehensive, and clear. In it, Crenshaw provides a complete outline of a strategic approach, as well as recommendations for application of the explanations to be derived from an instrumental study of terrorism.

In a later chapter in that same book, *Origins of Terrorism*, Crenshaw suggests that future theoretical inquiry might expand the logic of terrorism to center on causes, conduct, and consequences of terrorism (Crenshaw, 1998b). There is a significant need for more study of the link between motivation and terrorist behavior. As Tilly points out, "Good explanations put us on the path to effective action and counteraction" (2005, p. 22). However, Crenshaw makes it clear that

“no single explanation for terrorist acts will ever be satisfactory” (1998b, p. 24). Explanations of motivation must be flexible and contextual. And as Martin (2006, p. 103) reminds us, “The progression of explanations by the social and behavioral sciences in the future will naturally reflect the sociopolitical environments of the times in which they are developed.”

### EXPLORING THE WHAT OF TERRORISM FURTHER

- Examine the definitions of terrorism offered by different government agencies; for example, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State.
- What is the difference between terrorism and guerrilla warfare, struggles for national liberation, genocide, warfare, and violent crime? A good place to start your examination is Boaz Ganor’s article titled “Defining Terrorism: Is One Man’s Terrorist Another Man’s Freedom Fighter?”. The article can be found at <http://www.ict.org.il/articles/define.htm>.
- What is your definition of terrorism? State it in a single sentence. Using your definition, how would you distinguish terrorism from violent crime, war, guerrilla warfare, civil war, genocide, etc?
- Based on your definition of terrorism, explain your answer to the following questions:
  - Were the Sons of Liberty terrorists?
  - During the Civil War, could the acts of either the Union or the Confederacy be deemed terrorism?
  - Does the U.S. treatment of Native Americans under the Removal Act of 1830 constitute state-sponsored terrorism?
  - Was it state-sponsored terrorism when the National Guard fired in 1970 on students at Kent State University who were protesting the Vietnam War?
- Elaborate on the real-world consequences of defining terrorism. Be specific in describing why a precise definition matters in terms of the operation of counterterrorism activities.
- In the first reprint, Cooper discusses the difficulty of defining terrorism. Explain his reasoning and what is meant by the concept of “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.”
- What emphasis does Cooper place on the element of hate? Does he think people should be punished for their hatred of others? What is your feeling on this?
- According to Crenshaw, the author of the second reprint, what is the difference between a dispositional explanation and a strategic explanation of terrorist motivation?
- Based on your reading of Crenshaw, do you think social learning is related to cognitively restructuring the moral value of killing? Why or why not?
- How would suicide bombing be studied and explained from a strategic perspective?
- How could a strategic perspective be applied in developing policy to prevent bus bombings in Miami?

### VIDEO NOTES

The film, *Paradise Now* (Warner Brothers, 2005, 91 min.) is recommended as a most insightful and unvarnished look at the motivations of terrorists.

# Terrorism

## *The Problem of Definition Revisited*

H. H. A. Cooper

How can terrorism be defined when the process of defining is wholly frustrated by the presence of irreconcilable antagonisms? It is certainly not easy to define, much less comprehend. With respect to terrorism, there is among the many participants to the discussion no agreement on the basic nature of the fruit under consideration. In any case, the definition of terrorism has undergone a number of small refinements as experience has suggested. This article considers how to define terrorism or at least know it when it is seen in the coming decades.

*A living language has no existence independent of culture. It is not the loom of culture but its data bank. As such, it serves the needs, past and present, of a given community. As those needs change, language evolves to accommodate them.*

—Raymond Cohen (1990, pp. 41–42)<sup>1</sup>

With the advent of the new millennium, whatever one's preference for the mathematics of the event, a certain nostalgia for the past is inevitable. Although it is still difficult for many of us to adjust to no longer living in the 20th century, it seems even harder for others to let go of even the most recent of bygone memories. As the century raced to its anticlimactic close, a wave of recall swept through the media worldwide, made possible by new technologies that have given potent meaning to the yet ill-defined term *globalization*. Amid this feverish search for the most memorable this and the most renowned that, the sensitive observer might discern a hankering for earlier times, a kind of golden age in which everything was simpler, much easier to understand, and, to use appropriate *fin de siècle* terminology, less stressful. No examination of these impressions in general is essayed here. Yet, it is of some importance to notice them in relation to the present topic if for no other reason than to

offer a pertinent rejoinder. It can be stated with absolute certainty that there has never been, since the topic began to command serious attention, some golden age in which terrorism was easy to define or, for that matter, to comprehend. And, as we plunge gaily into the brave new world of the 21st century, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the problem of definition, or as it was once described, the problem of the problem of definition (Cooper, 1978), will come any closer to sensible resolution. With that solemn caveat in place, let us proceed to consider how, variously, we may come to define terrorism or at least know it when we see it in the coming decades.

### DEFINITION IS TRULY AN ART

Parenthetically, we must deal here with what is implied in the process of definition itself. Definition is truly an art. The artist seeks to represent,

SOURCE: From "Terrorism: The Problem of Definition Revisited" in *American Behavioral Scientist* by Cooper, H. H. A., 2001: 41: 881. Reprinted with permission from Sage Publications.

in concrete or abstract terms, something he or she has conceptualized or observed so as to give it some meaning of a distinctive character. The resultant work is a vehicle of communication for the thought or revelation that the artist seeks to convey to others. The central problem in the process is that no two human beings ever see the same thing, however simple, in exactly the same light or from the same standpoint. There is rarely, if ever, an exact correspondence of interpretation, and the introduction of but the slightest complexity can alter the meaning intended by the artist. Most ordinary, social communication is imprecise by nature. It simply is not necessary that we define our terms with exactitude; it suffices that we are generally understood. Of course, misunderstandings abound, especially between the genders<sup>2</sup> and persons of differing status, culture, occupation, education, and the like. This is sometimes a source of irritation and occasionally cause for amusement, but it is not often of great consequence. Yet, in serious discourse, especially on matters involving a potential for substantial disagreement or those bearing controversial or emotional overtones, the closest correspondence of understanding as to the meaning of the language employed is imperative. If we are discussing fruit, and I believe you are talking about apples when in fact you are trying to convey to me that you are referring to oranges, we are not going to get very far without timely clarification. With respect to terrorism, there is among the many participants to the discussion no agreement on the basic nature of the fruit under consideration. For some, it will always, unalterably be apples; for others, with equal rigor, it will remain oranges. No amount of sophistry or the introduction of other varieties will be helpful in resolving the issue of meaning. One person's terrorist will ever remain another's freedom fighter. The process of definition is wholly frustrated by the presence of irreconcilable antagonisms.

### A DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and perhaps for this reason alone, so many conferences and writings on the subject of terrorism begin with the obligatory, almost ritualistic recitation by the presenter of some preferred definition of terrorism.<sup>3</sup> This is not wholly an

exercise in futility; whatever the discrepancies detected by others, the definitions at least provide starting points for debate. The search has always been for one all-embracing statement that could stand at least a chance of gaining a high degree of acceptance by others as well as covering a majority of the bases. It can be reasonably confidently asserted that this procedure will continue unaltered as we transit the 21st century. In a similar spirit, then, the following definition of terrorism is offered here so that we may have a basis for reflection on the problems of terrorism and how it is likely to present itself in the new millennium.

Terrorism is the intentional generation of massive fear by human beings for the purpose of securing or maintaining control over other human beings.

This definition evolved over some 25 years of teaching about the topic of terrorism in a university setting, and during that time, it has undergone a number of small refinements as experience has suggested. Other definitions have similarly been subject to modification as those who propounded them sought to meet criticisms extended by others and to perfect the concepts enshrined in the words employed. In a very real sense, all the earlier definitions had to be subject to this process of refinement if they were to survive at all. Even the most assiduous wordsmiths were humbled by the task of encapsulating such powerful, at their simplest, contradictory ideas in one all-embracing sentence. It is no surprise, then, to encounter definitions that run for paragraphs, even pages, in frantic attempts to capture the elusive meaning embodied in the word *terrorism*. This is dialectic rather than definition, but it is an inescapable part of the process whether it is reduced to writing or articulated only in discussion. The above definition, in the form it is presented here, owes much to classroom discussion and the acuity of the students to whom it was offered as a starting point for an exploration of the subject. Before examining its components in detail, it seems helpful to explain the underlying philosophy orienting its construction. Although it is always dangerous to generalize, it may be observed that university students tend to be an unforgiving bunch. They are quick to seize on any errors or inconsistencies they detect in the formula. And, if they have cause to doubt as a result, their overall confidence in the instruction and the instructor is shaken. In

particular, in the matter of defining terrorism, the product offered had necessarily to address succinctly the thorny issue of “one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter”; hence the formulation offered here.

Again, a further thought has to be inserted at this juncture. However much you may buy into the freedom fighter argument, you are forced, if you are intellectually honest, to the conclusion that whatever label it might bear, terrorism is a bad thing. All you can sensibly say in its defense is that sometimes it may be necessary to do bad things to other people, most usually with the apologetic justification that it is done to prevent or deter them from doing bad or worse things to you. If it is conceded that there is no “good” terrorism, that such an import would be a contradiction in terms, any definition must unambiguously take this into account, for it goes to the fundamental nature of the concept. In practice, the definition of terrorism has been consistently plagued by an ever increasing need to justify the reprehensible. This has proved the biggest obstacle to the production of anything approaching a widely acceptable definition, especially in the international arena. It must be stressed that there is a basic antinomy here: What *I* do, however unpleasant is not terrorism; what *you* do is terrorism. From the point of view of definition, this is not a question of degrees such as dogs, for example, the term *high crimes and misdemeanors* in the impeachment realm (see Posner, 1999, pp. 98–105). What is asserted is a difference in kind; *I* don’t commit terrorism; *you* do. You can no more have a little bit of terrorism than you can be a little bit pregnant. From a definitional perspective, it ought not to matter who does what to whom. Terrorism should be defined solely by the nature and quality of what is done. Difficult as this is, definition should strive for impartiality in this field, or the exercise must fail in its purposes.

### IS TERRORISM A FREESTANDING CONCEPT?

Is terrorism, then, a freestanding concept? In terms of penal policy or normative configuration, is it something autonomous or simply a constituent element of certain kinds of criminal behavior that are already defined? What is

offered above certainly has to be carefully considered in that light. An examination of any coherent legal system will reveal many crimes where the creation of great fear in the victim (e.g., rape) is a central, defining feature. Many would agree that rape is a terroristic act, especially when it is employed in warfare as an instrument of subjugation or humiliation. In any unbiased analysis, it might reasonably be put forward as terrorism *par excellence*. Yet, it is not the crime of rape that comes readily or immediately to mind in any discussion of the meaning of terrorism. This is not to deny the terroristic content within what is understood about the crime of rape, at least in its violent manifestation, but rather an unexpressed preference for seeing terrorism as something separate, distinct, and having an existence all its own. For those taking such a position, and no objection is taken to it here, terrorism seems to inhabit a different universe from the ordinary, from even the most heinous of otherwise criminal behavior. That it can or should do so comes as no surprise to the legal positivist. Although norms cannot be simply conjured up out of thin air, the power to create new crimes in response to altered circumstances is an inherent faculty of any legal system. At this point, it must be made clear that what has been offered above as a conceptualization of terrorism is in no way to be regarded as an inchoate norm awaiting the interposition of the legal system’s authority to give it independent being. And, herein lies the central dilemma, which cannot be readily overcome by recourse to any legal artifice. It is only possible to construct a freestanding penal figure denominated *terrorism* out of elements borrowed from preexisting crimes already defined as such in their own right. Thus, rape can in this view be seen as a constituent element of an autonomous crime of terrorism, just as terrorism can be seen as a necessary ingredient in a violent rape. Although this does little to advance the process of definition *per se*, it does serve to expose a critical problem that cannot be evaded.

Even the most cursory examination of the many definitions of terrorism on offer should quickly persuade the critic how many of these rely for any sort of precision on the adjectives employed in their elaboration. These definitions tend to focus on purpose, and that, in each of them, is primarily political. Reduced to its simplest terms, terrorism is seen as extreme political

coercion. This, truth to tell, is the *raison d'être* of virtually all these definitional exercises. For it is only in the realm of the political that these definitions have any useful employment; hence their adversarial nature. Yet, assuredly, the abused child knows exactly what terrorism is, even though he or she might be quite unable to enunciate the word. More is revealed in this of the purposes of the definers, or refiners, than of the nature of terrorism itself. All who seek to find a meaning in the term *terrorism* would have to agree on the centrality of the massive fear, or terror,<sup>4</sup> it inspires in those on whom it is inflicted, as well as its coercive nature. What is in dispute is whether there is anything in the nature of a right to inflict such misery on others and, if so, in whom it inheres. Here, we come to another dilemma that cannot escape the notice of anyone seeking to define terrorism. In its nature, terrorism, by reason of its coercive aspects, has a marked similarity to the corrective and deterrent functions vested by common understanding and political theory in the state—and the responsible parent. The distinction is in degree rather than anything else. Consider, for example, the ultimate sanction permitted the nation-state seeking to exercise its authority internally to control crime, namely the death penalty. Those who subscribe to a belief in its efficacy, whether by way of deterrence or social hygiene, can only rely on its intimidatory effect; if it does not frighten others by way of example, its value is very limited. The state's power to wage war to maintain its integrity against external foes can be viewed in much the same way. Clearly, effectiveness turns on the ability to secure the desired result through intimidation. Here lies the road to Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, but we accord the nation-state considerable latitude in these matters. But, there comes a point when the line is crossed and we would say that the state has begun to rule by terror. There are issues of proportionality involved of a most delicate kind, but they are the ones that perturb the definitional process in most awkward ways. Terrorism becomes, for those in power, an affront to established authority. Power, when stretched to its limits is, to many, no more than a reign of terror. Any definition that ignores this is open to attack as pure cant. The point here is that the way in which these things are done has always assumed lesser importance from the point of view of their characterization as terrorism than who does them and to whom.<sup>5</sup>

It should be observed that there is a kind of parallel in this regard with what have come to be known in recent times as "hate crimes." Those who oppose the promulgation, altogether, of such a category argue simply that it is otiose; murder is murder. What can be done to increase the gravity with which certain matters seem to clamor for attention? Is any greater protection afforded potential victims by this increment? Nothing is added, for example, to the crime of murder that might serve as a special deterrent to those who would commit it against some class supposedly in need of particular protection. Many behaviorists and mental health professionals would argue, with considerable force on their side, that an individual who kills any victim in a singularly vicious way is exhibiting a hatred of that person regardless of the class to which that person belongs; in fact, so personalized may be the hatred that no issue of a class character enters into the matter (see Gourevich, 2000). None of this would satisfy those who argue for special hate crime legislation. Once more, the focus is plainly on who does what to whom and why. Hatred is an emotion and one that in civilized society is regarded as reprehensible, unhealthy, and socially harmful. It is the "why" of the matter that is troubling to those who see themselves as likely to be victimized by those who bear and exhibit these ugly emotions. The problem resides herein: The feelings we characterize as hatred cannot be punished unless they are exhibited in a way that is criminal in itself or in association with conduct that is already criminalized. If the device of making the element of hate is a way of making this latter punishable in a more severe fashion than would otherwise be the case, the position has something to commend it, but in the case of the most serious crimes, such as murder, they are already punishable to the limit; the rest is merely posturing. As with terrorism, we should define by reference to what is done rather than by shifting our focus to those who are victimized and the reasons they are targeted.

### GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS

Viewed in the formulation set down here, terrorism is a game of fixed quantities. It is cold comfort, but comfort nevertheless, that as we enter the new millennium, no new terrorism is

possible. How can this be? Creating massive fear in human beings is based on the same principles that have always informed the process: You can kill them, you can mutilate them or otherwise damage their physical or mental integrity, you can deprive them of their liberty, you can damage or destroy their relationships with people and things, you can adversely alter the quality of their lives by affecting their environment or their economic prospects or by imposing onerous burdens on them, or you can achieve your ends by credibly threatening to do all or any of these things. It is not possible to conceive of anything else that might accomplish the goal of creating the massive fear, or terror, that is at the heart of terrorism. That is the good news. The bad news—and it is very, very bad—is that with each passing moment ever newer and more horrible ways of undertaking these things are being imagined and made possible by the implacable, onward sweep of technology. That is the awful prospect that looms before us as we proceed into the new millennium. The 19th-century terrorist, if he or she were lucky, might have anticipated a body count in the hundreds, although none attained that target. It was probably easier for the terrorist, especially the anarchist, to concentrate on trying to effect change through coercion against selected individual targets, for example, the assassination of key members of the ruling classes. The 20th-century terrorist never truly reached his or her potential, for which we should be devoutly grateful. The ingredients were there, but somehow, the deadly brew was never administered to its deadliest effect. With regard to the concept and the resources available to it, the attack by Aum Shinrikyu on the Tokyo subway, judged on its results, was puny in the extreme; a 19th-century anarchist operating alone with black powder might have accomplished much more. The World Trade Center bombing in New York, similarly from the terrorists' point of view, produced a pathetically small death toll and nothing like the property damage that was possible. Although the horrific attack on the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City stands above them all in terms of execution, magnitude, and a lasting impression on the psyche of the American people, it is not difficult to imagine how much worse it might have been. This is the frightening face of the future, but in the matter of definition, it is no different from what we have struggled with in the past. This is

the fact that is urged here on those who will have to cope with the practical implications of terrorism in the new millennium.

## COMPREHENDING TERRORISM

We seek to define terrorism so as to be better able to cope with it. We cannot begin to counter effectively that which we are unable to fully comprehend or agree on as to its nature. Some 50-odd years have been wasted in trying to disentangle the topic of terrorism from the much grander subject of wars of national liberation.<sup>6</sup> A great deal of time and effort has been expended in trying to make the truly reprehensible politically respectable. As the awesome possibilities of the new millennium are translated into ever more frightening realities, we can no longer afford the fiction that one person's terrorist may yet be another's freedom fighter. Fighting for freedom may well be his or her purpose, but if the mission is undertaken through the employment of terroristic means, a terrorist he or she must remain; we ought not to confuse the sophistry of refinement for the process of definition. This assumes considerable importance as the older forms of terrorism give way, as they must, before the newer and more horrible ways of going about this grim business. For the advances of technology have not all aided the terrorist's purposes. As in so many other departments of modern life, the audience has become increasingly difficult to shock. Indeed, the terrorist nowadays has to struggle mightily against a kind of ennui affecting those he or she would seek to impress. The audience, with the ever present assistance of television reporting of the contemporaneous, has become sated on a diet of death and destruction. The misery of others is fast losing its ability to horrify or, at least, to horrify for very long. Terroristic violence on the screen, whether fact or fiction, has become commonplace; much of the mystery has faded. This has made the terrorist's task increasingly difficult: How do you recapture and refocus the jaded attention of such an audience? The possibilities are really quite limited. You can strive to increase the toll in terms of the body count; compared to conventional warfare, deaths resulting from acts of terrorism have been numerically insignificant. To measure the true potential of terrorism, one would have to look to, say, Rwanda. Alternatively,

the terrorist has to imagine novel, strikingly horrible means for doing the traditional things; and, significantly, the execution must match the imaginings. Clearly, whichever course is chosen, some of the mystery has to be reintroduced. Fear feeds off the unknown. We must be careful not to allow this development to warp the process of definition.

### FROM WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION TO CYBERTERRORISM

The expression "weapons of mass destruction" has now entered firmly into common currency. The expression conjures up visions of lots and lots of casualties and people dying in horrid ways as a result of the employment of such weapons. Because of its awesome, proved potential, nuclear weaponry is perhaps the first type to come to mind when the expression is used. Credible fears of the terrorist nuclear bomb go back at least to the 1970s; much fiction has been written around the theme of the "basement nuclear bomb." The concept has dominated futuristic theorizing about the direction terroristic escalation might take. Nuclear terrorism has, thankfully, remained in the realm of fiction. But, as we stand on the threshold of the new millennium, we would be most unwise to conclude that it will be ever thus. Indeed, it is little short of a miracle that we have not had to face the realities of nuclear terrorism to date. The knowledge and the materials have long been available to those who might have been tempted to engage in some feat of superterrorism (see Schweitzer, 1998). The point here is that if and when this awful eventuality materializes, it will not require any redefinition of terrorism; it will simply sharpen the terms with which it is drawn. We might remind ourselves at this juncture that it matters little to the instant victims whether they are done to death with a hatpin or consigned to perish in a nuclear conflagration. But, viewed in prospect, which is the more fearful, which the more likely to produce social nightmares? Even serially, you cannot account for a great many victims with hatpins. A simple nuclear device in the possession of a competent terrorist would demolish much property, alter the landscape, and kill and horribly maim a great many human beings. Its employment would alter forever the face of terrorism, and the way we have

come to think about it. It would not, however, require us to alter the way we define it.

Until the late 1980s, many tended to think of terrorism in almost climatological terms, as though it were blown by a cold wind out of the East. It was, for the most part, an indelibly Cold War phenomenon; terrorism was often referred to as a form of surrogate warfare. Unpleasant it undoubtedly was, especially for the instant victims, but there did exist a useful measure of control applied by the patron states. The euphoria of the early 1990s blinded us to the dangers inherent in the collapse of the control factor. Whether or not one subscribed to the mutually assured destruction theory, it was very unlikely that the principal antagonists would encourage their surrogates to use weapons of mass destruction that they would be unwilling themselves to employ. The disintegration of the "evil empire" had another unpleasant consequence for terrorism: It unleashed deadly material and put a lot of disengaged experts on the "free" market. Now, we have to face the real possibility of a revitalized Cold War with old Cold Warriors such as Vladimir Putin in the driver's seat. What is uncertain is whether the old controls will be reimposed, or even whether they can. Although none of this is likely to unleash fresh fears of small-group nuclear terrorism in the West, it is likely to have an impact in other areas of perhaps greater concern. The fearful instruments of chemical and biological warfare, largely eschewed by a majority of civilized nations, have acquired the soubriquet of "the poor man's nuclear bomb." Certainly, as death-dealing implements, the term is well applied. There is a kind of inevitability about the employment of these weapons by terrorists. The amount of publicity they have received over the past decade or so alone would have assured that outcome. It is worthy of note, yet again, that these possibilities encouraged by technological advances and political shifts have no definitional significance. The alterations have been simply adjectival. But, they will change the way we think about terrorism as well as about those whose job it is to undertake countermeasures. Sooner maybe than later, one of those packets or envelopes is going to contain anthrax spores, the real thing, rather than the miscellaneous hoax powders that have turned up so far. There is a kind of fearfulness about handling this stuff that, as much as anything else, has probably protected society until now. The fears are not misplaced. Considering

the number of terrorists who have blown themselves up with their own bombs, the very unfamiliarity with the handling of some of these substances, especially the nerve gases, suggests perils of an entirely different order from those previously experienced. The first successful employment of chemical and biological agents by terrorists will doubtlessly overcome any lingering inhibitions.

Now, yet another term has to be employed by those seeking to give precision to their particular definitions of terrorism. Not long after heaving a sigh of relief and congratulating ourselves at having avoided the catastrophes of Y2K predicted by the doomsayers, we have been hit with a wave of what is being called "cyberterrorism." Modern society is becoming more and more computer dependent. Everything from electronic commerce to the supply of energy is vulnerable, and although this may not be the immediate objective of the perpetrators, the potential for the associated loss of human life is not inconsiderable.<sup>7</sup> This cyberterrorism is still very much in its infancy; the methods are primitive and unsophisticated but effective. This is not "virtual" terrorism or Game Boy stuff. Cyberspace is a real place; real operations and real functions take place there, and real interests are at risk. The methods are new, but the principles behind their application are as old as terrorism itself. The technology employed has enabled the terrorists to reintroduce a useful, from their point of view, element of mystery into the process. They can, for a little while at least, operate from a considerable distance, concealing their identities and their purposes. The authorities, for the moment, can only confess to a sense of bafflement and try to reassure the affected public that everything possible is being done to protect the systems at risk and to apprehend the culprits. All this is going to generate a new lexicon, and already familiar terms such as *hackers*, *computer viruses*, *trap doors*, and the like will gain greater currency. Yet, we could as easily say these cybersystems were being "kidnapped," "hijacked," or "taken hostage," and when demands are presented to desist, the term *extortion* will come into play. Of greatest interest, perhaps, for the present purposes, a participant in an online discussion opined, "Hackers are freedom fighters for cyberspace" (Weise, 2000, p. 2A). Those who do not learn the lexical lessons of history are obliged to repeat the semester!

Terrorism, by its nature, seeks out and exploits its opponents' weaknesses. Again, a well-known aphorism has it that "terrorism is the weapon of the weak." This was a definitional device intended to characterize those tarnished with the terrorist label as being those who challenged rightful authority rather than those who abused it through practices that smacked of vicious cruelty. The nation-state has always been ultrasensitive to accusations that it is guilty of terrorism, whether against its own lawful residents or others (see, e.g., Herman & O'Sullivan, 1989). Where these cruelties are egregious, as in the case of Nazi Germany, few would cavil at defining what is done as terrorism. Yet, even that awful regime would claim its actions were in the nature of self-defense, a deterrent to behavior that threatened its cohesiveness and purposes.<sup>8</sup> Unhappily, such state terrorism is very far from being a thing of the past. As we proceed into the new millennium, we shall be confronted more and more with terrorism that proceeds from the mighty rather than the weak. A practical consequence of this delicacy in the matter of labeling can be seen by studying in any particular year the nations that find themselves on the U.S. State Department's list of "terrorist states," and those that do not. There is a kind of hypocrisy about this process that no definitional sophistry can hide; it simply highlights the perennial difficulty of describing forthrightly what terrorism is, for fear of upsetting those we might find it inconvenient to criticize. This is unfortunate on much more than a linguistic level. Definition is dictated under such circumstances by the harsh realities of power: None dare call it by its rightful name. This is surely the road to Tiananmen Square, and the consequences of ignoring the route are much more than merely academic.

Terrorism is a naked struggle for power, who shall wield it, and to what ends. The coercive character of what is done is plain enough to require little beyond description. Where the process does not produce the requisite submission, escalation is inevitable; action begets reaction. This is the real challenge to the high-minded. It is here that the state finds it especially needful to characterize what its opponents do as terrorism while seeking to distinguish its own counteraction as something quite different, lacking in reprehensible qualities. While looking at the conduct of those whose political philosophies we do not share, we ought not to disregard too cavalierly the mote in our

own eye. No nation-state can relinquish its sovereign authority to an adversary, attempting to seize it by force, and retain its own integrity. Retaliation is an imperative in such cases, but one of the objectives of the adversary is to produce an over-reaction. Brutal repression serves the adversary's purposes, so as to give rise to the charge, "See, you are as bad, or worse, than we are. Who is the terrorist now?" The audience is the community of nation-states, which has become increasingly censorious in judging the responses of others, especially when the judges are not directly confronted, for the moment, with terrorism problems of their own. In an ideal world, responses would be measured by much the same criteria as those against which an individual's rights of self-defense at law are evaluated, namely that the response should be necessary, reasonable, and proportionate to the harm suffered or apprehended (Cooper, 1998). We are forced to recognize that the real world in which modern-day terrorism takes place is very far from ideal. It is, rather, a Hobbesian universe in which all life is to be regarded as "nastie, brutish and shorte"—and cheap in the bargain. Terrorism thus becomes a battle for the moral high ground, with those in legitimate power trying to preserve their positions against opponents bent on dragging them into the gutter. The outcome is yet another phenomenological element in the process of defining terrorism that is likely to be of increasing importance in coming decades.

### THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION REMAINS UNALTERED THROUGHOUT

Thus, at the start of the new millennium, we can say with a high degree of certainty that the definition of terrorism is as needful and as illusory as ever. The fine minds that have engaged in the task over the past three decades or so have provided much fuel for the crucible and a great deal of raw material for the process, but a truly pure ingot has eluded all. Once again, the focus here has been on the problem of definition, which remains unaltered throughout. It is realism rather than pessimism that prompts the observation that this is really a problem without a solution, for none can voluntarily yield the high ground to the others. Terrorism is not a struggle for the hearts and minds of the victims nor for their immortal souls. Rather, it is, as Humpty Dumpty would have said, about who is to be master, that is all. Yet, withal, no

one who has experienced terrorism in the flesh has the slightest doubt about what it is or the sensations that it engenders.<sup>9</sup> Ask any concentration camp survivor. Ask those fortunate enough to have returned from the gulag. Ask those who have experienced the more recent examples of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia or in East Timor. They may not be able to encapsulate the horrors of their respective experiences in a finely turned phrase or two, but what they have undergone is to them and countless others not in the slightest doubt, for it is indelibly engraved on their psyches. Although this cannot suffice for the purposes of the polemic, it does help to focus the debate. As with obscenity, we know terrorism well enough when we see it. For the minds and bodies affected by it, this suffices; definition for these is otiose. This will not and cannot change in the years to come, strive as we may to give precision to the concept. It is diffidently opined here that we would be better employed in refocusing our efforts on what is done, the terrible acts themselves, whether by way of original initiative or retaliation. It might be more admirable to call a spade a spade, in the hands of whoever might be wielding it. These pathetic attempts at making the contemptible respectable will seem as ridiculous to those approaching the end of the present millennium as efforts to rehabilitate Attila the Hun or Genghis Khan would appear in our own times. So we are left, as we began, with our own imperfect formulas and the ever insistent need to explain and expound. As the incomparable Ludwig Wittgenstein (1921/1961) instructed us, "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. *They make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical" (p. 151). Terrorism is one of those things.

### NOTES

1. Cohen's (1990) *Culture and Conflict in Egyptian-Israeli Relations: A Dialogue of the Deaf* is an excellent scholarly work that deserves to be more widely known.
2. See, for example, the excellent scholarly works of Deborah Tannen, especially *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1990).
3. Representative of these worthy efforts is *International Terrorism: National, Regional, and Global Perspectives* (1976), edited by Yonah Alexander.
4. Terror and terrorism tend to be confused, somewhat awkwardly, in Frederick J. Hacker's (1976)

well-known work *Crusaders, Criminals, Crazies: Terror and Terrorism in Our Time*.

5. See, generally, the thoughtful arguments of Noam Chomsky, especially his chapter "International Terrorism: Image and Reality" in *Western State Terrorism* (1991), edited by Alexander George.

6. One of the more thoughtful and eclectic symposia on this subject was held in 1976 at Glassboro State College. The splendidly edited proceedings volume, *International Terrorism in the Contemporary World* (Livingston, 1978), contains the following, written by the author, on its first page: "Many nations have recognized the great potential of terrorism; the terrorist is now the spearhead of a developing theory and practice of surrogate warfare."

7. Such an attack on the air traffic control system, for example, has long been feared.

8. "Terrorism was the chief instrument of securing the cohesion of the German people in war purposes" (Office of the Chief Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, 1946, p. 144).

9. There is something faintly paradoxical about this that is reminiscent of the renowned cat of Schrödinger, seemingly capable of being alive and dead at the same time.

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## The Logic of Terrorism

### *Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice*

Martha Crenshaw

This chapter examines the ways in which terrorism can be understood as an expression of political strategy. It attempts to show that terrorism may follow logical processes that can be discovered and explained. For the purpose of presenting this source of terrorist behavior, rather than the psychological one, it interprets the resort to violence as a willful choice made by an organization for political and strategic reasons, rather than as the unintended outcome of psychological or social factors.<sup>1</sup>

In the terms of this analytical approach, terrorism is assumed to display a collective rationality. A radical political organization is seen as the central actor in the terrorist drama. The group possesses collective preferences or values and selects terrorism as a course of action from a range of perceived alternatives. Efficacy is the primary standard by which terrorism is compared with other methods of achieving political goals. Reasonably regularized decision-making procedures are employed to make an intentional choice, in conscious anticipation of the consequences of various courses of action or inaction. Organizations arrive at collective judgments about the relative effectiveness of different strategies of opposition on the basis of observation and experience, as much as on the basis of abstract strategic conceptions derived from ideological assumptions. This approach thus allows for the incorporation of theories of social learning.

Conventional rational-choice theories of individual participation in rebellion, extended to

include terrorist activities, have usually been considered inappropriate because of the "free rider" problem. That is, the benefits of a successful terrorist campaign would presumably be shared by all individual supporters of the group's goals, regardless of the extent of their active participation. In this case, why should a rational person become a terrorist, given the high costs associated with violent resistance and the expectation that everyone who supports the cause will benefit, whether he or she participates or not? One answer is that the benefits of participation are psychological. Other chapters in this volume explore this possibility.

A different answer, however, supports a strategic analysis. On the basis of surveys conducted in New York and West Germany, political scientists suggest that individuals can be *collectively* rational.<sup>2</sup> People realize that their participation is important because group size and cohesion matter. They are sensitive to the implications of free-riding and perceive their personal influence on the provision of public goods to be high. The authors argue that "average citizens may adopt a collectivist conception of rationality because they recognize that what is individually rational is collectively irrational."<sup>3</sup> Selective incentives are deemed largely irrelevant.

One of the advantages of approaching terrorism as a collectively rational strategic choice is that it permits the construction of a standard from which deviations can be measured. For example, the central question about the rationality of some terrorist organizations, such as the

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West German groups of the 1970s or the Weather Underground in the United States, is whether or not they had a sufficient grasp of reality—some approximation, to whatever degree imperfect—to calculate the likely consequences of the courses of action they chose. Perfect knowledge of available alternatives and the consequences of each is not possible, and miscalculations are inevitable. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), for example, planned the hijacking of a TWA flight from Rome in August 1969 to coincide with a scheduled address by President Nixon to a meeting of the Zionist Organization of America, but he sent a letter instead.<sup>4</sup>

Yet not all errors of decision are miscalculations. There are varied degrees of limited rationality. Are some organizations so low on the scale of rationality as to be in a different category from more strategically minded groups? To what degree is strategic reasoning modified by psychological and other constraints? The strategic choice framework provides criteria on which to base these distinctions. It also leads one to ask what conditions promote or discourage rationality in violent underground organizations.

The use of this theoretical approach is also advantageous in that it suggests important questions about the preferences or goals of terrorist organizations. For example, is the decision to seize hostages in order to bargain with governments dictated by strategic considerations or by other, less instrumental motives?

The strategic choice approach is also a useful interpretation of reality. Since the French Revolution, a strategy of terrorism has gradually evolved as a means of bringing about political change opposed by established governments. Analysis of the historical development of terrorism reveals similarities in calculation of ends and means. The strategy has changed over time to adapt to new circumstances that offer different possibilities for dissident action—for example, hostage taking. Yet terrorist activity considered in its entirety shows a fundamental unity of purpose and conception. Although this analysis remains largely on an abstract level, the historical evolution of the strategy of terrorism can be sketched in its terms.<sup>5</sup>

A last argument in support of this approach takes the form of a warning. The wide range of terrorist activity cannot be dismissed as

“irrational” and thus pathological, unreasonable, or inexplicable. The resort to terrorism need not be an aberration. It may be a reasonable and calculated response to circumstances. To say that the reasoning that leads to the choice of terrorism may be logical is not an argument about moral justifiability. It does suggest, however, that the belief that terrorism is expedient is one means by which moral inhibitions are overcome.

## THE CONDITIONS FOR TERRORISM

The central problem is to determine when extremist organizations find terrorism useful. Extremists seek either a radical change in the status quo, which would confer a new advantage, or the defense of privileges they perceive to be threatened. Their dissatisfaction with the policies of the government is extreme, and their demands usually involve the displacement of existing political elites.<sup>6</sup> Terrorism is not the only method of working toward radical goals, and thus it must be compared to the alternative strategies available to dissidents. Why is terrorism attractive to some opponents of the state, but unattractive to others?

The practitioners of terrorism often claim that they had no choice but terrorism, and it is indeed true that terrorism often follows the failure of other methods. In nineteenth-century Russia, for example, the failure of nonviolent movements contributed to the rise of terrorism. In Ireland, terrorism followed the failure of Parnell's constitutionalism. In the Palestinian-Israeli struggle, terrorism followed the failure of Arab efforts at conventional warfare against Israel. In general, the “nonstate” or “substate” users of terrorism—that is, groups in opposition to the government, as opposed to government itself—are constrained in their options by the lack of active mass support and by the superior power arrayed against them (an imbalance that has grown with the development of the modern centralized and bureaucratic nation-state). But these constraints have not prevented oppositions from considering and rejecting methods other than terrorism. Perhaps because groups are slow to recognize the extent of the limits to action, terrorism is often the last in a sequence of choices. It represents the outcome

of a learning process. Experience in opposition provides radicals with information about the potential consequences of their choices. Terrorism is likely to be a reasonably informed choice among available alternatives, some tried unsuccessfully. Terrorists also learn from the experiences of others, usually communicated to them via the news media. Hence the existence of patterns of contagion in terrorist incidents.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the existence of extremism or rebellious potential is necessary to the resort to terrorism but does not in itself explain it, because many revolutionary and nationalist organizations have explicitly disavowed terrorism. The Russian Marxists argued for years against the use of terrorism.<sup>8</sup> Generally, small organizations resort to violence to compensate for what they lack in numbers.<sup>9</sup> The imbalance between the resources terrorists are able to mobilize and the power of the incumbent regime is a decisive consideration in their decision making.

More important than the observation that terrorism is the weapon of the weak, who lack numbers or conventional military power, is the explanation for weakness. Particularly, why does an organization lack the potential to attract enough followers to change government policy or overthrow it?

One possibility is that the majority of the population does not share the ideological views of the resisters, who occupy a political position so extreme that their appeal is inherently limited. This incompatibility of preferences may be purely political, concerning, for example, whether or not one prefers socialism to capitalism. The majority of West Germans found the Red Army Faction's promises for the future not only excessively vague but distasteful. Nor did most Italians support aims of the neofascist groups that initiated the "strategy of tension" in 1969. Other extremist groups, such as the *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA) in Spain or the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in Northern Ireland, may appeal exclusively to ethnic, religious, or other minorities. In such cases, a potential constituency of like-minded and dedicated individuals exists, but its boundaries are fixed and limited. Despite the intensity of the preferences of a minority, its numbers will never be sufficient for success.

A second explanation for the weakness of the type of organization likely to turn to terrorism lies in a failure to mobilize support. Its members

may be unwilling or unable to expend the time and effort required for mass organizational work. Activists may not possess the requisite skills or patience, or may not expect returns commensurate with their endeavors. No matter how acute or widespread popular dissatisfaction may be, the masses do not rise spontaneously; mobilization is required.<sup>10</sup> The organization's leaders, recognizing the advantages of numbers, may combine mass organization with conspiratorial activities. But resources are limited and organizational work is difficult and slow even under favorable circumstances. Moreover, rewards are not immediate. These difficulties are compounded in an authoritarian state, where the organization of independent opposition is sure to incur high costs. Combining violent provocation with non-violent organizing efforts may only work to the detriment of the latter.

For example, the debate over whether to use an exclusively violent underground strategy that is isolated from the masses (as terrorism inevitably is) or to work with the people in propaganda and organizational efforts divided the Italian left-wing groups, with the Red Brigades choosing the clandestine path and Prima Linea preferring to maintain contact with the wider protest movement. In prerevolutionary Russia the Socialist-Revolutionary party combined the activities of a legal political party with the terrorist campaign of the secret Combat Organization. The IRA has a legal counterpart in Sinn Féin.

A third reason for the weakness of dissident organizations is specific to repressive states. It is important to remember that terrorism is by no means restricted to liberal democracies, although some authors refuse to define resistance to authoritarianism as terrorism.<sup>11</sup> People may not support a resistance organization because they are afraid of negative sanctions from the regime or because censorship of the press prevents them from learning of the possibility of rebellion. In this situation a radical organization may believe that supporters exist but cannot reveal themselves. The depth of this latent support cannot be measured or activists mobilized until the state is overthrown.

Such conditions are frustrating, because the likelihood of popular dissatisfaction grows as the likelihood of its active expression is diminished. Frustration may also encourage unrealistic expectations among the regime's challengers, who are not able to test their popularity. Rational

expectations may be undermined by fantastic assumptions about the role of the masses. Yet such fantasies can also prevail among radical undergrounds in Western democracies. The misperception of conditions can lead to unrealistic expectations.

In addition to small numbers, time constraints contribute to the decision to use terrorism. Terrorists are impatient for action. This impatience may, of course, be due to external factors, such as psychological or organizational pressures. The personalities of leaders, demands from followers, or competition from rivals often constitute impediments to strategic thinking. But it is not necessary to explain the felt urgency of some radical organizations by citing reasons external to an instrumental frame-work. Impatience and eagerness for action can be rooted in calculations of ends and means. For example, the organization may perceive an immediate opportunity to compensate for its inferiority vis-à-vis the government. A change in the structure of the situation may temporarily alter the balance of resources available to the two sides, thus changing the ratio of strength between government and challenger.

Such a change in the radical organization's outlook—the combination of optimism and urgency—may occur when the regime suddenly appears vulnerable to challenge. This vulnerability may be of two sorts. First, the regime's ability to respond effectively, its capacity for efficient repression of dissent, or its ability to protect its citizens and property may weaken. Its armed forces may be committed elsewhere, for example, as British forces were during World War I when the IRA first rose to challenge British rule, or its coercive resources may be otherwise overextended. Inadequate security at embassies, airports, or military installations may become obvious. The poorly protected U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut were, for example, a tempting target. Government strategy may be ill-adapted for responding to terrorism.

Second, the regime may make itself morally or politically vulnerable by increasing the likelihood that the terrorists will attract popular support. Government repressiveness is thought to have contradictory effects: it both deters dissent and provokes a moral backlash.<sup>12</sup> Perceptions of the regime as unjust motivate opposition. If government actions make average citizens willing to suffer punishment for supporting antigovernment

causes, or lend credence to the claims of radical opponents, the extremist organization may be tempted to exploit this temporary upsurge of popular indignation. A groundswell of popular disapproval may make liberal governments less willing (as opposed to less able) to use coercion against violent dissent.

Political discomfort may also be internationally generated. If the climate of international opinion changes so as to reduce the legitimacy of a targeted regime, rebels may feel encouraged to risk a repression that they hope will be limited by outside disapproval. In such circumstances the regime's brutality may be expected to win supporters to the cause of its challengers. The current situation in South Africa furnishes an example. Thus a heightened sensitivity to injustice may be produced either by government actions or by changing public attitudes.

The other fundamental way in which the situation changes to the advantage of challengers is through acquiring new resources. New means of financial support are an obvious asset, which may accrue through a foreign alliance with a sympathetic government or another, richer revolutionary group, or through criminal means such as bank robberies or kidnapping for ransom. Although terrorism is an extremely economical method of violence, funds are essential for the support of full-time activists, weapons purchases, transportation, and logistics.

Technological advances in weapons, explosives, transportation, and communications also may enhance the disruptive potential of terrorism. The invention of dynamite was thought by nineteenth-century revolutionaries and anarchists to equalize the relationship between government and challenger, for example. In 1885, Johann Most published a pamphlet titled *Revolutionary War Science*, which explicitly advocated terrorism. According to Paul Avrich, the anarchists saw dynamite "as a great equalizing force, enabling ordinary workmen to stand up against armies, militias, and police, to say nothing of the hired gunmen of the employers."<sup>13</sup> In providing such a powerful but easily concealed weapon, science was thought to have given a decisive advantage to revolutionary forces.

Strategic innovation is another important way in which a challenging organization acquires new resources. The organization may borrow or adapt a technique in order to exploit a vulnerability

ignored by the government. In August 1972, for example, the Provisional IRA introduced the effective tactic of the one-shot sniper. IRA Chief of Staff Sean MacStiofain claims to have originated the idea: "It seemed to me that prolonged sniping from a static position had no more in common with guerrilla theory than mass confrontations."<sup>14</sup> The best marksmen were trained to fire a single shot and escape before their position could be located. The creation of surprise is naturally one of the key advantages of an offensive strategy. So, too, is the willingness to violate social norms pertaining to restraints on violence. The history of terrorism reveals a series of innovations, as terrorists deliberately selected targets considered taboo and locales where violence was unexpected. These innovations were then rapidly diffused, especially in the modern era of instantaneous and global communications.

It is especially interesting that, in 1968, two of the most important terrorist tactics of the modern era appeared—diplomatic kidnappings in Latin America and hijackings in the Middle East. Both were significant innovations because they involved the use of extortion or blackmail. Although the nineteenth-century Fenians had talked about kidnapping the prince of Wales, the People's Will (*Narodnaya Volya*) in nineteenth-century Russia had offered to halt its terrorist campaign if a constitution were granted, and American marines were kidnapped by Castro forces in 1959, hostage taking as a systematic and lethal form of coercive bargaining was essentially new. This chapter later takes up the issue in more detail as an illustration of strategic analysis.

Terrorism has so far been presented as the response by an opposition movement to an opportunity. This approach is compatible with the findings of Harvey Waterman, who sees collective political action as determined by the calculations of resources and opportunities.<sup>15</sup> Yet other theorists—James Q. Wilson, for example—argue that political organizations originate in response to a threat to a group's values.<sup>16</sup> Terrorism can certainly be defensive as well as opportunistic. It may be a response to a sudden downturn in a dissident organization's fortunes. The fear of appearing weak may provoke an underground organization into acting in order to show its strength. The PIRA used terrorism to offset an impression of weakness, even at the cost of alienating public opinion: in the 1970s periods of

negotiations with the British were punctuated by outbursts of terrorism because the PIRA did want people to think that they were negotiating from strength.<sup>17</sup> Right-wing organizations frequently resort to violence in response to what they see as a threat to the status quo from the left. Beginning in 1969, for example, the right in Italy promoted a "strategy of tension," which involved urban bombings with high numbers of civilian casualties, in order to keep the Italian government and electorate from moving to the left.

### CALCULATION OF COST AND BENEFIT

An organization or a faction of an organization may choose terrorism because other methods are not expected to work or are considered too time-consuming, given the urgency of the situation and the government's superior resources. Why would an extremist organization expect that terrorism will be effective? What are the costs and benefits of such a choice, compared with other alternatives? What is the nature of the debate over terrorism? Whether or not to use terrorism is one of the most divisive issues resistance groups confront, and numerous revolutionary movements have split on the question of means even after agreeing on common political ends.<sup>18</sup>

### The Costs of Terrorism

The costs of terrorism are high. As a domestic strategy, it invariably invites a punitive government reaction, although the organization may believe that the government reaction will not be efficient enough to pose a serious threat. This cost can be offset by the advance preparation of building a secure underground. *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) in Peru, for example, spent ten years creating a clandestine organizational structure before launching a campaign of violence in 1980. Furthermore, radicals may look to the future and calculate that present sacrifice will not be in vain if it inspires future resistance. Conceptions of interest are thus long term.

Another potential cost of terrorism is loss of popular support. Unless terrorism is carefully controlled and discriminate, it claims innocent victims. In a liberal state, indiscriminate violence may appear excessive and unjustified and alienate a citizenry predisposed to loyalty to the

government. If it provokes generalized government repression, fear may diminish enthusiasm for resistance. This potential cost of popular alienation is probably least in ethnically divided societies, where victims can be clearly identified as the enemy and where the government of the majority appears illegal to the minority. Terrorists try to compensate by justifying their actions as the result of the absence of choice or the need to respond to government violence. In addition, they may make their strategy highly discriminate, attacking only unpopular targets.

Terrorism may be unattractive because it is elitist. Although relying only on terrorism may spare the general population from costly involvement in the struggle for freedom, such isolation may violate the ideological beliefs of revolutionaries who insist that the people must participate in their liberation. The few who choose terrorism are willing to forgo or postpone the participation of the many, but revolutionaries who oppose terrorism insist that it prevents the people from taking responsibility for their own destiny. The possibility of vicarious popular identification with "symbolic acts of terrorism may satisfy some revolutionaries, but others will find terrorism a harmful substitute for mass participation.

### The Advantages of Terrorism

Terrorism has an extremely useful agenda-setting function. If the reasons behind violence are skillfully articulated, terrorism can put the issue of political change on the public agenda. By attracting attention it makes the claims of the resistance a salient issue in the public mind. The government can reject but not ignore an opposition's demands. In 1974 the Palestinian Black September organization, for example, was willing to sacrifice a base in Khartoum, alienate the Sudanese government, and create ambivalence in the Arab world by seizing the Saudi Arabian embassy and killing American and Belgian diplomats. These costs were apparently weighed against the message to the world "to take us seriously." Mainstream Fatah leader Salah Khalef (Abu Iyad) explained: "We are planting the seed. Others will harvest it. . . . It is enough for us now to learn, for example, in reading the Jerusalem Post, that Mrs. Meir had to make her will before visiting Paris, or that Mr. Abba Eban had to travel with a false passport."<sup>19</sup> George

Habash of the PFLP noted in 1970 that "we force people to ask what is going on."<sup>20</sup> In these statements, contemporary extremists echo the nineteenth-century anarchists, who coined the idea of propaganda of the deed, a term used as early as 1877 to refer to an act of insurrection as "a powerful means of arousing popular conscience" and the materialization of an idea through actions.<sup>21</sup>

Terrorism may be intended to create revolutionary conditions. It can prepare the ground for active mass revolt by undermining the government's authority and demoralizing its administrative cadres—its courts, police, and military. By spreading insecurity—at the extreme, making the country ungovernable—the organization hopes to pressure the regime into concessions or relaxation of coercive controls. With the rule of law disrupted, the people will be free to join the opposition. Spectacular humiliation of the government demonstrates strength and will and maintains the morale and enthusiasm of adherents and sympathizers. The first wave of Russian revolutionaries claimed that the aims of terrorism were to exhaust the enemy, render the government's position untenable, and wound the government's prestige by delivering a moral, not a physical, blow. Terrorists hoped to paralyze the government by their presence merely by showing signs of life from time to time. The hesitation, irresolution, and tension they would produce would undermine the processes of government and make the Czar a prisoner in his own palace.<sup>22</sup> As Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighela explained: "Revolutionary terrorism's great weapon is initiative, which guarantees its survival and continued activity. The more committed terrorists and revolutionaries devoted to anti-dictatorship terrorism and sabotage there are, the more military power will be worn down, the more time it will lose following false trails, and the more fear and tension it will suffer through not knowing where the next attack will be launched and what the next target will be."<sup>23</sup>

These statements illustrate a corollary advantage to terrorism in what might be called its excitational function: it inspires resistance by example. As propaganda of the deed, terrorism demonstrates that the regime can be challenged and that illegal opposition is possible. It acts as a catalyst, not a substitute, for mass revolt. All the tedious and time-consuming organizational work of mobilizing the people can be avoided.

Terrorism is a shortcut to revolution. As the Russian revolutionary Vera Figner described its purpose, terrorism was "a means of agitation to draw people from their torpor," not a sign of loss of belief in the people.<sup>24</sup>

A more problematic benefit lies in provoking government repression. Terrorists often think that by provoking indiscriminate repression against the population, terrorism will heighten popular disaffection, demonstrate the justice of terrorist claims, and enhance the attractiveness of the political alternative the terrorists represent. Thus, the West German Red Army Faction sought (in vain) to make fascism "visible" in West Germany.<sup>25</sup> In Brazil, Marighela unsuccessfully aimed to "transform the country's political situation into a military one. Then discontent will spread to all social groups and the military will be held exclusively responsible for failures."<sup>26</sup>

But profiting from government repression depends on the lengths to which the government is willing to go in order to contain disorder, and on the population's tolerance for both insecurity and repression. A liberal state may be limited in its capacity for quelling violence, but at the same time it may be difficult to provoke to excess. However, the government's reaction to terrorism may reinforce the symbolic value of violence even if it avoids repression. Extensive security precautions, for example, may only make the terrorists appear powerful.

### Summary

To summarize, the choice of terrorism involves considerations of timing and of the popular contribution to revolt, as well as of the relationship between government and opponents. Radicals choose terrorism when they want immediate action, think that only violence can build organizations and mobilize supporters, and accept the risks of challenging the government in a particularly provocative way. Challengers who think that organizational infrastructure must precede action, that rebellion without the masses is misguided, and that premature conflict with the regime can only lead to disaster favor gradualist strategies. They prefer methods such as rural guerrilla warfare, because terrorism can jeopardize painfully achieved gains or preclude eventual compromise with the government.

The resistance organization has before it a set of alternatives defined by the situation and by

the objectives and resources of the group. The reasoning behind terrorism takes into account the balance of power between challengers and authorities, a balance that depends on the amount of popular support the resistance can mobilize. The proponents of terrorism understand this constraint and possess reasonable expectations about the likely results of action or inaction. They may be wrong about the alternatives that are open to them, or miscalculate the consequences of their actions, but their decisions are based on logical processes. Furthermore, organizations learn from their mistakes and from those of others, resulting in strategic continuity and progress toward the development of more efficient and sophisticated tactics. Future choices are modified by the consequences of present actions.

### HOSTAGE TAKING AS BARGAINING

Hostage taking can be analyzed as a form of coercive bargaining. More than twenty years ago, Thomas Schelling wrote that "hostages represent the power to hurt in its purest form."<sup>27</sup> From this perspective, terrorists choose to take hostages because in bargaining situations the government's greater strength and resources are not an advantage. The extensive resort to this form of terrorism after 1968, a year that marks the major advent of diplomatic kidnappings and airline hijackings, was a predictable response to the growth of state power. Kidnappings, hijackings, and barricade-type seizures of embassies or public buildings are attempts to manipulate a government's political decisions.

Strategic analysis of bargaining terrorism is based on the assumption that hostage takers genuinely seek the concessions they demand. It assumes that they prefer government compliance to resistance. This analysis does not allow for deception or for the possibility that seizing hostages may be an end in itself because it yields the benefit of publicity. Because these limiting assumptions may reduce the utility of the theory, it is important to recognize them.

Terrorist bargaining is essentially a form of blackmail or extortion.<sup>28</sup> Terrorists seize hostages in order to affect a government's choices, which are controlled both by expectations of outcome (what the terrorists are likely to do, given the government reaction) and preferences (such as

humanitarian values). The outcome threatened by the terrorist—the death of the hostages—must be worse for the government than compliance with terrorist demands. The terrorist has two options, neither of which necessarily excludes the other: to make the threat both more horrible and more credible or to reward compliance, a factor that strategic theorists often ignore.<sup>29</sup> That is, the cost to the government of complying with the terrorists' demands may be lowered or the cost of resisting raised.

The threat to kill the hostages must be believable and painful to the government. Here hostage takers are faced with a paradox. How can the credibility of this threat be assured when hostage takers recognize that governments know that the terrorists' control over the situation depends on live hostages? One way of establishing credibility is to divide the threat, making it sequential by killing one hostage at a time. Such tactics also aid terrorists in demonstrating a commitment to carrying out their threat. Once the terrorists have murdered, though, their incentive to surrender voluntarily is substantially reduced. The terrorists have increased their own costs of yielding in order to persuade the government that their intention to kill all the hostages is real.

Another important way of binding oneself in a terrorist strategy is to undertake a barricade rather than a kidnapping operation. Terrorists who are trapped with the hostages find it more difficult to back down (because the government controls the escape routes) and, by virtue of this commitment, influence the government's choices. When terrorists join the hostages in a barricade situation, they create the visible and irrevocable commitment that Schelling sees as a necessary bond in bargaining. The government must expect desperate behavior, because the terrorists have increased their potential loss in order to demonstrate the firmness of their intentions. Furthermore, barricades are technically easier than kidnappings.

The terrorists also attempt to force the "last dear chance" of avoiding disaster onto the government, which must accept the responsibility for noncompliance that leads to the deaths of hostages. The seizure of hostages is the first move in the game, leaving the next move—which determines the fate of the hostages—completely up to the government. Uncertain communications may facilitate this strategy.<sup>30</sup> The terrorists can pretend

not to receive government messages that might affect their demonstrated commitment. Hostage takers can also bind themselves by insisting that they are merely agents, empowered to ask only for the most extreme demands. Terrorists may deliberately appear irrational, either through inconsistent and erratic behavior or unrealistic expectations and preferences, in order to convince the government that they will carry out a threat that entails self-destruction.

Hostage seizures are a type of iterated game, which explains some aspects of terrorist behavior that otherwise seem to violate strategic principles. In terms of a single episode, terrorists can be expected to find killing hostages painful, because they will not achieve their demands and the government's desire to punish will be intensified. However, from a long-range perspective, killing hostages reinforces the credibility of the threat in the next terrorist incident, even if the killers then cannot escape. Each terrorist episode is actually a round in a series of games between government and terrorists.

Hostage takers may influence the government's decision by promising rewards for compliance. Recalling that terrorism represents an iterative game, the release of hostages unharmed when ransom is paid underwrites a promise in the future. Sequential release of selected hostages makes promises credible. Maintaining secrecy about a government's concessions is an additional reward for compliance. France, for example, can if necessary deny making concessions to Lebanese kidnappers because the details of arrangements have not been publicized.

Terrorists may try to make their demands appear legitimate so that governments may seem to satisfy popular grievances rather than the whims of terrorists. Thus, terrorists may ask that food be distributed to the poor. Such demands were a favored tactic of the *Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP) in Argentina in the 1970s.

A problem for hostage takers is that rewarding compliance is not easy to reconcile with making threats credible. For example, if terrorists use publicity to emphasize their threat to kill hostages (which they frequently do), they may also increase the costs of compliance for the government because of the attention drawn to the incident.

In any calculation of the payoffs for each side, the costs associated with the bargaining process must be taken into account.<sup>31</sup> Prolonging the

hostage crisis increases the costs to both sides. The question is who loses most and thus is more likely to concede. Each party presumably wishes to make the delay more costly to the other. Seizing multiple hostages appears to be advantageous to terrorists, who are thus in a position to make threats credible by killing hostages individually. Conversely, the greater the number of hostages, the greater the cost of holding them. In hijacking or barricade situations, stress and fatigue for the captors increase waiting costs for them as well. Kidnapping poses fewer such costs. Yet the terrorists can reasonably expect that the costs to governments in terms of public or international pressures may be higher when developments are visible. Furthermore, kidnappers can maintain suspense and interest by publishing communications from their victims.

Identifying the obstacles to effective bargaining in hostage seizures is critical. Most important, bargaining depends on the existence of a common interest between two parties. It is unclear whether the lives of hostages are a sufficient common interest to ensure a compromise outcome that is preferable to no agreement for both sides. Furthermore, most theories of bargaining assume that the preferences of each side remain stable during negotiations. In reality, the nature and intensity of preferences may change during a hostage-taking episode. For example, embarrassment over the Iran-*contra* scandal may have reduced the American interest in securing the release of hostages in Lebanon.

Bargaining theory is also predicated on the assumption that the game is two-party. When terrorists seize the nationals of one government in order to influence the choices of a third, the situation is seriously complicated. The hostages themselves may sometimes become intermediaries and participants. In Lebanon, Terry Waite, formerly an intermediary and negotiator, became a hostage. Such developments are not anticipated by bargaining theories based on normal political relationships. Furthermore, bargaining is not possible if a government is willing to accept the maximum cost the terrorists can bring to bear rather than concede. And the government's options are not restricted to resistance or compliance; armed rescue attempts represent an attempt to break the bargaining stalemate. In attempting to make their threats credible—for example, by sequential killing of

hostages—terrorists may provoke military intervention. There may be limits, then, to the pain terrorists can inflict and still remain in the game.

## CONCLUSIONS

This essay has attempted to demonstrate that even the most extreme and unusual forms of political behavior can follow an internal, strategic logic. If there are consistent patterns in terrorist behavior, rather than random idiosyncrasies, a strategic analysis may reveal them. Prediction of future terrorism can only be based on theories that explain past patterns.

Terrorism can be considered a reasonable way of pursuing extreme interests in the political arena. It is one among the many alternatives that radical organizations can choose. Strategic conceptions, based on ideas of how best to take advantage of the possibilities of a given situation, are an important determinant of oppositional terrorism, as they are of the government response. However, no single explanation for terrorist behavior is satisfactory. Strategic calculation is only one factor in the decision-making process leading to terrorism. But it is critical to include strategic reasoning as a possible motivation, at a minimum as an antidote to stereotypes of "terrorists" as irrational fanatics. Such stereotypes are a dangerous underestimation of the capabilities of extremist groups. Nor does stereotyping serve to educate the public—or, indeed, specialists—about the complexities of terrorist motivations and behaviors.

## NOTES

1. For a similar perspective (based on a different methodology) see James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985). See also Harvey Waterman, "Insecure 'Ins' and Opportune 'Outs': Sources of Collective Political Activity," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 8 (1980): 107–12, and "Reasons and Reason: Collective Political Activity in Comparative and Historical Perspective," *World Politics* 33 (1981): 554–89. A useful review of rational choice theories is found in James G. March, "Theories of Choice and Making Decisions," *Society* 20 (1982): 29–39.

2. Edward N. Muller and Karl-Dieter Opp, "Rational Choice and Rebellious Collective Action," *American Political Science Review* 80 (1986): 471–87.
3. *Ibid.*, 484. The authors also present another puzzling question that may be answered in terms of either psychology or collective rationality. People who expected their rebellious behavior to be punished were more likely to be potential rebels. This propensity could be explained either by a martyr syndrome (or an expectation of hostility from authority figures) or intensity of preference—the calculation that the regime was highly repressive and thus deserved all the more to be destroyed. See pp. 432 and 485.
4. Leila Khaled, *My People Shall Live: The Autobiography of a Revolutionary* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), 128–31.
5. See Martha Crenshaw, "The Strategic Development of Terrorism," paper presented to the 1985 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans.
6. William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1975).
7. Manus L. Midlarsky, Martha Crenshaw, and Fumihiko Yoshida, "Why Violence Spreads: The Contagion of International Terrorism," *International Studies Quarterly* 24 (1980): 262–98.
8. See the study by David A. Newell, *The Russian Marxist Response to Terrorism: 1878–1917* (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, University Microfilms, 1981).
9. The tension between violence and numbers is a fundamental proposition in DeNardo's analysis; see *Power in Numbers*, chapters 9–11.
10. The work of Charles Tilly emphasizes the political basis of collective violence. See Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly, and Richard Tilly, *The Rebellious Century 1830–1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), and Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978).
11. See Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Terrorism under Democratic Conditions: The Case of the IRA," in *Terrorism, Legitimacy, and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence*, edited by Martha Crenshaw (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983).
12. For example, DeNardo, in *Power in Numbers*, argues that "the movement derives moral sympathy from the government's excesses" (p. 207).
13. Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 166.
14. Sean MacStiofain, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (N.p.: Gordon Cremonisi, 1975), 301.
15. Waterman, "Insecure 'Ins' and Opportune 'Outs'" and "Reasons and Reason."
16. *Political Organizations* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
17. Maria McGuire, *To Take Arms: My Year with the IRA Provisionals* (New York: Viking, 1973), 110–11, 118, 129–31, 115, and 161–62.
18. DeNardo concurs; see *Power in Numbers*, chapter 11.
19. See Jim Hoagland, "A Community of Terror," *Washington Post*, 15 March 1973, pp. 1 and 13; also *New York Times*, 4 March 1973, p. 28. Black September is widely regarded as a subsidiary of Fatah, the major Palestinian organization headed by Yasir Arafat.
20. John Amos, *Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement* (New York: Pergamon, 1980), 193; quoting George Habash, interviewed in *Life Magazine*, 12 June 1970, 33.
21. Jean Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France (1880–1914)*, 2d ed. (Paris: Société universitaire d'éditions et de librairie, 1955), 74–5.
22. "Stepniak" (pseud. for Sergei Kravshinsky), *Underground Russia: Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life* (London: Smith, Elder, 1883), 278–80.
23. Carlos Marighela, *For the Liberation of Brazil* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 113.
24. Veraigner, *Mémoires d'une révolutionnaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1930), 206.
25. *Textes des prisonniers de la "fraction armée rouge" et dernières lettres d'Ulrike Meinhof* (Paris: Maspéro, 1977), 64.
26. Marighela, *For the Liberation of Brazil*, 46.
27. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), 6.
28. Daniel Ellsberg, *The Theory and Practice of Blackmail* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1963).
29. David A. Baldwin, "Bargaining with Airline Hijackers," in *The 50% Solution*, edited by William I. Zartman, 404–29 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), argues that promises have not been sufficiently stressed. Analysts tend to emphasize threats instead, surely because of the latent violence implicit in hostage taking regardless of outcome.
30. See Roberta Wohlstetter's case study of Castro's seizure of American marines in Cuba: "Kidnapping to Win Friends and Influence People," *Survey* 20 (1974): 1–40.
31. Scott E. Atkinson, Todd Sandier, and John Tschirhart, "Terrorism in a Bargaining Framework," *Journal of Law and Economics* 30 (1987): 1–21.