2 **Terrorist Motivations and Behaviors**

Chapter 2

Terrorist Motivations and Behaviors

Al-Qaida and its loose confederation of affiliated movements remain the most immediate national security thereat to the United States and a significant security challenge to the international community…intent to mount large-scale spectacular attacks …current approach focuses on propaganda warfare – using a combination of terrorist attacks, insurgency, media broadcasts, Internet-based propaganda, and subversion to undermine confidence and unity in Western populations and generate a false perception of a powerful worldwide movement.

> **U.S. Department of State**
> *Country Reports on Terrorism 2006*
> **April 2007**

Terrorists are the enemy in the War on Terrorism. The nature of terrorists and their behaviors are a wide ranging set of data. Terrorism in general has many motivations depending on the special interests of the individual or cells. Common characteristics or clearly defined traits may be indicated in simple comparisons, but any detailed study will identify that significant contrasts are more often the norm. Nonetheless, benefits exist in studying varied terrorist motivations and behaviors at the individual and organizational level. Observations on human nature and group dynamics under the conditions of stress, anxiety, and extremist values can provide insight into the causes of particular behaviors.

Figure 2-1. **Terrorism and Propaganda Warfare**

This chapter examines the goals and motivation to use terror. Behavior of a terrorist may vary greatly depending on ideological commitment, individual intelligence and education, geographical setting, and organizational reach. The degrees of intent and capability hold the key of how serious each threat actually is as an enemy.

Section I: Goals

Understanding the goals of the enemy promotes an active approach to analyzing the transfer of goals to objectives, and objectives into operational plans and actions. While prediction is conditional, a terrorist will consider target value and cost required of the terrorist organization to successfully attack. A terrorist will evaluate what force protection measures are in effect in the vicinity of a target and determine a cost benefit analysis. From these analyses and forms of study and surveillance, a terrorist will isolate weaknesses of a target and exploit these weaknesses.

Goals and objectives of terrorist organizations differ throughout the world and range from regional single-issue terrorists to the aims of transnational radicalism and terrorism. As the most prominent democracy and significant economic, military, and political power in the world, the U.S. is a convenient and appealing target for extremists.

A sample statement by an al-Qaida spokesperson focuses on a primary strategic aim of al-Qaida. By causing the United States to commit significant wealth to protect its economy and associated infrastructure and to employ a fully engaged U.S. Armed Forces, al-Qaida intends to stress and degrade U.S. global presence and prestige.[69]

Al-Qaida and its affiliated terrorist networks configure a major terrorist threat with global reach. Attacks on high value economic targets are likely to be targeted within the U.S. Homeland and U.S. presence abroad.

How can comparatively small terrorist groups believe they can successfully confront the United States? For Islamic extremists, part of the answer reflects on jihad fighters in Afghanistan and their success against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Many of these Islamic fighters were persuaded through their propaganda that they alone had defeated the

> **…But our war with America is fundamentally different, for the first time priority is defeating it economically. For that, anything that negatively affects its economy is considered for us a step in the right direction on the path to victory. Military defeats do not greatly effect how we measure total victory, but these defeats indirectly affect the economy which can be demonstrated by the breaching of the confidence of capitalists and investors in this nation's ability to safeguard their various trade and dealings.'**
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> **Abu Mus'ab al-Najadi**
> **October 2005**

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[69] "Unraveling Al-Qaeda's Target Selection Calculus," April 17, 2007, available from http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/070417.htm; Internet; accessed 15 May 2007.

Soviet Union in Afghanistan, even though the U.S. provided substantial support to the Islamic fighters.[70]

Another reason to expect greater use of terrorism against the U.S. is regional or global competitors may feel that they cannot openly challenge, constrain, or defeat the U.S. with any other technique. Nations have employed state sponsored or state directed terrorism to produce results that could not have otherwise been achieved against U.S. opposition. Non-state actors can span the wanton attack of an individual terrorist to apocalyptic or theological extremist groups that seek to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction.

> **"Those youths are different from your soldiers. Your problem will be how to convince your troops to fight, while our problem will be how to restrain our youths to wait for their turn in fighting and in operations."**
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> **Usama bin Laden, "Declaration of War Against The Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places" August 26, 1996**

In addition to many potential adversaries, enemies view the U.S. as particularly vulnerable to the psychological impact and uncertainties generated by terror tactics in support of other activities.[71] Consequently, terrorist groups are likely to try capitalizing on what they may perceive as vulnerabilities. They include beliefs that:

- The United States of America is extremely casualty averse. Any loss of life takes on significance out of proportion to the circumstances.

- The U.S. Government policies and policy makers are overly influenced by public opinion, which in turn is particularly susceptible to the adverse psychological impact of terrorism.

- The U.S. economic performance is perception driven, and very vulnerable to the adverse psychological impact of terrorism.

- The U.S. cannot sustain long term efforts or exhibit public sacrifice in pursuit of difficult national goals.

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[70] Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002) 10,17.

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

The growing polarization of some domestic political issues means that the U.S. is also likely to see increased terror attacks on its own soil by a variety of domestic or so-called homegrown terrorist groups. These groups may target U.S. forces either as symbols of government oppression, sources of weapons and equipment, or means to gain terrorist organizational prestige through a successful attack.

Operational Intent of Terrorism

Terrorism is primarily a psychological act that communicates through violence or the threat of violence. Terrorist strategies will be aimed at publicly causing damage to symbols or inspiring fear. Timing, location, and method of attacks accommodate mass media dissemination and optimize current news impact.

> **"We have seen in the last decade the decline of the American government and the weakness of the American soldier who is ready to wage Cold Wars and unprepared to fight long wars. This was proven in Beirut when the Marines fled after two explosions. It also proves they can run in less than 24 hours, and this was also repeated in Somalia."**
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> **Usama bin Laden interview by ABC News' John Miller, May 1998**

A terrorist operation will often have the goal of manipulating popular perceptions, and will achieve this by controlling or dictating media coverage. This control need not be overt, as terrorists analyze and exploit the dynamics of major media outlets and the pressure of the news cycle.[72] A terrorist attack that appears to follow this concept was the bombing of commuter trains in Madrid, Spain in March 2004. There has been much speculation as to the true objective behind these bombings. One view is that Islamic terrorists who conducted the attacks specifically planned to influence the political process in Spain. They believed that a large percentage of the Spanish population opposed the war in Iraq and would feel that the current government was responsible for the bombings, and would vote for the opposition. The attacks occurred during morning rush hour just three days prior to national elections. The timing facilitated maximum casualties on the trains that killed 191 people and injured more than 1800. News coverage was immediate throughout the world and amplified the carnage of the terrorist attack. An antiwar Socialist prime minister was elected and quickly withdrew Spain's military forces from Iraq. Another aspect of the bombings was the terrorist connection to crime and drug dealing in a network that spanned Morocco, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands.[73]

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[72] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 136-142.

[73] "The Architect and Fifth Generation Warfare," June 4, 2006; available from http://www.thestrategist.org/archives/2006/06/the_architect_o.html; Internet; accessed 13 March 2007.

In considering possible targets, terrorists recognize that a massively destructive attack launched against a target that cannot or will not attract sufficient media coverage is not purposeful. The 1998 bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania illustrate how two diplomatic posts created global sensation because of the attacks and resulting media coverage. Modern technology provides immediate broadcast coverage of violence. The September 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City was observed by millions of people worldwide on live television as the successive attacks occurred and sensational mass destruction followed.

Section II: Motivation

Motivation categories describe terrorist groups in terms of their goals or objectives. Some of common motivational categories are separatist, ethnocentric, nationalistic, and revolutionary.

Motivational Categories

- **Separatist.** Separatist groups reach for a goal of separation from existing entities through independence, political autonomy, or religious freedom or domination. The ideologies that separatists promote include social justice or equity, anti-imperialism, as well as the resistance to conquest or occupation by a foreign power. Categories of ethnicity and nationalism can crossover in support rationale.

Figure 2-2. **Beslan Hostage Crisis**

- **Ethnocentric.** Ethnocentric groups see race as the defining characteristic of a society and a basis of cohesion. Group members promote the attitude that a particular group is superior because of its ethnic or racial characteristics.

- **Nationalistic.** The loyalty and devotion to a nation and the national consciousness place one nation's culture and interests above those of other nations or groups is the motivating factor behind these groups. This can aim to create a new nation or to split away part of an existing state in order to join with another nation that shares the perceived national identity.

- **Revolutionary.** These groups are dedicated to the overthrow of an established order and replacing governance with a new political or social structure. Often associated with communist political ideologies, other political movements can advocate revolutionary methods to achieve their goals.

Ideology Influences

Groups with secular ideologies and nonreligious goals will often attempt highly selective and discriminate acts of violence to achieve a specific political aim. This often requires them to keep casualties at the minimum amount necessary to attain the objective. The intention is to avoid a backlash that might damage the organization's acceptability and maintain the appearance of a rational group that has legitimate grievances. By limiting their attacks they reduce the risk of undermining external political and economic support.

One example of a group that discriminates on target selection is the Revolutionary Organization 17 November. This is a radical leftist organization established in 1975 in Greece that is anti-Greek establishment, anti-United States, anti-Turkey, and anti-NATO. Its operations have included assassinations of senior U.S. officials, Greek public figures, and attacks on and foreign firms investing in Greece. In total, 17 November is believed to have been responsible for over 100 attacks, but just 23 fatalities between 1975 and 2000. [74] In many instances, the group used a .38 caliber pistol or a .45 caliber handgun which came to be regarded as their signature weapon. While face-to-face assassination was their early modus operandi, the group later used rockets and bombs stolen from Greek military facilities. Over 50 rocket attacks were claimed by 17N.[75]

 Religiously oriented and millenarian groups may attempt to inflict as many casualties as possible. An apocalyptic or theological extremist frame of reference may determine loss of life as irrelevant and encourage mass casualty producing incidents. In 1995, the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan attempted to cause mass casualties by releasing sarin in the Tokyo subway system.

Figure 2-3. **Shoko Asahara and Aum Shinrikyo**

Some terrorists state that killing people labeled as religious nonbelievers is acceptable in an attack. The 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya inflicted more casualties on the local Kenyan inhabitants than U.S. citizens. The ratio was approximately 20 non-U.S. citizens for every U.S. citizen killed. Wounded people numbered over 5000 Kenyans; 95 percent of the total casualties were non-American.[76] Fear of moral backlash rarely concerns this type of terrorist organization. With numerous dead and maimed Kenyans, terrorists attempted to qualify a rationale for the deaths and appease critics, but overall were unapologetic for the destruction, deaths, or mayhem.

Fig. 2-4. **Nairobi**

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[74] "Revolutionary Organization 17 November (17N)," CDI Terrorism Project, 5 August 2002; available from http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/17N-pr.cfm; Internet; accessed 24 September 2004.

[75] *Wikipedia*, "Revolutionary Organization November17, " available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_Organization_17_November; Internet; accessed 12 May 2007.

[76] Christopher C. Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000; reprint, Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 51.

Muslim Victims of Terrorism 2006

Approximately 58,000 individuals worldwide were either killed or injured by terrorists attacks in 2006…well over 50 percent of the victims were Muslims, and most were victims of attacks in Iraq."

NCTC Reports on Terrorism Incidents - 2006 April 2007

For terrorist groups professing secular political, religious, or social motivations, their targets are often highly symbolic of authority: government offices, banks, national airlines, and multinational corporations with direct relation to the established order. Likewise, they may conduct attacks on representative individuals whom they associate with economic exploitation, social injustice, or political repression. While extremist religious groups also use much of this symbolism, there appears to be a trend to connect attacks to greater physical devastation and suffering. There also is a tendency to add religiously affiliated individuals, such as missionaries, and religious activities such as worship services to the targeting equation.

With much of the global attention on contemporary Islamic extremism and terrorism, the 2007 NCTC *Report on Terrorism Incidents - 2006* cites an interesting statistic. "As in 2005, Muslims in 2006 again bore a substantial share of the victims of terrorist attacks. Approximately 58,000 individuals worldwide were either killed or injured by terrorist attacks in 2006…well over 50 percent of the victims were Muslims, and most were victims of attacks in Iraq."[77]

Symbolism related to ideology may focus terrorist targeting in striking on particular anniversaries or commemorative dates. Nationalist groups may strike to commemorate battles won or lost during a conventional struggle, whereas religious groups may strike to mark particularly appropriate observances. Many groups will attempt to commemorate anniversaries of successful operations, or the executions or deaths of notable individuals related to their particular conflict. For instance, Timothy McVeigh conducted the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building on April 19th, the anniversary of the end of the Branch Davidian siege near Waco, Texas in 1993, as well as a violent incident from the early American Revolution in 1775.

Ideological Categories

Ideological categories describe the political, religious, or social orientation of the group. While some groups will be seriously committed to their avowed ideologies, for others, ideology is poorly understood and primarily a rationale used to provide justification for

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[77] National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), *Reports on Terrorism Incidents - 2006*, 30 April 2007, 11; available from http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/Patterns-of-global-terrorism.asp; Internet; accessed 2 May 2007.

their actions to outsiders or sympathizers. Common ideological categories include political, religious, and social.

Political

Political ideologies are concerned with the structure and organization of the forms of government and communities.

- **Right Wing.** These groups are associated with the reactionary or conservative side of the political spectrum, and often are associated with fascism or neo-Nazism. Despite this, right-wing extremists can be every bit as revolutionary in intent as other groups. Their intent is to replace existing forms of government with a particular brand of authoritarian rule.

Fig. 2-5. **Aryan Nation**

- **Left Wing.** These groups are usually associated with revolutionary socialism or variants of communism such as Maoist or Marxist-Leninist. With the demise of many communist regimes and the gradual liberalization of remaining regimes toward capitalism, left-wing rhetoric can often move towards and merge with anarchistic thought.

Fig, 2-6. **Shining Path**

- **Anarchist.** Anarchist groups are anti-authority or anti-government, and strongly support individual liberty and voluntary association of cooperative groups. Often blending anti-capitalism and populist or communist-like messages, modern anarchists tend to neglect the problem of what will replace the current form of government, but generally promote that small communities are the highest form of political organization necessary or desirable.

Religious

Religiously inspired terrorism is on the rise. This is not a new phenomenon. Between 1980 and 1995, international terror groups espousing religious motivation increased by 43 percent.[78] Islamic terrorists and extremist organizations have been the most active and greatest recent threat to the United States. Religious extremism couches terrorism with distorted interpretation of theological dogma and can mask secular objectives as holy writ, infallible guidance, and non-negotiable responsibility. One commentary states, "The literature on terrorism clearly documented a dramatic rise in the religious affiliation

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[78] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 90.

of terrorist organizations. A generation ago none of the eleven international terrorist organizations was religiously oriented. By 2004, nearly half of the world's identifiable and active terrorist groups are classified as motivated by religious. Today, the vast majority of terrorist groups using suicide attacks are Islamic, displacing secular groups like the Tamil Tigers. Furthermore, religiously-oriented organizations account for a disproportionately high percentage of attacks and casualties."[79]

Religious motivations can also be tied to ethnic and nationalist identities, such as Kashmiri separatists combining their desire to break away from India with the religious conflict between Islam and Hinduism. The conflict in Northern Ireland provides an example of the intermingling of religious identity with nationalist motivation. Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu and a host of lesser known religious denominations have seen activists commit terrorism in their name or spawned cults professing adherence to the larger religion while following unique interpretations of that particular religion's dogma.

Figure 2-7. **IRA on City Street**

Social

Often particular social policies or issues will be so contentious among individuals or groups that beliefs incite extremist behavior and terrorism. This form of social terrorism is often referred to as single issue or special interest terrorism. Some issues that have produced terrorist activities in the United States and other countries are: animal rights, abortion, ecology and the environment, anti-government,[80] and ethnic, race, or minority rights.

Location or Geographic Categories

Geographic designation of domestic or foreign terrorism has lost much of its meaning in the evolving membership of terrorist organizations. In the 1990s, domestic terrorism was commonly associated with right-wing or hate groups comprised of U.S. citizens. Concerns about terrorism included the possibility recruiting military personnel into their groups. Terrorist rationales for this recruiting included lending a degree of legitimacy to militant claims, providing trained members to further train other group members in the

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[79] *Small Wars Journal*, "SWJ Blog: Luttwak's Lament," available from http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2007/04/luttwaks-lament/; Internet; accessed 12 May 2007.
[80] "Group Profile, First Mechanical Kansas Militia," available from http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3418; Internet; accessed 12 May 2007. Some proclaimed groups may be nothing more but individuals with a bizarre concept of the world and conspiracy. Notwithstanding, these type of people can pose a significant threat to military forces when plots develop to attack events such as a 4th of July celebration at a U.S. Army installation.

use of weapons and tactics, and assisting in plans to steal military weapons, munitions, and equipment.[81]

More recent examples of citizens attacking their own country of citizenship blur the description of domestic versus foreign inspired terrorism. Examples include the 2002 Bali, Indonesia bombings that killed over 200 people and wounded over 200 people, and the 2005 London subway and bus bombings that brought a new level of terrorism to the United Kingdom homeland.

- **Domestic or Indigenous.** These terrorists are "home-grown," that is, they can be native born or naturalized citizens of a nation. They operate within and against their own country of residence. They may or may not have direct association with terrorist organizations located external to the United States homeland.

Examples include Timothy McVeigh and his bombing of the Murrah Federal Building, or the six men arrested in May 2007 for conspiring to attack U.S. military people, facilities, and equipment at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The criminal complaint accents that "The philosophy that supports and encourages jihad around the world against Americans came to live here in New Jersey and threaten the lives of our citizens through these defendants."[82] Initial investigation indicates that several of the men entered the U.S. illegally years previous to this incident.

- **International or Transnational.** International can be visualized as terrorist activity that is primarily between two nations and their geographic location. International groups may operate in multiple countries, but retain a geographic focus for their activities. Issues will indicate regional impact as a norm. Transnational is a more expansive realm of operating among multiple national geographic locations, and creating global impact with operational or strategic reach. Capabilities may include use of cyberspace and the Internet, worldwide financial institutions, and satellite headquarters or clandestine cells in multiple hemisphere locales.

Fig. 2-8. **Hizballah**

For example, Hizballah has several organizational cells worldwide and has conducted operations in multiple countries, but is primarily concerned with political events in the region of Lebanon and Israel. Al-Qaida and its affiliated groups are transnational. Their vision is global and "In general terms…exhibit many characteristics of a globalized insurgency. This insurgency aims to overthrow the existing world order and replace it with a neo-fundamentalist, reactionary, authoritarian,

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[81] Steven Presley, *Rise of Domestic Terrorism and Its Relation to United States Armed Forces*, [Abstract] April 1996, available from http://www.fas.org/irp/eprint/presley.htm; Internet; accessed 12 May 2007.

[82] *CNN.com*, "Official: Radicals wanted to create carnage at Fort Dix," available from http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/05/08/fortdix.plot/index.html; Internet; accessed 12 May 2007.

transnational state. They collect intelligence, engage in denial and deception, use subversion, launch propaganda campaigns, engage in sabotage, and, of course, embrace terror as a defining tactic. Terror, of course, not only serves as a means of destruction, but also garners them visibility and provides them identity."[83]

Section III: Behavior

Individual Behaviors

No one profile exists for terrorists in terms of family background or personal characteristics. Several general observations may assist in understanding the extreme behavior of a terrorist. Notions of a bizarre social misfit or uneducated and unemployed person are a misperception as a norm. An analysis of over 150 al-Qaida terrorists displayed a norm of middle- to upper-class, highly educated, married, middle-aged men.[84] Women are appearing in increasing numbers, and have been significant actors in groups such as the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, but men provide the vast majority of terrorist cadre in actual attacks. Adolescents and children have been used in terrorist attacks too. In some cases, children have been unaware that they were being used as terrorists such as in suicide bombings.[85]

Fig. 2-9. **Children as Suicide Bombs**

Utopian Worldview. Terrorists typically have idealized goals regardless of their aims as political, social, territorial, nationalistic, or religious. This utopianism expresses itself forcefully as an extreme degree of impatience with the rest of the world and convinces the terrorist to validate criminal acts as allowable methods. The terrorist will commonly perceive a crisis too urgent to be solved other than by the most extreme methods. A perception may exist that the government is too corrupt or ineffective to adopt change. This sense of impatience with opposition is central to the terrorist worldview and is a norm of secular and theologically motivated terrorists.

Cost-Benefit Analysis. Terrorist groups require recruitment, preparation, and integration into an operational structure in order to conduct terrorist acts. Recruits require extensive vetting to ensure that they demonstrate the ability to succeed in assigned missions and are

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[83] Henry Crumpton, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Remarks at Transnational Terrorism Conference-12 January 2006," available from http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2006/59987.htm: Internet; accessed 12 May 2007.

[84] Philip G. Wasielewski, "Defining the War on Terror," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 44, 1st Quarter 2007, 16.

[85] "Fatah Tricks 12-year-old Boy into becoming a Suicide Terrorist," 15 March 2004, available from http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terrorism+and+Islamic+Fund...; Internet; accessed 8 June 2007.

not infiltrators counter to the group's purpose. Al-Qaida assessed selected volunteers in a number of training camps and screened those individuals with the highest potential and skills. Additional training and testing determined those members who would be chosen for actual terrorist missions. The 9/11 attacks illustrated this type of ideologically indoctrinated, intelligent, and well prepared terrorists committed to a specific terrorist act.[86] Group leaders will consider the relationship between the cost of using, and possibly losing an asset, and the potential benefits to the group's notoriety.[87] Terrorist operational planning focuses on economies of personnel and balances the likelihood of loss against the value of a target and the probability of success. Masked by terms of martyrdom, terrorist propaganda promotes the concept that suicide is an acceptable and sought after means of commitment to an ideal.

For example, suicide bombing has caused significant turmoil in the Middle East region, and in particular, Iraq. Yet, an extremist religious viewpoint accepts suicide as a legitimate act and can be used to encourage this self-destruction and murder. Terrorists in Afghanistan have increased their resistance to the Afghan government and coalition forces in the last year and introduced suicide bombing on a level not experienced in earlier campaigning. Suicide attacks rose 370 percent in 2006 from the previous year. 80 suicide attacks occurred in 2006 compared to 17 in 2005.[88] The pattern in 2007 indicates an increasing number of suicide attacks.

Subordinate to Superior

Unquestioning submission to a group's authority figure may evolve from intensive indoctrination and a personal need to belong to a group and feel a sense of collective purpose. This is true of hierarchical and networked organizations, and in large or small groups. Individual leaders may exhibit great charisma or promote themselves as having a profound understanding of religious or philosophical principles.[89] If an individual feels disenfranchised from society or the ability to influence personal lifestyle and meaning, an authority figure within a terrorist group may be perceived as a role model and can suggest or demand tremendous sacrifices from subordinates. This form of inspirational leader uses persuasion and can also inspire "leaderless resisters" or "lone wolf avengers" to conduct individual acts of terror with no control by a chain of command.[90]

Dehumanization of Non-Members

Dehumanization permits violence to be directed indiscriminately at any target outside of the terrorist group. Assuming that all those outside of the group are either enemies or neutral, terrorists can rationalize in attacking anyone. Dehumanization removes some of

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[86] Philip G. Wasielewski, "Defining the War on Terror," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 44, 1st Quarter 2007, 17.

[87] Ehud Sprinzak, "Rational Fanatics," *Foreign Policy,* 120 (September/October 2000): 66-73.

[88] National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), *Reports on Terrorism Incidents - 2006*, 30 April 2007, 76; available from http://www.terrorisminfo.mipt.org/Patterns-of-global-terrorism.asp; Internet; accessed 2 May 2007.

[89] Sabil Frances, "Uniqueness of LTTE's Suicide Bombers," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Article no. 321 (4 February 2000): 1; available at http://www.ipcs.org; Internet; accessed 7 September 2002.

[90] Philip G. Wasielewski, "Defining the War on Terror," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 44, 1st Quarter 2007.

the onus of killing innocent people. Some extremist views promote ideas that any compromise with adversaries is impossible. Other extremist views state that particular ethnic groups evolved from animals and are not worthy of any human comparison. Other viewpoints cite a continual struggle between oppressors and oppressed, and that a religious duty exists to fight and defeat inhuman opponents in the name of oppressed people and for the expansion of specific religious beliefs.

A terrorist can be indoctrinated to believe that murder furthers the interests of an unawakened social or ethnic people that are too oppressed or misinformed to realize its own best interests. Whether self-proclaimed as a revolutionary vanguard or a true patriot, a distorted concept assumes that the terrorist acts for the benefit of either a silent or ignorant mass that would approve of their struggle if they were free to choose or if they fully understood.

Terrorists can take this rationale of indiscriminate killing to an extreme. Some extremists promote attacks on civilians. Abu Anas al-Shami states, "Therefore, imams agree that if unbelievers shield themselves with the Muslims, how would it be for the Muslims if they did not fight? Thus it is permissible to fire upon them, and we mean the disbelievers."[91]

Until his death in 2006, Abu Mus'ab al-Zwaqawi actively supported suicide terrorism and rejected any traditional separation of military or government targets from civilians who may be in the same vicinity. In addition to indiscriminate killings, al-Zwaqawi also used very brutal tactics such as videotaped beheadings to create terror.

Fig. 2-10. **Videotaped Murder**

Lifestyle Attractions

The lifestyle of a terrorist, while not particularly appealing for members of stable societies, can provide emotional, physical and sometimes social rewards. Emotional rewards include the feelings of notoriety, power, and belonging. In some societies, there may be a sense of satisfaction in rebellion; in others there may be a perceived increase in social status or power. For some, the intense sense of belonging generated by membership in an illegal group is emotionally satisfying.[92]

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[91] Brian Fishman, *Zarqawi's Jihad*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, U.S. Military Academy, 26 April, 2006, 20.
[92] Ibid., 34-35.

Physical rewards can include such things as money, authority, and adventure.[93] This lure can subvert other motives. Several of the more notorious terrorists of the 1970s and 1980s, such as Abu Nidal,[94] became highly specialized mercenaries, discarding their convictions and working for a variety of causes and sponsors. Abu Nidal is a nom de guerre for Sabri al-Banna and an international terrorist group named after its founder "Abu Nidal" – Abu Nidal Organization (ANO).[95] Sabris al-Banna rose in notoriety in the Palestine Liberation Organization

> **"There's something about a good bomb."**
>
> **Bill Ayers, Former Weather Underground Leader in his memoir *Fugitive Days***

(PLO) but broke away from the PLO to form his own terror organization in the mid-1970s. The group's goals center on the destruction of the state of Israel, but the group has served as a mercenary terrorist force with connections to several radical regimes including Iraq, Syria, and Libya.[96] ANO activities link to terrorist attacks in 20 countries with killing about 300 people and injuring hundreds of additional people totaling estimates of about 900 victims.[97]

Lifestyle attractions also include a sense of elitism, and a feeling of freedom from societal mores. "Nothing in my life had ever been this exciting!" was a statement by Susan Stern, member of the Weather Underground, describing her involvement with the U.S. domestic terrorist group.[98]

Organizational Behavior

People within groups have different behaviors collectively than they do as individuals. Terrorist organizations have varying motives and reasons for existence, and how the group interprets these guides or determines internal group dynamics. Groups are normally more daring and ruthless than the individual members. No individual wishes to appear less committed than the others, and will not object to proposals within the group they would not consider as an individual.[99] Leaders will not risk being seen as timid, for fear of losing their influence over the group. The end result can be actions not in keeping with individual behavior patterns as far as risk and lethality, but dictated by the pressure of group expectations and suppression of dissent and caution.

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[93] Ibid., 271.

[94] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 187.

[95] "Abu Nidal," *Encyclopedia of the Orient* [database on-line]; available from http://i-cias.com/e.o/abu_nidal.htm; Internet; accessed 24 February 2004.

[96] "Abu Nidal Organization," *Terrorism Questions and Answers* [database on-line]; available from http://cfrterrorism.org/groups/abunidal.html; Internet; accessed 24 February 2004.

[97] "Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)," *FAS Intelligence Resource Program* [database on-line]; available from http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/ano.htm; Internet, accessed 24Febraury 2004.

[98] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 176.

[99] Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, rev. ed. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998), 36.

Group commitment stresses secrecy and loyalty to the group. Disagreements are discouraged by the sense of the external threat represented by the outside world, and pressure to conform to the group view. Excommunication from the group adds to the group's loathing and hatred of doubters or deserters.[100] The slightest suspicion of disloyalty can result in torture and murder of the suspect. The ideological intensity that makes terrorists such formidable enemies often turns upon itself, and some groups have purged themselves so effectively that they almost ceased to exist.[101]

Frequently, the existence of the group becomes more important than the goal the members originally embraced. A group may adjust objectives as a reason for continued existence. In some cases, success can mean disbanding the organization. As members reject group direction and methods, individuals or factions may cause factions to develop. The resulting splinter groups or dissenting individual members are extremely volatile and run the risk of compromising the original group's purpose.

In cases where the terrorists are not tied to a particular political or social goal, groups will even adopt a new cause if the original one is resolved. When first formed, many of the Euro-terror groups such as the Red Army Faction (Germany) and Communist Combatant Cells (Belgium) grew out of the 1960s student protest movement. The initial motivations for their actions were supposedly to protest U.S. involvement in Vietnam and support the North Vietnamese government. When American involvement in Vietnam came to an end, some of the radical membership in Europe embraced Palestinian and pro-Arab causes rather than disband. Later, they conducted attacks against research facilities supporting the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative, and to protest and prevent deployment of the Pershing IRBM (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile) in Germany.

Organizations that are experiencing difficulties may tend to increase their level of violence. This increase in violence can occur when frustration and low morale develops within the group due to lack of perceived progress or successful counter-terrorism measures that may limit freedom of action within the terrorist group. Members attempt to perform more effectively, but such organizational and cooperative impediments usually result in poor operational performance. The organization hopes that a change to more spectacular tactics or larger casualty lists will overcome the group's internal problems.[102]

After an increase in suicide attacks, the chief military leader of India's northern command in Kashmir stated that militants were launching attacks to lift the morale of their cadres, because continued Indian army operations were killing militants daily and weakening the terrorist group's capabilities.[103]

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[100] David C. Rapoport, ed*., Inside Terrorist Organizations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 157.
[101] Christopher C. Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000; reprint, Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 213.
[102] Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, rev. ed. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998), 16.
[103] "Kashmir's Army Chief Fears Increased Suicide Attacks by Rebels," *South Asia Monitor*, 6 August 2003, 2; available from http://www.southasiamonitor.org/focus/2003/july/24rebels.html; Internet; accessed 20 April 2004.

Another example is al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. During a 13-month period, this al-Qaida subgroup sustained a number of arrests and killings of their members, including the group's leader being killed and replaced four times. In May and June 2004, the sub-group conducted a wave of hostage taking, beheadings, and gruesome murders. *Sawt Al-Jihad*, an al-Qaida identified journal, interviewed the leader of the Al-Quds Brigade, a subordinate unit of the group that took responsibility for the May 29, 2004 Oasis Compound attack at al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia where 22 people were killed. During this interview, the terrorist commander claimed they had either beheaded or cut the throats of more than twelve of the victims.[104] Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula was also responsible for a number of other murders including Robert Jacobs, an American contract employee, and the beheading of Paul Johnson, an American contract employee. The terrorist group released videotapes of both kidnappings and murders.

Fig. 2-11. **Oasis Compound al-Khobar**

Conclusion

This chapter presented aspects of terrorist motivations and behaviors. Goals and objectives of terrorist organizations differ throughout the world and range from regional single-issue terrorists to the aims of transnational radicalism and terrorism.

Terrorism is primarily a psychological act that communicates through violence or the threat of violence. Common motivational categories include separatism, ethnocentrisms, nationalism, and revolution. Ideological categories can be framed by political, religious, or social purpose.

Domestic or indigenous terrorists are "home-grown," that is, they can be native born or naturalized citizens of a nation. They operate normally within and against their own country of residence. International or transnational terrorists can be visualized as operating primarily between two nations and their geographic region. International groups may operate in multiple countries, but retain a regional geographic focus for their activities. Terrorism is becoming more violent as terrorist organizations realize the value of notoriety due to spectacular attacks and the mass media exploitation that results.

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[104] *Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Shooting, Hostage Taking, Kidnapping Wave – May/June 2004* (Alexandria: Tempest Publishing, LLC, 2004), 46-60.

The U.S. Depart of State's Coordinator for Counterterrorism states several salient points on how a worldview by democratic nations must address terrorism in a contemporary operational environment.[105]

Combating Transnational Terrrorism

"Our global interdependence makes us stronger, but also in some aspects, more vulnerable. There is also a backlash from those who view globalization as a threat to traditional culture and their vested interests. Some discontented, illiberal non-state actors perceive themselves under attack and, therefore, resort to offensive action. This is the case with Al Qaeda and affiliated organizations. Yet, these enemies face a strategic environment featuring nation states with an overwhelming dominance in conventional military forces. This includes but is not limited to the U.S. It's no surprise, then, that our actual and potential enemies have taken note of our conventional superiority and acted to dislocate it. State actors, such as North Korea and Iran, seek irregular means to engage their foes. Iran uses proxies such as Hizballah. Non-state actors like Al Qaeda have also developed asymmetric approaches that allow them to side-step conventional military power. They embrace terror as a tactic, but on such a level as to provide them strategic impact. Toward that end, they seek to acquire capabilities that can pose catastrophic threats, such as WMD, disruptive technologies, or a combination of these measures."

Henry Crumpton, Coordinator for Counterterrorism
U.S. Department of State, January 2006

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[105] Henry Crumpton, "Remarks by Amb. Henry A. Crumpton, U.S. Coordinator for Counterterrorism at RUSI Conference on Transnational Terrorism," 16 January 2006; available from http://london.usembassy.gov/ukpapress17.html; Internet; accessed 12 August 2007.