

## **Handout 2. Definitions of Terrorism**

"The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological." (U.S. Department of Defense)

"Terrorism constitutes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted." (Walter Laqueur)

"Terrorism is defined here as the recurrent use or threatened use of politically motivated and clandestinely organised violence, by a group whose aim is to influence a psychological target in order to make it behave in a way which the group desires." (C. J. M. Drake)

"The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." (FBI)

### **Handout 3. Causes of Terrorism**

#### **Introduction**

The causes of terrorism appear to be varied. There does not appear to be one lone factor that leads people to engage in acts of terror. Scholars have categorized motivations for terrorism to include psychological, ideological, and strategic.

#### **Psychological Perspective**

Those who engage in terrorism may do so for purely personal reasons, based on their own psychological state of mind. Their motivation may be nothing more than hate or the desire for power. For example, in 1893 Auguste Vaillant bombed the French Chamber of Deputies. Prior to his conviction and subsequent execution Vaillant explained his motivation in terms of hate for the middle classes. Vaillant wanted to spoil the sense of economic and social success, by tainting it with his violence. In many respects this terrorist is interested in getting attention from others for his or her act, rather than some grand ideological or strategic goal.

#### **Ideological Perspective**

Ideology is defined as the beliefs, values, and/or principles by which a group identifies its particular aims and goals. Ideology may encompass religion or political philosophies and programs. Examples of terrorist groups motivated by ideology include the Irish Republican Army (IRA), in Sri Lanka the Liberation Tigers of Tamal Eelam (LTTE), and the Bader Meinhoff in Germany. The IRA is motivated by a political program to oust the United Kingdom from Ireland and unite Ireland under one flag. Similarly the LTTE seek to establish a separate state for their people, the Tamals in Sri Lanka. Finally, the Bader Meinhoff was a terrorist group made up of middle-class adults who opposed capitalism and sought to destroy capitalist infrastructure in Germany.

#### **Strategic Perspective**

Terrorism is sometimes seen as a logical extension of the failure of politics. When people seek redress of their grievances through government, but fail to win government's attention to their plight, they may resort to violence. From this viewpoint, terrorism is the result of a logical analysis of the goals and objectives of a group, and their estimate of the likelihood of gaining victory. If victory seems unlikely using more traditional means of opposition, then one might calculate that terrorism is a better option. For example, in South Africa the African National Congress only turned to the use of terrorism after political avenues were explored and failed. Of course, not just individuals may feel let down by the political process. States may use terrorists in the pursuit of their own strategic interests. States may sponsor terrorist groups, especially when the objectives of the state and the terrorist group are similar. For example, Libya used terrorists to explode a bomb aboard Pan Am 103 flying from London to New York in 1988, allegedly in response to U.S. and British bombing of Libya.

**Conclusion**

It is impossible to say for sure what causes terrorism. A person's psychological make-up certainly will play a role, but to what extent is unclear. Some may come to terrorism, not out of any love for violence, but rather to further their ideological goals. Others may be motivated to use terror simply because it appears to be a useful strategic alternative, or may further the state's objectives. Indeed, terrorism may occur for psychological, ideological, and strategic grounds all at once. An individual may decide terrorism fits his or her own view of the world—that it makes sense. A group may come to use terrorism because it furthers and is supported by their ideology. Finally, groups or persons may use terrorism because it fits with their strategic objectives and goals.

#### Handout 4. Profile of a Terrorist: Osama bin Laden

Below is material about Osama Bin Laden. The first is from a U.S. Department of State publication, and the second from an interview broadcast on ABC.

##### From U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1997*\*

Usama [Osama] bin Muhammad bin Awad bin Ladin is one of the most significant sponsors of Sunni Islamic terrorist groups. The youngest son of Saudi construction magnate Muhammad Bin Ladin, Usama joined the Afghan resistance almost immediately after the Soviet invasion in December 1979. He played a significant role in financing, recruiting, transporting, and training Arab nationals who volunteered to fight in Afghanistan. During the war, Bin Ladin founded al-Qaida—the Base—to serve as an operational hub, predominantly for like-minded Sunni Islamic extremists. The Saudi government revoked his citizenship in 1994 and his family officially disowned him. He had moved to Sudan in 1991, but international pressure on that government forced him to move to Afghanistan in 1996.

In August 1996, Bin Ladin issued a statement outlining his organization's goals: drive U.S. forces from the Arabian Peninsula, overthrow the Government of Saudi Arabia, "liberate" Muslim holy sites in "Palestine," and support Islamic revolutionary groups around the world. To these ends, his organization has sent trainers throughout Afghanistan as well as to Tajikistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen and has trained fighters from numerous other countries including the Philippines, Egypt, Libya, and Eritrea. Bin Ladin also has close associations with the leaders of several Islamic terrorist groups and probably has aided in creating new groups since the mid-1980s. He has trained their troops, provided safehaven and financial support, and probably helps them with other organizational matters.

Since August 1996, bin Ladin has been very vocal in expressing his approval of and intent to use terrorism. He claimed responsibility for trying to bomb U.S. soldiers in Yemen in late 1992 and for attacks on them in Somalia in 1993, and reports suggest his organization aided the Egyptian al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya in its assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak in Ethiopia in 1995. In November 1996 he called the 1995 and 1996 bombings against US military personnel in Saudi Arabia "praiseworthy acts of terrorism" but denied having any participation in those bombings. At the same time, he called for further attacks against US military personnel, saying: "If someone can kill an American soldier, it is better than wasting time on other matters."

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\* The different spelling of Osama bin Laden reflects U.S. State Department preference in 1997.

**Below is an interview with Osama bin Laden by ABC's John Miller (conducted on May 28, 1998). The interview presents a number of different insights concerning the origins of terrorism (such as the psychological, ideological, and strategic). You will note the extent to which bin Laden attempts to speak on behalf of all of Islam—which of course in reality he does not.**

JOHN MILLER Mr. bin Laden, to Americans you are an interesting figure: A man who comes from a background of wealth and comforts who ended up fighting on the front lines. Many Americans would think that's unusual.

OSAMA BIN LADEN Thanks be to Allah. It is hard for one to understand if the person does not understand Islam. In our religion we believe that Allah created us to worship him. Allah is the one who created us and blessed us with this religion, and orders us to carry out the holy struggle jihad to raise the word of Allah above the words of the unbelievers.

We believe this is a form of worship we must follow despite our financial ability. This is a response to Westerners and secularists in the Arab world who claim the reason for the awakening and the return to Islam is financial difficulties. This is untrue. In fact, the return of the people to Islam is a blessing from Allah, and their return is a need for Allah.

This is not a strange issue. During the days of jihad, thousands of young men who were well off financially left the Arabian Peninsula and other areas and joined the fighting—hundreds of them were killed in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya. We pray Allah grants them martyr status.

JOHN MILLER You have been described as the "World's Most Wanted Man." There is word that the American government intends to put a price on your head in the millions for your capture. Do you think about that? Does it worry you?

OSAMA BIN LADEN Praise be to Allah. It does not worry us what the Americans think. What worries us is pleasing Allah. The Americans impose themselves on everyone who believes in his religion and his rights. They accuse our children in Palestine of being terrorists. Those children that have no weapons and have not even reached maturity. At the same time they defend a country with its airplanes and tanks, and the state of the Jews, that has a policy to destroy the future of these children.

Clinton stands after Qana and defends the horrible massacre that severed the heads of children and killed about 100 persons.\* Clinton stands and claims Israel has the right to defend itself. We do not worry about American opinion, or the fact they place prices on our heads.

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\* Qana is a village in Lebanon where, on April 18, 1996, Israeli artillery shelled a compound in response to an attack allegedly launched by forces housed in the village. Some 800 civilians had taken refuge in the compound, and over 100 died in the attack. The Israeli government claimed that the compound had been in the hands of Hizballah, a terrorist group opposed to Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

We as Muslims believe that our fate is set. If the whole world decides to get together and kill us before our time has come, we will not die, our livelihood is set. No matter how much pressure America places on the regime in Riyadh to freeze our assets and to prevent people from contributing to this great cause, we rely on Allah.

**Questions for Consideration**

What insight or understanding does the psychological perspective give us about this terrorist? What insight or understanding does the ideological perspective give us? What insight or understanding does the strategic perspective give us?

## Handout 6. Responses to Terrorism

Historically, there have been a number of responses to terrorism. These have included the use of violence to oppose terrorists, the use of negotiation, and finally the use of international conventions to create international norms in opposing terrorism. While these three are not, by any means, the only ways in which governments have sought to address terrorism, they certainly have been among the most popular.

The use of force and violence against terrorism has been demonstrated periodically. U.S. military action against the Taliban in Afghanistan is an example of the use of force against terrorism. The Taliban, harboring the al Qaeda organization, was the target of U.S. military action. In another example, in 1988 three suspected members of the Irish Republican Army were shot and killed in Gibraltar by members of the British Special Air Services. Force, in this case, was used against suspected members of a terrorist organization. The use of force is both a tit-for-tat strategy, as well as an attempt to hinder the terrorists' ability to operate.

Negotiation is a second method for dealing with terrorism. While nations may refuse publicly to negotiate with terrorist groups, they may follow a different strategy in secret. For example, Great Britain had long refused to negotiate with the Irish Republican Army and its political wing Sinn Fein. Yet, out of the public view negotiations did proceed, ultimately leading to the Good Friday Agreements, which went far in ending terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland. Another example is the negotiation that took place between the African National Congress (ANC) and the apartheid government of South Africa. The ANC had been proscribed as a terrorist organization, and the government foreswore any negotiation with the ANC. Yet, behind the scenes negotiations did take place, ultimately resulting in the end of apartheid in South Africa.

International agreements are another attempt at addressing terrorism. International organizations, such as the United Nations, pass resolutions and seek to foster greater political action among member states. For example, the 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings requires that parties to the convention must make it a criminal act to unlawfully and intentionally use explosives or other deadly devices in public with the objective of causing death or injuring a person. Another example of action by the international community was UN Security Council anti-terrorism resolution 1373, "Improving International Cooperation."

You may wish to reflect on these approaches to handling terrorism in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Particular approaches or combinations of approaches may be more appropriate in a given context.