

Chapter 5

Terrorism of the Foreseeable Future

Today's extreme Islamist groups such as al-Qaida do not merely seek political revolution in their own countries. They aspire to dominate all countries. Their goal is a totalitarian, theocratic empire to be achieved by waging perpetual war on soldiers and civilians alike.

**Honorable Michael Chertoff
U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security
April 2007**

The *Report of the Future of Terrorism Task Force*, published in January 2007, assesses future threats to the United States for the next five years. The lead finding of the report states, "There is every indication that the number and magnitude of attacks on the United States, its interest and its allies will likely increase." Predicting the nature, timing, or location of the next attack is beyond the scope of this report, however, the task force spotlights, "The most significant terrorist threat to the homeland today stems from a global movement, underpinned by a jihadist/Salafist ideology."¹⁹⁴

Terrorism threats range al-Qaida affiliated cells with regional, international, or transnational reach to individual self-radicalized and unaffiliated terrorists with single issue agendas and finite capabilities. These types of terrorist threat exist as foreign and domestic threats of the United States in the U.S. Homeland and in United States presence throughout the world.



Figure 5-1. **Terrorism Trends and Future Trauma**

¹⁹⁴ Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Advisory Council, *Report of the Future of Terrorism Task Force*, January 2007, Washington, D.C.: Department of Homeland Security, 2-3.

Section I: Future Trends in Terrorism

To appreciate the future of terrorism, understanding current trends of terror must consider the nature of terrorists, and study the capabilities and limitations of specific cells or movements in an evolving contemporary operational environment. As the regions of the world advance in technological areas, expand the mobility opportunities of people, and exploit the Internet and other media, extremists fuel grievances and alienate segments of populations to foster support for their agendas.



As a means to an end, terrorism is becoming a more physically dangerous and more psychologically effective weapon. While a simple description of terrorism remains, “The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear...” terrorism is rising from a tactical novelty to become, in many instances, a significant operational and strategic tool.

Terrorism is becoming a more network based that encourages a loosely organized, self-financed organizational structure. The motivation of some terrorist groups appears to be based increasingly on theological extremes and ideological absolutes. The international or transnational cooperation among terrorist groups provides an improved ability to recruit members, develop fiscal support and resources, gain skills training, transfer of technology, and when desired, political advice.¹⁹⁵

Terrorists are adapting constantly to optimize their knowledge, training, logistical support, and readiness to conduct terror.

This chapter examines several key themes of the probable future of terrorism in an era of increasing globalization.¹⁹⁶ Nine aspects frame the assessment of terrorism trends. These trends are: intensified ideological extremism, enhanced operational capabilities, flexible organizational networks, expended transnational associations, emergent independent actors, increased weapon system lethality, intended mass casualties and mayhem, targeted economic disruption, and exploited mass media marketing.

¹⁹⁵ Raphael Perl, *Terrorism and National Security: Issues and Trends* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service Issue Brief for Congress, 22 December 2003), 1.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

Section II: Assessing the Trends

Intensified Ideological Extremism

A U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) assessment of global terrorism states, “Al-Qaida’s strategic objectives – reestablishing the Islamic caliphate, unified by a common ideology rooted in a violent rejection of apostasy and characterized by fervent opposition to Western influence in traditionally Islamic countries – compel al-Qaida’s commitment...”¹⁹⁷ Senior leaders of al-Qaida have repeatedly stated an aim of establishing Islamic states that would include Afghanistan, an Islamic state in the Levant, Egypt, and neighboring states in the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq.

Other regions of the world have terrorist organizations with similar ideological aims such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria. GIA poses to oust the Algerian regime and replace it with an Islamic state.¹⁹⁸ In September 2006, al-Zawahiri used a 9/11 anniversary videotape to announce that the Algerian Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat was formally aligning itself with al-Qaida.¹⁹⁹ The Jemaah Islamiya (JI) has the aim of establishing an Islamic caliphate that would span Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, and the Southern Philippines.²⁰⁰



Fig. 5-1. Bali and Jemaah Islamiya

Theology extremism underlies much of the contemporary Islamic struggle. The Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia is a very conservative ideology that is also very powerful due to its significant wealth from Saudi Arabian oil profits. By some estimates, the Wahhabi movement controls 70 to 90 percent of the Sunni Islamic institutions in the world. Much of the radical madrassas emerge from this institutional support and ferment extremism in their religious doctrine and conduct. According to a former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the “...Wahhabi ideology is essentially the same ideology as that of al-Qaida. It is genocidal with respect to Shiite Muslims, Jews, homosexuals, apostates, and is fanatically repressive, particularly of women, but also of virtually everyone else.”

¹⁹⁷ Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007; Washington, D.C. : Defense Intelligence Agency, 6.

¹⁹⁸ Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*, April 2007; 241, available from <http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/Patterns-of-global-terrorism.asp>; Internet; accessed 2 May 2007

¹⁹⁹ Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007; Washington, D.C. : Defense Intelligence Agency, 8.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 255.

The two ideologies have an ultimate aim of establishing a worldwide caliphate – a theocracy – that equates to a religious dictatorship.²⁰¹

Enhanced Operational Capabilities

Terrorists use new electronic and cyber technologies, and adapt existing ones to their uses. The debate over privacy of computer data was largely spurred by the specter of terrorists planning and communicating over cyberspace with encrypted data beyond law enforcement's ability to intercept or decode this data. To exchange information, terrorists have exploited disposable cellular phones, over the counter long-distance calling cards, Internet cafes, and other means of relative anonymous communications. Embedding information in digital pictures and graphics and sending them over the Internet is another innovation employed to enable the clandestine global communication that modern terrorists require.²⁰²

Terrorist groups and other illegal sub-state organizations are rapidly becoming indistinguishable from each other. The increasing role of criminal activity in financing terrorism, either in partnership or competition with traditional criminal activities, is making it very difficult, if not impossible, to clearly determine where one stops and the other begins. These enterprises include well-publicized activities such as drug trafficking and smuggling, which some terrorists, insurgencies, and even less reputable governments have been engaged in for decades. They also include newer, less well-known illegal activities such as welfare fraud, tax evasion and fraud, counterfeiting, and money laundering. Many of these activities are offshoots of terrorist groups' evolving capabilities of false documentation and concealment of money transactions for their operational purposes. These activities now generate a profit for additional funding.



Fig. 5-2. **Crime and Terror**

Terrorists and criminal organizations are becoming more closely related, as terrorists utilize criminal networks and methods to operate, and as criminals become more politicized.²⁰³ As national governments fail, their ruling elites frequently criminalize the nation itself, lending their sovereignty to smuggling, money laundering, piracy, or other illicit activities. Their security forces may retreat into terrorism to hold onto what power or authority they can, and use terrorist groups to function in place of the official arms of

²⁰¹ R. James Woolsey, "Intelligence and the War on Terrorism," *The Guardian*, 9, April 2007, 21-30.

²⁰² Thomas Homer-Dixon, "The Rise of Complex Terrorism," *Foreign Policy Magazine* (15 January 2002): 2.

²⁰³ "The New Threat of Organized Crime and Terrorism" *Jane's Terrorism & Security Monitor* (6 June 2000): 1-5; available from

http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jtsm/jtsm000619_1_n.shtml; Internet; accessed 27 June 2000.

the government. Successful coups often generate governments that immediately resort to terror to consolidate their position.²⁰⁴

This interpenetration of a criminal element into the government while government officials are seeping down to the terrorists' level is the result of governments feeling that legality in the international sense is a luxury they cannot afford and perhaps do not need. The better-funded sub-state organizations such as terrorist organizations or criminal syndicates infiltrate or supplant the government. Eventually, there is no distinction between the two as they effectively merge.

Emerging and non-state entities are not compelled to obey any established rules regarding the uses of force. Terrorism and the use of terror to oppress may be viewed as logical and effective methods to accomplish objectives. The development of rules of war and the framework of international laws that attempt to protect the civilian from military action are irrelevant to these combatants. Thus the expansion of where and to whom violence may be applied will accelerate. The treatment of prisoners will rely more on the provision for ransom or retribution for mistreatment than on the rulings of the international agreements such as Geneva Convention.²⁰⁵

Terrorist basing and operations in urban environments will increase. Terrorists have typically operated in urban environments, but the emergence of megalopolis cities in undeveloped or poorly developed countries, with poor services, weak governance, and rampant unemployment and dissatisfaction has created a near perfect recruiting ground-cum-operating environment for terrorists. Many of these cities have adequate international communication and transport capacities for the terrorists' purposes; yet have ineffective law enforcement and a potentially huge base of sympathizers and recruits. The inability of external counterterrorism and law enforcement organizations to effectively intervene where the local government is unable to assert authority is another advantage.²⁰⁶



Fig. 5-3. **Urban Terror**

A development related to this is the emergence of gray areas where no government exercises actual control. Control is imposed by sub-state actors that can span criminal organizations, militias, and terrorists. These groups may as coalitions or in various states of coexistence ranging from truce to open hostility. These areas may be located in urban centers or rural regions and a lack or absence of any effective government control.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000), 48.

²⁰⁵ Martin L. Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 202.

²⁰⁶ Xavier Raufer, "New World Disorder, New Terrorisms: New Threats for the Western World," in *The Future of Terrorism*, ed. Max Taylor and John Horgan (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000), 32.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Terrorists have demonstrated significant resiliency after disruption by counterterrorist action. Some groups have redefined themselves after being defeated or being forced into dormancy. The Shining Path of Peru (*Sendero Luminosa*) lost its leadership cadre and founding leader to counter-terrorism efforts by the Peruvian government in 1993.²⁰⁸ The immediate result was severe degradation in the operational capabilities of the group. However, the Shining Path has returned to rural operations and organization in order to reconstitute itself. Although not the threat that it was, the group remains in being, and could exploit further unrest or governmental weakness in Peru to continue its renewal.

There are potential cyber-terrorism impacts in relation to the U.S. military forces transformation. As the U.S. military increases its battlefield information capabilities, vulnerabilities peculiar to networks such as overload feedback between nodes and destruction of key concentration nodes become available for terrorists to exploit.²⁰⁹ Simple deception techniques can exploit a reliance on sophisticated technology.²¹⁰ When Usama bin Laden thought American satellites were being used to locate him tracing his satellite phone, he had an aid depart from his location carrying the phone. Evidently the aid was captured with the phone, while bin Laden escaped.



Expanded Transnational Associations

Terrorist groups display significant progress in emerging from a subordinate role in nation-state conflicts to become prominent as international influences in their own right. They are becoming more integrated with other sub-state entities such as criminal organizations and legitimately chartered corporations, and are gradually assuming various levels of control and identity with national governments. For example, the FARC and ELN of Columbia use extortion, kidnapping, money laundering, and other economic strategies to finance their operations. Reports estimate that the FARC collects half a billion dollars per year from protecting the drug trade of the region.²¹¹ Other examples include Hizballah and HAMAS members who establish front companies to cover an illegal market system, conduct money laundering, fraud, and tax evasion. United States investigations have directly linked Hizballah and HAMAS to illegal cigarette trafficking and funneling the illicit profits to their organizations that include material support to terrorism.²¹²

²⁰⁸ *International Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, 1997 ed., s.v. "Terrorism in Peru."

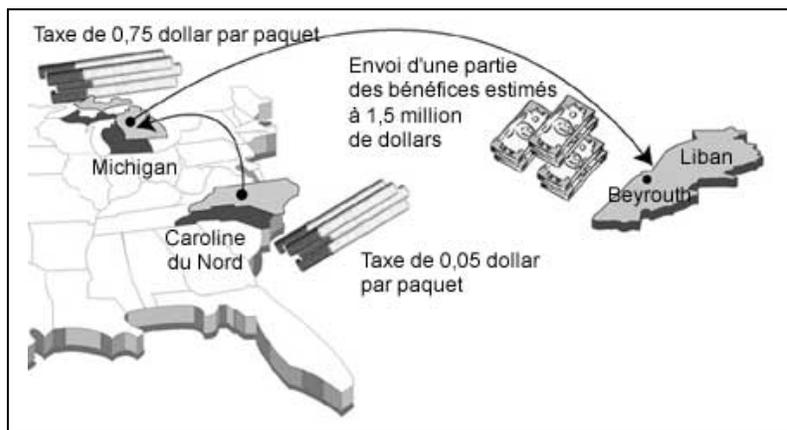
²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²¹⁰ "Osama's Satellite Phone Switcheroo," *CBS News.com*, 21 January 2003, 1; available from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/01/21/attack/main537258.shtml>; Internet; accessed 10 February 2003.

²¹¹ Christopher C. Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (London, Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000), 65 and 139.

²¹² William Billingslea, "Illicit Cigarette Trafficking and the Funding of Terrorism," *The Police Chief*, February 2004, 49-54.

Between 1996 and 2000, a group of individuals affiliated with Hizballah used bulk cash to purchase about \$8 million in cigarettes in North Carolina, where the cigarette tax is 5 cents per pack. They then traveled to sell the cigarettes in Michigan, where the cigarette tax is 75 cents per pack.



They then traveled to sell the cigarettes in Michigan, where the cigarette tax is 75 cents per pack. Avoiding the tax to the State of Michigan, profits were an estimated \$1.5 million. A portion of this illegal profit was delivered to Hizballah in Lebanon to finance their operations in the region.

Fig. 5-4. **Criminal Activities in Support of Terrorism**

This evolutionary development has inverted the previous relationship between terrorists and governments.²¹³ In the earlier relationships, the nation-state sponsor had some measure of control. Due to the ability of terrorist groups to generate tremendous income from legitimate and illegal sources, it often becomes the terrorist organization that “sponsors” and props up its weaker partner, the national government. For example, during the period it was based in Afghanistan, al Qaeda was running an annual operating budget of approximately \$200 million, while their hosts the Taliban had only \$70 million annually.²¹⁴ In addition to financial supremacy, al Qaeda personnel also provided much of the technical expertise the Taliban lacked. The only asset the Taliban had to offer was sanctuary and the advantages their status as a recognized national government provided in some countries.

Although the increase in terrorist income has been tied to the increasing involvement of terrorists in international crime, simpler support by the more traditional means of donations, extortions, and extra-legal contributions can be leveraged into significant sums through investment. The PLO is an excellent example of financing through legitimate investments. The organization managed to acquire sufficient wealth by these means in the 1980s, receiving an estimated 80 percent plus of its annual operating budget of \$600 million from investments.²¹⁵ This allowed the PLO progressively greater autonomy in dealing with other nations.

²¹³ Maurice R. Greenberg, Chair, William F. Wechsler and Lee S. Wolosky, Project Co-Directors, *Terrorist Financing: Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Publication Office, Council on Foreign Relations, 25 November 2002), 5.

²¹⁴ David Albright, “Al Qaeda’s Nuclear Program: Through the Window of Seized Documents,” *Policy Forum Online Special Forum 47* (6 November 2002): 8; available from http://www.nautilus.org/fora/Special-Policy-Forum/47_Albright.html; Internet; accessed 14 February 2003.

²¹⁵ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 84.



Flexible Organizational Networks

Terrorists have shown the ability to adapt to the techniques and methods of counterterror agencies and intelligence organizations over the long term. The decentralization of the network form of organization is an example. Adopted to reduce the disruption caused by the loss of key links in a chain of command, a network organization also complicates the tasks of security forces, and reduces predictability of operations.

Terrorists are improving their sophistication and abilities in virtually all aspects of their operations and support. The aggressive use of modern technology for information management, communication and intelligence has increased the efficiency of these activities. Cyber attack is a constantly expanding threat. Weapons technology has become more available, and the purchasing power of terrorist organizations is on the rise. The



ready availability of both technology and trained personnel to operate it for any client with sufficient cash allows the well-funded terrorist to equal or exceed the sophistication of governmental counter-measures.²¹⁶

Homegrown terrorists targeted key landmarks and security service locations in a plot that ended with a controlled delivery by police of three tons of material the terror suspects thought was ammonium nitrate. Internet chat rooms were used to develop the plot. An investigation grew to include Canadian, United States, and United Kingdom counterterrorism. By mid 2006, the investigation resulted in the arrest of 17 young men.²¹⁷

Fig. 5-5. **Cyber Attack**

The advantage to terrorist organizations that use criminal activities to fund operations will continue to grow. Money is the great force multiplier for terrorists, and criminal activity produces more money than other strategies. The annual profit from criminal activity is estimated at 2 to 5 percent of the world Gross Domestic Product, or \$600 billion to \$1.5 trillion in profit.²¹⁸ Terrorists are emphasizing criminal activities for their

²¹⁶ Fred L. Fuller, "New Order Threat Analysis: A Literature Survey", *Marine Corps Gazette* 81 (April 1997): 46-48.

²¹⁷ Richard Esposito, "Terror Cell Targets," June 05, 2006, available from <http://>

<http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl...>; Internet; accessed 11 June 2007.

C0GHpqY8HKM:&tbnh=89&tbnw=117&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dinternet%2Band%2Bterror%26start%3D20%26gbv%3D2%26ndsp%3D20%26svnum%3D10%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN

²¹⁸ Kimberly L. Thachuck, "Terrorism's Financial Lifeline: Can it Be Severed," *Strategic Forum*, 191 (May 2002): 2.

support funding because it allows them to compete more effectively with their adversaries, and conduct larger and more lethal operations.



Emergent Independent Actors

During the evolution of modern terrorism in the Cold War era, even nationalist insurgent groups sought and required a sponsor from one of the two competing ideological blocs. Sponsors could effectively influence the policy of their clients, and exercise a limited form of control over their actions. This gradually shifted to a less rigid control as more sponsors, such as Libya, entered the field. The collapse of the Soviet Union removed the motivations and capabilities of a large number of state sponsors. This loss of significant resources eliminated support for many terrorist groups, particularly those terrorist groups closely aligned with the communist bloc.²¹⁹

Punitive actions against rogue states or states of concern have gradually reduced or denied some geographical sanctuaries and sources of support for terrorists. Although this can be temporarily disruptive, new support structures can replace previous systems. Groups based in Libya shifted to Iraq or Syria when support was restricted due to international sanctions and U.S. military action against Libya because of their sponsorship of terrorism. Similarly, al-Qaida shifted key functions from the Sudan to Afghanistan when U.S. action and diplomatic pressure were brought to bear in that geographical area.

In response, terrorists have adjusted their financial operations to become more self-sustaining in their activities, resulting in greater independence from any external control. Terrorist operations require extensive financial support. The facility with which groups can obtain and move funds, procure secure bases, and obtain and transport weaponry determines their operational abilities and the level of threat that they pose. The international nature of finance, the integration of global economies, and the presence of terrorists in the illegal economies of slaves, drugs, smuggling, counterfeiting, identity theft, and fraud have aided this new independence from traditional sources of sponsorship and support.²²⁰



Fig. 5-6. **Abu Mus'ab al-Suri**

²¹⁹ Christopher C. Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000; reprint, Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 3.

²²⁰ Kimberly L. Thachuck, "Terrorism's Financial Lifeline: Can it Be Severed," *Strategic Forum* no. 191 (May 2002): 2.

Terrorist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri published his vision for how to best carry on the jihad with the value of small semi-independent or independent cells in host countries. Minimal organizational structure or layering of supervision enhances security of individual terrorist operations, even though logistics and other support may be problematic. He writes, "The groups must move from the classical structure for an underground organization, which is a hierarchical "pyramid" shaped chain of command, to a "secret gang-war [structure], which has different and numerous cells untied together [separate cells]." ²²¹ Individuals plan their own missions and often will be responsible for their own financing.



Fig. 5-7. Fort Dix Training

Recent arrests of individuals planning to attack U.S. military members at Fort Dix, New Jersey illustrate this type of independent terrorist cell operation.



Increased Weapon System Lethality

On a practical level, what changes to terrorist operations will concern U.S. forces? Terrorism will continue to increase in lethality. Who is the terrorist? Terrorism is merging and combining with various other state and sub-state actors, further blurring the difference between criminals, rogue governments, and terrorists. These are concerns regarding the impacts and interactions of mass media, technological advances, urbanization, and illegal fundraising with terrorism.

The Defense Intelligence Agency assesses that non-state actors, specifically al-Qaida, continue to pursue weapons of mass destruction. In the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, the DIA estimates that terrorists are interested in ricin, botulinum toxin, and anthrax. Chemical weapons might include cyanide or other industrial chemicals, mustard, and sarin. DIA estimates that "...al-Qaida and other terrorist groups the capability and intent to develop and employ a radiological dispersal device."²²²

²²¹ SITE Institute, "Abu Musab al-Suri Outlines Strategy for Attacks Against America, Britain, Russia, and NATO Countries," July 13, 2005, available from <http://siteinstitute.org/bin/articles.cgi?ID=publications67905&Category=publications&Subcategory=0;> Internet; accessed 11 June 2007.

²²² Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007; Washington, D.C. : Defense Intelligence Agency, 9.

The ongoing conflict in Iraq displays that terrorist group attacks account for only a small fraction of insurgent violence but the high-profile nature of terrorist operations has a disproportionate impact.²²³ Recent improvised explosive device (IED) attacks in Iraq combined with industrial chemicals have caused casualties but nowhere near the damage and destruction that would be caused by a weapon of mass destruction. Use of explosively formed projectiles (EFP) is a significant increase in weapon capability.

Of the technologies that are available to a well financed terrorist group or possibly individual actors, biological and nuclear threats may be the most significant near term



WMD threats. The United States has already been attacked by anthrax with the crime still under investigation and no identified terrorist or terrorist group to hold accountable. In a government program to examine capabilities, a government sponsored group of experts produced a weaponized version of a harmless bacillus with properties similar to anthrax. The weaponization meant producing the extremely small size of particles required to infect a person via inhalation.²²⁴

Fig. 5-8. Emplacing an EFP

Intended Mass Casualties - Mayhem

Ongoing conditions in Iraq provide an example of changing dynamics in conflict with growing casualties and a perception by portions of the civilian population that "...unchecked violence is creating an atmosphere of fear, hardening sectarianism, empowering militias, and vigilante groups, hastening a middle-class exodus, and shaking confidence in government and security forces."²²⁵ Terrorism plays a key role in much of this physical and psychological violence.

Fewer incidents with greater casualties appear to be the goal for many terrorist groups. This is not just a function of efficiency and developing skills, but a tendency by the increasing number of terrorists to view ever-larger casualty lists as a measure of their influence and power. The years from 1998 to 2001 show a large increase in the

²²³ Ibid., 4.

²²⁴ Randall J. Larsen, "Our Own Worst Enemy: Why Our Misguided Reactions to 9-11 Might Be America's Greatest Threat," *The Guardian*, 9 April 2007, 5-16.

²²⁵ Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007; Washington, D.C. : Defense Intelligence Agency, 3.

number of casualties per incident due to catastrophic terrorism events: the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the 9/11 attacks in 2001. These three events caused for over 9000 casualties.

Conventional explosives have also been used by U.S. citizens in terrorist acts such as the 1995 bombings of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. That attack killed over 160 people and caused another 850 additional casualties. McVeigh was a U.S. citizen with personal beliefs that festered into a growing mistrust and eventual hatred of the U.S. government.²²⁶ McVeigh selected the Murrah Building from a list of sites he developed as potential targets. He wanted his attack to target Federal law enforcement agencies and their employees. He recognized that many innocent people would be injured or killed. Awaiting execution, McVeigh remarked, "I like the phrase 'shot heard 'round the world,' and I don't think there's any doubt the Oklahoma blast was heard around the world."²²⁷



Fig. 5-9. **McVeigh**

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a particularly alarming issue. The specter of their effects amplifies the dangers of a catastrophic terrorist act. Information is readily available on many aspects of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and conventional high yield explosives. Materiel for attempting the construction of some forms of WMD is easily accessible in the public domain. The knowledge and technological means of specialists to produce WMD is a shadowy area of science, crime, and intrigue available to the terrorist.



Fig. 5-10. **Anthrax Letters**

In August 2006, an al-Qaida cell was disrupted that planned to bomb nearly a dozen airplanes while in flight enroute to the United States. In June 2006, Canadian authorities detained a group of individuals who were planning a series of attacks in Ontario, Canada that included bombings, seizing Canadian parliamentat4ry Buildings, and a broadcast center and hostages.²²⁸

The trend to exploit available technologies and the desire for more casualties will probably accelerate the eventual employment of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) by terrorists. Documented uses of chemical (Tokyo 1995) and biological weapons (Oregon in 1984²²⁹ and Florida and Washington D.C. in 2001) demonstrate the ability

²²⁶ Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 2001), 108.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 382.

²²⁸ Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007; Washington, D.C. : Defense Intelligence Agency, 7 and 8.

²²⁹ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 121.

to use WMD. Al-Qaida has stated an intention to acquire and attack the United States with WMD.



Targeted Economic Disruption

Modern, high-technology societies are susceptible to a concept of complex terrorism. Dependence on electronic networks, sometimes with minimal redundancy, and concentrating critical assets in small geographic locales can present lucrative targets for the terrorist. Ensuring redundant systems exist, dispersing critical assets physically, and creating buffers, firewalls, or other type safeguards can enhance defense and recovery from such complex terrorist attacks.²³⁰

The military will not be the only, or necessarily the primary target of new strategies useful against leading edge technologies and organizations. The dispersal of key civilian infrastructure nodes into locations remote from the urban complexes they serve increases their vulnerability and the reliance on computerized control systems to monitor and control these nodes increase their exposure to cyber-terrorism.

Many of the emerging entities that are rising to wield effective power in failing states are only concerned with the immediate tactical effects of their actions. They therefore look upon modern terrorism as an effective mode of conflict. They can point to the fact that al

Qaeda invested only \$500,000 in an attack that is estimated to eventually cost the U.S. Government \$135 billion in damages and recovery costs.²³¹ Considering that these figures do not reflect the costs of military and law enforcement efforts to investigate and eliminate the organization responsible, the comparative return on the investment is even greater.²³² A terrorist attack on other critical infrastructure could be catastrophic too.

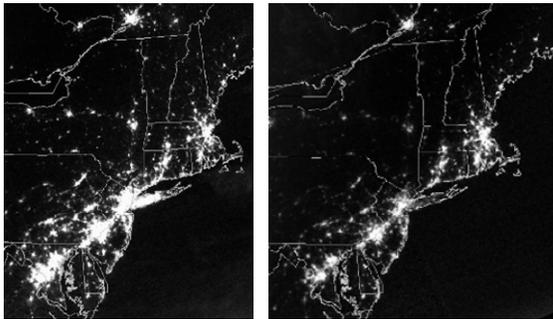


Fig. 5-11. **Electrical Grid Blackout 2003**

²³⁰ Thomas Homer-Dixon, "The Rise of Complex Terrorism," *Foreign Policy Magazine* (January-February 2002): 1, 6, and 7; available from http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=170; Internet; accessed 26 August 2004.

²³¹ Kimberly L. Thachuck, "Terrorism's Financial Lifeline: Can it Be Severed," *Strategic Forum* no. 191 (May 2002): 4.

²³² Fred L. Fuller, "New Order Threat Analysis: A Literature Survey", *Marine Corps Gazette* 81 (April 1997): 46-48.

In the United States, the electric grid may be one of the prime terrorist targets. Several factors not linked to terrorism contributed the August 14, 2003 blackout that left 50 million people around the Great Lakes without power and cost the nation's economy an estimated \$1 billion.²³³ Although redundancies are built into the power systems, a simple natural event caused a power surge overload and shutdown of the electrical power grid servicing New York, New England, and eastern Canada.²³⁴ Figure 5-11 illustrates the electrical power grid failure in August 2003. Two satellite images of the northeastern United States taken the day before the blackout condition and during the blackout on August 14, 2003 show the significant disruption and failure of electrical power.



Fig. 5-12. Targeted for Terror - Abqaiq Oil Facility, Saudi Arabia

Overseas, U.S. interests are different. Oil infrastructure gets more attention as a norm by many nations and vulnerability of critical aspects of the oil industry are at a primary source in the Middle East. Single points of failure in the infrastructure or denying critical services for a period of time might cripple many of the world's economies. One example is the Saudi oil production facility at Abqaiq; this facility handles about two-thirds of the Saudi crude oil daily output. The sulfur clearing towers of the facility are essential to processing the crude for shipment.²³⁵

²³³ Evelyn Brown, "Creating stability in a world of unstable electricity distribution," *Logos*, 22, Spring 2004, available from http://www.anl.gov/Media_Center/logos22-1/electricity.htm; Internet; accessed 11 June 2007.

²³⁴ R. James Woolsey, "Intelligence and the War on Terrorism," *The Guardian*, 9, April 2007, 26.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 26

In Nigeria, rebel factions, the government, and terrorists struggle over access and control of that nation's oil in the Niger Delta. Destruction of infrastructure, killings, and kidnapping have reduced oil production in the last year by 25 percent of its former output.²³⁶

Other critical infrastructure and support systems for the United States provide terrorists with a wide array of potential targets in land, maritime, cyber, and space environments.

Exploited Mass Media Marketing

Exploiting media coverage is as a norm for the terrorist. Effectiveness of information operations will be measured by ability to cause a dramatic impact of fear and uncertainty in a target population. Surprise and sustained violence will be normal against specified people representing elements of civil or military control and order, or common citizens as prey for terrorists in a culture of violence. Damage or destruction of community, regional, or national infrastructure and governance will be used to gain attention, provoke excessive reaction by host nation or coalition military forces, and attempt to alienate general population support of government policies and programs.



Fig. 5-13. Interview

Likewise, due to the increase in information outlets, and competition with increasing numbers of other messages, terrorism now requires a greatly increased amount of violence or novelty to attract the attention it requires. The tendency of major media to compete for ratings and the subsequent revenue realized from increases in their audience size and share produces pressures on terrorists to increase the impact and violence of their actions to take advantage of this sensationalism.²³⁷

There is an increasingly technological and informational nature to all conflict. Terrorism is no exception. Terrorists will continue to cultivate the ability to use new and innovative technologies, and methods of applying existing technologies to new uses. Terrorists will use sophisticated technology and will explore the improvement in capabilities that technology provides, especially the synergy between simple operations and selective technologies to ensure success.

A sinister yet simple aspect of media marketing is the indoctrination of children to hate and promote violence and terror in distorted views of the world they live in. For example,

²³⁶ Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007; Washington, D.C. : Defense Intelligence Agency, 24.

²³⁷ *International Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, 1997 ed., s.v. "The Media and International Terrorism."

HAMAS al-Aqsa television broadcast a graduation ceremony of Kindergartens of the Islamic Association in Gaza. As adults guide the program and ask the children “What is your most lofty aspiration?” The children respond, “Death for the sake of Allah.” The small boys dressed to resemble Palestinian militants march into view and drop to the floor to crawl on their stomachs as if moving in a tactical manner. HAMAS conducts many charitable activities to assist Palestinians but concurrently promotes hate and terrorism.²³⁸ In a similar adolescent example, Palestinian Authority schoolbooks reject Israel’s right to exist, promote terror, and present maps that do not display Israel as a nation state and claiming this geography as Palestine.²³⁹

Terrorists will attempt to exploit US vulnerabilities to information dominance. Casualty avoidance and the media effect are interrelated perceptions held by many potential adversaries of the US social and political situation. Terrorists may believe the US. is extremely casualty averse and that images and news of casualties will be easy to deliver to the American public in their living rooms. While this effect may be overemphasized, promotion of goals, acts, and demands are significant part of terrorist operations.

Al-Qaida is steadily increasing its use of videotape releases. As of June 2007, al-Qaida has released 48 videos whereas 58 videos were released during the entire previous year of 2006. Techniques to reach a larger audience include broadcast anchors in periodic announcements, improved video engineering quality, and use of Arabic and English as subtitles in videos. Some speeches are issued in Arabic, English, French, and Urdu. The propaganda campaigns continue to recruit, and expose listeners to ideological rationale for terrorism.²⁴⁰

Wearing a white robe and a turban, Adam Yehiye Gadahn, who also goes by the name Azzam al-Amriki, spoke in English and the video carried Arabic subtitles. The video appeared on a Web site often used by Islamic militants and carried the logo of al-Qaida's media wing, as-Sahab. He warns, "Your failure to heed our demands ... means that you and your people will ... experience things which will make you forget all about the horrors of September 11th, Afghanistan and Iraq and Virginia Tech..." Gadahn has been charged in a U.S. treason indictment with aiding al-Qaida, and could face the death penalty if convicted.²⁴¹



Fig.5-14. al-Qaida Propaganda

²³⁸ Julie Stahl, “Palestinian Kindergarten Graduates Vow to Die for Allah,” 1 June 2007, available from <http://www.memritv.org/search.asp?ACT=S9&P1=1468>; Internet; accessed 5 June 2007.

²³⁹ “Palestinian Textbooks Incite hatred, US Funds Terror-Center Schools,” 6 March 2007, available from <http://www.justsixdays.co.uk/isblog/>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2007.

²⁴⁰ “Al-Qaida raises Tempo of Video Releases,” available from <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/06/01africa/ME-GEN- Al-Qaida-Video-Offensive.php>; Internet; accessed 4 June 2007.

²⁴¹ Anna Johnson, “Al-Qaida video threatens attacks on U.S.,” May 30, 2007, available from <http://www.buffalonews.com/260/story/87272.html>; Internet; accessed 11 June 2007.

In the techniques of media exploitation, terrorists were pioneers.²⁴² Since the terrorists prepare their operations around a desired media effect, they will be prepared and vocal or visual for reporting coverage. They can orchestrate supporting events and interviews to reinforce the desired message. Terrorists have well-established methods of presenting disinformation and false perspectives. Frequently, military reluctance to comment on ongoing operations in the media for operational security (OPSEC) reasons can assist the terrorist. If no balanced information comes from official sources in a timely manner, the media will use the information readily available from the terrorist as a primary source for reporting the story.

Terrorists will exploit the vulnerabilities of new technologies to attacks or disruption. Terrorists have a great deal of flexibility in their ability to acquire new technology. They also have the advantage of only needing to attack or neutralize specific systems or capabilities. Consequently, they can narrowly focus their expenditures on the limited countertechnology. They can neutralize some advanced systems or capabilities through the use of simple and unconventional techniques such as suicide bombers.



Fig. 5-15. **Encryption and Hacking**

Nonetheless, terrorism can have strategic impacts far beyond the physical damage of a terrorist attack. The terrorist bombings of commuter trains in Madrid just prior to a national election may indicate an alarming result on national resolve. A democratic election and political process appeared to react to these terrorist attacks, and caused a change in a sovereign government. National policies and coalition support to the War on Terrorism changed dramatically with this new government.

Section III: Enablers to Terror

Terrorism will be a condition in future conflicts. There are more unresolved international issues left over from the forty-plus years of the Cold War than from the conclusion of either of the two World Wars. However, now there is no balance of power or two-power system to regulate the conflicts that will arise from these issues.

The world order has changed significantly in recent decades. The number of new, sovereign nations that emerged from the end of the Cold War rivals the new nations created after the two World Wars and the retreat of the colonial empires in the 1950s and 1960s. However, not all of these nations are viable states and most of them do not have stable leadership other than that of local ethnic or tribal strongmen. Many have significant problems aside from poor leadership. The most significant of these problems include disease, resource depletion, factionalism, and incursions from neighboring states.

²⁴² Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 133-139.

The incidence of newer pandemics such as HIV/AIDS are just now beginning to equal the lethality of older scourges such as plague, malaria and other tropical fevers. The World Health Organization reports 1,000 to 3,000 cases of plague every year.²⁴³ On the other hand, the 2004 United Nations report on AIDS reports almost five million new cases of HIV in 2003.²⁴⁴



Gene research and the field of genomics may help combat new diseases, but offer the potential of a two-edged sword. Although it may provide advances in health care, it could also acquire a perverse tack toward biological warfare with very specific infections and target groups.²⁴⁵

Fig. 5-16. **Dual Bio-Technology**

State actors can destabilize regions with export of technologies and skills that promote the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Several state sponsors of terrorism as determined by the U.S. Department of State are Iran, North Korea, Syria, Sudan, and Cuba.²⁴⁶ Iran appears determined to develop nuclear weapons, and is probably pursuing biological weaponry. North Korea continues to develop its WMD capability as evidenced by its first nuclear test in October 2006. North Korea could have already produced several nuclear weapons from plutonium, and has a biotechnology infrastructure capable of producing biological weapons. Large stockpiles of chemical weapons probably exist too.²⁴⁷ Syria has a chemical warfare program capability and pursues similar biological weapon programs. Ballistic missiles and cruise missiles add a factor of concern related to sea and land attack.²⁴⁸

Countries may lack a base of sufficient industrial or technological production to sustain an economic system and attempt to rely on basic agriculture and resource extraction. Often, population pressure and lack of foresight encourage rapid depletion of finite resources. The establishment of a viable economic system to support a national government becomes impractical. Illegal activity may replace a gap in regular market development and create a setting prime for links to terror.

²⁴³ "Plague," *CDC Plague Home Page*; available from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/plague/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 9 July 2004.

²⁴⁴ *2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic: Executive Summary* (Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2004), 5.

²⁴⁵ "In My Humble Opinion: Genomics is the most important economic, political, and ethical issue facing mankind," *Fast Company*, November 1999; available from <http://www.fastcompany.com/online/29/jellis.html>; Internet; accessed 26 February 2004.

²⁴⁶ Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*, April 2007; 145-149; available from <http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/Patterns-of-global-terrorism.asp>; Internet; accessed 2 May 2007.

²⁴⁷ Michael D. Maples, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, Statement for the Record, Senate Select committee on Intelligence Committee, 11 January 2007; Washington, D.C. : Defense Intelligence Agency, 13.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

Many nations are simply geographic fiction. They are results of an earlier international power strategy on a map and lack any sense of national or geographic identity. Tensions between tribal or ethnic factions, or a minority in one nation aligning with similar groups of a regional nation other than their own nation can be destabilizing. Non-state and sub-state organizations and power blocs are assuming military roles and utilizing organized forces in conflicts, and terror tactics in social or political conflicts. Major corporations, private security companies, and well-funded transnational terror groups have all played significant roles in failed or dysfunctional states

Two likely models in the nature of future conflicts emphasize struggle among cultures or a disintegration of a culture. The first model is strategic in nature, and reflects that past conflicts have moved from tribal to national to ideological struggles, culminating with World War II and the Cold War. This view predicts fighting along the parts of the world where cultures intersect, such as the Central Asian confluence of the Islamic and Eastern Orthodox cultures. The assumption is future conflicts will be between cultures, and wherever there is a line of engagement between two differing cultures, there will be conflict.²⁴⁹

A primary ideological conflict exists among Islamic extremists who seek domination of major areas of the world currently occupied by Muslims. Eventually, this theocratic radicalism seeks a secular expansion to other regions of the world.



Fig. 5-17. **General Density Distribution of Sunni and Shia Muslims**

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/world_maps/muslim_distribution.jpg

²⁴⁹ Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993): 2; available from http://www.lander.edu/atannenbaum/Tannenbaum%20courses%20folder/POLS%20103%20World%20Politics/103_huntington_clash_of_civilizations_full_text.htm#.I.%20THE%20NEXT%20PATTERN%20OF%20CONFLICT; Internet; accessed 6 December 2002.

A transnational network like al-Qaida becomes more than a fundamentalist religious terror movement in such a setting. A goal of replacing the power structures in the historical Arab world with a new caliphate is impractical and unlikely, but when viewed at a clash of cultures, al-Qaida becomes a global transnational insurgency. The struggle fights against imposed Western political ideals and alien social order across multiple countries and regions simultaneously. Stateless for the moment, these cadres hope to organize the vanguard of an extremist religious revolution whose eventual success they consider inevitable.

The second model predicts the failure of numerous current nation-states in the developing regions of the world. Unable to exert authority, protect their citizens, or control their borders, they are disintegrating. Many of these countries are splintering into tribal and ethnic factions that might coalesce into a new, more stable form, or continue to devolve through violence into lawless zones of minor warlords and bandits.²⁵⁰

Regardless of which model more accurately describes the future, a most important occurrence common to both will be the merging of terrorists as they adapt and improvise flexible national, international, or transnational organizations.

Theories exist for using all of these levels of disorder, as well as economic warfare, information warfare, and conventional military force, in an orchestrated campaign against an adversary. This would be conducted as a long-term effort of undeclared conflict that might appear as amicable relations between the two adversaries, but with one pursuing the eventual defeat of the other through multiple, simultaneous methods.²⁵¹ Forms of terrorism easily fit into this construct of overt and covert conflict. The arena of cyber-war exemplifies the ability to impact on critical infrastructure, and its disruption and damage to national security, economic functions, and U.S. military response.²⁵²

The effectiveness of this approach is in the costs to the victim to defend against multiple threats with no clear foe. Operational control over the various tools employed by the aggressor is not required, as long as the tools perform their role of reducing the adversary of resources and resolve. Deniability is maintained and diplomacy pursued to keep the conflict from becoming focused before the aggressor is ready. Although all manner of unconventional threats may be employed, terrorism is a key component of this strategy.

The U.S. military unit leader, operator, and planner must be prepared to act in a chaotic and unstructured contemporary operational environment. Terrorism, unfortunately, will be a constant in the conditions of the future.

²⁵⁰ Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000), 7-9.

²⁵¹ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, trans. Department of State, American Embassy Beijing Staff Translators (Washington, D.C., 1999).

²⁵² President of the United States, *The National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace*. (Washington, D.C., February 2003), Preface; available from http://www.whitehouse.gov/pcipb/cyberspace_strategy.pdf; Internet; accessed 8 December 2003.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the future of terrorism with emphasis on concepts ideological extremism, world regional disorder, and morphing forms of terrorism. The evolution of some terrorist activity into non-state, politicized criminal action is an arena of growing concern. The merging of criminals, rogue political leaders, and terrorists into various groupings for their mutual benefit may be temporary as a collective identity, or may build some longevity as substantial bases of fiscal and materiel support and safehaven. International or transnational links and associations further complicate the issue.

Terrorism is foremost a political problem; yet, terrorism can have impact on other elements of power such as economic, social, and military. Common terms and definitions assist in focusing situational awareness of the Threat. Actions must consider aspects of terrorist activity that may include political demonstration, criminal conduct, and possible links to paramilitary operations or low intensity conflict.²⁵³



The psychological impact of terror on a target audience must be viewed as a means to an end. Threats cannot be assessed by knowing just functional capabilities. The sophistication of emergent tactics, techniques, and procedures will seek to attack vulnerabilities. Threats must be evaluated against two essential factors of terrorist intent and terrorist capability to act.

Participation in and use of terrorism will increase. Individuals and groups that are not currently employing terrorism will adopt it as a tactic, and those that are employing terror tactics at low levels of lethality will become more violent. This is a combination of existing terrorist groups trying to destabilize the existing order on an ever-widening basis, and the tendency of terrorist groups to increase the level of violence when not immediately successful.²⁵⁴

Accented by the U.S. Department of State, “a deeper trend is the shift in the nature of terrorism, from an international terrorism of the late twentieth century into a new form of non-state warfare that resembles a form of global insurgency. This represents a new era of warfare, and countering this threat demands the application of counterinsurgency techniques that focus on protecting, securing, and winning the support of at-risk populations, in addition to targeting violent extremist networks and individual terrorists.”²⁵⁵

This handbook presented principal themes on the following aspects of terrorism: (1) explore who will want to engage U.S. military forces utilizing terrorism, (2) understand

²⁵³ Long, *The Anatomy of Terrorism*, 11 and 13.

²⁵⁴ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 162-163.

²⁵⁵ Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*, April 2007; 14, available from <http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/Patterns-of-global-terrorism.asp>; Internet; accessed 2 May 2007.

why and how terrorist targeting is accomplished against U.S. military forces, and (3) describe what means are used and can will be used against U.S. military forces whether they are deployed on an operational mission, in-transit to or from an operational mission, or performing duties at an installation or institutional support location.

To Know the Enemy is an operational environment in itself.