

Chapter 23

Terrorism and globalization

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Reader's Guide

Globalization has contributed to the growth of terrorism from a regional phenomenon into a global one. Precisely how it has contributed, however, is hard to determine. The difficulty lies in the complex nature of terrorism and disagreements on what constitutes globalization. Global terrorism has been explained in

cultural, economic, and religious terms linked to globalization. However, such terms are not sufficient to explain the relationship. Technology associated with globalization has enabled terrorist groups to conduct operations that are more deadly, distributed, and difficult to combat than in the past. Technological advantage is not one-sided and states can use technology to diminish the global impact of terrorism.

Introduction

The relationship between **terrorism** and **globalization** is difficult to describe accurately. Each phenomenon is complicated and defies simple characterization. It is inaccurate to suggest that globalization is responsible for terrorism, but technologies associated with globalization have been exploited by terrorists. In particular, technologies have increased the ability of terrorist groups to work together, share information, and reach out to previously unavailable audiences. Technology cannot change the character of the terrorist message

or the nature of the struggle. Terrorism is a weapon of the weak, conducted by a minority who promote an extremist ideology—it often fails to create political change. The global community is not powerless in the face of such violence. In order to succeed, the global community must utilize the resources at its disposal collaboratively, in a way that is consistent with international law and human rights, to diminish support for terrorism and demonstrate the illegitimacy of terrorist messages and aspirations.

Definitions

Terrorism and globalization share at least one thing in common—both are complex phenomena open to subjective interpretation. Definitions of terrorism vary widely but all start from a common point of departure. Terrorism is characterized, first and foremost, by the use of violence. This tactic of violence takes many forms and often indiscriminately targets non-combatants. The purpose for which violence is used, and its root causes, is where most of the disagreements about terrorism begin. Historically, the term ‘terrorism’ described state violence against citizens during the French Revolution. Over the past half-century, however, terrorism has come to mean the use of violence by small groups aiming to achieve political change. Terrorism differs from criminal violence in its degree of political legitimacy. Those sympathetic to terrorist causes suggest that violence is the only remaining option that can draw attention to the plight of the aggrieved. Such causes have included ideological, ethnic, and religious exclusion or persecution.

Defining terrorism can be difficult as groups often espouse multiple grievances and compete with one another for resources and support. In addition, the relative importance of these grievances within groups can change over time (see **Box 23.1**). Those targeted by terrorists are less inclined to see any justification, much less legitimacy, behind attacks that are designed to spread fear by killing and maiming civilians. As a result, the term ‘terrorist’ has a pejorative value that is useful in delegitimizing those who commit such acts.

Reaching consensus on what constitutes terrorism is difficult. The legitimacy of terrorist means and

methods is the foremost reason for disagreement (see **Box 23.2**). Some view terrorist acts as legitimate only if they meet the criteria associated with revisionist interpretations of ‘just war’ tradition, which focus on the actions of individuals. These criteria, which apply to all applications of force, have been expanded to include a just cause, proportional use of violence, and the use of force as a last resort. Realists suggest that the political violence used by terrorist groups is illegitimate on the basis that states alone have a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force.

Box 23.1 Types of terrorist groups

Audrey Kurth Cronin has outlined different types of terrorist groups and their historical importance in the following way:

‘There are four types of terrorist organizations currently operating around the world, categorized mainly by their source of motivation: left-wing terrorists, right-wing terrorists, ethnonationalist/separatist terrorists, and religious or ‘sacred’ terrorists. All four types have enjoyed periods of relative prominence in the modern era, with left-wing terrorism intertwined with the Communist movement, right-wing terrorism drawing its inspiration from Fascism, and the bulk of ethnonationalist/separatist terrorism accompanying the wave of decolonization especially in the immediate post-World War II years. Currently, “sacred” terrorism is becoming more significant . . . many groups have a mix of motivating ideologies—some ethnonationalist groups, for example, have religious characteristics or agendas—but usually one ideology or motivation dominates.’

(Cronin 2002/3: 39)

Box 23.2 Legitimacy

Martha Crenshaw provides an approach to determine the legitimacy of acts of terrorism:

'The value of the normative approach (to terrorism) is that it confronts squarely a critical problem in the analysis of terrorism, and indeed any form of political violence: the issue of legitimacy . . . the need for scholarly objectivity and abstraction does not excuse us from the obligation to judge the morality of the use of force, whether by the state or against . . . Terrorism must not, as the terrorists can foresee, result in worse injustice than the condition the terrorists oppose . . . The targets of terrorism are morally significant; witness the difference between material objects and human casualties.'

(Crenshaw 1983: 2-4)

As with other forms of irregular warfare, terrorism is designed to achieve political change for the purposes of obtaining power in order to right a perceived wrong. Terrorism, however, is the weakest form of irregular warfare with which to alter the political landscape. The reason for this weakness is that terrorist groups rarely possess the broader support of the population that characterizes insurgency and revolution. Terrorist groups often lack broader support for their objectives because their goals for change are based on radical ideas that do not have widespread appeal. In order to influence change, terrorists must provoke drastic responses that act as a catalyst for change or weaken their opponent's moral resolve. In a few cases, terrorist acts have achieved relatively rapid change. The bombings in Madrid in 2004, for example, influenced the outcome of elections in Spain in a dramatic fashion, and anecdotal evidence suggests that the attack was designed with just this purpose in mind. Many terrorist leaders hope that their actions will lead to disproportionate reactions by a state, which in turn disaffects public or international opinion and increases support for their cause. Other leaders using acts of terrorism seek immediate impact, to demonstrate the weakness of their opponent, and by extension the group's power and reach, by generating fear through media coverage. For example, during the 2008 attack in Mumbai, one leader told terrorists to tell the media that the attack ' . . . was just the trailer, just wait till you see the rest of the film'. Terrorist campaigns, however, often take years or decades to achieve meaningful results and the amount and nature of force used can be problematic.

Terrorist groups risk fading into obscurity if they do not cow the public or conduct newsworthy attacks. However, attacks by terrorists that are so horrific, such as publicized beheadings in Taliban-controlled parts of western frontier Pakistan, puts support for terrorist causes at risk. Therefore terrorism is defined here as 'the use of violence by sub-state groups to inspire fear, by attacking civilians and/or symbolic targets, for purposes such as drawing widespread attention to a grievance, provoking a severe response, or wearing down their opponent's moral resolve, to effect political change'.

As with definitions of terrorism, there is general agreement on at least one aspect of globalization. Technologies allow the transfer of goods, services, and information almost anywhere quickly and efficiently. In the case of information, the transfer can be secure and is nearly instantaneous. The extent of social, cultural, and political change brought on by globalization, including increasing interconnectedness and homogeneity in the international system, remain the subject of much disagreement and debate, as other chapters in this volume have outlined. These disagreements, in turn, influence discussion of the extent to which globalization has contributed to the rise of modern terrorism. There is little doubt that the technologies associated with globalization have been used to improve the effectiveness and reach of terrorist groups. The relationship between globalization and terrorism is best understood as the next step in the evolution of political violence since terrorism became a transnational phenomenon in the 1960s.

Key Points

- Agreement on what constitutes terrorism continues to be difficult given the range of potential acts involving violence.
- Terrorism, or acts of violence by sub-state groups, has been separated from criminal acts on the basis of the purpose for which violence is applied, namely political change.
- Terrorist groups succeed when their motivations or grievances are perceived to be legitimate by a wider audience. Disproportionate or heavy-handed responses by states to acts of terrorism serve to legitimize terrorist groups.
- The definition of globalization, as with terrorism, is open to subjective interpretation, but the technologies associated with globalization have increased terrorist capabilities.

Terrorism: from transnational to global phenomenon (1968–2001)

Historically, terrorists have used readily available means to permit small numbers of individuals to spread fear as widely as possible. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anarchists relied on revolvers and dynamite. Yet terrorists and acts of terrorism, including bombings or assassinations in Austria-Hungary (Empress Elisabeth of Austria, assassinated in Geneva in 1898), Tsarist Russia (Tsar Alexander II, assassinated in Saint Petersburg, 1881), the United States (Wall Street bombing, 1920), and the United Kingdom (the 1885 London Underground bombing) among others, rarely had an impact beyond national borders. Three factors led to the birth of transnational terrorism in 1968: the expansion of commercial air travel, the availability of televised news coverage, and broad political and ideological interests among extremists that intersected around a common cause. As a result, terrorism grew from a local to a transnational threat. Air travel gave terrorists unprecedented mobility. For example, the Japanese Red Army trained in one country and attacked in another, such as the 1972 Lod Airport massacre in Israel. Air travel appealed to terrorists for other reasons. Airport security measures, including passport control, were almost non-existent when terrorists began hijacking airlines. These **skyjackings** suited terrorist purposes well. Hijacked airlines offered a degree of mobility, and therefore security, for the terrorists involved. States also acquiesced to terrorist demands, which encouraged further incidents. The success of this tactic spurred other terrorist groups, as well as criminals and political refugees, to follow suit. As a result, incidents of hijacking skyrocketed from five in 1966 to ninety-four in 1969. Shared political ideologies stimulated cooperation and limited exchanges between groups as diverse as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque separatist Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), and groups demanded the release of imprisoned 'fellow revolutionaries' in different countries, giving the impression of a coordinated global terrorist network. The reality was that groups formed relationships of convenience, based around weapons, capabilities, and money, to advance local political objectives.

Televised news coverage also played a role in expanding the audience who could witness the theatre of terrorism in their own homes. Individuals who had never heard of 'the plight of the Palestinians' became notionally aware of the issue after incidents such as the live coverage of the hostage taking conducted by Black September during the 1972 Munich Olympics. Although media

coverage was termed the oxygen that sustains terrorism, terrorists discovered that reporters and audiences lost interest in repeat performances over time. To sustain viewer interest and compete for coverage, terrorist groups undertook increasingly spectacular attacks, such as the seizure of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) delegates by 'Carlos the Jackal' in Austria in December 1975. Terrorism experts speculated that terrorist leaders understood that horrific, mass casualty attacks might cross a threshold of violence. This may explain why few terrorist groups have attempted to acquire or use weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

The Iranian 'Islamic Revolution' of 1979 was a watershed event in transnational terrorism. Although Israeli interests remained primary targets for attack, due to continued sympathy for the Palestinian cause, a number of groups began to target citizens and other symbols of the United States. The decade of terrorism (1980–90) included incidents such as suicide bombings (Lebanon, 1983) and hijackings (TWA Flight 847, 1985). During this decade, three disturbing trends emerged: fewer attacks, that were more deadly and indiscriminate; the increasing sophistication of attacks; and a greater willingness to perform suicide attacks.

Transnational Marxist-Leninist groups discovered that their source of support disappeared at the end of the cold war. In addition, state law enforcement and paramilitary forces were increasingly effective in **combating terrorism**. Other terrorist groups discovered that transnational attacks were counter-productive in achieving local aims. For example, ETA and the IRA sought negotiations but still used terrorist attacks as a bargaining ploy and to remain visible domestically until eventually giving up armed struggle entirely. Although Marxist-Leninist transnational terrorism was decreasing in scale and intensity, militant Islamic terrorism, symbolized by the group Al Qaeda and enabled by globalization, was growing into a global phenomenon.

Key Points

- The majority of transnational terrorist attacks from 1979 onwards targeted American citizens and symbols.
- Trends in terrorism since 1968 include greater casualties, increasing sophistication, and suicide attacks.
- Transnational Marxist-Leninist groups have been replaced by global militant Islamic terrorist groups.

Terrorism: the impact of globalization

Al Qaeda, or 'The Base', received global recognition as a result of its attacks conducted in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. But what exactly is Al Qaeda? Is it a global terrorist group that threatens Western civilization and values, a sub-state financial and resource provider to like-minded terrorist groups, or merely the purveyor of an extremist set of beliefs that justifies political violence to fulfil militant Islamic myths? Experts continue to debate what Al Qaeda is, what it represents, and the actual threat that it poses, particularly since the killing of Osama bin Laden in Abbotabad, Pakistan in May 2011. Part of the reason for the disagreement stems from the fact that Al Qaeda, as the standard bearer for militant Islam, has evolved considerably despite loss of territory and the death or capture of most of its senior leadership. Today Al Qaeda appears less as a terrorist group and more as a global movement that markets and exploits its own form of militant Islam in a loose network of 'franchised' cells and groups (see Fig. 23.1). Regardless of how one views Al Qaeda, one cannot dispute the

continuing influence and appeal of its message across national boundaries as 'franchises' have sprung up in the Arab Maghreb, Yemen, the trans-Sahal, and Nigeria. Efforts to explain the vitality of global terrorism in general—and Al Qaeda in particular—focus on three areas linked to aspects of globalization: culture, economics, and religion.

Cultural explanations

Culture is one way to explain why militant Islam's call for armed struggle has been successful in underdeveloped countries. In particular, violence is the only method of preserving traditions and values against a cultural tsunami of Western products and materialism. Once sought after as an entry method to economic prosperity, Western secular, materialist values are increasingly rejected by those seeking to regain or preserve their own unique cultural identity. The social changes associated with globalization and the spread of free market capitalism appear to overwhelm the identity

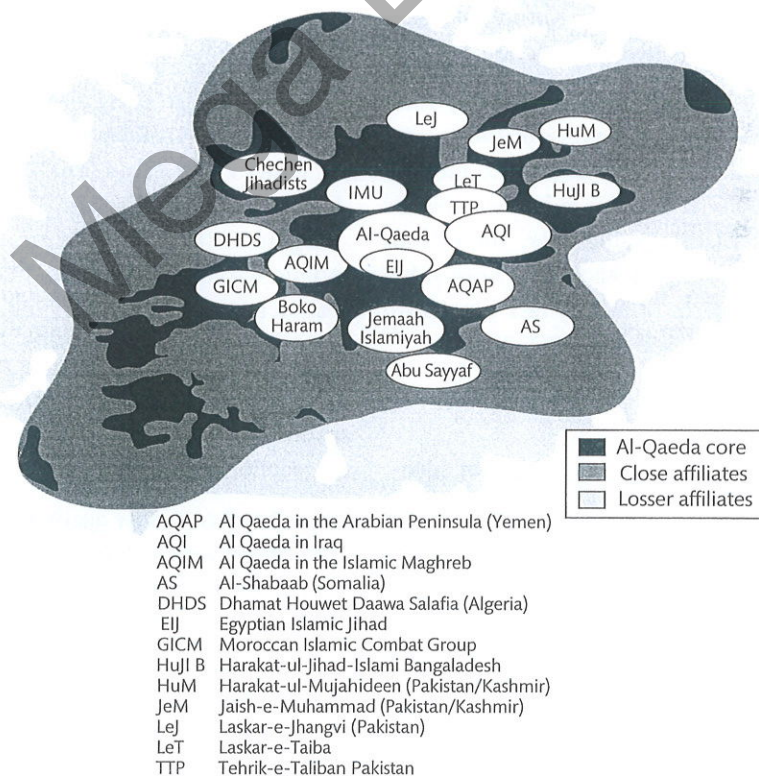


Figure 23.1 The terrorist nebula and regional clusters

Modified from Rabasa, Chalk, et al. (2006), *Beyond Al-Qaeda: Part 1, The Global Jihadist Movement*: 80.

or values of groups who perceive themselves as the losers in the new international system. In an attempt to preserve their threatened identity and values, groups actively distinguish themselves from despised 'others'. At the local level, this cultural friction may translate into conflicts divided along religious or ethnic lines to safeguard identity.

According to one explanation, however, the number of distinct civilizations is limited globally. Samuel Huntington suggests that a major fault-line exists between the liberal Western civilization and an Islamic one 'humiliated and resentful of the West's military presence in the Persian Gulf, the West's overwhelming military dominance, and . . . [unable] to shape their own destiny' (1993: 32). Critics of Huntington suggest, among other things, that he ascribes a degree of homogeneity within the Islamic world that simply does not exist. Theologically and socially, the Islamic 'civilization' contains a number of deep fault-lines that impede the cooperation required to challenge the West. The extremely bloody sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'a in Iraq is only one example of these very real fissures. Militant Islamic calls to kill non-combatants and fellow Muslims represent another internal fault-line. Non-believers fall into the categories of infidels (those of different religion) and apostates (those Muslims who do not share their interpretation of the Koran). In 2005, Osama bin Laden gave unequivocal sanction to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi to kill Muslim Shi'a in Iraq. Such actions call into question the morality of the means, and therefore the legitimacy of bin Laden and militant Islam as the champions of Muslim values among the wider and moderate Islamic community. The victims of militant Islamic terrorist violence have been other Muslims and not Western 'others', a fact bin Laden acknowledged in 2011 (Lahoud et al. 2011: 21–42).

Economic explanations

Not everyone agrees that defence of culture or identity is the primary motivation for globalized terrorist violence. Others see economic aspects as the crucial motivating factor in the use of violence to effect political change. Although globalization provides access to a world market for goods and services, the net result has also been perceived as a form of Western economic imperialism. The United States and the post-industrial states of Western Europe form the global North, or economic 'core', which dominates international economic institutions such as the World Bank, sets exchange rates, and determines fiscal policies. The actions and

policies can be unfavourable to the underdeveloped countries, or global South, that comprise the periphery or gap. Political decisions by the leaders of underdeveloped countries to deregulate or privatize industries to be competitive globally may lead to significant social and economic upheaval. The citizenry may shift loyalties to illegal activities such as terrorism if the state breaks its social contract with them (Junaid 2005: 143–4), including activities outside of state control through global underground economies such as 'System D', using alternative currencies (BitCoin), and alternative websites on the 'Deep Web' such as 'Silk Road'.

Wealth is also linked to personal security and violence. With little possible opportunity to obtain wealth locally, individuals will leave to pursue opportunities elsewhere. Paradoxically, rising standards of living and greater access to educational opportunities associated with globalization may lead to increased individual expectations. If those expectations are unrealized, individuals can turn to extreme political views and action against 'the system' that denies them the opportunity to realize their ambitions, as Ted Robert Gurr hypothesized in 1970 (Gurr 1970: 46). One study suggests that a sense of alienation and lack of opportunity among some Muslim males is a contributing factor in their decision to turn to violence globally. Within militant Islamic groups, however, most leaders and senior operatives attended graduate schools around the globe in fields as diverse as engineering and theology, and were neither poor nor downtrodden (Sageman 2004: 73–4; 95–6).

Other views offer a broader explanation. In particular, the writings of revolutionary Franz Fanon provide insights in the use of political violence to right economic wrongs (Onwudiwe 2001: 52–6). In the 1960s, Fanon suggested that the struggle would exist until the economic and power imbalances were removed (Fanon 1990: 74). Terrorist violence is motivated by inequalities of the global economy. Therefore terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in 1993 and 2001 were not reactions against the policies of the United States *per se*, but rather a blow against an icon of global capitalism. Statements by fringe groups, including neo-Nazis, anarchists, and the 'New, New Left', are additional evidence that globalization might be a stimulus for political violence (Rabasa, Chalk, et al. 2006: 86–93).

The links between terrorism and poverty also vary considerably between regions. Many militant Islamic terrorists in Europe have employment rates and salaries that are close to EU averages for their age group (Bakker 2006: 41, 52). The changing character of militant Islamic violence, and its shift in intensity to Yemen,

Mali, Nigeria, and elsewhere, suggests that while the ideology, leadership, and facilitation are still the purview of the relatively privileged within terrorist groups, economic and ethnic factors may increasingly become the means by which the next generation of terrorists are recruited.

Religion and 'new' terrorism

In the decade prior to September 11, a number of scholars and experts perceived that fundamental changes were taking place in the character of terrorism. The use of violence for political purposes, to change state ideology or the representation of ethnic minority groups, had failed in its purpose and a new trend was emerging (see Ch.14). Postmodern or 'new' terrorism was conducted for different reasons altogether. Motivated by promises of rewards in the afterlife, some terrorists are driven by religious reasons to kill as many of the non-believers and unfaithful as possible (Laqueur 1996: 32–3). Although suicide tactics had been observed in Lebanon as early as 1983, militant Islam had previously been viewed as a state-sponsored, regional phenomenon (Wright 1986: 19–21).

New terrorism, which some authors use to explain the global jihad, is seen as a reaction to the perceived oppression of Muslims worldwide and the spiritual bankruptcy of the West. As globalization spreads and societies become increasingly interconnected, Muslims have a choice: accept Western beliefs to better integrate, or preserve their spiritual purity by rebelling. Believers in the global jihad view the rulers of 'Islamic' countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or Iraq as apostates who have compromised their values in the pursuit and maintenance of secular, state-based power. The only possible response is to fight against such influences through jihad. Jihad is understood by most Islamic scholars and imams to mean the internal struggle for purity spiritually, although it has also been interpreted historically as a method to establish the basis for just war. Extremists who espouse militant Islam, including Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, understand jihad in a different way. For the jihadi terrorist, there can be no compromise with either infidels or apostates. Zawahiri and bin Laden may die but the ideology and the 'cosmic struggle' can and must continue.

The difference in value structures between secular and religious terrorists makes the responses to the latter difficult. Religious terrorists will kill themselves and others to secure rewards in the afterlife. Differences in value structures make the deterrence of religious

terrorism difficult if not impossible, as secular states cannot credibly threaten materially that which the terrorists value spiritually. Secular terrorism has had as its goal the pursuit of power in order to correct flaws in society but retain the overarching system. Religious terrorists, in contrast, do not seek to modify but rather replace the normative structure of society (Cronin 2002/3: 41). Terrorists may be unable or unwilling to compromise on what they see as a 'sacred value' (Atran 2010: 400).

The use of religion as a reaction to and an explanation for the phenomenon of global terrorism contains some of the same incongruities as those focused on cultural and economic aspects. For Western observers, religious reasons appear to explain how individual terrorists are convinced to take their own lives and kill others. Personal motivations can include promises of financial rewards for family members, achieving fame within a community, taking revenge for some grievance, or simply achieving a form of self-actualizing. Yet few religious terrorist leaders, planners, and coordinators martyr themselves. Religion provides terrorist groups with a crucial advantage: the mandate and sanction of the divine to commit otherwise illegal or immoral acts. There is a substantial difference between religious motivation as the single driving factor for individuals to commit acts of terrorism and the ultimate purpose for which violence is being used. Scholars disagree on the ultimate political purpose of religiously inspired suicide violence. Such purposes can include competing with other terrorist groups for popular support in a process of 'outbidding' (Bloom 2005: 77–9), or self-determination, to convince foreign occupiers to withdraw their forces (Pape 2005: 45–6). A common theme among jihadi statements is another political purpose: overthrowing apostate regimes and assuming political power. Political power, in turn, is necessary to impose the militant Islamic form of Sharia law in a state and restore the just and pure society of the caliphate.

Key Points

- Cultural, economic, and religious aspects provide necessary explanations for globalized terrorist violence, but they are insufficient individually.
- The current wave of terrorist violence uses religion as a motivator and to provide the justification for killing non-combatants.
- The ultimate purpose for modern militant Islamic violence is obtaining political power in order to conduct political, social, economic, and religious reform according to Sharia law.

Globalization, technology, and terrorism

Few challenge the point that terrorism has become much more pervasive worldwide due to the processes and technologies of globalization. The technological advances associated with globalization have improved the capabilities of terrorist groups to plan and conduct

once limited to mimeographed manifestos and communiqués. Terrorist supporters and sympathizers now build their own websites. An early example was a website sympathetic to the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement. This website posted the manifestos and videos during the seizure of the Peruvian embassy in Lima in 1997. Webmasters of websites sympathetic to terrorist groups also control the content and distribution of the material posted on their websites. Terrorist groups in Chechnya and the Middle East have increasingly used video cameras to record operations for and results of attacks, including roadside bombings and the downing of aircraft. Individuals or small groups have produced videos useful in inspiring potential recruits and raising donations. Messages, files, and polemics can be distributed to almost anywhere on the globe via email or text messaging almost instantaneously. Multimedia content is generated individually, and it is simple or crude. The electronic journal *Inspire*, produced by the group Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, has been noteworthy for the speed of both its production and messaging. The ease of purposes of spreading messages to the widest audience for those without Internet or text messaging capabilities, and where speed of communication is a requirement or a possibility for security reasons, has led not to rely exclusively on virtual methods. The ease with which modest capabilities can be used by terrorist groups and their sympathizers to disseminate propaganda leaflets, posters, and even magazines in large quantities. Whereas offset printers and photocopiers are difficult to move, a laptop and printer can be packed in a suitcase, and the mobility of the terrorist cell generating the attacks and making them more difficult to locate.

Globalization

In the era of transnational terrorism, groups planned and executed individual attacks or mounted multiple attacks from a single staging base. The technologies

of the Wide Web, as the case of Mustafa Setmariam Nasar suggests (see Case Study 1).

Another form of empowerment for terrorist groups brought on by globalization is the volume, range, and sophistication of propaganda materials. Terrorist operations with far more devastation and coordination than their predecessors could have imagined. In particular, technologies have improved the capability of terrorist groups and cells in the following areas: proselytizing, coordination, security, mobility, and lethality.

Proselytizing

Terrorist groups have traditionally sought sympathy and support within national boundaries or in neighbouring countries as a means to sustain their efforts. Sustaining terrorist causes has traditionally been more difficult as terrorist messages, goals, and grievances tend to be extreme, and therefore less appealing, than those of insurgents. For example, land reform, government corruption, or foreign occupation motivates larger numbers of individuals to support or join insurgencies, whereas the radical political ideology espoused by groups such as the Japanese Red Army and the Weather Underground had little appeal in largely prosperous and stable democratic societies. States have traditionally had an advantage in their ability to control information flows and use their resources to win the battle of hearts and minds against terrorist groups. But terrorist leaders understand how the Internet has changed this dynamic: 'we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma' (Office of the Director of National Intelligence 2005: 10).

The continued expansion of the number of Internet service providers, especially in states with relaxed or ambivalent content policies or laws, combined with capable and inexpensive mobile devices, laptops, tablets, software, applications, and wireless technologies, has empowered individuals and groups with the ability to post tracts on or send messages throughout the World Wide Web. One form of empowerment is the virtual presence that individuals have. Although prominent jihadi terrorists' physical presence can be removed through imprisonment or death, their virtual presence and influence is immortalized on the World

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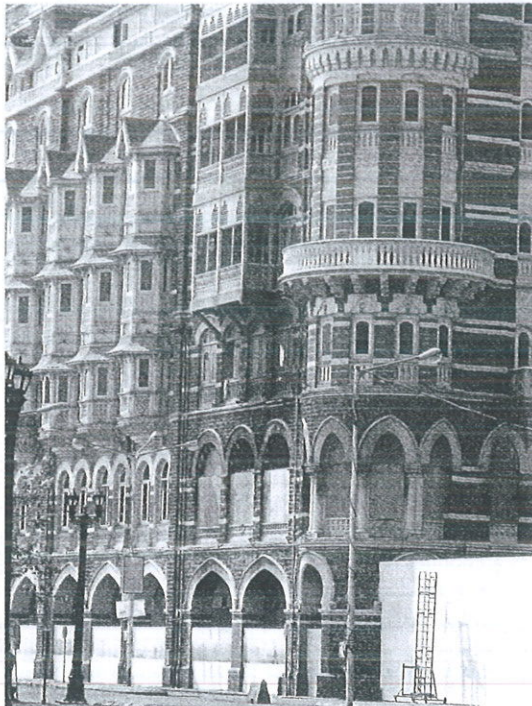
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Mega Lecture

Case Study 2 Mumbai

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On 26 November 2008 ten terrorists landed ashore and entered the port city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay) in India. The ten split up into a number of 'teams', each with separate targets. Two teams conducted 'hit and run'-style attacks on a number of public areas, including the central rail station (Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus) and attractions such as a movie theatre and a cafe popular with tourists (Café Leopold), over the course of almost two hours. These attacks were designed to inflict maximum casualties and spread confusion among Indian first responders, politicians, and the population. Other teams converged upon three separate

buildings: two iconic hotels, the Taj Mahal and Trident Oberoi, and Nariman (or Chabad) House, a Jewish outreach centre. These teams proceeded to take hostages, barricade themselves inside the buildings, and communicate with Indian negotiators and media outlets. For the next two days media attention focused on the buildings and the hostage crisis drama inside. Indian police forces, the National Security Guard commandos, stormed all three buildings and rescued surviving hostages by the morning of 29 November. In all, nine of the ten terrorists were killed but 156 people died and more than 300 were injured over the course of the three-day attack.

Several aspects related to the technologies of globalization were evident in the attack and response. The targets for attack were scouted out by a Pakistani-American, David Headley, who travelled between the United States, India, and Pakistan repeatedly in the two years before the attack. The separate terrorist teams were able to manoeuvre in a foreign city at night with the aid of handheld Garmin GPS receivers and maps developed from Google Maps. In addition, the teams were able to communicate with each other, and their coordinators, using commercial satellite and cell phones. Indeed, the attacks were coordinated from Pakistan to a high degree, with terrorist team leaders being told what to do and when on a number of occasions. At one point, Zabiuddin Ansari, who was watching live media coverage of the attacks more than 500 miles away, ordered the team inside the Taj hotel, by satellite phone, to move to the higher floors and the outside rooms, pile carpets up in the corners, and set them on fire.

The communications between coordinators and teams were intercepted by Indian authorities. These conversations allowed identification of some of the coordinators by voice pattern, and much of the commercially obtained material was traced back to their point of sale and purchaser. The wealth of evidence allowed Indian officials to identify the source of the attacks: the Pakistani terrorist group Laskar-e-Taiba.

camps in Afghanistan, since December 2001. Instead of a hierarchical organization with fixed training bases, what has developed in its stead is a virtual global militant Islamic 'community of practice' characterized by individuals exchanging information and discussing the best ways to coordinate and conduct attacks. Cells form around individuals sympathetic to militant Islamic goals, accessible via webcast or online jihadi discussion forums. Law enforcement officials believe that there are more than 5,000 active militant Islamic discussion sites along the lines of the now-defunct Muntada al-Ansar al-Islami. The watchword for such violence can be thought of as a variation on the activist motto 'think globally, act locally', which reinforces the perception of militant Islam's global depth, power, and reach.

Security

Terrorist cells without adequate security precautions are vulnerable to discovery and detection. Translations of captured Al Qaeda manuals, for example, demonstrate the high value its writers place on security, including surveillance and counter-surveillance techniques. The technological enablers of globalization assist terrorist cells and leaders in preserving security in a number of ways, including distributing elements in a coordinated network, remaining mobile (see 'Mobility'), and using clandestine and/or encrypted communications.

The security of terrorist organizations has been preserved historically by limiting communication and information exchanges between cells. This ensures that if one cell is compromised, its members only know

each other's identities and not those of other cells. Therefore the damage done to the organization is minimized. Security is even more important to clandestine cells operating on their own without central direction. Technological advancements, including faster processing speeds and software developments, now mean that those sympathetic to terrorist causes can contribute to the cause virtually through servers located hundreds or thousands of miles away.

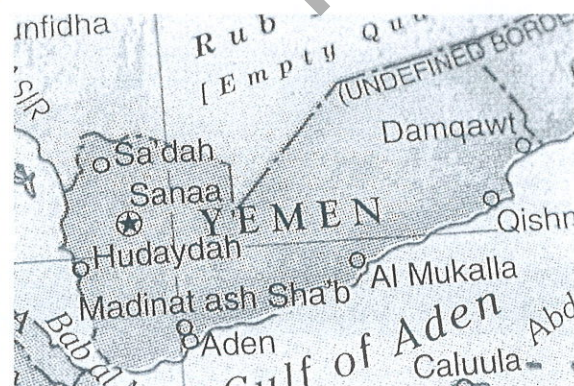
Terrorist groups have been able to leverage technological developments designed to shield a user's identity from unauthorized commercial or private exploitation (Gunaratna 2002: 35). Concerns about infringements on civil liberties and privacy during the early years of the Internet led to the development of 128- and 256-bit encryption freeware that is extremely costly and time-consuming to crack. In addition, access to hardware such as cell phones, personal data assistants, and computers can be restricted via the use of passwords. The use of Internet protocol address generators, anonymity protection programs, and rerouted communications, as well as private chat rooms where password-protected or encrypted files can be shared, also provide a degree of security. Within the virtual jihadist community, youth sympathetic to the militant Islamic cause post information in discussion groups on ways to circumvent electronic surveillance through awareness of phishing and mobile phone monitoring techniques and the use of electronic 'dead letters'—saving draft messages in shared third-party email accounts, such as Gmail, without sending anything that could be intercepted.

Mobility

The reduced size and increased capabilities of personal electronics also give terrorists mobility advantages. Mobility has always been a crucial consideration for terrorists and insurgents alike, given the superior resources that states have been able to bring to bear against them. In open societies that have well-developed infrastructures, terrorists have been able to move rapidly within and between borders, and this complicates efforts to track them. The globalization of commerce has also improved terrorist mobility. The expansion in the volume of air travel and goods that pass through ports has increased exponentially through globalization. Between states, measures have been taken to ease the flow of goods, services, and ideas in a less restrictive fashion to improve efficiency and reduce costs. One example is the European Schengen Agreement, in which border security measures between EU member states have been relaxed to speed up deliveries.

The use of air travel by terrorists has been well documented. Carlos the Jackal evaded arrest through air travel, and two of the London 2005 bombers travelled to Pakistan before the attack, allegedly to film their 'martyrdom videos' and receive bomb-making instruction. The latest generation of terrorists, including Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, resembles their transnational predecessors in exploiting travel methods for attacks (see **Case Study 3**). Terrorist use of transportation need not necessarily be overt in nature, as the volume of goods transported in support of a globalized economy is staggering and difficult to monitor effectively.

Case Study 3 Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab



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Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab provides a portrait of a globally mobile citizen turned terrorist. He is a 23-year-old Nigerian

citizen and the privileged son of a wealthy and successful African banker. Abdulmutallab had every advantage growing up, including schooling at the British International School (Nigeria), University College London, the San'a Institute for the Arabic Language (Yemen), and the University of Wollongong (United Arab Emirates). Despite his material comforts, Abdulmutallab blogged about his sense of loneliness and isolation. His travel put him into contact with Anwar al-Awlaki, a Yemeni imam linked to a number of global terrorists including the Fort Hood gunman, Nidal Malik Hasan. At some point, Abdulmutallab received a specialized two-stage bomb manufactured in Yemen sewn into an undergarment. He tried unsuccessfully to detonate the device on Northwest Flight 253 after purchasing a ticket in Ghana and travelling from Lagos to Amsterdam to Detroit on 25 December 2009.

For example, customs officials cannot inspect all of the vehicles or containers passing through border points or ports. To illustrate the scale of the problem, the United States receives 10 million containers per year and one port, Los Angeles, processes the equivalent of 12,000 twenty-foot containers daily. Western government officials fear that terrorist groups will use containers as a convenient and cheap means to ship WMD. Incidents in Italy in 2001 and Israel in 2004 confirm that terrorist groups are aware of the convenience and cheapness of globalized shipping to improve their mobility.

Lethality

Globalization has undoubtedly had a troubling influence on terrorism, but the one element that concerns counter-terrorism experts and practitioners the most is future catastrophic attacks using WMD. During the transnational era, terrorists could obtain advanced weapons to conduct more lethal attacks, including rudimentary WMD, but on the whole they did not. Few tried to acquire them and fewer still, including the Weather Underground, threatened their use. The precise reasons why terrorists did not acquire and use such weapons during this era are unclear. Experts speculated, however, that terrorist leaders understood that the more lethal their attacks were, the greater the likelihood that a state or the international community would focus their entire efforts on hunting them down and eradicating them.

Since the end of the cold war, however, some terrorist leaders have expressed both the desire and will to use WMD. Evidence that US troops recovered in Afghanistan in 2001 outlined plans by Al Qaeda to produce and test biological and chemical weapons under a plan code-named *zabadi* (curdled milk). A raid on a suspected Al Qaeda flat in London (2004) revealed quantities of ricin, a toxin, and in 2004 and 2007 Al Qaeda-affiliated groups used or planned to use chlorine

gas in attacks in Jordan and Iraq. Militant Islamic statements have mentioned, and one fatwa supports, the use of any means, including WMD, to kill as many infidels and apostates as possible. Globalized media may play a role in shaping terrorist plans as Al Qaeda leaders are alleged to have been inspired by the spectacular special effects of Hollywood blockbuster movies.

In the absence of WMD, globalization has facilitated access to weapons, resources, and the proficiency required to conduct smaller, but more lethal attacks. Terrorist groups from Chechnya to Pakistan have shared their expertise in the manufacturing of lethal bombs triggered by increasingly sophisticated and globally available remote control devices. In Iraq and Afghanistan, insurgent and terrorist groups have built sophisticated 'improvised explosive devices' (IEDs). IEDs vary in lethality and complexity. The United States, for example, claims that Iran supports terrorist violence in Iraq through the supply of specific IED technology able to penetrate heavily armoured vehicles. State sponsorship, however, may no longer be necessary in a globalized world. Digital videos suggest that terrorists are already conducting distance learning through a 'virtual jihad academy' in which prospective terrorists study everything from conducting ambush attacks to making and using IEDs, to increase their effectiveness and lethality.

Key Points

- Elements of globalization that permit the rapid exchange of ideas and goods can also be leveraged and exploited by terrorist groups.
- The technologies associated with globalization allow terrorists to operate in a highly distributed global 'network' that shares information and allows small cells to conduct highly coordinated, lethal attacks.
- Globalization may allow some terrorist groups to acquire, manufacture, and use weapons of mass of destruction to conduct catastrophic attacks.

Combating terrorism

States plagued by transnational terrorism responded individually and collectively to combat the phenomenon during the cold war. These responses ranged in scope and effectiveness and included passing anti-terrorism laws, taking preventative security measures at airports, and creating special operations counter-terrorism forces

such as the West German Grenzschutzgruppe-9 (GSG-9). Successful rescues in Entebbe (1976), Mogadishu (1977), Prince's Gate, London (1980), and Singapore (1991) demonstrated that national counter-terrorism forces could respond effectively both domestically and abroad. A normative approach to tackling the problem,

founded on the principles of international law and collective action, was less successful. Attempts to define and proscribe transnational terrorism in the United Nations bogged down in the General Assembly over semantics, but other cooperative initiatives were successfully implemented. These included the conventions adopted through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to improve information-sharing and legal cooperation, such as the Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970). Another collective response to improve information-sharing and collaborative action was the creation of the Public Safety and Terrorism Sub-Directorate in Interpol in 1985. However, most initiatives and responses throughout this decade were largely unilateral, regional, or ad hoc in nature.

State leaders disagree on how best to deal with the current form of global terrorist violence. Much of the controversy relates to the nature of the threat and the best approach to tackle it. Some national leaders view the form of militant Islam as an intractable problem in which there can be no negotiation. The stakes in 'the Long War' consist of the preservation of basic freedoms and a way of life. In order to defeat terrorism, individual states have a responsibility to protect civilian populations while dealing with terrorist cells, supporters, and sympathizers within their own borders. Given the global, elusive, and adaptive character of the militant Islamic threat, the best approach for dealing with global terrorism is to pool resources together in a coalition of the willing: the global North improving the capabilities of much of the global South. The end result will be the development of a Global Counter-Terrorism Network (GCTN) of states able to detect, track, and eliminate terrorist threats while non-military efforts address the root causes of terrorism. One example of globalization in practice has been the use by the United States of unarmed and armed Global Hawk, Predator, and Reaper drones to conduct surveillance and strikes against terrorist targets. The drones are flown remotely from bases thousands of miles away, their video feeds are disseminated to operations centres and users locally, regionally, and globally, and attacks are authorized, conducted, and monitored without US forces having to engage in direct combat, leading to claims of 'extrajudicial' or 'targeted killing' by others.

Other national leaders are less comfortable with the concept of 'war' against terrorism. In their view, actions by the military can only lead to terrorist reprisals, or worse—the return of terrorism to its original connotation, the sanctioned use of terror by the state to repress

its own citizenry. In their eyes, terrorism is a crime that is best dealt with through law enforcement methods. By dealing with terrorism as a police problem, states uphold the rule of law, maintain the moral high ground, preserve democratic principles, and prevent the establishment of martial law. Military force should only be used in extreme circumstances and even then its use may have negative consequences. Terrorism is best dealt with inside state borders and through cooperative international law enforcement efforts to arrest suspects and provide them with due process. The law enforcement approach to terrorism must balance taking enough measures against terrorist groups without crossing over into the realm of "political justice," where the rules and rights enshrined in the principle of due process are either wilfully misinterpreted or completely disregarded' (Chalk 1996: 98). To do little against domestic or global terrorism, in the name of upholding the rule of law, risks offering terrorist groups a sanctuary and the security of rights and laws.

The virtual opinion of a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), members of blogs, and webmasters has also been critical of the 'war' on terrorism. Those suspicious of the motives of the political elite of the United States range widely in their opinions. Conspiracy theorists online suggest that the war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere is the first stage in the establishment of an Orwellian system that is constantly in conflict with the terrorist 'other' to justify continued violation of personal rights and privacy. More objective communities of practice and NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch, routinely provide monitoring and online reporting of suspected government human rights and civil liberties abuses. One example is the persistent attention paid to the status of terrorist detainees held in US custody at Guantanamo Bay.

Although disagreements still exist over how best to deal with terrorism philosophically, pragmatically the largest problems reside in locating terrorists and isolating them from their means of support. Locating and identifying terrorists is a tedious and time-consuming process that requires collecting, assessing, and analysing information collected from a range of sources. Information technologies associated with globalization have been useful in assisting this process. Such technologies allow identification of terrorist patterns before and after attacks, with systems capable of performing calculations measured in the trillions per second (floating point operations, or 'flops'). Terrorist finances and organizations are evaluated through link analysis to construct a more comprehensive picture of how the terrorist

elements interact. In addition, huge volumes of information can be reduced and exchanged electronically between departments, agencies, and other governments, or made available on secure servers whose capacities are measured in terabytes. Discovering terrorist cells, however, has much to do with luck and pursuing non-technical leads. States' bureaucracies can impede or negate technical and resource advantages over terrorist groups.

In order to deal with global terrorism, the international community must address its most problematic modern aspects: the appeal of messages that inspire terrorists to commit horrific acts of violence. Killing or capturing individuals does little to halt the spread of extremist viewpoints that occur under the guise of discussion and education. In the case of Islam, for example, radical mullahs and imams twist the tenets of the religion into a doctrine of action and hatred, where spiritual achievement occurs through destruction

rather than personal enlightenment. In other words, suicide attacks offer the promise of private goods (spiritual reward) rather than public good (positive contributions to the community over a lifetime). Precisely how the processes and technologies of globalization can assist in delegitimizing the pedagogy that incites terrorists will remain one of the most vexing challenges for the international community for years to come.

Key Points

- States, individually and collectively, have political, military, legal, economic, and technological advantages in the struggle against terrorist groups.
- Differences between states over the nature and scope of the current terrorist threat, and the most appropriate responses to combat it, reflect subjective characterizations based on national biases and experiences.

Conclusion

The onset of the 'Arab Spring' and the 'Twitter Revolution', combined with the deaths of Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki, led some to suggest that militant Islamic terrorism was in its final throes. However, the 2012 terrorist attack on the American consulate in Benghazi, Libya, served as a reminder that such terrorism will be with us for years to come. Terrorism remains a complex phenomenon in which violence is used to obtain political power to redress grievances that may have become more acute through the process of globalization. Globalization has increased the technical capabilities of terrorists and given them global reach, but has not altered the fundamental fact that terrorism represents the extreme views of a minority of the global population. In other words,

globalization has changed the scope of terrorism but not its nature. The benefits that globalization provides terrorists are neither one-sided nor absolute. The same technologies and processes also enable more effective means for states to combat them. Global terrorists can only succeed through popular uprising or the psychological or physical collapse of their state-based adversary. Neither outcome is likely given the limitations of terrorist messages and capabilities. Terrorist and counter-terrorist campaigns are characterized by prolonged struggle to maintain advantages in legitimacy domestically and internationally. The challenge for the global community will be in utilizing its advantages to win the war of ideas that motivates and sustains those responsible for the current wave of terrorist violence.

Questions

- 1 Why is linking terrorism with globalization so difficult to do theoretically?
- 2 When did terrorism become a truly global phenomenon and what enabled it to do so?
- 3 In what ways are the technologies and processes associated with globalization more beneficial to states or terrorists?
- 4 Given that terrorism has been both a transnational and a global phenomenon, why has it not been more successful in effecting change?