THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
WASHINGTON, DC 20319-5078

Terrorism as Grand Strategy
Academic Year 2020-2021

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Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Module
09/14/2020	1	<u>Terrorism as Grand Strategy:</u> Assessing Our Ends
09/21/2020	2	<u>Terrorism as Grand Strategy:</u> Assessing Our Environment and Ends
09/28/2020	3	<u>Terrorism as Grand Strategy:</u> Developing Our Strategy
10/05/2020	4	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Political: Governance
10/19/2020	5	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Political: Diplomacy
10/26/2020	6	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Information: Messaging
11/02/2020	7	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Information: Intel and Counter-Intel
11/09/2020	8	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Military: Ends of Violence
11/16/2020	9	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Military: Developing Violent Means
11/23/2020	10	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Economic: Making Money
11/30/2020	11	<u>Instruments of Power:</u> Economic: Sanctioning Opponents
12/10/2020	12	<u>Case Study Presentations</u> 1. Religious Radicals and the New Right 2. Ethno-Nationalists 3. Left-Wing Radicals 4. Single Issue Terror

Course Overview

Introduction: The purpose of this course is to give students an evaluation of conflict from the terrorists' perspective. The readings and class discussions should enable us to move beyond the study of terrorism as a tactical phenomenon and look at terrorism as a holistic political strategy. To begin with, we must recognize that terrorism is a complex phenomenon practiced by a wide variety of organizations and individuals with disparate ends, means, and operating environments.

To say that we will look at the conflict from the perspective of the terrorist is not to grant radicals any kind of moral equivalence; needless to say there may be some cases where one sympathizes with the aims of militants, and others where moral outrage is more appropriate. Other cases, will merely make us scratch our heads. The key issue will be to view terrorists as rational individuals (for the most part) who are pursuing rational goals (debatable, sure!) in a manner that makes sense given the relative capabilities of the violent organization. In fact, in one of our early lessons we'll look at how successful terrorists have been at achieving at least some of their objectives, lending credence to the idea that terrorism is a rational strategy indeed.

Most of us tend to think of terrorism as a tactic, or perhaps a category of tactics, rather than a strategy. In some contexts it is, but rarely is terrorist *violence* to be found in a vacuum. Terrorism almost always occurs in conjunction with other methods of political agitation—such as propaganda, protests, labor strikes, guerilla warfare, etc—and is more usefully thought of as a method of non-state politics by other means. Like all modes of warfare, there are numerous permutations of strategies that make use of terrorism, and numerous types of organizations which might employ terrorism as a dominant strategy. Our course will provide a framework for evaluating terrorism as a strategy across a range of contexts with an eye towards understanding how terrorists go about taking on the state as well as rival organizations.

Approach: The course consists of twelve two-hour sessions that will analyze issues covered in the readings through group discussion. The first half of the course will be dedicated to looking at how terrorists begin to assess their prospects against the state and develop a strategy appropriate to their aims, circumstances, and capabilities. The final day of class will be dedicated to a war gaming exercise whereby the Terrorism class will square off against the students in the International Counterterrorism 6600 concentration. The final paper for the course will be a two page assessment of a historical strategy.

A note on the readings: There are no text books which approach the study of terrorism specifically as a strategic framework. I have therefore used the notion of DIME (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of power) to organize readings from a variety of different sources. Since understanding the perspective of the terrorist was paramount this course uses original writings from the radicals themselves whenever feasible.

Required Texts:
- Walter Laqueur *(Ed.),* Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, HAMAS, and Other Terrorists from Around the World and Throughout the Ages, Sourcebook Press, Napierville, IL, 2004.
- Jeremy Weinstein, Inside Rebellion: the Politics of Insurgent Violence Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2007.
- Randall Law Terrorism: A History, Polity Press, Cambridge UK, 2017.

- These texts will be complimented with selected readings which will be made available on the course Blackboard page.

Course Learning Outcomes
1. Understand how terrorists conceive of the battlespace.
2. Understand how terrorists formulate strategies given their ends, capabilities, and operating environment.
3. Understand how terrorists orchestrate political, diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments in pursuit of overarching political strategies.

Assessment
Students must meet all stated course objectives to pass this course. The performance objectives in this course are three-fold. Firstly students are expected to come to class prepared and engaged (Participation = 25%). Secondly, each student will be responsible for presenting a specific case study as part of a team (Class Final Exercise = 25%). Finally, each student will compose a short (~1000) page strategic assessment of a historical terrorist organization (Final Paper = 50%). This historical assessment will also be your case study for the final presentations… so there's double duty involved here.

Students who fail to complete all course requirements in the time allotted will receive an overall grade of Incomplete (I), and students who cannot meet all course objectives will receive an overall grade of Fail (F). In both cases, the student will enter a remediation program in effort to bring the student's performance up to passing standards.

Any student may appeal any course grade. First, within a week of the release of the grade, request a review by the course director. Should this review not lead to a satisfactory resolution, submit a written petition to the NWC Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs within two weeks of the release of the grade. The Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs will convene a faculty panel to conduct a formal review; the decision of that panel will be final.

Assignments:

Strategic Assessment: (50%)
Throughout the semester you will become an expert on a single terrorist organization. This organization can be contemporary, or it can be a historical case-study. For the final project you will write a short assessment of the strategy employed by the group, with an eye towards how well it meshed with their goals, operating environment, and organizational capabilities. Take care in really assessing how operations and tactics either followed or failed to follow a Grand Strategy? What were the assumptions made by the group? Did they bare out in reality? Did the group position itself to take advantage of strategic opportunities? Don't make the mistake of assuming that success meant the group did everything right, and conversely, defeat is not the only indicator of bad strategy. Find the key ingredients of success/failure and articulate them in your papers.

Religious Terror and the New Right
- Al-Qaeda (Afghanistan/Pakistan)
- Islamic State (Syria/Iraq)
- Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Egypt)
- HAMAS (Gaza Strip)
- Hezbollah (Lebanon/Syria)
- The Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord (United States)

Ethno-Nationalists
- The Irgun (Mandatory Palestine)
- Lehi (Mandatory Palestine)
- Viet Minh (Vietnam)
- Provisional IRA (Northern Ireland)
- Sons of Liberty (Colonial America)
- The National Organization of Cypriot Fighters (Cyprus)

Left-Wing Radicals
- Red Army F(r)action (West Germany)
- Red Brigades (Italy)
- Weather Underground (United States)
- Action Direct (France)
- Japanese Red Army (ummm… Japan!)
- Sendero Luminoso (Peru)
- Guerilla Army of the Poor (Guatemala)

Single Issue Terrorism
- Animal Liberation Front (I'd say America… but let's be honest… it's really just Northern CA.)
- Earth Liberation Front/EarthFirst/Monkey-Wrenchers (United States/Europe)
- Anti-Abortion (United States)
- Anti-LGBT (United States)
- Anti-Globalization

Topic 1
Terrorism as Grand Strategy: Assessing our Ends
September 14, 2020

Overview

Terrorists advertise themselves as seeking a single monolithic goal; the control of the state, the secession of a particular territory, the dominance of one religion or ethnicity, or perhaps, even the promulgation of a specific set of policies (anti-abortion, animal rights, eco-terror). In reality, terrorists often pursue more nuanced goals in a bid to stay in active competition with the state. In order to understand terrorist tactics, campaigns, and ultimately strategy we need to delineate both end state goals as well as process goals.

Terrorist goals short of victory—process goals—are often overlooked, but to the militant strategist in the midst of war, they are often more important than theoretical end-states. In fact, when queried about post-conflict political systems, a disconcertingly high number of terrorists have only cursory ideas about what that might entail, as the crux of terrorist strategy revolves around the achievement of intermediate objectives geared toward prolonging the conflict and perpetuating the organization. These ends include destabilizing the status quo, eroding the legitimacy of the state while building the legitimacy of the radical organization, recruiting and retaining members, attriting the capabilities of the state, and out-competing rival organizations.

Ideology plays a role in strategy in so far as one's world view defines the problem that is to be solved as well as the universe of "acceptable" targets. Gramscian leftists who believe that cultural institutions are responsible for maintaining the power of the bourgeoisie, for example, may find it completely acceptable to target university professors, clerics, and other cultural figures. Anti-colonialists, on the other hand, may be more likely to target symbols of cultural encroachment, such as the FLN's campaign in Algeria against locals who drink and smoke. Anti-colonialist and other groups fighting foreign occupation have it easy, as the occupier provides them with plentiful targets which can be attacked with little danger of causing backlash amongst the locals. Contemporary religiously oriented groups seem to target unbelievers, but upon closer inspection this often a poorly disguised ethno-nationalist violence.

Key Questions

1. How does an understanding of the alternate goals of terrorism affect our assessment of terrorism as a strategy?
2. What goals do terrorists pursue short of victory? How might organizations substitute different ends when others become unachievable?
3. How effective is terrorism at achieving these more nuanced goals?

Required Readings:

- Andrew Kydd and Barbera Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* Vol 31(1) Summer 2006 pgs. 49-80 (31 Pages)
- Peter Neumann and MLR Smith, "Terrorism and Strategic Theory" and "The Strategy of Terrorism" in <u>The Strategy of Terrorism: How it Works, and Why it Fails</u> Routledge 2008, pgs. 12-55. (44 Pages)

For those who want to dig deeper:

1. CJM Drake, "The Role of Ideology in Terrorists' Target Selection," *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol 10(2) Summer 1998, pgs. 53-85 (33 Pages)
2. Ariel Merari, "Terrorism as a Strategy of Struggle: Past and Future," *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol 11(4) Dec 2007, pgs. 52-65 (24 Pages)

Topic 2
Terrorism as Grand Strategy: Assessing Our Environment and Means
September 21, 2020

Overview

Terrorists do not make strategic decisions in a vacuum. Obviously, like military personnel, some are more gifted than others in strategic logic. However, there are drivers of strategy that force terrorists to tailor their behavior according to several factors; the operating environment, their organizational capabilities, and their constituency… real or imagined.

The operating environment is perhaps the most pressing concern for militants when organizing a campaign. The major variables in this category would be regime type (of the opposing state), nature of the opposition (are there other radical organizations competing for membership?), level of economic development, and geography. Organizations facing a highly functional autocratic state will certainly chose different behavior than those facing democratic societies that are more permissible but nevertheless have high levels of legitimacy. Likewise, groups operating in failed states will face less of a challenge from the state, but may be outmaneuvered by rival organizations that proliferate in such environments.

There are also means oriented theories of terrorism which posit that technological capabilities make certain strategies more likely to succeed and therefore more rational to pursue. The first of these were the "dynamiters," early Fenian militants who viewed the advent of dynamite in the mid-19th Century as the great equalizer between men and armies. The Anarchists of the following decades echoed these sentiments. Similar arguments today have been made regarding the miniaturization of weapons, WMD Terrorism, and communication technologies that allegedly make networked resistance more effective.

Finally, terrorists must take into account the nature of their constituencies. Often, these populations are very real, and the militants operate at the edge of a broader political movement. Other times, terrorists imagine themselves at the vanguard of a broader movement which sparsely exists outside their fevered imaginations. Where real constituencies exist, militants must tailor their strategies… especially those which involve the use of violence… to appeal to their in-groups. Some populations have high degrees of tolerance for violence against out-groups, but history has shown us that all population have limits on their acceptance of violence.

Key Questions

1. What are the key determinants of the terrorist operational environment? How good are terrorists at realistically assessing their circumstances?
2. How do groups deal with competition from other militants?
3. Do technological advances make terrorism more likely? How do terrorists integrate innovation into their strategies?

Required Readings:

- Matthew Wilson and James Piazza, "Autocracies and Terrorism: Conditioning Effects of Authoritarian Regime Type on Terrorist Attacks," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol 57(4) June 2013, pgs 941-955 (14 Pages)

- John Most, *The Case for Dynamite* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 340-343.
- Ted R. Gurr, "Why Men Rebel Redux: How Valid are its Arguments 40 Years On?" Available online at http://www.e-ir.info/2011/11/17/why-men-rebel-redux-how-valid-are-its-arguments-40-years-on/. November 2011.
- Thomas Homer-Dixon, "The Rise of Complex Terrorism" *Foreign Policy*, Available online at http://www.homerdixon.com/2002/01/01/the-rise-of-complex-terrorism/. January 2002.

Topic 3
Terrorism as Grand Strategy: Developing our Strategy
September 28, 2020

Overview
The purpose of this section is to introduce students to the two major strategic schools of thought in violent non-state politics; Che's *Focoism*, and Mao's *Protracted War Strategy*. These two schools are very broad in conception and application, and most terrorist organizations (whether they are aware of it or not) adhere to one or the other school. Each strategy is geared toward particular operating environments and carries with it strengths and weaknesses which in turn impact both terrorist behavior as well as prospects for success.

Focoism received its name and fullest articulation from Che Guevara following his experiences during the Cuban Revolution; however, tenets of Focoist strategy have been followed by terrorist organizations for millennia. The basic concept of Focoism is that the revolutionary individual and/or the revolutionary organization can act as the spark (the focus) of revolutionary spirit that would then spread to the broader population without the need to spend years organizing more formal institutions and mobilizing large numbers of radicals. The first inklings of Focoist doctrine can be found in classical writings on tyrannicide which emphasize the ability of a revolutionary hero to effect sweeping political change. These writings were the first to give a moral argument in favor of a tactic we would recognize as terrorism (political murder) as well as delineating conditions where such actions would be permissible (typically where elite "rights" had been eroded by an autocrat). Some 19th Century Social Revolutionaries (Republicans, Nihilists, Anarchists, and Marxists) advocated for a strategy referred to as "Propaganda by the Deed" which relied on a "Revolutionary Vanguard" rather than a broad based rebellion to usher in political change. American neo-Confederate Louis Beam developed a similar strategy for the American far right termed "Leaderless Resistance," an idea from which al-Qaeda borrowed heavily when the strategist Abu Musab al-Suri developed his rather unoriginally titled, "Leaderless Jihad."

Students in this class will likely be more familiar with Mao's Protracted War Strategy which is based, if not on a historically accurate depiction of the Chinese Revolution, then at least on the romanticized narrative forwarded by Mao after the fact! Mao's strategy eschews the hope of a spontaneous victory for the more likely reality of a protracted conflict with the state, where proper organizing, institutional and military preparations, and popular mobilization will prove decisive. Terrorism, in the context of Protracted War Strategy, is an intermediary and complimentary strategy in a conflict which will eventually be decided in attritional warfare with the State's forces. Protracted War Strategy was followed to devastating effect against numerous colonial armies by anti-colonial insurgents, and to less effect by still formidable Marxist guerillas in Latin America in the mid to late-20th Century. Currently, Protracted War Strategy finds its echo in ISIS' "near enemy" strategy while al-Qaeda's chief strategist advocates a Focoist oriented "far enemy" strategy.

Key Questions

1. What are the core concepts underpinning each of these schools of thought?
2. What strengths and weaknesses can be derived from each strategy? How might terrorist who have chosen to follow one strategy mitigate weaknesses inherent in that course of action?
3. What operational environments are conducive to which strategy? Why?
4. Do groups pursue hybrid strategies? If so under what conditions?

Required Readings:

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- Che Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare: A Method* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 360-364 (5 pages)
- Nikolai Morozov, *The Terrorist Struggle* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 76-82 (7 pages)
- Regis Debray, *The Guerrilla as the Political Vanguard* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 365-369 (5 pages)
- Osama bin Laden, Jihad Against Jews and the Crusaders in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 410-412 (3 pages)
- Randall Law <u>Terrorism: A History</u> Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2011, pgs. 95-120 (26 Pages)
- Brynjar Lia, *Al-Suri's Doctrine for Decentralized Jihadi Training* – Part 1 (3 Pages)
- Brynjar Lia, , *Al-Suri's Doctrine for Decentralized Jihadi Training* – Part 2 (3 Pages)

Protracted War Strategy

- Mao Tse-Tung, *The Three Stages of the Protracted War* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 352-356 (5 Pages)
- Lenin, *Revolutionary Adventurism* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 196-199 (4 pages)
- Marx and Engels, *Comments on Terrorism* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 186-195 (10 pages)
- Leon Trotsky, *The Collapse of Terrorism I-II* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 200-206 (7 pages)
- Daniel Byman and Jennifer Williams, *ISIS vs Al-Qaeda: Jihadism's Global Civil War* The National Interest, Feb 24 2015 (5 Pages)

For those who want to dig deeper:

1. Jacob Shapiro, <u>The Terrorist's Dilemma</u>, Princeton University Press, 2013 pgs. 1-17
2. Jeremy Weinstein *Control* in <u>Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence</u> Cambridge 2007, pgs. 127-159
3. Walter Laqeuer, <u>A History of Terrorism</u>, Transaction Press, 2016, pgs. 19-77.

Topic 4
The Political Instrument: Political Parties and Governance
October 5, 2020

Overview
This week marks the movement away from looking at terrorism as a strategy broadly towards looking at how terrorists manipulate and orchestrate the instruments of power at their disposal. Since Terrorism is by definition *political* violence, we can—to borrow from Clausewitz—view terror as political competition by other means. We will begin therefore with the political machinations of terrorists groups, and how—at least when done correctly—these instruments can forward the political goals of terrorists, with or without the use of violence. There are three major ways in which rebels dabble in more "legitimate" forms of political activities: the use of political parties, the provision of government services in areas under direct rebel control, and the use of diplomacy to sway international opinion, conduct bilateral relations with potential donors, and negotiate with opposing states.

Many terrorist organizations operate in tandem with more "acceptable" political parties or organizations. Often this is because the terrorist group itself was once a political party which opted to escalate its political activism to illegal means. Other times organizations divide themselves into political and armed wings. Still other times, radicals merely represent the militant fringe of a broad cultural movement which enjoys political representation. For example, many left wing radicals in Italy enjoyed at least tepid support from far left politicians in the Communist Party, amongst others. These political parties may cooperate directly with the organization or merely offer ideological and legal cover for violent groups.

Rebels which have risen to the level of insurgents, or even combatants in a civil war, often find themselves in control of populations and geographic space, large and small. These militants must make a choice whether or not to provide civil and social services which were formerly provided by the state. This is a key strategic question as governance is incredibly expensive, and doesn't always result in increased violent capabilities. Thus, for groups which do practice governance, there must be other, more intangible, benefits from investing in local administration.

Key Questions

1. Do political organizations represent a significant tool in the arsenal of terrorism?
2. How do legitimate organizations square themselves with the illegal (violent) behavior of their terrorist allies?
3. Why would terrorists invest large resources in governing specific areas? What are the costs? What are the payoffs?
4. What is the nature of rebel regimes? How do they organize for governance and to what extent are they successful?

Required Readings:
- Leonard Weinbeg, Ami Pedahzur, and Arie Perliger, <u>Political Parties and Terrorist Groups 2nd Edition</u> Routledge 2009, pgs. 1-14, 22-34, 105-126 (41 Pages)
- Jeremy Weinstein, *Governance* in <u>Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence</u> Cambridge University Press, 2007, pgs. 163-197 (34 Pages)

For Those Who Want to Dig Deeper:
- Seth Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad," *International Security*, Vol 32 (4) Spring, 2008, pgs. 7-40. (33 Pages)
- Leonard Weinberg, "Turning to Terror: The Conditions Under Which Political Parties Turn to Terrorist Activities," *Comparative Politics,* Vol 23 (4) July, 1991, pgs. 423-438. (16 Pages)

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Topic 5
The Political Instrument: Diplomacy
October 19, 2020

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Overview

Militants seldom confine their operations to a single geographic location. Nor do they interact solely with other radicals. Rather many of the more sophisticated groups expend considerable energy liaising with potential state sponsors, attempting to manipulate international organizations, or even negotiating with enemy states. As a result, the ability of a group to utilize the diplomatic instrument adeptly has considerable baring on the overall impact of the group.

The presence or absence of a state sponsor for a rebel group might actually be the key indicator of success for most insurgencies. However, even smaller terrorist networks benefit tremendously from state sponsors. They provide training, materiel, money, political support, and—most importantly—territory that counterterror states can't penetrate. However, state sponsors have their own agendas, and threading the needle between courting state sponsors and becoming a pawn of a foreign state's regional ambitions is a difficult act for even seasoned diplomats.

Manipulating international organizations, whether multilateral bodies or NGO's has proven an effective strategy for numerous groups. Legitimate international bodies can be key ingredients in bringing international pressure to bear on state enemies. The Algerian FLN routinely timed their strikes and violent protests to coincide with annual meetings of the UN Security Council so as to embarrass permanent Security Council member France. Zapatista rebels in Mexico, used international NGO's to prevent the Mexican government from undertaking what would have been a devastating counterinsurgent action, after the former's seizure of San Cristobal in Oaxaca.

Finally, rebels often participate in negotiations with enemy governments. Sometimes this is to consolidate political gains in the form of an advantageous peace treaty. Interacting with state diplomats at once provides an air of legitimacy to international audiences while serving as a propaganda coup amongst domestic constituents. Quite often, militants use it as a supremely effective play for time.

Key Questions

1. How can international governmental organizations and NGOs be leveraged by violent groups?
2. What are the likely points of contact between rebels and their state sponsors? How does this impact the nature of the interactions between militants and sponsors?
3. How effective is terrorism as a tool of diplomacy? Does violence actually sway international behavior?
4. When and why do terrorists negotiate? What leverage do they require to be able to bend the negotiations to their ends?

Required Readings:
- Reyko Huang, "Rebel Diplomacy in Civil War," *International Security* Vol 40 (4), Spring 2016, pgs. 89-126. (39 Pages)

- Lisa Morje Howard and Alexandra Stark, "How Civil Wars End: The International System, Norms, and the Role of External Actors" *International Security* Vol 42 (3) Winter 2017/2018, pgs. 127-171. (45 Pages)

For Those Who Want to Dig Deeper:
- David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, "Emergence and Influence of the Zapatista Social Netwar" in Ronfeldt and Arquilla (eds.) <u>Networks and Netwars: the Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy</u> RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 2001, pgs. 171-195. (25 pages)

Topic 6
The Information Instrument: Messaging
October 26, 2020

Overview

A significant component of terrorism's definition is that the intended audience of violence is ALWAYS wider than the literal victims. Thus terrorism is by definition a psychological strategy… a form of information warfare.

Terrorists compensate for their lack of coercive force by using violence as a form of communication, a messaging system intended to simultaneously address multiple audiences; victims, those who identify with the victim, potential constituencies, members of the state elite, etc. The message can be one of empowerment or disempowerment, depending on the audience and how astute the organization is at messaging in conjunction with violence.

One of the ironies of terrorism is that despite the inordinate sums states spend on their intelligence services, terrorists often hold the advantage in the information instrument. Spies and infiltration have been the bane of terrorist groups from Russian penetration of Anarchist cells in the 1870s to British use of informers during the Irish Troubles, to the FBI's penetration of the Klan in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Thus, terrorists spend considerable energy to elude detection by the state, often with considerable success.

Key Questions

1. What are the intended audiences for terrorism, and how do illegal groups address each?
2. What methods of communication, other than violence, do terrorists make use of?
3. How critical is counter-intelligence to terrorist operations?

Required Readings:
- Pyotr Kropotkin, *The Spirit of Revolt,* in Voices of Terror pgs. 94-99 (6 Pages)
- Alex Schmid, *Terrorism as Psychological Warfare* Democracy and Security, Vol 1, 2005, pgs 137-146 (10 Pages)
- Bridgette Nacos, "Media and Terrorism in the 21st Century" in Bridgette Nacos, Mass Mediated Terrorism: Mainstream and Digital Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Rowan and Littlefield, New York, NY, 2016, pgs. 1-24. (25 Pages)
- Bridgette Nacos, "The Communication Calculus of Terrorism" in Bridgette Nacos, Mass Mediated Terrorism: Mainstream and Digital Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Rowan and Littlefield, New York, NY, 2016, pgs. 27-46. (20 Pages)

For Those Who Want to Dig Deeper:

1. Mary Beth Altier, Emma Leonard Boyle, Neil Shortland, and John Horgan, "Why They Leave: An Analysis of Terrorist Disengagement from Eighty Seven Autobiographical Accounts" *Security Studies* Vol 26 (2) 2017, pgs. 305-332. (29 Pages)

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Topic 7
The Information Instrument: Intelligence and Counterintelligence
November 02, 2020

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Overview
Terrorists operate in hostile environments. Even sophisticated groups rarely exceed their opposing states in power and resources. Thus, terrorist operations must well planned and executed while guarding against disruption by the state and rival organizations. In short, rebels absolutely require robust intelligence and counter-intelligence capabilities if they are to survive. In day to day operations, this takes one of two forms… proactive intelligence collection—usually in target acquisition and surveillance—and defensive counterintelligence.

Terrorism is the most high-risk form of asymmetrical warfare. If the group were not at risk of annihilation on a daily basis, it would engage the state in more sophisticated forms of violence. A consequence is that violent activities must be well planned to have the maximum impact, highest likelihood of success, and lowest costs on an organization's resources. Careful target selection and in depth research on our adversaries is of paramount importance.

Among the greatest threats faced by terrorist groups is penetration by rival intelligence services, whether they're from the state or another group competing for the same base of support. Thus, whether you're the post-Civil War IRA, the third generation of the Klan, or Islamic State, robust counterintelligence is paramount to long term survival. In particular we need CI to pursue two goals; denial operations to hide our infrastructure from our enemies, and weeding out informers in our ranks.

Key Questions:
1. What are the key uses to which terrorists put their intelligence assets?
2. Is there an asymmetry in operational intelligence between militants and the State?
3. What are the risks run by militants when conducting counter-intelligence operations?

Required Readings:
- Blake Mobley, *Chapters 1 and 7* Terrorism and Counterintelligence: How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection Columbia University Press 2012 pgs. 1-19 and 239-259 (39 Pages)
- Antoine Henri de Jomini, *National Wars* in Voices of Terror pgs. 238-242 (5 Pages)

Topic 8
The Military Instrument: Violence and its Uses
November 09, 2020

Overview
Conceptually, it is impossible to disaggregate the military instrument from other tactics as it is through violence that terrorist groups achieve other goals such as diplomacy, communication, recruitment, and as we shall learn in the next section, the imposition of economic sanctions. Nevertheless, there are certainly aspects of the military instrument that can be broken out and studied *sui generis*; the impact of "Grand Strategy" on military capacity and behavior, the centrality of violence to recruitment, and the effectiveness of terrorist violence in attritional warfare.

As one might expect, how a radical group organizes itself has tremendous impact on its capacity to wield all instruments of power. This has at least two implications for the use of force. Firstly, it impacts the nature, quality, and precision of the violence of which an organization is capable. Secondly, the extent to which organizations can make use of other instruments impacts the centrality of force in the over-all campaign.

Terrorist groups by definition are violent organizations, otherwise we would merely think of them as extremist political parties or groups. Thus, terrorists make a conscious decision to market themselves as violent organizations to would-be members in market places that are often dominated by non-violent alternatives. Terrorist groups use the military instrument not just to sanction enemies, but also to signal to constituencies their commitment to the cause. This creates incentives for escalation when two or more radical groups attempt to "outbid" one another for support or when organizational schisms result in more militant factions break away from the main group.

The emphasis of terrorism as an instrument of psychological warfare detracts from the fact that especially astute terrorist violence can erode the capacity of the state in a literal sense. This can be a direct result of violence, such as the Pakistani Taliban's destruction of P3C airframes at Mehran Naval Station, but more often it is an indirect result of violence which makes governance in certain areas untenable. It has been widely noted that this was a central rationale for al-Qaeda in Iraq's anti-Shia violence in 2004-2005, and ISIS' similar campaign from 2014-2017. For developing nations, this strategy can be incredibly effective at eroding state capacity, and therefore military power. The side effect, however, is that the organization then owns the space "liberated" from government control. Groups that lack advanced D, I, and E instruments will find it difficult to fill the void left by the absence of government services and will be blamed for the loss of quality of life.

Key Questions

1. How central is violence to other instruments of power?
2. How do terrorist groups organize for violence?
3. What is the impact of organizational strategy on military capacity and behavior?
4. What are the downsides, from the terrorists perspective, of an over reliance on the military instrument? Can strategic/selective targeting help ameliorate some these potential negatives?

Required Readings:

- John of Salisbury, *On Slaying Public Tyrannts,* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs. 22-26 (5 Pages)
- Karl Heinzen, *Murder,* in <u>Voices of Terror</u> pgs 57-67 (10 Pages)
- Jeremy Weinstein, *Violence,* in <u>Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence</u> Cambridge 2007, pgs. 198-259. (62 pages)

For those who want to dig deeper:

1. Peter Nuemann and MLR Smith, *The Escalation Trap* in <u>The Strategy of Terrorism: How it Works and Why it Fails</u> Routledge 2008, pgs 76-93. (18 Pages)
2. Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, "Hostage-Taking" in <u>The Political Economy of Terrorism</u> Cambridge Univ Press 2006 pgs. 160-187 (27 Pages)
3. Robert A. Pape, *The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* American Political Science Review Vol 97(3) August 2003 pgs. 343-361 (19 Pages)
4. Terrence McCoy, *ISIS and the Success of Horrifying Violence* Washington Post June 13, 2014 (3 Pages)

Topic 9
The Military Instrument: Developing Violent Means
November 16, 2020

Overview: Once a choice to engage in strategic violence has been made three major hurdles to successful implementation remain. Firstly, organizations must develop the technical and tactical expertise to employ violence. Secondly, would-be terrorists must obtain the requisite materiel to launch their campaign. Finally, terrorists—if they want to be successful—must develop institutional mechanisms to control violence by subordinates.

Developing the expertise to use violence is an often overlooked aspect of rebellion. Nevertheless, it is crucial to organizational success, especially at the beginning of a violent campaign when the organization is weak and prone to challenges from both state and non-state enemies. The key reason behind ISIS' early success in Syria was that the battle hardened jihadists and their allies from the Ba'athist military had almost a decade of insurgent experience under their belts. The nascent Free Syrian Army, on the other hand, was populated mostly by academics and other professionals. Gaining recruits with military experience is always the easiest way to leapfrog rivals in terms of capabilities. Institutionalizing that knowledge in a reproducible fashion by developing training regimen is the next step.

The operating environments of would-be revolutionaries varies tremendously from one country to the next. One of the most immediate impacts on a terrorist group, is access to weapons. In some conflict zones, weapons are awash and easily obtainable in open markets. In others, such as the US, they can be easily obtained provided one doesn't raise the retailer's suspicions. In more austere environments, such as autocracies like China or Western countries where sophisticated weapons are illegal, terrorists will improvise with whatever avails itself: knives, heavy trucks, even axes and hatchets.

Finally, violence must be bent towards strategic goals. A seminal rule of rebellion that has been hard for militants to learn is that violence can be extraordinarily counterproductive. This is made all the more perilous for terrorists as their organizational designs create incentives for violence in the tactical cells while strategic cells often lack the ability to exercise day to day control. Of utmost importance is to limit violence against ingroup populations. Attacking outsiders (religious apostates, foreigners, rival ethnic groups) is easy to explain to constituencies, but using violence to oust opponents from within your own population must be messaged prolifically. In all cases, violence must be messaged as defensive, with blame for initiation being projected on the victim. What no terrorist group EVER wants, is to be blamed for violence. Rather, violence must always be in defense of the ingroup, however defined.

Key Questions

1. How do militants tap into local materiel procurement networks? When such networks are not readily available, how do terrorists innovate?
2. How do terrorists learn tactics? What are the pros and cons of different training regimes?
3. What role do inter-organizational relationships play in spread technological and tactical know-how across operational spaces?

Required Readings:

- Barak Barfi, "The Military Doctrine of the Islamic State and the Limits of Ba'athist Influence," *CTC Sentinel* Vol 9(2) February 2016, pgs. 18-23. (6 Pages)
- Anne Stenerson, "The Internet: A Virtual Training Camp?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol 20 (2), 2008, pgs. 215-233. (19 Pages)
- Mia Bloom, "Constructing Expertise: Terrorist Recruitment and "Talent Spotting" in the PIRA, al Qaeda, and ISIS" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol 40 (7), 2017, pgs. 603-623. (21 Pages)
- Ben Hubbard and Eric Schmitt, "Military Skill and Terrorist Technique Fuel Success of ISIS" *New York Times*, available online at https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/world/middleeast/army-know-how-seen-as-factor-in-isis-successes.html
- Gary Ackerman and Ryan Pereira, "Jihadists and WMD: A Re-evaluation of the Future Threat" Monograph prepared for the 8th Annual CBRNE Conference, Orlando FL, October 2015. (9 Pages)

For those who want to dig deeper:
1. Rashmi Singh, "A Preliminary Typology Mapping Pathways of Learning and Innovation by Modern Jihadist Groups," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Vol 40 (7) 2017, pgs. 624-644 (21 Pages)
2. Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism" *American Political Science Review* Vol 97 (3), August 2003, pgs. 343-361. (18 Pages)
3. Gavin Cameron, "Multi-Track Microproliferation: Lessons from Aum Shinrikyo and Al-Qaeda" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* Vol 22, 1999, pgs. 277-309. (33 Pages)
4. Assaf Moghadam, "How Al-Qaeda Innovates" *Security Studies* Vol 22, 2013, pgs. 466-497. (32 Pages)
5. Francesco Trebbi *et al*, "Insurgent Learning" *National Bureau of Economic Research*, June 2017. (58 Pages)

Topic 10
The Economic Instrument: Making Money!
November 23, 2020

Overview: When looking at the instruments of power as it pertains to states, the economic instrument is the only one that is at once a source of strength, as well as a tool of government power. The same is true for terrorist organizations; economic activity is both a source of organizational power as well as a weapon terrorists can wield to sanction governments if they refuse militant demands.

Illegal groups need funding in order to perpetuate their strategy. They must pay salaries, attract recruits, and buy materiel, food, housing, transport, and weapons. More advanced organizations require funding to run civil service wings that can involve welfare distribution, public housing, medical facilities, and sanitation. Further, making money is only part of the equation. Once earnings are produced they must be moved from the source to the operational component in need. Even local groups must do this, as evidenced from the ubiquitous accounting documents found in al-Qaeda in Iraq safe-houses throughout Anbar in the late 2000's.

The method of revenue creation often results from pure opportunity, however more sophisticated groups create strategies to extract resources from local populations, organized crime, foreign states, etc. As it turns out, the nature of our money making enterprises can have outsized impact on the nature and capabilities of our organization. And not simply due to the amounts earned. Taxation strategies have pros and cons, as does involvement in narco-trafficking. Attracting state sponsors is excellent from a monetary perspective, but comes with strings attached, etc. In addition, the way the group moves money from one part of the organization to another creates massive effects on the management structure. Groups with central committees that disburse money to constituent cells—often because a state is supplying the leadership with capital—tend to have tight command and control. Groups that require autonomous cells to kick money back to the central org, on the other hand, tend to suffer from negative incentive structures.

Finally, groups that move money across borders are at risk of anti-money laundering policies. Nevertheless, if you are perpetrating a far enemy strategy, you must prepare to move money through sophisticated financial institutions.

Key Questions

1. What are the core requirements for a functioning terrorist organization and what do those requirements cost?
2. How diversified are terrorist finances?
3. How do terrorists move money from one location to another?

Required Readings:

- Patrick Johnson *et al*, *Chapter 3*, Foundations of the Islamic State: Management, Money, and Terror in Iraq, 2005-2010, RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 2016, pgs. 49-66. (17 Pages)
- Victor Asal *et al*, "When Terrorists Go Bad: Analyzing Terrorist Organization's Involvement in Drug Smuggling" *International Studies Quarterly* Vol 59, 2015, pgs. 112-123. (13 Pages)

- Daniel Byman, "The Changing Nature of State Sponsorship of Terrorism," *The Saban Center For Middle East Policy at the Brookings* Institution, Analysis Paper #16, May 2008, pgs. 1-31. (32 Pages)

For those who want to dig deeper:

1. John Horgan and Max Taylor, "Playing the Green Card: Financing the Provisional IRA: Part 1" *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol 11 (2), Summer 1999, pgs. 1-38. (38 Pages)
2. John Horgan and Max Taylor, "Playing the Green Card: Financing the Provisional IRA: Part 2" *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol 15 (2), Summer 2003, pgs. 1-60. (60 Pages)
3. Matthew Levitt, "Terrorist Financing and the Islamic State" Testimony Submitted to the House Committee on Financial Services, November 13, 2013. (12 Pages)

Topic 11
The Economic Instrument: Sanctioning Opponents
November 30, 2020

Overview: The converse of last week's study of terrorist finances is that terrorism is an expensive problem for states. Pursuantly, terrorists have proven adept at eroding state power and political will by hitting them in their checkbooks. Making the conflict expensive for states, however is more complex than it seems. Terrorists seek to raise the costs of specific state policies, they use tactical violence to erode capabilities, and they undertake actions in an effort to produce negative macro-economic effects.

Economic terrorism, at the strategic level, is often used to make a given course of action too expensive for the opposing state. This has been most successful in anti-colonial struggles. As colonialism was an economic doctrine primarily, all terrorists had to do was raise the costs of occupation above what states could effectively extract from the local economy. As holding colonies became more and more expensive, domestic constituencies in favor of colonial policies were significantly weakened.

Even at the tactical level, however, terrorists often attempt to inflict maximum financial harm on their adversaries. For example, on the few occasions when insurgents have breached US base perimeters in Afghanistan, the militants have always tried to reach air-platforms first, as these are the most expensive pieces of hardware they can attack. Pakistani Taliban militants used the same logic when they overran Mehran Airbase in Western Pakistan, likely because it was known to house P3 airplanes, at the time among the most expensive platforms in the Pakistani Navy.

In a similar vein, terrorism creates significant macro-economic distortions which can be manipulated by astute terrorists. These macro-economic effects can be the result of massive loss from a single attack, such as 9-11, but those types of operations are rare. More impactful and long lasting has been the impact on private industry of terrorism and kidnapping risk insurance, which adds a considerable premium to the transport of energy resources. Likewise, a sustained uptick in defense spending as a direct consequence of terrorism can create massive debt and inflationary pressures. It was likely this goal which informed al-Qaeda's provocational attacks of 9-11. A less obvious example would also be Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's printer cartridge plot to bring down a US cargo flight. According to AQAP's INSPIRE magazine the group considers the plot a success despite the failure of the device to detonate as the plot cost the group a mere $4200, while the vulnerability will force the United States and other countries to begin screening bulk cargo at a cost of many millions.

Key Questions

1. How do terrorists maximize their economic impact on the state?
2. Apart from anti-colonial struggles, has economic calculus played a key role in getting states to suspend CT campaigns?
3. What are the key macroeconomic impacts of terrorism? Can terrorists purposefully produce desired macroeconomic effects or are these just "Happy Accidents" from the militant's perspective?

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Required Readings:

- Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, "The Economic Impact of Transnational Terrorism" in Enders and Sandler, <u>The Political Economy of Terrorism</u>, Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2012, pgs. 203-223. (20 Pages)
- Alberto Abadie and Javier Gardeazabal, "The Economic Costs of Conflict: A Case Study of the Basque Country" *American Economic Review* March 2003, pgs. 113-131. (18 Pages)
- Neta C Crawford, "US Budgetary Costs of Wars Through 2016: $4.79 Trillion and Counting" *Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*, September 2016. (22 Pages)

Topic 12
Assessing the Cases
December 10, 2020

Overview
Throughout the course, you've been tasked to become an expert on a particular group that represents part of a broader movement. Hopefully, by this point, you've been peppering the weekly meetings with examples pulled from your outside research. In addition, you've been writing your final paper providing a more in depth assessment of your respective group. Now it is time to share your findings with your colleagues. Today will be devoted to providing SHORT overviews of the group in question, their strengths, weaknesses, and strategies. This way all your colleagues will have the ability to assess how different types of groups, operating in different circumstances in different times, adapted (or failed to adapt) to their situation.

Key Questions
1. What was/is the operating environment(s) of the groups in question?
2. What was/is the nature of the constituency of the radical group?
3. What were/are the internal capabilities of the group?
4. To what extent did/does the group organize effectively?
5. To what extent did their articulated goals represent a realistic appraisal of their and their enemies' capabilities?
6. How effectively did/does the group utilize the instruments of power?