MIPT National Memorial Institute
for the Prevention of Terrorism

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The National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to prevent terrorism on U.S. soil and to mitigate its effects. MIPT was founded as a living memorial to those who lived, those who died and those who were changed forever by the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. MIPT conducts reseach into the social and political causes and effects of terrorism, and it feels a special obligation to serve the needs of emergency responders—police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and all of the others who are first on the scene in the aftermath of terrorist activity.

Preface

The National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT, located in Oklahoma City) firmly believes that the accurate dissemination of knowledge on terrorism is a critical ingredient for combating terrorism on U.S. soil. The U.S. Congress directed MIPT to conduct "research into the social and political causes and effects of terrorism," and to this end the organization has partnered with the RAND Corporation to improve the nation's awareness of the history and emerging trends of terrorism. In order for leaders to plan and responders to prepare, their policies must first be informed by the past. By learning lessons from previous incidents and grasping current trends, they can better understand the nature of future threats and how to protect against them.

This yearbook is designed to further the vital link between policymakers, emergency responders, public officials, scholars, and the public. The articles contained herein offer thoughtful perspectives of subject-matter experts who draw heavily on a powerful database of terrorist acts worldwide. Their contemporary analyses and insights probe cross-cutting issues and describe the terrorist threat environment. This volume also features graphical summaries and statistics on terrorist incidents and trends. While MIPT and RAND are not alone in chronicling trends in terrorism, no other organizations have been as active in terms of sharing their information with the public. Our publications that use the database are but the beginning of this type of information sharing; MIPT's intent is for others to take advantage of this tool and develop further knowledge. By keeping the database open, objective, and online, we afford our users unparalleled access to a unique resource (which is available at the MIPT Web site, www.mipt.org).

Currently, there is no single, comprehensive site from which policymakers, practitioners, and the public can find facts concerning global terrorism. We believe that MIPT's database and its related publications can help to satisfy this need. By combining them with other databases, Web documents, and library materials, MIPT will be able to offer an in-depth, interactive, and comprehensive Terrorism Knowledge Base in a central location. With this knowledge in hand, our nation can better understand and assess the threats it faces.

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Articles

Change and Continuity in Terrorism Revisited: Terrorist Tactics, 1980–2005

Rollie Lal and Brian A. Jackson

What makes certain tactics more popular than other tools for terrorists? Various considerations influence the choice. Low cost, low risk, and high media exposure are clearly priorities, but different circumstances may require different tactics. As such, a variety of methods, including bombings, hijackings, kidnappings, arson, armed attacks, and assassinations, have all developed into standard tools used by terrorist groups.

This article examines the tactics that terrorists have used to stage their attacks over the past 25 years. In assessing terrorist threats, it is important to identify changes in the reasons that provide the foundation for why terrorists do what they do, as well as how they do it—the tactics and weapons terrorist groups use to carry out their attacks. This particular article focuses on the latter. We note that with changes in technology and in the targets terrorists seek to attack, there have been shifts in the ways in which terrorist organizations have planned and staged operations. Drawing on the data available in the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base (see the box below), the following sections will examine the tactics terrorists have used to stage their attacks over the past 25 years.[1]

> **Components of the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base**
>
> **The RAND Terrorism Chronology Database (1968–1997)** monitors all international terrorism incidents during this period.
>
> **The RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incident Database (1998–present)** monitors all terrorism incidents worldwide, including both domestic and international incidents.
>
> Varied inclusion criteria for the two data sets mean that there are significant differences in the number and type of terrorist incidents that are included in each. The total number of terrorist incidents per year in the Chronology Database average in the hundreds, while those in the more recent Incident Database average in the thousands. Much of this difference stems from the broader inclusion criteria (e.g., domestic incidents) used for the Incident Database.
>
> Since this analysis looks across the time periods of the two sources, we will discuss the percentages of terrorist incidents in the database that adopt specific tactics. This choice minimizes the influence of the very different attack counts for this discussion, but the reader is cautioned that our doing so also minimizes real differences that exist in the data for the different time periods.

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[1] This article lists incident profile descriptions from the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base. Where necessary, the descriptions have been slightly modified for clarity and for adaptation to the style of this report.

The coding of terrorist incidents makes it possible to examine shifts in the percentages of incidents in the database that draw on specific tactics, thus providing a window into how the distribution of terrorist activity has changed over time. Looking at the most general level, Figure 1 shows the changing tactical distribution of terrorist incidents in the database on a year-to-year basis. Even such an aggregate representation demonstrates important points of both change and continuity in terrorist tactical choices over this time period. For example, terrorists' general preference for "the gun and the bomb" in designing their operations is evident over the entire period (categories of bombing, armed attack, and assassination, among others). In contrast, significant variation in the use of other tactics is seen over time (e.g., barricade/hostage operations have nearly fallen from the repertoire of terrorist groups).[2]

Beyond tabulating the prevalence of tactic types, however, it is important to drill into each tactic to examine how its context and use have changed over time. As the world saw on September 11, 2001, the meaning of an aircraft hijacking today—after seized airliners have been used as weapons to inflict lethal and large-scale damage—is categorically different from hijackings carried out in the past, when the focus was more frequently extortion or capturing media attention through an extended period of terrorization and bargaining. The following

Figure 1
Percentages of Terrorist Incidents by Tactic Type, 1980–2005

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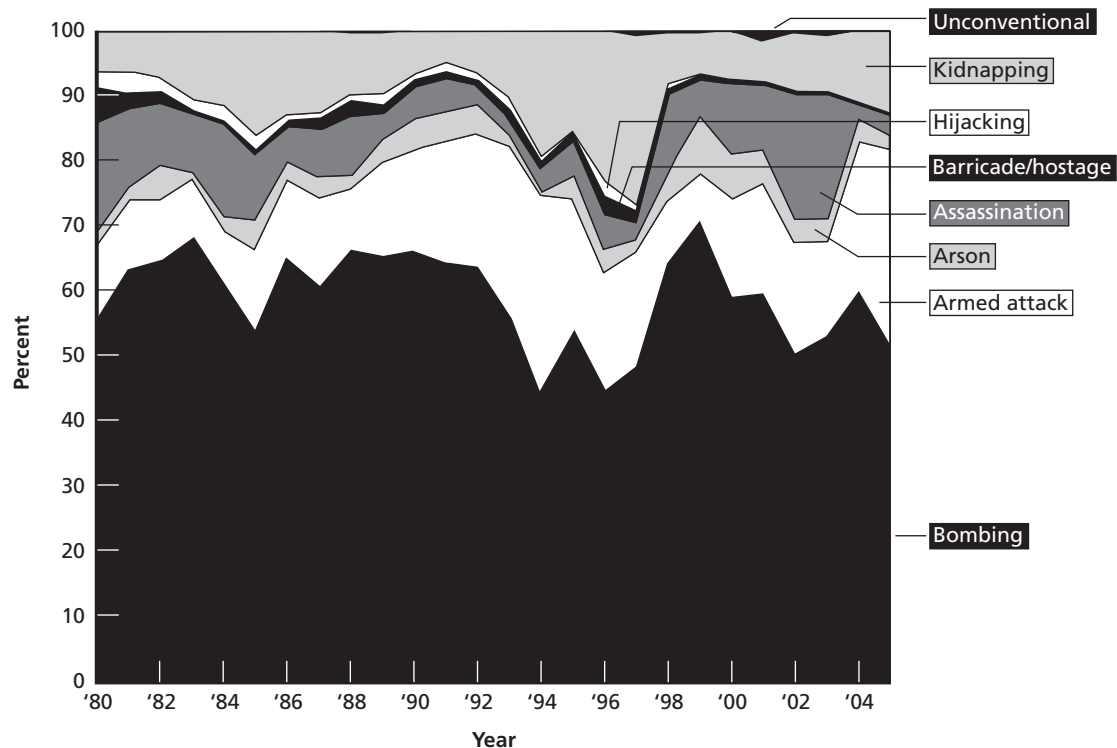
[2] However, barricade/hostage operations have been used recently to devastating effect by Chechen groups, as seen in the Moscow theater and Beslan attacks.

sections examine the main tactics represented in the Incident Database—bombing, armed attack, arson, assassination, barricade/hostage, hijacking, and kidnapping—looking at both their prevalence in the terrorist repertoire and the variety in how terrorist organizations have applied them over this period.

Bombing

The role of the bomb as an element of terrorists' tactical repertoire reaches back into the earliest history of modern terrorism. Anarchist terrorists adopted the use of explosives in the 1800s, and the attractiveness of the weapon was symbolic as well as functional—"dynamite made all men equal and therefore free."[3] In the period covered by the RAND-MIPT data sets, bombing incidents represent the majority of terrorist attacks (57 percent of all incidents). In most individual years, bombings account for more than half the terrorist attacks (except in 1994, 1996, and 1997) and have reached as high as 70 percent of attacks in 1999 (see Figure 2).

   The prevalence of bombings as a tactic of choice for terrorist organizations is reinforced by the many ways explosives can be used and applied. Identifying an attack as a bombing by definition obscures this variety, by focusing on the tool used rather than the way in which the terrorist has applied it. Examination of incidents in the database range from the use of small letter bombs for targeting individuals to large-scale vehicle bombs designed to produce mass casualties and destroy structures and property.

Figure 2
Bombings as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005

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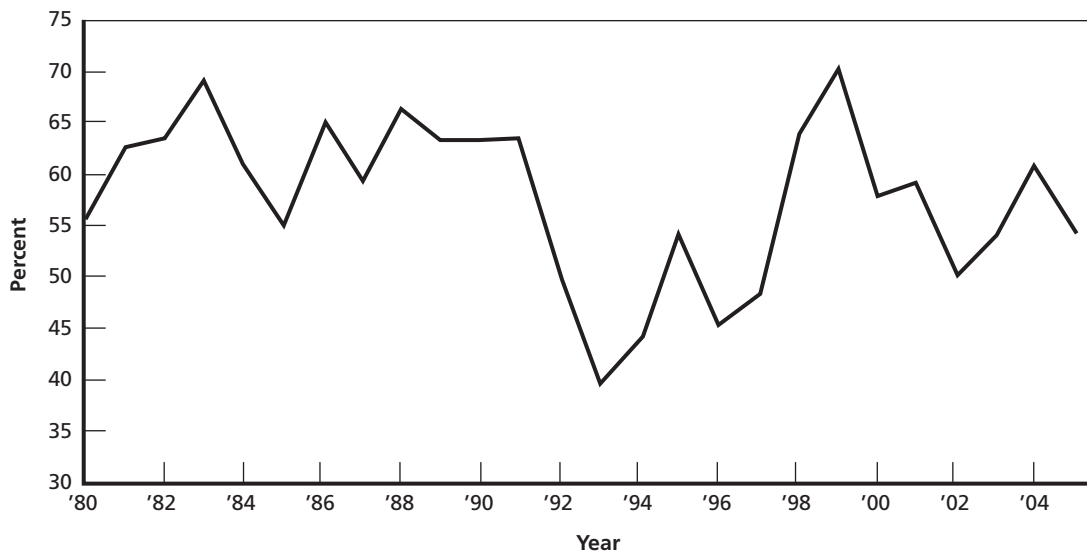
[3] Quoted in Walter Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism*, Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2001, p. 55.

February 1990 (Northern Ireland). The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) bombed the Belfast factory of the aircraft company Short Brothers, the largest industrial employer in Northern Ireland and a supplier to the British Army.

April 1995 (United States). A massive roadside truck bomb detonated at the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City killed 168 people, injured more than 500 people, and destroyed half of the nine-story building.

Similarly, tactical variation in the use of explosive devices is wide—ranging from the use of single devices to targeting infrastructure to producing specific effects (e.g., causing the release of hazardous materials) to coordinating the application of multiple explosive devices to increase the scale of an attack.

June 1980 (United States). An explosion rocked the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, burying in rubble a plaque bearing the famous "Give me your tired, your poor..." poem. No one was injured.

March 2004 (Spain). 191 people were killed and over 600 others were wounded when ten bombs detonated in Madrid on the train line. The bombs were detonated by cell phones and were left in backpacks.

The variety in the ways in which bombs can be used means that expertise in the construction and use of explosive devices is a versatile asset for terrorist groups and is applicable to many different targets and operations. This versatility makes the tactic broadly valuable: more specialized or niche tactics (e.g., tactics that rely on specialized components or are relevant only for a defined set of targets) expose a terrorist group to the risk that successful interdiction or defensive measures could significantly limit the group's effectiveness. For bombs, if a group is denied one set of targets or ingredients, there are many other ways to construct and apply the devices.

Armed Attack

Like bombing, armed attack includes a wide variability in the incidents that fall within it. Armed attacks staged by terrorists range from small-scale attacks, such as shooting one person, to major operations aiming to produce many casualties or to take large facilities.

March 1980 (Federal Republic of Germany). The Irish Republican Army (IRA) claimed its third attack on British soldiers in Germany in a month by taking responsibility for the ambush of a British soldier who was shot five times while jogging in Osnabrueck.

March 1981 (El Salvador). More than a dozen men in three groups attacked the U.S. embassy building with machine-gun fire and self-propelled grenades, but no one was

injured. Two groups of men each fired on the building from opposite ends as a diversionary tactic, while a third group fired a Chinese-made rocket-propelled grenade, which damaged the building severely.

Between 1980 and 2005, the percentage of terrorist incidents in the databases classified as armed attacks has varied considerably from highs above 30 percent to lows of about 7.5 percent (see Figure 3). A major driver of the recent increases in the percentage of armed attack incidents is the conflict in Iraq; for example, nearly 68 percent of the armed attacks recorded in 2005 occurred in Iraq.[4] The other spike in the percentage of armed attack incidents in 1993–1994 was driven by a relatively small number of international terrorism incidents occurring in those years, with a significant number of armed attack incidents in Israel, Egypt, and Algeria.

Within the category of armed attack, the relative sophistication of terrorist operations also varies considerably—from the crude and basic (the "drive-by" shooting or the lone operative hurling a grenade at a target) to much more complex and technically demanding operations involving closely coordinated small unit operations and multiple types of weapons.

> **November 1995 (Egypt).** Islamic extremists opened fire on a train en route from Aswan to Cairo in the south of Egypt near Farshut village, about 600 kilometers from Cairo, injuring two foreign tourists—one French and one Dutch—as well as an Egyptian.

Figure 3
Armed Attacks as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005

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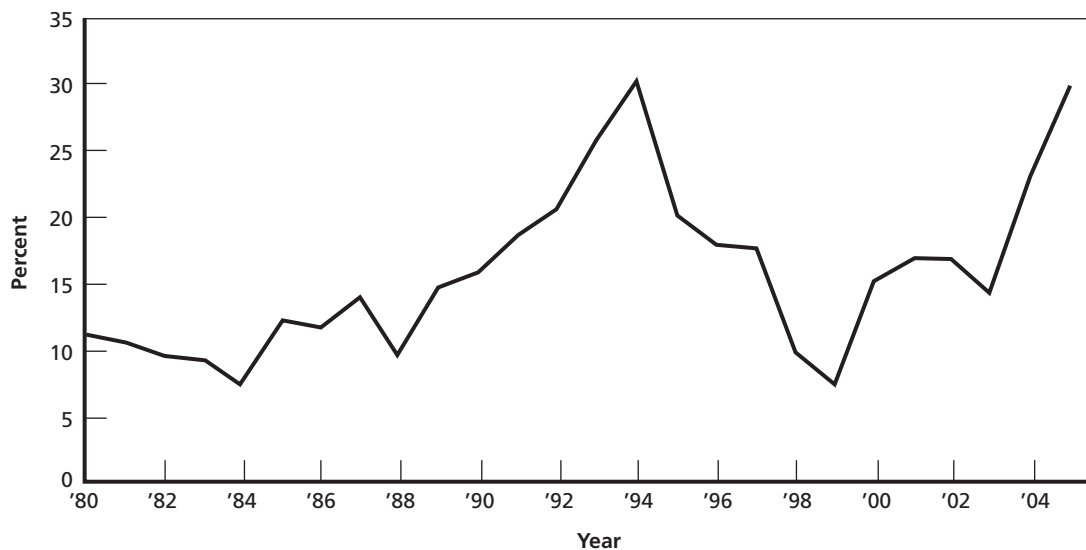
[4] Note that only attacks that occur in Iraq that meet the definitions of terrorism (e.g., not including those perpetrated against military forces) are included in the database.

January 2000 (Switzerland). Two "pyrotechnical rockets" were fired into the International Congress Center in Davos, which was to host the annual World Economic Forum on January 25. Authorities believe that the rockets may have been the work of opponents of the World Trade Organization.

While sophistication varies, the data in the database indicate that terrorist use of armed attack tactics is very regional in nature. More than half the attacks (56 percent) described occurred in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region, and only one other region, South Asia, accounts for more than a tenth of the attacks (12 percent).

Arson

The tactic of arson—intentionally setting fires to cause injury or damage—has been used at a low level by a variety of terrorist groups. Arson as a tactic has been used in 3.7 percent of incidents in the data set, and its use has varied from a low of 0.3 percent in 1994 (when there was only one incident of arson described in the data set) to a high of 8.9 percent in 1999 (a year in which there were arson campaigns in both Turkey and Spain that resulted in approximately 65 percent of the arsons that year) (see Figure 4).

    Use of arson is frequently associated with attacks to destroy property, such as the use of the tactic in recent years by environmental terrorist groups, such as the Earth Liberation Front; however, it has also been used in an effort to produce injuries and fatalities as well.

Figure 4
Arson as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005
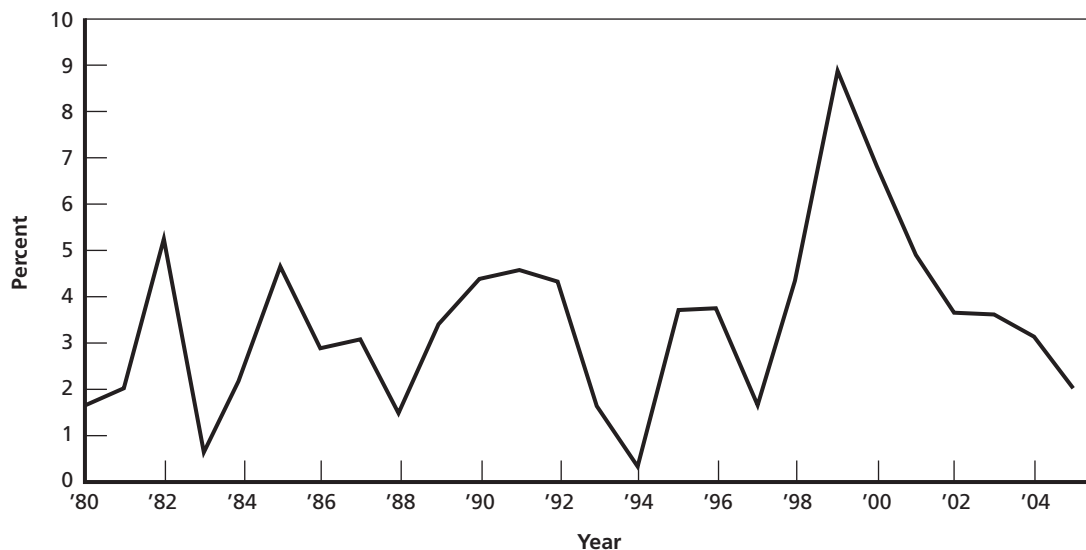
February 1985 (Philippines). A group protesting U.S.-Japanese support of the Marcos government claimed responsibility for a hotel fire in Manila that killed at least 30, including five Americans. Police confirmed arson as the cause of the fire, which virtually destroyed the Regent of Manila luxury hotel. The group sent a communiqué to several news agencies the day after the fire.

November 2005 (United States). A number of SUVs and other luxury cars were set on fire at two car dealerships in Pacific Beach, California. Police blamed members of the Earth Liberation Front for perpetrating that attack and several other arson attacks in the surrounding areas.

For an extremist group, arson can provide a low-technology mode of attack with few logistical or other requirements. Many arson incidents described in the database involve groups penetrating targets (i.e., breaking into buildings) and setting fire to their contents, or the use of basic methods, such as Molotov cocktails, to start fires.

April 1980 (France). A commando group of the extreme right, composed of some 20 young people, set fire to two cars of the Paris-Moscow express train with the help of several Molotov cocktails. The cars were severely damaged. Fortunately, though, the train was nearly empty. The group painted the words "National Youth Front" and "Boycott" on the side of the train.

June 1982 (Federal Republic of Germany). Nine partly U.S.-owned firms in Essen, Hochum, Duesseldorf, and Muenster received letters containing incendiary devices. In the padded envelopes were an alarm clock, a flat battery, and a cigarillo packet filled with a plasticine-like substance, which initial examination showed to be inflammable but not explosive. A message read, "In the next war no one will be innocent. Stop the madness. We wish mister president and his friends a hot reception."

The use of arson has not been limited to completely low-tech approaches. Examples of arson attacks in the database are comparable to bombings, in which timers or other mechanisms are used to delay triggering initiation of a flammable material.

Assassination

Assassination—the murder of key government, business, or social leaders—is a terrorist tactic with an automatically high level of visibility. A wide variety of goals are behind terrorists' motivations to assassinate key individuals. Assassination is often meant to send a message to others in government and in society regarding the possible results of continuing, or not pursuing, a certain path of action. This may include the killing of individuals to prevent them from sharing information or testifying in a particular legal case. Often an assassination is planned to retaliate against the individual for his or her actions with regard to the group's interests.

July 1981 (Guatemala). Members of a right-wing death squad are assumed to have murdered the Rev. Stanley Rother, an American missionary who had lived and worked among the Cakchiquel Indians for 13 years. Some nuns found him in his rectory, shot twice in the head. One month earlier, Rother was quoted in an interview as saying, "I have found that I am on a list of those to be killed." Many members of his village had been murdered previously, suspected of sympathizing with leftist guerrillas. Rother had, on this account, written a letter to authorities describing the army's atrocities against innocent peasants.

May 1991 (India). Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a suicide bomber from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam while he campaigning in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Twelve other people were killed in the explosion as well. His assassination came during the bloodiest election campaign in India's 44-year history as an independent country.

An assassination can also be planned against someone simply to highlight a particular issue by use of a high-profile incident. The target individual(s) may have a tangential relation to the conflict in question. However, the importance of an assassination attack lies in its ability to deter action by an individual or garner the attention of the media and public very rapidly as a result of the profile of the victim.

In recent years, heavily increased security has made the assassination of leaders a more difficult option for terrorist groups. Nonetheless, assassination continues to be a popular tactic against leaders who are less protected (see Figure 5 for assassins as a percentage of all incidents over the past 25 years).

Figure 5
Assassinations as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005
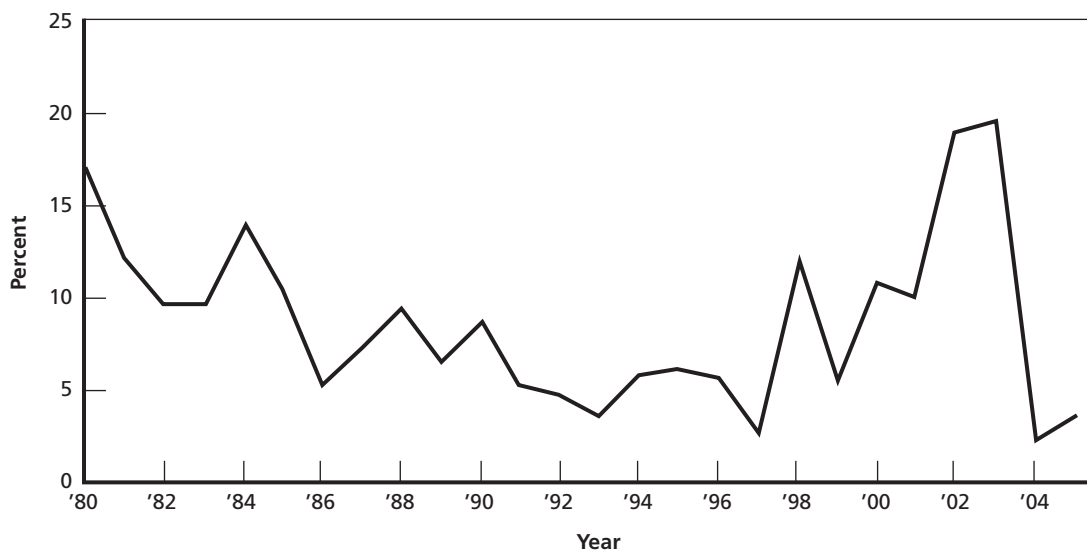
Barricade/Hostage

Barricade/hostage taking involves the seizure of a person or group for the purpose of gaining publicity for a cause, for political demands, or for negotiating the release of group members. In a barricade situation, the whereabouts of the individuals are generally known, since they are barricaded at a certain location. However, in a kidnapping scenario, individuals are usually taken to an unknown location. Seizure of media facilities has also been used often as a tactic to allow the terrorist group to directly publicize its demands. In recent years, this tactic has declined drastically in frequency and, in 2005, accounted for fewer than 0.5 percent of all attacks (see Figure 6).

> **January 1988 (Peru).** Tupac Amaru guerrillas took over the Associated Press office in Lima and forced staff to broadcast a communiqué.

> **September 2004 (Russia).** A group of 30 to 35 armed Chechen separatists, including men and women, many wearing suicide bomber belts, seized a school in the southern Russian town of Beslan, taking children, parents, and teachers hostage in the school gym. At least ten of the hostage-takers appeared to be from Arab countries. The official death toll reached 338, although unofficial figures were higher; at least 727 people were injured. The total number of hostages is believed to have been around 1,200.

Increasingly, hostage taking is conducted with the purpose of drawing attention to the incident to highlight the subsequent killing of the hostages. Several hostages taken in Iraq have fallen into this category, with the killings often videotaped or otherwise publicized over news media and the Internet.

Figure 6
Barricade/Hostage Attacks as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005
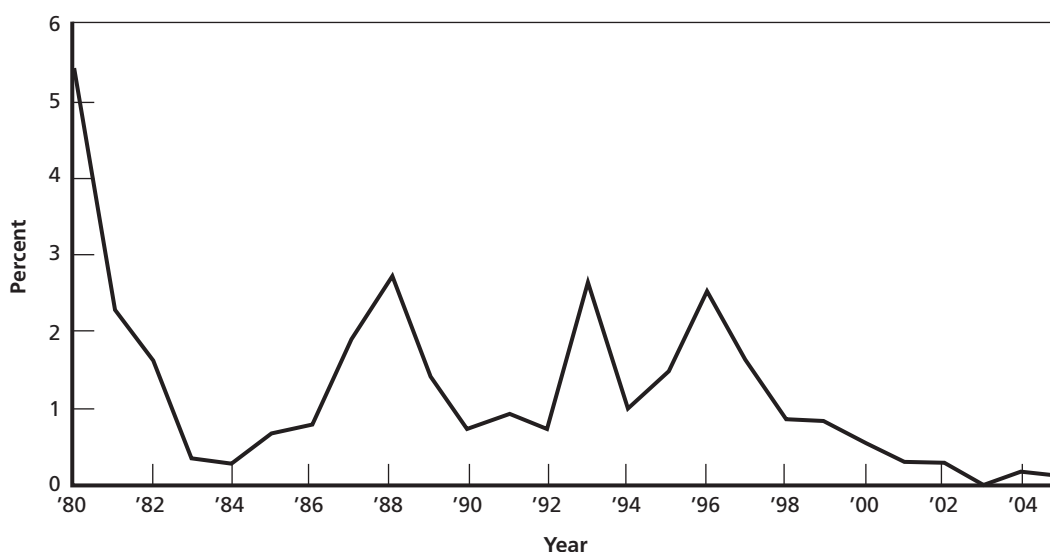
Hijacking

Terrorists may commandeer aircraft, ships, cars, or other vehicles with the purpose of gaining leverage to negotiate political demands or gain safe passage. The hijackers can also take control of a vehicle to take hostages and use them to negotiate their demands.

October 1985 (Egypt). The Italian cruise liner *Achille Lauro*, with 511 passengers onboard, was seized off the Egyptian coast by four hijackers who identified themselves as members of the Palestine Liberation Front. The terrorists had demanded the release of 50 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel, as well as freedom for other Palestinians imprisoned elsewhere. One American passenger was shot in the head and thrown overboard by his captors. The four Palestinians finally surrendered to Egyptian authorities.

March 2003 (Kyrgyzstan). Suspected Uighur separatists intercepted a passenger bus, taking 16 Chinese businessmen and four Kyrgyztanis from Kyrgyzstan's capital to China. The attackers killed all 20 passengers, then burned the bus. Kyrgyzstan police suspect the Uighur group East Turkistan Liberation Organization of being behind the attack.

Incidents such as the 9/11 attacks show that terrorist groups may view the tactic of hijacking differently than before. Rather than seizing a vessel to negotiate demands, followed by the release of the hostages and the vessel, hijackers may intend to use the vessel as a powerful weapon. In using aircraft as bombs to destroy buildings (and the planes), the 9/11 hijackers were able to drastically increase the lethality, media exposure, and psychological effect of the attack.

September 2001 (United States). Hijacked American Airlines Flight 11 from Boston bound for Los Angeles crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Fifteen minutes later, hijacked United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston bound for Los Angeles crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center. Both towers collapsed, killing an estimated 2,823 people and causing hundreds of injuries. The terrorists, trained by al Qaeda, were said to have used small knives and box cutters to overtake the planes.

Increased security measures in the past few decades may have served as a deterrent for hijackings. According to the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, hijackings have declined in use as a tactic since the 1980s and comprised fewer than 0.5 percent of all incidents in 2005 (see Figure 7).

Figure 7
Hijacking as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005
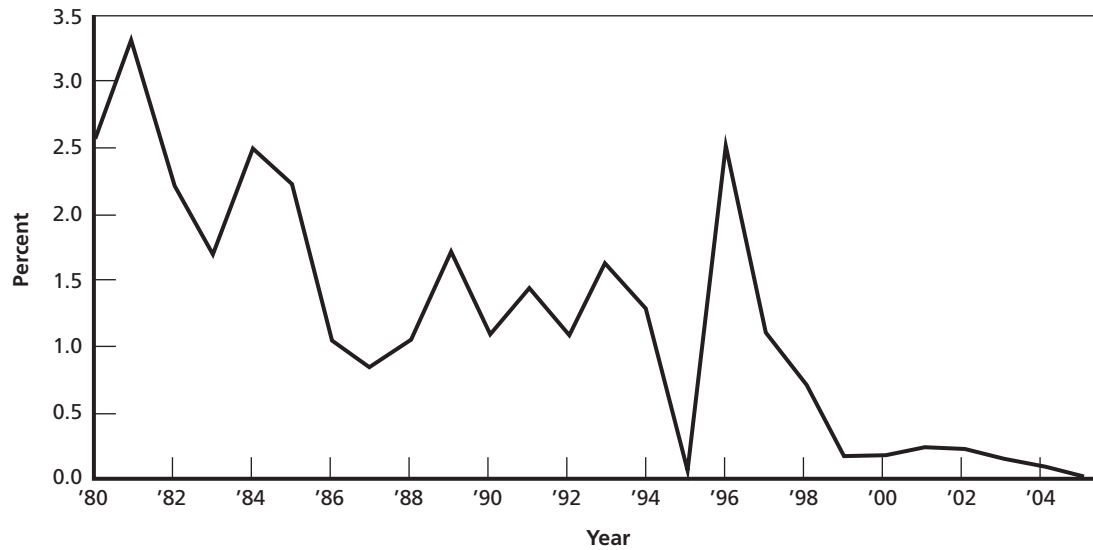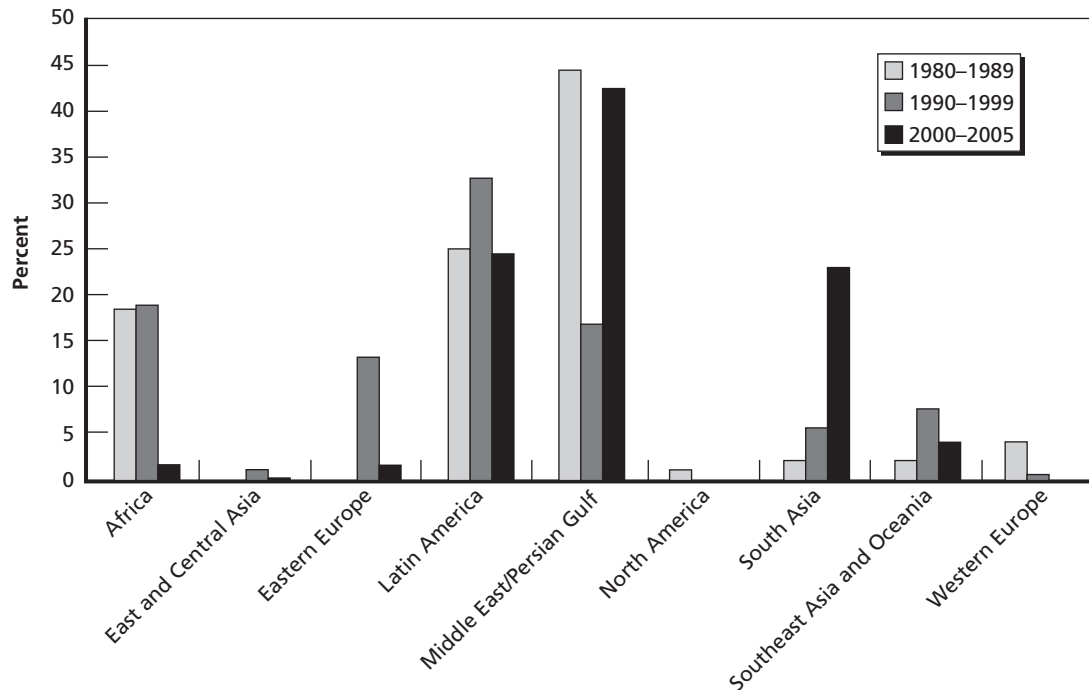

Kidnapping

The kidnapping as an element of terrorist activity has been a prominent part of many groups' activities and in the public's vision of the types of operations terrorist groups undertake. For example, kidnapping operations undertaken by Hezbollah in Lebanon during the 1980s were prominently reported in the media and framed public opinion about the threat of terrorism during that period. Looking across the past 25 years, the prominence of kidnapping as a percentage of the terrorist incidents in the databases has varied, with peaks in the 1980s and later in the mid-1990s. Overall, kidnappings represent approximately 7 percent of the incidents in the database from 1980 to 2005.

The occurrence of kidnapping incidents described in the database has varied over time across regions of the world (see Figure 8). While the Middle East/Persian Gulf region and Latin America have been prominent targets throughout the time frame we are examining, their relative prominence has changed. In the 1980s, the Middle East/Persian Gulf region represented the largest percentage of incidents and, within that region, the events in Lebanon dominated. (During that decade, kidnappings in Lebanon represented approximately 38 percent of such events in the world and a full 83 percent of kidnappings in the Middle East.) In the 1990s, kidnappings in Latin America dominated, driven by events in Colombia (accounting for 25 percent of total kidnappings in the decade and nearly 78 percent of those in Latin America). Since 2000, the peak of the threat distribution has shifted again back to the Middle East, although South Asia has also increased in prominence for kidnapping incidents. The majority of the kidnappings in the Middle East have occurred in Iraq (38 percent of total kidnappings during those years and nearly 90 percent of the kidnappings in the Middle East).

Figure 8
Percentages of Kidnappings in World Regions by Decade, 1980–2005

Terrorists have sought to accomplish a variety of goals through the use of kidnapping operations. "Classical" kidnapping operations seized a prominent individual or citizens of a targeted country and sought to coerce actions by or extort money in exchange for their release.

July 1995 (India). In Kashmir, a German and a Norwegian tourist were kidnapped by the Kashmiri separatist group, Al-Faran, from the same area as American and British tourists earlier in the week. Al-Faran issued a deadline of July 15 for the Indian government to meet Al-Faran's demand to release its leaders imprisoned in India. The decapitated body of the Norwegian hostage was found on August 13, 1995, along with a written threat to kill the remaining hostages.

April 2000 (Philippines). Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) gunmen seized 20 hostages, including many foreign tourists from the famous resort Pulau Sipadan, in Malaysia. Included among the hostages were three Germans, two Japanese, two Finns, two South Africans, a Lebanese woman, two Filipinos, and some hotel staff workers. According to some reports, the gunmen had demanded that a $2.6 million ransom be paid for the hostages, a request that was relayed to one of the relatives of the hostages. ASG members were also demanding the protection of ancestral fishing grounds as part of their demands for the release of the hostages.

Beyond seeking specific actions or rewards, kidnapping is also used as a way of garnering media and public attention through the "personalized" threat made against the kidnapped individual. All these motives for kidnapping operations have been observed in recent years in Iraq, where kidnappings have been used to pressure nations and organizations participating in activities there; to extort money; and, particularly through the use of Internet-disseminated execution videos, to garner public attention to a group and to directly inspire broader terror (see Figure 5 for kidnappings as a percentage of all incidents over the past 25 years).

September 2004 (Iraq). Jordanian Hisham Talab el-Aza, an administrator for Starlite, a transport company that does work for the U.S. military, was kidnapped on September 30. A video made public October 2 shows el-Aza surrounded by militants demanding that Starlite leave Iraq. The company announced that it would shut down its operation in Iraq. el-Aza's wife said that the kidnappers demanded $100,000 ransom. On October 14, el-Aza was released for $50,000 ransom.

January 2005 (Iraq). Two Iraqis who are said to have set up an Internet system in northern Iraq to help in the January 30 elections were kidnapped. On January 19, the Ansar al-Sunnah Army released a video showing the execution of the two men. The two men were identified as Mohammed Abdullah and Ali Ghrain. On a video released by militants, the two men claimed to work for a U.S. company called Proactive.

Figure 9
Kidnappings as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005
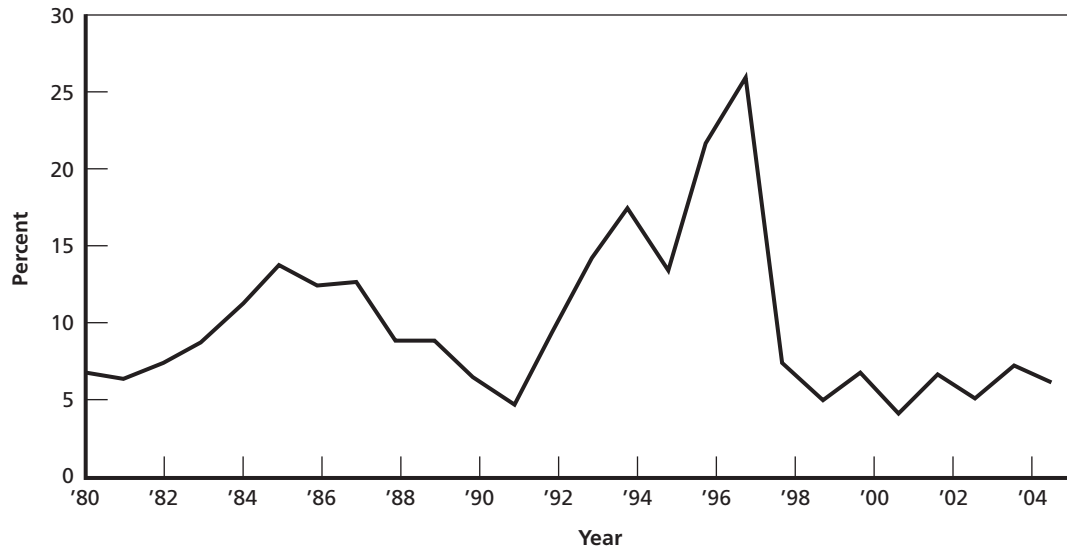
Suicide Terrorism

Suicide terrorism is a subcategory in the database that describes individuals who carry explosives or other lethal materials with the intent to kill themselves at the time of destruction of their target, or any incident wherein the attacker intends to be killed during the operation. This tactic was not popularly used prior to the early 1980s, but it received widespread media attention from the 1983 suicide car bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon. Subsequently, several terrorist groups adopted the tactic.[5] Suicide bombings have been an effective tactic for assassinations, for attacks on military targets, and for creating mass casualties and terror. In addition, the dedication of the individuals willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of the group lends to the credibility and legitimacy of the group in the eyes of other members and possible recruits.[6] As a result, suicide bombings have become increasingly popular with terrorist groups during the 1990s and early 2000s. The MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base indicates a steep spike in the number of suicide incidents in recent years, with the Iraq war contributing to much of this increase (see Figure 10).

> **April 1994 (Israel).** A Hamas suicide bomber blew up a bus in Afula in Northern Israel. The young West Bank resident crashed his car, which carried about 385 pounds of nails and explosives, into the bus. Eight people were killed, including four teenage boys. Most of the injured were high school students. The bombing was in reprisal for the Hebron massacre.

Figure 10
Suicide Attacks as a Percentage of All Database Incidents, 1980–2005

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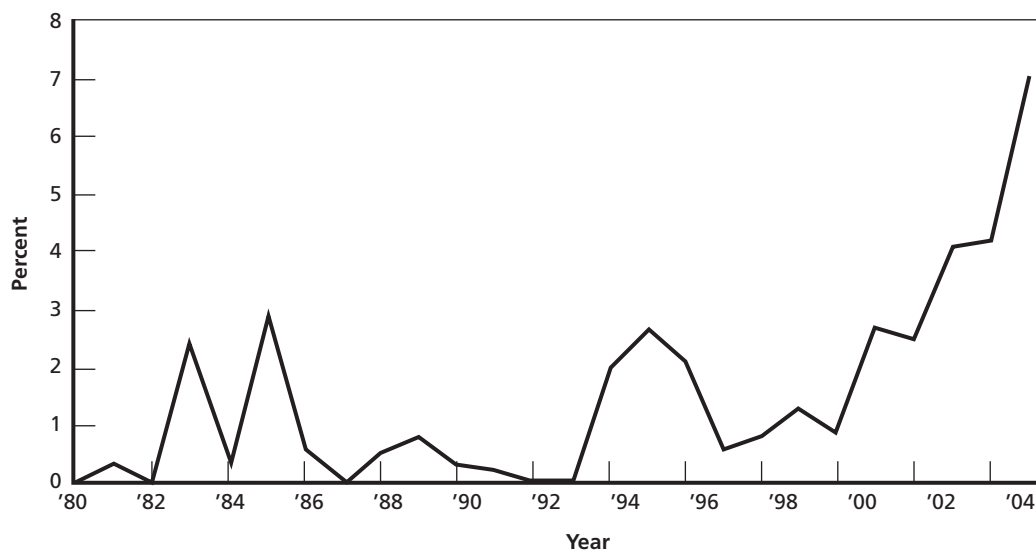
[5] Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, New York: Random House, 2005.

[6] Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 76.

July 2005 (United Kingdom). In the most violent day in London history since World War II, more than 50 people were killed and about 700 were injured in four suicide bomb blasts. Three of the bombers struck the London underground train system, and the fourth detonated on a double-decker bus. The three train blasts occurred within moments of each other, and the bus bombing happened about an hour after the first three.

Conclusions

Terrorists must select their tactics carefully, considering risks to the group, impact on the target, media exposure, and the effect on recruitment. With these considerations in mind, terrorist groups have clearly concluded that the tactic of bombing a target is the most effective for their purposes. Bombings account for more than 50 percent of the terrorist attacks in the MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base from 1980 to 2005. Nonetheless, assassinations and barricades/hostage situations remain tactics used for specific purposes by terrorist groups and may be used to target certain individuals more effectively. In addition, armed attacks remain common, particularly as a result of the ease with which groups can acquire weapons to conduct attacks. The importance of media exposure to terrorist groups has increased the popularity of certain tactics as well. Kidnapping and suicide bombings have become more attractive over time to groups operating in Iraq, as both garner high media exposure and therefore have a positive effect on group morale and recruitment.

The various tactics used by groups likely will continue to shift. As the technology available to terrorist groups advances, and as security countermeasures change the risks involved in attacking certain targets, groups will adjust their strategies. Tracking the tactics used by these groups, and analyzing their shifts, can provide the information necessary for understanding the direction of future attacks.

Maritime Terrorism in the Contemporary Era: Threat and Potential Future Contingencies

Peter Chalk

Introduction

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European communist bloc in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was confidently assumed that the international system was on the threshold of an era of unprecedented peace and stability. Politicians, academics, and diplomats alike increasingly began to forecast the imminent establishment of a new world order that would be managed by liberal democratic institutions and that would develop within the context of an integrated global economy based on the principles of the free market.[1] As this unprecedented interstate structure emerged and took root, so it was assumed that destabilizing threats to national and international security would decline commensurately.

However, the initial euphoria that was evoked by the end of the Cold War has been systematically replaced by a growing sense of understanding that global stability has not been achieved and has, in fact, been decisively undermined by transnational security challenges, or so-called gray-area phenomena. These threats, which cannot be readily defeated by the traditional defenses that states have erected to protect both their territories and populaces, bear off the remarkable fluidity that currently characterizes international politics—a setting in which it is no longer exactly apparent who can do what, to whom, and with what means. Moreover, it has become increasingly apparent that in the contemporary era, violence and the readiness to inflict death is being used by the weak not so much as a means of expressing identity but more intrinsically as a way of creating it.[2]

Stated more directly, the geopolitical landscape that presently confronts the global community lacks the relative stability of the linear Cold War division between East and West. Indeed, few of today's dangers have the character of overt military aggression stemming from a clearly defined sovereign source. By contrast, security, conflict, and general threat definition have become far more opaque and diffuse in nature, taking the form of amorphous challenges whose source is internal rather than external to the political order that the concept of "national interest" has conventionally represented.[3]

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[1] See, for example, International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook*, Washington, D.C., 1991, pp. 26–27.

[2] "Terrorism and the Warfare of the Weak," *The Guardian* (London), October 27, 1993.

[3] Peter Chalk, *Non-Military Security and Global Order: The Impact of Extremism, Violence and Chaos on National and International Security*, London: Macmillan, 2000, pp. 1–2.

The maritime realm is particularly "conducive" to these types of threat contingencies given its vast and largely unregulated, opaque nature. Covering 139,768,200 square miles,[4] most of this environment takes the form of high seas that lie beyond the strict jurisdiction of any one state—meaning that they are, by definition, anarchic. These "over-the-horizon" oceans are fringed and linked by a complex lattice of territorial waters, estuaries, and riverine systems, which in many cases are poorly monitored and in terms of internationally recognized jurisprudence exist as entirely distinct and independent entities.[5] Combined, these various traits and practices have served to ingrain the planet's aquatic expanse with the type of unpredictable and lawless qualities that Thomas Hobbes once famously wrote ensured life as "brutish, nasty and short."[6]

One particular threat that academics, intelligence analysts, law enforcement officials, and politicians have begun to take increasingly serious note of during the past several years is the exploitation of the maritime realm to simultaneously facilitate terrorist logistical and operational designs. Indeed, commentators in various countries now appear to believe that the next major strike on Western interests is as likely to emanate from a non-territorial theater as a land-based one. This article assesses the potential threat of maritime terrorism. It starts by first discussing the principal factors underscoring the current concern with maritime extremism and the principal reasons terrorist groups might seek to undertake operations in a non-terrestrial environment. The article then goes on to consider the types of strike that might manifest and the organizations that represent the most serious challenge in terms of contemporary maritime attack capabilities. It finishes by briefly examining some of the principal U.S.-led international measures that have been enacted to counter terrorism at sea and the extent to which these initiatives lay the groundwork for a concerted regime of maritime security.

For the purposes of analysis, this article adopts the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) working group's definition of maritime terrorism. Although relatively broad, this conception captures the essential qualities of the phenomenon in question: "Maritime terrorism refers to the undertaking of terrorist acts and activities (1) within the maritime environment, (2) using or against vessels or fixed platforms at sea or in port, or against any one of their passengers or personnel, (3) against coastal facilities or settlements, including tourist resorts, port areas and port towns or cities."[7]

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[4] This equates to some 2.42 times the planet's terrestrial surface area.

[5] Rupert Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," in Joshua Ho and Catherine Zara Raymond, eds., *The Best of Times, the Worst of Times: Maritime Security in the Asia-Pacific*, Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2005, p. 157.

[6] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London: Fontana, 1969, p. 143.

[7] See S. Quentin, "Shipping Activities: Targets of Maritime Terrorism," *MIRMAL*, No. 2, January 20, 2003, online at http://www.derechomaritimo.info/pagina/mater.htm (as of May 2005).

Factors Underscoring the Contemporary Perceived Threat of Maritime Terrorism

Historically, the world's oceans have not been a major locus of terrorist activity. Indeed, according to the RAND Terrorism Chronology Database and the RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incident Database, seaborne strikes have constituted only 2 percent of all international incidents over the last 30 years. To be sure, this relative paucity partly stems from the fact that many organizations have either not been located near to coastal regions or possessed the necessary means to extend their physical reach beyond purely local theaters. However, there are also several problems associated with carrying out waterborne strikes that have, at least historically, worked to offset some of the tactical advantages outlined above. Most intrinsically, operating at sea requires terrorists to have mariner skills, access to appropriate assault and transport vehicles, the ability to mount and sustain operations from a non–land-based environment, and certain specialist capabilities (e.g., surface and underwater demolition techniques).[8] Limited resources have traditionally precluded such options being available to most groups.

Very much related to this is the inherently conservative nature of terrorists in terms of their chosen attack modalities. Precisely because groups are constrained by ceilings in operational finance and skill sets, most have deliberately chosen to follow the course of least resistance—adhering to tried and tested methods that are known to work, which offer a reasonably high chance of success and whose consequences can be relatively easily predicted. Stated more directly, in a world of finite human and material assets, the costs and unpredictability associated with expanding to the maritime realm have typically trumped any potential benefits that might be garnered from initiating such a change in operational direction.

A further consideration has to do with the nature of maritime targets themselves, which because they are out of sight are generally out of mind (something that is particularly true of commercial vessels). Attacking a ship is, thus, less likely to elicit the same publicity—either in scope or immediacy—as striking land-based venues, which, because they are fixed and typically located near some urban conglomeration, are far more media accessible.[9] This consideration is important because terrorism, at its root, is a tactic that can only be effective if it is able to *visibly* demonstrate its salience and relevance through the so-called propaganda of the deed.[10] Rather, like the philosopher's tree falling silently in the forest, if no one observes the event, will anyone care?

Despite these considerations, the perceived threat of maritime terrorism has risen markedly over the past several years and is now taking on a singular importance in terms of national

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[8] Author interviews, Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies analysts, Singapore, September 2005. See also Paul Wilkinson, "Terrorism and the Maritime Environment," and Brian Jenkins, Bonnie Cordes, Karen Gardela, and Gerladine Petty, "A Chronology of Terrorist Attacks and Other Criminal Actions Against Maritime Targets," both in Eric Ellen, ed., *Violence at Sea*, Paris: International Chamber of Commerce, 1986.

[9] Wilkinson, "Terrorism and the Maritime Environment," p. 34; Jenkins et al., "A Chronology of Terrorist Attacks and Other Criminal Actions Against Maritime Targets," p. 65.

[10] For a discussion on this aspect of the terrorist phenomenon, see Peter Chalk, *West European Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: The Evolving Dynamic*, London: Macmillan, 1996, ch. 1.

and international counterterrorism planning.[11] This is particularly true of the United States, which has been at the forefront of attempts to strengthen the global regime of maritime security following the attacks of September 11, 2001. The reasons for this heightened level of apprehension are complex and multifaceted but generally pertain to one or more of the following issues of concern.

First, the international community appears to have become progressively more cognizant of the general vulnerability of global shipping as a result of the largely unpoliced nature of the high seas, the fact that many littoral governments lack the resources—and, in certain cases, the willingness—to enact serious programs of coastal surveillance, and the sheer esoteric character that typifies much of the oceanic environment. As Rupert Herbert-Burns of Lloyd's of London observes:

> The combination of the enormous scope, variety and "room for manoeuvre" offered by the physical and geographical realities of the [earth's] maritime environment ... presents a sobering and uncomfortable reality.... [W]hat compounds this reality further is that the commercial milieu that simultaneously affords ... the ability to deploy, finance operations, tactical concealment, logistical fluidity and wealth of targets of opportunity—the commercial maritime industry—is itself numerically vast, complex, deliberately opaque and in a perpetual state of flux.[12]

Exacerbating international concern is the increased dependence of seaborne commercial traffic—which, itself, has risen markedly over the past five to ten years[13]—to pass through narrow and congested maritime choke points where, owing to forced restrictions on speed and maneuverability, vessels remain highly vulnerable to offensive interception.[14] Such misgivings have been especially palpable in light of moves by a growing number of shipping companies to

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[11] Author interviews, U.S. government and British defense officials, Singapore and London, September 2005. See also John Frittelli, *Port and Maritime Security: Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL31733, December 30, 2004, pp. 1–3; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Maritime Security: New Structures Have Improved Information Sharing, but Security Clearance Processing Requires Further Attention*, Washington, D.C., GAO-05-394, April 2005, pp. 1, 7.

[12] Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," p. 158.

[13] Roughly 80 percent of global trade currently moves by sea; more than 6 million containers enter U.S. ports every year, accounting for roughly half the world's present inventory (12 million containers are estimated to be moving on the world's oceans at any given point in time). See Joshua Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," *The Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1, March 2004, p. 49, and "Maritime Security Measures to Amplify Cost for Shipping," *Transport Security World*, July 29, 2003.

[14] Key choke points of concern include the Malacca Straits, the Strait of Bab el-Mandab, the Hormuz Straits, the Bosphorus Straits, the Straits of Dardanelles, the Dover Straits, the Gibraltar Straits, the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, and the Keele Canal. All these waterways require ships to significantly reduce their speed to ensure safe passage (in the Bosphorus Straits, for instance, at least six accidents occur every 1 million transit miles); are vital to global commercial, passenger, or military shipping; and constitute viable locations from which to launch maritime attacks using contiguous land-based platforms. Author interviews, government officials, intelligence analysts, and maritime security experts, Singapore, London, and Amsterdam, September 2005. See also Ali Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism: A New Challenge for NATO," *Energy Security*, January 24, 2005, online at http://www.iags.org/n0124051.htm (as of May 2005).

replace full staffing complements with "skeleton" crews—sometimes numbering no more than half a dozen personnel—as a cost-cutting device. Although such cuts have helped to lower overhead operating costs, they have also made gaining control of boats that much easier.

Second, many of the offsetting factors that have historically served to detract from the overall attractiveness of the maritime realm as a theater for terrorist activity no longer hold salience. The growth of international media and satellite communications has meant that it is now far more probable that attacks at sea will elicit the necessary exposure and publicity that terrorists crave. As one British naval expert put it: "Should a cruise ship be bombed—even in the middle of vast oceans—one can expect that news teams would be on the scene covering the story, if not within minutes, certainly within hours."[15] Even if this were not the case, the advent of modern video technology has allowed terrorists to record and transmit their messages of death and destruction in apparent real time, as has been so vividly demonstrated, for example, since 2003 with the televised images of hostage beheadings in Iraq.

Equally, the growth of offshore industries combined with the popularity of maritime sports has served to increase the ease by which groups can gain basic skills and equipment for seaborne attacks.[16] In the southern Philippines, for instance, alleged members of Jemaah Islamiya (JI) are thought to have enrolled in scuba courses run by commercial resort diving companies; intelligence and law enforcement officials believe that these course have been undertaken specifically to facilitate attacks on underwater gas and oil pipelines off the coast of Mindanao.[17]

Third, not only are international terrorists exhibiting greater tactical sophistication and innovation than in the past—perhaps best exemplified by the 9/11 attacks[18]—but also many groups appear to be broadening their militant agendas to include specific experimentation with seaborne modalities. Indeed, as Table 1 highlights, no fewer than five major terrorist events have taken place since 2000. The main fear is that these incidents may be indicative of a future trend in militant Islamist extremism that increasingly views the maritime realm as both a viable and conducive theater of activity.[19]

Fourth, there have been fears that terrorists will be able to overcome existing shortcomings in seaborne attack capabilities by contracting out to pirate syndicates. Most concern in this

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[15] Comment made during the Senior Counter-Terrorism Course, Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, September 1, 2005.

[16] See, for instance, Jenkins et al., "A Chronology of Terrorist Attacks and Other Criminal Actions Against Maritime Targets," p. 67.

[17] Author interviews, Philippine and American intelligence and law enforcement personnel, Manila, May 2005, and Singapore, September 2005. What appears to have particularly attracted the attention of Philippine and American security personnel is that the alleged JI members actively sought training in deep-sea diving but exhibited little or no interest in decompression techniques.

[18] The sophistication and innovation of 9/11 was reflected in several respects: the coordination of multiple aircraft hijackings; long-term planning and surveillance on the part of the perpetrators—much of which was undertaken in enemy territory; the institution of an effective logistics support infrastructure that literally spanned the globe; and the ability to mount simultaneous, mass-casualty attacks using unconventional weapons.

[19] Author interview, Control Risks Group analysts, London, September 2005. See Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," pp. 50–51.

regard has focused on the possible employment of maritime crime groups to hijack and deliver major oceangoing vessels (e.g., oil tankers, container ships, and liquefied natural gas [LNG] carriers) that are then either scuttled to block critical sea-lanes of communication (SLOCs) or detonated to cause a major explosion at a target port of opportunity. To be sure, the possible convergence between piracy and terrorism remains highly debatable given the differing and, in many ways, conflicting objectives of the respective perpetrators. Indeed, while sea-based criminal gangs and syndicates remain directly dependent on a thriving and active global shipping industry to sustain their activities, extremists associated with the contemporary international jihadist network are more concerned with disrupting maritime trade as part of their self-defined economic war against the West.[20] That said, the idea of an emergent nexus developing between piracy and terrorism is a contingency that has been highlighted in several maritime threat assessments over the past five years and is clearly one that security, intelligence, and maritime officials are not prepared to dismiss out of hand.[21] A case in point is the Lloyd's Joint War Committee (JWC) 2005 designation of the Malacca Straits as an "area of enhanced [terrorism] risk."[22] This determination resulted from a risk-vulnerability study carried out by the UK-based Aegis group, which specifically considered anticipated future links between regional Islamist militants and maritime criminals in its analysis.[23]

Finally, the 2003 hijacking of the *Dewi Madrim*, an Indonesian chemical tanker, has been taken as evidence that terrorists are actively preparing to execute a high-profile assault at sea. While the exact circumstances surrounding the incident are disputed, it is known that the boarding party (the members of which have not been identified) steered the ship for nearly an hour before leaving with equipment and technical documents. A number of commentators believe that the seizure was, in fact, a training exercise designed to hone the navigation and sailing skills of terrorists seeking to ram an oceangoing vessel either into a very large crude carrier or an offshore petrochemical facility.[24]

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[20] The incompatibility of pirate and terrorist objectives was repeatedly expressed to the author during interviews with maritime security officials conducted in Singapore, London, and Amsterdam in September 2005.

[21] Frittelli, *Port and Maritime Security*, p. 8; Catherine Zara Raymond, "Maritime Terrorism—A Risk Assessment: The Australian Example," in Ho and Raymond, *The Best of Times, the Worst of Times*, p. 197; Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," p. 51; "ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations], EU Experts Discuss Fighting Terrorism at Sea," Associated Press, February 25, 2002; "The Maritime Threat from al-Qaeda," *The Financial Times* (UK), October 20, 2003

[22] Notably, while the Malacca Straits were included on the Lloyd's list of designated regions and countries, Syria, Iran, Sri Lanka, and Yemen were all removed. Each designation is reviewed by the JWC on a quarterly basis. Author interview, Lloyd's analysts, London, September 2005.

[23] Author interviews, Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies analysts, and analysts with Raytheon International (ASEAN) and Glenn Defense Marine (Asia) Singapore, September 2005. The designation of the Malacca Straits as an "area of enhanced risk" allows maritime insurance companies to levy a "war surcharge" on ships transiting the waterway up to 0.01 percent of the total value of their cargo; this is over and above the 0.05 percent baseline premium that is routinely imposed on seaborne freight. At the time of this writing, no shipping association had actually been required to make the additional payment.

[24] Author interviews, U.S. embassy officials, Singapore, and Lloyd's analysts, London, September 2005. See also Bronson Percival, *Indonesia and the United States: Shared Interests in Maritime Security*, Washington, D.C.: United States–Indonesia Society, June 2005, p. 10, and Rommel Banlaoi, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 58,

Terrorist Rationales for Operation and Attacking at Sea

There are a number of reasons contemporary terrorists might want to extend operational mandates to the maritime environment. On one level, groups may see utility in instituting sea-based activities as a means for overcoming extant security measures on land, the comprehensiveness of which has dramatically escalated over the past several years. Indeed, while heightened internally based immigration and customs arrangements and general target hardening have emerged as "staples" of counterterrorism in many countries since 9/11, the overall latitude of action on the world's oceans and coastal waters remains prevalent, offering extremists the opportunity to move, hide, and strike in a manner not possible in a terrestrial theater.[25] This process of threat displacement has arguably been further encouraged by international pressure on littoral states to invest in territorially bounded homeland security initiatives. In the case of governments that have consistently struggled to enact effective systems of coastal surveillance, such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Turkey, Eritrea, and Kenya, this has further reduced already-limited resources for offshore surveillance.[26] The resultant void would, conceivably, be of particular interest to terrorist groups, which have traditionally acted very much like bodies of flowing water—always choosing the course of least resistance.

Beyond this consideration, maritime attacks provide an alternative means for causing mass economic destabilization, eliciting a large number of casualties, and possibly triggering a major environmental catastrophe. Today, roughly 80 percent of global freight moves by sea; much of it takes the form of cargo that is transshipped on the basis of a "just-enough, just-in-time" inventory. Disrupting the mechanics of this highly intensive and efficient trading system has the potential to trigger vast and cascading fiscal effects, particularly if the operations of a major commercial port were severely curtailed.[27] As Michael Richardson explains: "The global economy is built on integrated supply chains that feed components and other materials to users just before they are required and just in the right amounts. That way, inventory costs are kept low. If the supply chains are disrupted, it will have repercussions around the world, profoundly affecting business confidence."[28]

The closure of all 29 seaports along the U.S. west coast in October 2002 provides an indication of the damage that could occur. The 14-day lockdown, which was caused by a labor dispute between dockworkers and management, disrupted more than 200 ships carrying 300,000 containers. The direct cost to the American economy of cargo disruptions alone has

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No. 4, Autumn 2005, p. 65. It should be noted that just as many commentators vigorously reject these claims, arguing that the hijacking of the Dewi Madrim was a simple case of piracy that has been repeatedly misrepresented in the media. This is the official line of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) in London.

[25] Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," p. 157.

[26] Author interview, intelligence officials and maritime security analysts, Singapore and London, September 2005.

[27] Author interviews, Control Risks Group and Lloyd's analysts, London and Amsterdam, September 2005. See also Raymond, "Maritime Terrorism," p. 179.

[28] Michael Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade: Maritime-Related Terrorism in an Age of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2004, p. 7.

been estimated at $467 million, while the subsequent effort of clear freight backlogs is thought to have removed between 0.4 and 1.1 percent of nominal gross domestic product from prominent Asian exporters, including Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore.[29]

Equally significant economic externalities could potentially be generated by attacking petroleum tankers and offshore energy facilities. The suicide attack against the MV *Limburg* in October 2002 represents a pertinent case in point. Although the incident resulted in only three deaths (two of them were the bombers), it directly contributed to a short-term collapse of international shipping business in the Gulf; led to a $0.48-per-barrel hike in the price of Brent crude oil; and, as a result of the tripling of war-risk premiums levied on ships calling at Aden, caused the Yemeni economy to lose an estimated $3.8 million a month in port revenues.[30]

These considerations have particular pertinence to al Qaeda, not least because Osama bin Laden has explicitly emphasized that attacking key pillars of the Western commercial and trading system is integral to his self-defined war on the United States and its major allies. Repeated statements attributed to the Saudi renegade and his major cohorts post-9/11 have denigrated America as a paper tiger on the verge of financial collapse, with many further urging young Muslims to wage their jihad against Washington by focusing on targets that are liable to have a disruptive economic effect, including shipping.[31] This was perhaps best exemplified in an al Qaeda communiqué that was issued following the bombing of the MV *Limburg*:

> By exploding the oil tanker in Yemen, the holy warriors hit the umbilical cord and lifeline of the crusader community, reminding the enemy of the heavy cost of blood and the gravity of losses they will pay as a price for their continued aggression on our community and looting of our wealth.[32]

In terms of human casualties, ships such as passenger ferries and cruise liners represent viable venues for executing large-scale civilian-centric strikes. Like commercial airliners, these vessels are viewed as high-prestige, symbolic targets whose destruction is likely to elicit considerable media attention. Unlike airlines, however, they are generally characterized by less stringent predeparture security (especially in the case of ferries); are more vulnerable to postdeparture interception (not least because they sail to precise schedules and itineraries that are widely

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[29] Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade*, p. 66; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Report on Security in Maritime Transport: Risk Factors and Economic Impact*, Paris, July 2003, pp. 17–18; Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Global Issues Brief on Economic Costs of Terrorism*, Canberra: Economic Analytical Unit, April 7, 2003.

[30] See Ben Sheppard, "Maritime Security Measures," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, March 2003, p. 55; Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade*, p. 70; Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," p. 165; Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, Robert T. Reville, and Anna-Britt Kasupski, *Trends in Terrorism: Threats to the United States and the Future of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-393-CTRMP, 2005, p. 22, fn. 20–21.

[31] See, for instance, Tanner Campbell and Rohan Gunaratna, "Maritime Terrorism, Piracy and Crime," in Rohan Gunaratna, ed., *Terrorism in the Asia Pacific*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003, pp. 73–74, and Paul Eedle, "Terrorism.com," *The Guardian* (London), July 17, 2002.

[32] Alleged bin Laden statement cited in Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," p. 165. See also Brian Whitaker, "Tanker Blast Was Work of Terrorists," *The Guardian* (London), October 17, 2002.

available); and, most importantly, typically cater for a far larger passenger load. The average capacity of a cross-channel vehicular "ro-ro"[33] operating out of Dover in the United Kingdom, for instance, is about 2,000 passengers, while the Queen Mary can cater for as many as 5,000 paying customers and crew.[34] In short, ferries and cruise ships are relatively easy to hit (at least in comparison with planes) in a manner that is likely to elicit a significant body count. Moreover, in the case of the latter, the victims will almost certainly be affluent Westerners from a Judeo-Christian background—that is, those who are the primary targets of the contemporary international jihadist ideological agenda.[35]

On the environmental front, a decisive terrorist strike could cause extensive damage. Because heavy fuel oil will not disperse or easily emulsify when treated with detergents, a major spill from a stricken petroleum tanker would devastate the marine environment in the immediate vicinity of the release. Just as seriously, if left to drift on prevailing currents, the slick could severely degrade elongated tracts of fertile coastline—creating a highly costly and potentially long-term ecological disaster.[36] For a number of developing states in Africa and Asia that rely heavily on fish for both indigenous consumption and overseas export earnings, such effects could realistically feed into wider socioeconomic instability, which if not quickly contained could fundamentally undermine latent perceptions of governing legitimacy. Although deliberately causing environmental harm has yet to emerge as a mainstream terrorist tactic, it is certainly one that analysts have postulated as a potential motivator for future acts of extremism, particularly as militants seek to extend the focus of their aggression toward venues that have historically not factored significantly in national or international security planning.[37]

Terrorism Scenarios

Drawing on the various considerations outlined above and looking to predict how terrorists may actually seek to exploit the maritime realm for future operational purposes, intelligence analysts and security experts have highlighted several scenarios in their analytical forecasting. At least seven possibilities are routinely postulated:

- Use of a commercial container ship to smuggle chemical, biological, or radiological (CBR) materials for an unconventional attack carried out on land or at a major commercial port such as Rotterdam, Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, New York, or Los Angeles

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[33] A *ro-ro* is the colloquial name given to a vehicular ferry that loads and unloads cars and trucks through a roll-on, roll-off process.

[34] Author interviews, IMB and UK Customs and Excise (Intelligence Branch), London, September 2005. In the month of June 2005 alone, Dover catered to 1.3 million passengers; 259,000 cars; 180,000 freight vehicles; and 12,000 coaches.

[35] Author interview, former British defense intelligence official, London, September 2005.

[36] Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade*, p. 42.

[37] See, for instance, Michael J. Penders and William L. Thomas, "Ecoterror: Rethinking Environmental Security After September 11," *National Resources & Environment*, Winter 2002, pp. 159–207, online at http://abanet.org/environ/pubs/nre/specissue/pendersthomas.pdf (as of May 2006).

- Use of a "trojan horse," such as a fishing trawler, resupply ship, tug, or similar innocuous-looking vessel, to transport weapons and other battle-related materiel
- Hijacking of a vessel as a fund-raising exercise to support a campaign of political violence directed toward ethnic, ideological, religious, or separatist designs
- Scuttling of a ship in a narrow SLOC to block or disrupt maritime traffic
- Hijacking of an LNG carrier that is then detonated as a floating bomb or used as a collision weapon
- Use of a small, high-speed boat to attack an oil tanker or offshore energy platform to affect international petroleum prices or cause major pollution
- Directly targeting a cruise liner or passenger ferry to cause mass casualties by contaminating the ship's food supply, detonating an onboard or submersible improvised explosive device (IED), or, again, by ramming the vessel with a fast approach, small attack craft.[38]

Of the contingencies noted above, it is those involving container ships, small boats, and passenger vessels that warrant the most concern. It would be extremely difficult to block a SLOC for an extended period of time—certainly grounding one ship would be insufficient—and there are only a few choke points that are truly non-substitutable in terms of maritime trade.[39] Equally, petroleum and LNG carriers are constructed with built-in safety measures that are specifically designed to mitigate the chance of a critical breach or accidental explosion—such as double-lined hulls and reinforced storage tanks, which when not at capacity are also filled with noncombustible gases—and while crude oil and liquefied gas may be extremely flammable, they are not explosive. Moreover, appropriately rigging these vessels for detonation requires both time and a safe location to operate, neither of which are likely to be readily available to a perpetrating group.[40]

By contrast, the use of small boats for attack or logistical purposes and for strikes either using or directed against commercial and passenger vessels are generally viewed as not only realistic but also within the capability requirements of contemporary terrorists. Three main reasons account for this assessment. First, as years of drug trafficking bear witness to, it is relatively easy to compromise the integrity of the container shipping network or employ ocean-based craft for smuggling purposes. Second, the consequences of non-detection of CBR materials being transported into a target country could be enormous, in terms of both mass destruction

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[38] Author interviews, intelligence officials and maritime security analysts, London, Amsterdam, and Singapore, September 2005. See also Campbell and Gunaratna, "Maritime Terrorism, Piracy and Crime," pp. 70–89; Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," pp. 163–169; Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," pp. 63–64; and Percival, *Indonesia and the United States*, pp. 10–13.

[39] For instance, blocking the Malacca Straits, which is often singled out as particularly vulnerable to attacks of this sort given the volume of maritime traffic that passes through the waterway, would necessitate no more than an extra three days of "steaming" on the part of freight carriers. While this may well raise shipping costs—and then only temporarily—it would not represent a critical delay for most cargo (with the possible exception of perishable goods). Author interview, Lloyd's analysts, London, September 2005.

[40] Author interviews, Singapore government officials and former British defense intelligence official, Singapore and London, September 2005.

and large-scale economic disruption. Third, small-boat attacks, fund-raising hijackings, and strikes on passenger vessels have already occurred, with the latter constituting the most frequent occurrence of terrorism in the maritime realm.

Contemporary Maritime-Capable Terrorist Groups

Several groups have recognized the inherent advantages of operating at sea and moved to conspicuously integrate waterborne modalities into their overall logistical and attack mandates. Among the better-known of these organizations have been:

- The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), which has attacked both passenger ferries and private yachts as well as conspicuously exploited commercial shipping to avail the resupply of weaponry and other war-related materiel originating from the Middle East.[41]
- Chechen rebels, who have carried out sporadic attacks on passenger ferries in the vicinity of the Bosporus Straits.
- Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, which carried out a number of strikes on passenger ships during the early to mid-1990s.
- Numerous Palestinian organizations, including Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Palestinian Authority, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF). The latter group carried out the infamous hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* in 1985, which remains, arguably, one of the most spectacular seaborne assaults to date.
- Lebanese Hezbollah, which is known to have received training in seaborne techniques from its principal sponsor, Iran, and has made efficient use of the maritime environment for covertly moving weapons, personnel, and materiel.[42]
- The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which has been responsible for numerous seaborne strikes in the southern Philippines, including the 2004 sinking of *Superferry 14*. Resulting in 116 fatalities, this incident remains the most deadly act of maritime terrorism to have been carried out in the modern era (although it appears as though the extent of the death toll was more "accidental" than deliberate—see Table 1).

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[41] Many of these weapons were procured from Libya and transported to Ireland in container vessels fraudulently registered under flags of convenience. In the course of one year during the late 1980s, PIRA took delivery of nearly 120 metric tons of arms and explosives through this conduit, including AK-47 assault rifles; Webley pistols; rocket-propelled grenade launchers; surface-to-air missiles; hand grenades; and a wide assortment of ammunition, detonators, fuses, and SEMTEX-H explosives. See Chalk, *West European Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism*, p. 42, and "Arming the IRA: The Libyan Connection," *The Economist*, March 31, 1990.

[42] Author interview, IMB, London, September 26, 2005. According to a former member of British defense intelligence, Hezbollah has also acquired a Soviet-era patrol boat that it uses for its own coastal "policing" purposes. Author interview, former British defense official, London, September 29, 2005.

- Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), which, prior to its signing of a peace agreement with the Indonesian government in 2005, had been linked to a number of hijackings of tugs, fishing trawlers, and other small craft in the Straits of Malacca.[43]
- The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which in the guise of the group's so-called Sea Tigers,[44] retains the most advanced maritime attack capability of any known substate terrorist-insurgency organization (see below for a detailed discussion of the unit's structure and operations).
- Jamaat al-Tawhid wa'l-Jihad (or Unity and Jihad Group), a Sunni organization led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi that has been at the forefront of attacks against U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq and that has taken responsibility for attacks aimed at destroying offshore oil terminals in the south of the country.
- Al Qaeda, which was directly behind the bombings of the USS *Cole* and MV *Limburg* in 2000 and 2002, respectively, and linked to a series of rocket attacks on the Jordanian port of Aqaba in 2005. Prior to his arrest in 2003, the organization's chief maritime planner, Abdel Rahim al-Nashiri (colloquially known as Amir al-Bahr, or "Prince of the Sea"), was also believed to have been in the latter stages of finalizing plans to attack Western shipping interests in the Mediterranean and American and British warships in the Straits of Gibraltar.[45]

Table 1 catalogues some of the more high-profile and publicized assaults carried out by these groups.

In the contemporary era, it is al Qaeda, Lebanese Hezbollah, the ASG, and particularly the LTTE that have been most consistently recognized as entities equipped with viable and proven maritime attack capabilities.

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda has been recognized as a major maritime terrorist actor with a proven capacity to attack major oceangoing vessels. According to Lloyd's of London and a 2002 Norwegian

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[43] It should be noted that many commentators do not view these strikes as "terrorism," since the perpetrators' prime motivation is economic. However, the fact that seized funds have been used specifically to support GAM's insurgency in Aceh suggests that the attacks represent something more than basic criminality and do, in fact, involve a definite political dimension that Herbert-Burns has termed "logistical-support terrorism." See Rupert Herbert-Burns and L. Zucker, "Drawing the Line Between Piracy and Maritime Terrorism," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, September 2004, p. 3, and Raymond, "Maritime Terrorism," p. 197.

[44] See, for instance, Michael Knights, "Iraqi Critical Infrastructure Faces Sophisticated Threat," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, January 2006, pp. 22–23.

[45] Percival, *Indonesia and the United States*, p. 9; Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade*, p. 19; Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism"; "Al Qaeda Has Multi Faceted Marine Strategy," Agence France Press, January 20, 2003; "Policing Spain's Southern Coast," *BBC News*, March 2, 2004, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3582217.stm (as of May 2006). Nashiri had apparently developed a four-point plan for the attacks in the Mediterranean, which included ramming ships with small boats; detonating medium-sized vessels near other craft or at port; crashing aircraft into large carriers, such as supertankers; and using suicide divers or underwater parasitic devices (e.g., submersible limpet mines) to destroy surface platforms.

Table 1
High-Profile Maritime Terrorism Attacks, 1979–2004

Incident	Group	Deaths	Remarks
Bombing of Lord Mountbatten's private yacht (1979)	PIRA	4	The yacht was destroyed by the detonation of an onboard explosive device; Mountbatten, two of his godchildren, and one crew member were killed.[a]
Hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* (1985)	PLF	1 (Leon Klinghoffer, an American wheelchair-bound tourist, was shot and pushed overboard)	The cruise ship was hijacked in an attempt to coerce the release of 50 Palestinians being held in Israel. The perpetrators were eventually detained in Sicily.[b]
Targeting of cruise ships on the Nile River (1992–1994)	Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya	N/A	The group targeted at least four cruise ships during these two years as part of its general effort to undermine the Egyptian tourist sector (a key contributor to the country's economy).[c]
Hijacking of a Turkish passenger ferry in the Black Sea (1996)	Chechen rebels	N/A	Nine rebel gunmen held 255 passengers hostage for four days during which they threatened to blow up the captured ferry to bring international attention to the Chechen cause; the abductors eventually sailed the vessel back to Istanbul, where they surrendered.[d]
Suicide bombing of the USS *Cole* (2000)	Al Qaeda	19 (17 U.S. sailors, 2 terrorists)	The bombing took place while the *Cole* was refueling at the Yemeni port of Aden. The assault involved 600 pounds of C4 explosive that was packed into the hull of a suicide attack skiff. In addition to those who were killed, 39 sailors were injured.[e]
Suicide bombing of the MV *Limburg*[f] (2002)	Al Qaeda	3 (1 crewman, 2 terrorists)	The attack involved a small fiberglass boat packed with 100–200 kilograms of TNT that was rammed into the tanker as it was preparing to take on a pilot-assisted approach to the Ash Shihr Terminal off the coast of Yemen. The *Limburg* was lifting 297,000 barrels of crude at the time of the strike, an estimated 50,000 of which spilled into the waters surrounding the stricken vessel.
Use of *Karine A* to transport weapons for anti-Israeli strikes (2002)	Palestinian Authority	N/A	*Karine A*, a 4,000-ton freighter, was seized in the Red Sea on January 3, 2002. The vessel was carrying a wide assortment of Russian and Iranian arms, including Katyusha rockets (with a 20-kilometer range), antitank missiles (Light Antitank Weapon and Sagger), long-range mortar bombs, mines, sniper rifles, ammunition, and more than 2 tons of high explosives. The $100 million weapons consignment was linked directly to Yasser Arafat and was allegedly to be used for attacks on Jewish targets in Israel and the occupied territories.[g]

Table 1—Continued

Incident	Group	Deaths	Remarks
Hijacking of the fully laden MV *Penrider*, shipping fuel oil from Singapore to Penang in northern Malaysia (2003)	GAM	N/A	This is one of the few instances in which GAM has directly claimed responsibility for a maritime attack. The group took three hostages (the master, chief engineer, and second engineer), who were eventually released after a $52,000 ransom was paid.[h]
Use of the *Abu Hassan*, an Egyptian-registered fishing trawler, to transport weapons and training manuals to assist militant strikes in Israel (2003)	Lebanese Hezbollah	N/A	The Egyptian owner of the trawler was recruited by Hezbollah and trained specifically to carry out maritime support missions. The vessel, which Israeli naval commandos intercepted 35 nautical miles off Rosh Hanikra near Haifa, was being used to ferry a complex weapons and logistics consignment, consisting of fuses for 122-millimeter Qassam rockets, electronic time-delay fuses, a training video for carrying out suicide strikes, and two sets of CD-ROMs containing detailed bomb-making information.[i]
Attacks against the Khor al-Amaya (KAAOT) and Al-Basra (ABOT) oil terminals, Iraq (2004)	Jamaat al-Tawhid wa'l-Jihad	3	The attacks were claimed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as a follow-up to the 2000 USS *Cole* and 2002 *Limburg* strikes (using the same small-craft, suicide modality) and appeared to be part of an overall strategy of destabilization in Iraq (the terminals were shut down for two days, costing nearly $40 million in lost revenues).[j]
Bombing of the Philippine *Superferry 14* (2004)	ASG, combined with elements from JI[k] and the Rajah Soliaman Revolutionary Movement (RSRM)[l]	116	Attack involved 20 sticks of dynamite that were planted in a hollowed-out television set. The bomb set off a fire that quickly spread throughout the ship, which lacked of an effective internal sprinkler system. Of the 116 fatalities, 63 have been identified (at the time of this writing) and 53 remain unaccounted for. The incident has been listed as the most destructive act of terrorism in maritime history and the fourth most serious international incident since 9/11.[m]
Suicide attack on the Port of Ashdod, Israel (2004)	Hamas, al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade	10	The attack took place at Ashdod, one of Israel's busiest seaports, and involved two Palestinian suicide bombers from Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade. The perpetrators had apparently been smuggled to the terminal inside a commercial container four hours before the operation. Some speculation remains that al-Qaeda assisted with logistics of the strike.[n]
A series of three Katyusha rocket attacks at the port of Aqaba, Jordan (2005)	Al Qaeda[o]	1	Two of the rockets narrowly missed the USS *Ashland*, an American naval ship docked at the port; the third landed near Eilat airport in neighboring Israel. Following the assault, a statement, signed by al Qaeda in the Levant and Egypt, was posted on the Internet affirming that "Zionists are a legitimate target" and warning "Americans, who are spreading their corruption throughout the world and who have stolen the wealth of the Muslim nation, to expect even more attacks."[p]

Table 1—Continued

[a] Author interview, former defense intelligence official, London, September 29, 2005.

[b] The PLF's original intention was to seize the *Achille Lauro* and then ram it into the Israeli oil terminal at Ashad. However, the attack team was discovered before this operation could be put into effect, forcing a change in plan. Author interview, former British defense intelligence official, London, September 29, 2005.

[c] Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," p. 50; John Sitilides, "U.S. Strikes Expose Emerging Regional Threats," *The HR-Net Forum (The Washington Monitor)*, August 28, 1998.

[d] Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," p. 50; Sitilides, "U.S. Strikes Expose Emerging Regional Threats"; Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism"; "Hostage Taking Action by Pro-Chechen Rebels Impairs Turkey's Image," *People's Daily* (China), April 24, 2001. Allegedly, the gunmen had also considered blowing up one of the two suspension bridges that cross the Bosphorus to close the strait to traffic.

[e] For more on this incident, see Raphael Perl, *Terrorist Attack on U.S.S. Cole: Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RS20721, January 30, 2001.

[f] The MV *Limburg* has since been renamed and now operates under the designation MV *Maritime Jewel*. Author interview, Lloyd's analysts, London, September 30, 2005.

[g] "IDF Seizes PA [Palestinian Authority] Weapons Ship," Jewish Virtual Library, January 4, 2002, online at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/paship.html (as of May 2006).

[h] Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," pp. 167–168. See also Kate McGeown, "Aceh Rebels Blamed for Piracy," *BBC News*, September 8, 2003, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3090136.stm (as of May 2006), and International Maritime Organization, *Reports on Acts of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships*, London, September 4, 2003, online at http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D8084/40.pdf

[i] Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," p. 166.

[j] Mirelle Warouw, "The Threat Against Maritime Assets: A Review of Historical Cases, Operational Patterns and Indicators," unpublished paper prepared for the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, 2005, p. 12; Knights, "Iraqi Critical Infrastructure Faces Sophisticated Threat," pp. 22–23; Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism".

[k] JI is an Indonesia-based jihadist group that has been linked to al Qaeda and allegedly seeks the creation of a pan-regional Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia. It has been held responsible for several high-profile attacks in the region, including the 2002 Bali bombings (which collectively killed 198 people and remain the single most deadly international terrorist attack since 9/11); suicide strikes on the U.S.-owned Marriott hotel and the Australian embassy in Jakarta in 2003 and 2004, respectively (combined toll of 17 deaths and 248 injuries); and coordinated attacks against tourist hubs, again in Bali, in 2005 (32 killed, more than 100 wounded). For two excellent overviews of the group's origins and terrorist activities, see International Crisis Group, *Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the "Ngruki" Network*, Brussels and Jakarta, August, 2002, and International Crisis Group, *Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous*, Brussels and Jakarta, August 2003.

[l] The RSRM is a highly fanatical fringe element of Balik Islam, a Philippine-based movement composed of Christian converts to Islam. The group has been linked to both JI and ASG and seeks to replace the existing administration in Manila with a Muslim theocracy to purge what it regards as the artificial influx of Catholic influences first introduced by the Spanish and then consolidated under the Americans. Author interviews, counterterrorism and intelligence officials, Manila, March 2005. See also Johnna Villaviray, "When Christians Embrace Islam," *The Manila Times*, November 17, 2003, and "Summary of Report," *The Manila Times*, April 12, 2004.

[m] Author interviews, Philippine Anti-Terrorism Task Force, Manila, May and November 2005, and Maritime Intelligence Group official, Washington D.C., August 2005.

[n] Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism." Certain commentators have argued that the Ashdod attack represented one of the first attempts by Palestinian militants to conduct an attack on an Israeli target with the explicit intention of causing mass casualties.

[o] The attacks were actually claimed in the name of a the Abdullah al-Azzam Brigades, which is widely believed to be a direct affiliate of al Qaeda and which took responsibility for the October 2004 strikes on the Taba and Ras Shitan tourist resorts in Sinai, Egypt. See "Al Qaeda Claim for Red Sea Attacks," CNN.com, August 19, 2005, online at http://cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/08/19/jordan.blasts/index.html (as of May 2006).

[p] See "Jordan Rockets Miss US Navy Ship," *BBC World News*, August 19, 2005, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/4165190.stm (as of May 2006).

intelligence report, prior to 9/11, al Qaeda owned at least 23 ships, most of which operated through front companies located in Liberia, Tonga Panama, Belize, and the Isle of Man (all notorious for tolerating registration bureaus that permit irresponsibly lax strictures regarding crewing conditions and documentation requirements).[46] A similar U.S. report has put al Qaeda's inventory at 15 merchant carriers, which may or may not include other ships chartered but not specifically owned by the organization.[47] There have also been periodic reports that bin Laden has used fishing trawlers procured from family businesses located in Madagascar and parts of Asia to transport weapons, ammunition, and explosives.[48]

As noted above, al Qaeda has demonstrated a proven capacity to hit and damage major oceangoing vessels, notably through its attacks on the USS *Cole* and MV *Limburg*. These two attacks, which both occurred in Yemeni waters, largely exhibited the same characteristics. In addition, the group has been directly linked to several thwarted assaults, including a planned strike on the USS *Sullivans* while it refueled in the Gulf of Aden in January 2000; an ambitious scheme to bomb American naval assets visiting Singapore's Changi naval base in 2001 (which was to have been carried out in conjunction with JI); a complex, multistaged plot aimed against Western shipping interests transiting through the Straits of Gibraltar that same year; and an alleged plan in 2005—reputedly to be carried out by Syrian national Lu'ai Sakra[49]—to ram Israeli cruise ships traveling in international waters with explosive-laden speedboats.[50] All these actual and attempted incidents—most of which were the brainchild of Abdel Rahim al-Nashiri, al Qaeda's chief maritime planner—exhibited a largely similar set of organizational traits and characteristics: (1) an intention to destroy symbolic (military, economic, iconic)

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[46] Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism"; "What al-Qaida Could Do with a Terror Navy," *World Net Daily*, October 20, 2003, online at http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=35157 (as of May 2006).

[47] See Vijay Sakhuja, "Challenging Terrorism at Sea," *Institute of Peace & Conflict Studies*, No. 679, January 2002, online at http://www.ipcs.org/Terrorism_articles.jsp (as of May 2006); Raymond, "Maritime Terrorism," p. 193; Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," pp. 171–172; Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," p. 58; Intellibridge, "United States—Security: A Progress Report on U.S. and International Approaches to Maritime Security," *Homeland Security Monitor*, July 10, 2003; Peter Grier and Faye Bowers, "How al Qaeda Might Strike the US by Sea," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 15, 2003; J. Mintz, "15 Freighters Believed to Be Linked to al Qaeda," *Washington Post*, December 31, 2002; and "Al-Qaida Training Manual Shows Seaports Top Target," *WorldNetDaily*, October 30, 2003. According to one former British defense official, al Qaeda owns only one or two ships outright, with most of its assets taking the form of charter vessels. Author interview, London, September 2005.

[48] Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," p. 58.

[49] Sakra was arrested in Turkey in August 2005 with 1,650 pounds of explosives. He has been directly linked to al Qaeda and is suspected of involvement in the November 2003 bombings of British and Jewish targets in Istanbul that collectively killed 63 people. See "Turkish Detain al Qaeda Suspects Who Planned to Ram Explosive Laden Speedboats into Ships Full of Israeli Tourists," *BBC World News*, August 11, 2005, and "Plot to Attack Israeli Cruise Ships Exposed," Rantburg.com, August 11, 2005, online at http://rantburg.com/poparticle.php?ID=126500&D=2005-08-11&HC=1 (as of May 2006).

[50] Herbert-Burns, "Terrorism in the Early 21st Century Maritime Domain," pp. 168–169; Raymond, "Maritime Terrorism," p. 193; Percival, *Indonesia and the United States*, p. 9; Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade*, p. 19; Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," pp. 58–59; Zachary Abuza, "Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Keeping al-Qaeda at Bay," in Julie Sirrs, Mahan Abedin, and Christopher Heffelfinger, eds., *Unmasking Terror: A Global Review of Terrorist Activities*, Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation, 2004, p. 449; Louis Meixler, "Turkish Police Detain al-Qaida Suspects," Associated Press, August 11, 2005.

targets; (2) a preference for small-craft suicide strikes undertaken against stationary or near-stationary vessels; and (3) extensive pre-attack surveillance and preparation.[51]

While al Qaeda remains a chief focus of U.S. concern in terms of maritime terrorism, its functional ability to act concertedly in this realm has atrophied over the past several years. The group not only has lost the input of al-Nashiri as a result of his arrest in November 2002 but also has steadily lost the ability to exert concerted command and control over international attacks as a result of setbacks it has suffered from the global war on terrorism. Indeed, the largely monolithic entity that emerged from Afghanistan in the late 1990s now more closely corresponds to a "movement of movements" that has become increasingly reliant on locally based affiliates to carry out its attacks.[52] In most cases, these satellite organizations lack the resources and capabilities to conduct long-range strategic maritime strikes of the sort seen and planned between 2000 and 2002. That said, one should not discount the future possibility of more limited strikes taking place that are cheap and easy to execute and that have a realistic capacity to disrupt and generate media attention. Contingencies that might fit this general pattern would certainly include the bombing of a passenger ferry or possibly the detonation of a radiological dispersal device that is concealed in containerized cargo and set to explode while being offloaded at a target port of opportunity.

Lebanese Hezbollah

Lebanese Hezbollah has been linked to a variety of maritime incidents in the Middle East, the bulk of which have been directed against Israel. For the most part, the organization has either supported Palestinian organizations seeking to carry out waterborne attacks (e.g., as in the *Abu Hassan* incident) or used ships as a logistical conduit to facilitate its own strikes.[53] There have been periodic allegations, however, that Hezbollah has worked with al Qaeda and that it possibly provided inspiration and materiel assistance for the bombing of the USS *Cole*.[54] According to the testimony of Ali Mohamed, who was convicted of conspiracy in connection with the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the organization's then–operations chief, Imad Mughniya, held several meetings with Osama bin Laden in the late 1990s during which he agreed to provide both training and explosives for the *Cole* attack, which was to be modeled on an alleged strike against U.S. and Israeli ships in Singapore.[55]

Hezbollah's maritime capabilities are derived from its primary sponsor, Iran, and date back to the decade-long war against Iraq when Teheran made extensive use of proxy-executed attacks against tankers and other offshore platforms in the Persian Gulf. Security analysts believe that the group has received training in basic mariner skills as well as more advanced techniques such as combat scuba diving, underwater demolition, and the piloting of mini-

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[51] Warouw, "The Threat Against Maritime Assets," p. 9.

[52] Chalk et al., *Trends in Terrorism*, pp. 11–15.

[53] Author interviews, maritime security analysts, London, September 2005. See also Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," p. 59.

[54] Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," p. 59.

[55] Institute for Counter-Terrorism, "Hizbollah Planned to Attack U.S. and Israeli Ships in Singapore," *Spotlight: In the News*, June 9, 2002, online at http://www.ict.org.il/spotlight/det.cfm?id=790 (as of May 2006).

submarines.[56] While there is no indication as yet of Hezbollah actively seeking to engage in an expanded campaign of maritime terrorism, there is a possibility that Iran might reengage the group to attack Western commercial assets in the Strait of Hormuz—which accounts for nearly half the world's oil flows—particularly in light of American and European attempts to forestall the country's nascent nuclear infrastructure.[57]

Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

The ASG's association with maritime terrorism reflects the oceanic tradition of Moro Muslim communities in Mindanao. Most of the group's actions have focused on hijackings of inter-island ferries, tugs, and fishing trawlers sailing in the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Triangle, where the borders of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia meet. Attacks typically involve armed takeovers of target vessels followed by the abduction of crew or passengers who are either robbed or held for ransom. For most of its interceptions, the group uses modified speedboats that are able to outrun and outmaneuver anything the Philippine Navy can currently put to sea.[58] In addition to these assaults, the ASG has carried out episodic shore-based strikes, including one highly publicized operation in 2000 that involved the kidnappings of foreign tourists from Sipidan and that reputedly netted the group between $15 million and $20 million in "blood money."[59]

On a more direct level, the ASG has been linked to several passenger ship bombings. The most destructive assault, as noted in Table 1, was the 2004 attack on *Superferry 14*, which eventually led to the deaths of 116 people.[60] More recently, the group managed to place and detonate an IED on the MV *Dona Ramona* ferry as it was being loaded at the Lamitan Wharf in Basilan, despite the presence of armed soldiers who had been posted at the gangplank to provide portside security for the vessel. Although no one was killed in the explosion (30 were

[56] Author interviews, maritime security analysts, London, September 2005; Rohan Gunaratna, "Maritime Terrorism: Future Threats and Responses," paper given before the International Research Group on Political Violence meeting, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., April 15, 2001. See also Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Center for Special Studies, "Hizbullah: Special Information Paper," June 2003.

[57] Author interview, former British defense intelligence official, London, September 2005.

[58] See, for instance, Anthony Davis, "Piracy in Southeast Asia Shows Signs of Increased Organisation," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 2004, pp. 39–40.

[59] Raymond, "Maritime Terrorism," p. 195; Banlaoi, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia," p. 72; Davis, "Piracy in Southeast Asia Shows Signs of Increased Organisation," p. 40; Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Gunmen Take Foreigners Hostage in Malaysia," *Washington Post*, April 25, 2000; "Libya Denies Ransom Offer for Hostages," *Sacramento Bee*, August 13, 2000.

[60] In a telephone interview following the incident, the group's spokesman, Abu Soliman, taunted the Philippine government, asserting: "Still doubtful about our capabilities? Good. Just wait and see. We will bring the war that you impose on us to your lands and seas, homes and streets. We will multiply the pain and suffering you have inflicted on our people" (Abu Soliman, cited in Banlaoi, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia," p. 72). See also Marco Garrido, "After Madrid, Manila?" *Asia Times*, April 24, 2004.

injured, however, including several children), the incident clearly underscored the organization's proclivity for sheer audacity and demonstrated its ability to catch regional authorities off-guard.[61]

Of potentially greater concern are reports that the ASG may be moving to decisively extend the reach of its maritime capabilities. According to statements released by the Philippine military in 2005, one of the group's operatives, Gamal Baharan, admitted under interrogation that he and another JI cadre, Rohmat (known as "Zaki"), had been instructed to undertake a commercial scuba diving course at a resort on Palawan Island. Intelligence officials speculate that the intended purpose of this training was to avail attacks on underwater natural gas or oil pipelines, or vessels docked at port (specifically by attaching limpet mines to ship hulls).[62] Notably, Bahran made no mention of being ordered to master decompression techniques—which has been taken as a possible indication that he was dispatched as a prospective martyr—and, at least according to the press, alluded to targets situated outside the immediate Philippine theater.[63] While there certainly remains a risk that the ASG is seeking to develop its maritime agenda in this fashion, Western analysts have cast doubt on the credibility of some of Bahran's statements, further pointing out that much of the reporting on scuba training in the Philippines is speculative and often difficult to confirm.[64]

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

The LTTE is generally credited with possessing the most advanced maritime attack capabilities of any substate terrorist-insurgency group in the world. Vested in the so-called Sea Tigers, which falls under the command of Soosai, the group is thought to have roughly 3,000 trained mariners at its disposal who are dispersed among several subdivisions, including sea battle regiments, underwater demolition teams, boat construction squads, a telecommunications wing, a marine weapons armory, an intelligence and reconnaissance section, a so-called exclusive economic zone marine logistics support unit,[65] and a dedicated martyr strike force. The group's fleet has been estimated at between 100 and 200 vessels that embrace attack, transport, personnel, multipurpose, and suicide craft, which have been variously deployed in brown (coastal), green (coastal to deep sea), and blue (deep sea) waters for both logistical and active

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[61] "Bomb Hits Philippines Ferry," CNN.com, August 27, 2005.

[62] Anthony Davis, "Philippines Fears New Wave of Attacks by Abu Sayyaf Group," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, May 2005, p. 12; Jim Gomez, "Extremist Groups in Philippines Are Forming Alliances," Associated Press, March 12, 2005; "Abu Sayyaf Guerrillas Training for Sea-Borne Terror Attacks," Associated Press, March 17, 2005; Jeff Antiporda and Anthony Vargas, "Terrorist Trainer Nabbed," *The Manila Times* (the Philippines), March 23, 2005; "Nabbed JI Operative Liaison to Abus," Associated Federated Press, March 23, 2005; "Terror's New Frontier: Underwater," Associated Press, March 18, 2005, online at http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/03/18/terror/main681524.shtml (as of May 2006).

[63] Author interview, former British defense intelligence official, London, September 2005. See also Davis, "Philippines Fears New Wave of Attacks by Abu Sayyaf Group," p. 12.

[64] Author interview, U.S. embassy, Manila, April 2005. See also Warouw, "The Threat Against Maritime Assets," p. 16.

[65] According to Gunaratna, the unit consists of *Mirage*-class fiberglass vessels that are capable of long-range operations and used to provide protection for the group's transport and logistics ships as they sail toward the northeastern coast. See Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1998, p. 256.

operational purposes.[66] Although much of this inventory was thought to have been badly damaged in the deadly tsunami that struck the northeastern coast of Sri Lanka in December 2004, regional and Western intelligence officials and academics believe that the organization has managed to recoup most of its losses, benefiting from the relative insulation provided by the ongoing—albeit increasingly tenuous—cease-fire with the Colombo government that has been in force since 2002.[67]

The Sea Tigers have demonstrated a proven ability to execute decisive assaults using both conventional and suicide modalities. With regard to the former, the group relies on fast-approach surface vessels equipped with heavy machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and radar sonar systems. Attacks are mostly directed against the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) and aimed at disrupting Colombo's marine mobility off the northeastern coast, a critical smuggling conduit for LTTE arms procured from overseas. However, the organization has also employed its assault boats to target commercial carriers—either to steal payloads that are viewed as instrumental to the wider Tamil war effort (e.g., tractors, cement, and industrial explosives) or to lure SLN craft into ambushes.[68] In addition, there have been periodic allegations of cargo freighters being hijacked and fraudulently reregistered under flags of convenience to boost the capabilities of the Tigers' nonmilitary wing, the Sea Pigeons.[69]

Besides conventional attacks, the LTTE has made a conscious effort to institutionalize suicide tactics into its broader maritime strategic ambit. The group has carried out more than 40 such strikes since 1990, the bulk of which have taken the form of explosive-laden skiffs that are rammed into SLN surface vessels, which have first been singled out and surrounded by hunter "wolf packs" drawn from conventional sea battle regiments.[70] These assaults have been deliberately calibrated to engender chronic operational paralysis in the enemy, not least by exhibiting an image of a combative adversary that is, at once, utterly ruthless and totally undeterrable.

Unlike the LTTE's land-based suicide cadres—the Black Tigers, who undergo a highly demanding and intensive regimen of physical, mental, and psychological training—martyr

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[66] Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, p. 257; Gunaratna, "Maritime Terrorism"; Sinai, "Future Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," pp. 57–58; Warouw, "The Threat Against Maritime Assets," pp. 2–3.

[67] Author conversations with intelligence officials and Sri Lankan experts, National Conference Center, Landsdowne, Va., August 2005.

[68] Author interview, Sri Lankan naval and intelligence officials, Colombo, May 1997 and May 2004. See also Sinai, "Trends in Worldwide Maritime Terrorism," pp. 57–58; Warouw, "The Threat Against Maritime Assets," pp. 3–4; Roger Davies, "Sea Tigers, Stealth Technology and the North Korean Connection," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, March 2001, pp. 2–3; "Tamil Tigers Warn Foreign Vessels, Claim Attack on Chinese Ship," Agence France Presse, September 10, 1997.

[69] At least ten oceangoing merchant vessels are currently thought to reside in the ranks of the Sea Pigeons, which are used to transport both legitimate cargo (as a means of raising additional revenue for the LTTE war effort) and weapons and other battle-related materiel procured from Asian, European, and African markets. See Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, p. 375; Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism"; Mark Winchester, "Ship of Fools," *Soldier of Fortune*, August 1998, p. 40; and "Tamil Tigers' Owns Fleet of 11 Merchant Vessels," *Lloyd's List*, February 29, 2000.

[70] Peter Chalk and Bruce Hoffman, *The Dynamics of Suicide Terrorism: Four Case Studies of Terrorist Movements* (government publication; not releasable to the general public), RAND Corporation, 2005, p. 73; Rohan Gunaratna, "Sea Tiger Success Threatens the Spread of Copycat Tactics," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, March 2001, p. 12.

forces in the Sea Tigers mostly consist of wounded militants who volunteer to undertake sacrificial missions as a last "hurrah" for the group. In common with their terrestrial counterparts, however, these personnel do benefit from well-grounded reconnaissance and preparation alongside a well-developed and sophisticated research and development (R&D) arm. Attack craft, for instance, are shallowly hollowed out in the fashion of a shoe and constructed from lightweight material to maximize their speed and maneuverability, both of which help to minimize their radar silhouette and the physical target they present to defensive machine gun and cannon fire.[71] Most vessels are also equipped with a special penetration rod that extends from the front of the craft and which is designed to puncture the hull of SLN ships before attached explosive packs are detonated. This style of assault has been highly effective in amplifying the destructive force of resulting shock waves, allowing the Sea Tigers to cripple even large-scale combat frigates.[72]

Perhaps the most creative R&D efforts, however, have been attempts to construct small, two-man dispatch submarines. According to Rohan Gunaratna, one of the world's leading authorities on the LTTE, prototypes for these vessels already exist, complete with angled metal superstructures to reduce their sonar cross-sections and a capacity to remain submersed for up to six hours. Their primary purpose is, allegedly, to avail the covert penetration of combat diving teams—both suicide and non-suicide—inside Sri Lankan harbors to destroy berthed vessels with underwater IEDs.[73] Gunaratna claims that two types of explosive devices have been refined for these missions, each of which can be activated manually or by delayed timer switches: (1) cylindrical bombs (roughly 60–90 centimeters in height) that can be suspended from a ship's propeller or rudder shaft and (2) RDX slabs that are attached to the underside of hulls with a black glycerol mixture.[74]

Tiger maritime operations have been extremely effective in consolidating the group's coastal control around northeastern Sri Lankan, which has, in turn, been critical to securing SLOCs across the Bay of Bengal to Thailand's Andaman coast—the principal regional loading point for LTTE weaponry. In addition, the organization has made full use of its conventional and suicide units to decisively engage the SLN.[75] Indeed, according to one former SLN admiral, fear of being caught in a martyr strike has been one of the main factors contributing to decreases in recruitment to the navy over the past several years. It is also worth bearing in mind that the LTTE conducted a USS *Cole*–style attack as far back as 1990.[76] This not only suggests

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[71] Chalk and Hoffman, *The Dynamics of Suicide Terrorism*, p. 73; Gunaratna, "Maritime Terrorism."

[72] Revelations that the LTTE was making concerted moves in this direction first broke in 2000, when a partially completed prototype was discovered at a Tamil-owned shipyard in southern Thailand. For further details, see Anthony Davis, "Tracking Tigers in Phuket," *Asiaweek*, June 2000, and "Lanka Suspects Submarine in Thailand to Be LTTE's," *Times of India*, July 16, 2000. Author interview, Sri Lankan intelligence officials and Western diplomats, Colombo, May 2004.

[73] Sri Lankan sources also believe that the move to develop submarines was driven by the SLN's purchase of new-generation *Dvora* fast-attack craft at the end of the 1990s, which were proving effective against Sea Tiger surface ships.

[74] Gunaratna, "Sea Tiger Success Threatens the Spread of Copycat Tactics," p. 16.

[75] Gunaratna, "Sea Tiger Success Threatens the Spread of Copycat Tactics," p. 12.

[76] Author interviews, retired SLN officer and Western diplomatic official, Colombo, May 2004.

that the organization is some ten years ahead of al Qaeda in terms of seaborne capabilities but also, more intrinsically, may be serving as a critical benchmark for future developments in the wider arena of maritime terrorism.

International Measures to Counter the Threat of Maritime Terrorism

A number of largely U.S.-led international measures have been enacted since 2001 in an effort to mitigate potential seaborne terrorist contingencies and generally enhance the overall transparency of the global maritime environment. Among the more publicized programs and agreements are the following:[77]

- The Container Security Initiative (CSI), a U.S.-led initiative involving a series of bilateral, reciprocal accords that, among other things, allow for the forward deployment of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers and their foreign counterparts to prescreen container ships bound for and departing from U.S. shores. As of July 2004, the CSI was operational at 20 overseas ports.[78]
- The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code), which was adopted by the International Maritime Organization at its December 2002 conference and which outlines minimum security procedures that all ships and ports must meet to improve overall maritime security. Any vessel that does not meet these requirements or that leaves from a port that does not meet the requirements can be turned away by relevant authorities at the destination terminal.[79] Stipulations in the code are based on those that underscore the U.S. Maritime Transport Security Act (MTSA)[80] of 2004.[81]

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[77] In addition to the listed measures, the United States is looking to relaunch what was formerly known as the African Coastal Security Program, which was aimed at improving the green-water navies and coast guards of participating states to enable them to conduct more effective maritime surveillance. NATO has also resolved to help deter, defend, and disrupt attacks at sea through Operation Active Endeavor (OAE). Launched shortly after 9/11, this initiative provides up to eight navy vessels to monitor cargo flows across the entire Mediterranean Basin and may be further expanded to include the Black Sea over the next couple of years. Since OAE's inception, more than 41,000 vessels have been hailed and 47 compliant boardings have taken place. Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism"; Andrew Koch, "US Is Now Set to Turn the Focus on African Security," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, April 21, 2004, p. 6; Brian Whitmore, "NATO Faces Challenges as It Retools for the War on Terror," *Boston Globe*, March 28, 2004

[78] U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "Keeping Cargo Safe: Container Security Initiative," online at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/international_activities/csi/ (as of May 2006); Frittelli, *Port and Maritime Security*, pp. 12–13; U.S. General Accounting Office, *Summary of Challenges Faced in Targeting Oceangoing Cargo Containers for Inspection*, Washington, D.C., GAO-04-557T, March 31, 2004.

[79] Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism."

[80] The U.S. Congress passed the MTSA in 2002. The legislation requires U.S. federal agencies, ports, and vessel owners to take numerous steps to upgrade maritime security and stipulates the CBP to develop national and regional plans to secure ocean-based transportation systems. It also requires ports, waterfront terminals, and certain types of vessels to institute their own incident response protocols that must then be submitted to and approved by the Coast Guard. Frittelli et al., *Port and Maritime Security*, pp. 14–15.

[81] Lloyd's Register, "ISPS Code," undated, http://www.lr.org/Standards/Codes/ISPS.htm (as of May 2006).

- The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), another U.S.-led initiative that aims to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by sanctioning the right to stop, board, and, if necessary, seize a vessel on the high seas if it is suspected of smuggling chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials.[82] At the time of this writing, the PSI had been adopted by 11 countries: Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.[83]
- The Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), a U.S. program that offers international importers expedited processing of cargo if they comply with U.S. CBP guidelines for securing their entire supply chain. More than 45,000 companies have so far agreed to participate in C-TPAT.[84]

A full discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of these measures is beyond the scope of this article. However, a few preliminary remarks can be made. On the positive side, the initiatives have helped to lend a degree of transparency to what has hitherto been a highly opaque theater. Specifically, they lay the parameters for regulated interstate action in the maritime realm, both by enumerating rules, principles, and attendant responsibilities for international cooperation and, more importantly, by providing a common framework in which to further develop and refine joint policies over the medium-to-long term. This type of contextual foundation simply did not exist prior to 9/11.[85]

On the negative side, the programs outlined above suffer from three critical shortfalls as presently configured:

- They are limited in scope. The U.S. initiatives are largely confined to a narrow set of like-minded allies, while the ISPS precludes the vast bulk of littoral countries, many of which simply lack the resources to fully comply with its requirements (significantly, this has had the inadvertent effect of further increasing the potential terrorist exposure of what are already vulnerable ports and facilities).[86]
- The initiatives are largely directed at increasing the security "wall" around commercial seaborne traffic, paying scant regard to contingencies that do not involve containerized cargo (e.g., ferry bombings) or modalities designed to counter the root source of threats to the oceanic environment—terrorist organizations themselves.

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[82] The PSI seeks to expand the limits of international law, which sanctions the right to stop and seize a ship on the high seas under four specific conditions: (1) with the permission of the country under whose flag the vessel in question is sailing; (2) if it is stateless; (3) if it is suspected of being a pirate craft; or (4) if it is being used to transport slaves, smuggle illegal drugs, or make unauthorized broadcasts.

[83] U.S. Department of State, "The Proliferation Security Initiative," June 2004; Richardson, *A Time Bomb for Global Trade*, pp. 97–108; Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism."

[84] Frittelli et al., *Port and Maritime Security*, p. 13.

[85] See, for instance, Stephen Flynn, "On the Record," *Government Executive Magazine*, October 1, 2003.

[86] According to the OECD, implementation of the ISPS Code will cost vessel operators $1.28 billion in the first year and $730 million annually thereafter. Koknar, "Maritime Terrorism"; David Osler, "The Cost of ISPS," *Lloyd's List*, April 22, 2004.

- With particular reference to the ISPS Code, there is as yet no definitive means to effectively audit how well extant measures are being implemented by participating states or, indeed, to gauge their overall utility in terms of dockside security. As one maritime analyst summed up with respect to the Rotterdam terminal—the international system's busiest terminal for oceangoing freight—while the facility is compliant on paper and relatively secure compared with most other ports around the world, the whole verification procedure remains weak, constituting not much more than "a tick-in-the-box exercise."[87]

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[87] Author interview, maritime security analysts, Control Risks Group, Amsterdam, September 2005.

Ready to Detonate: The Diverse Profiles of Female Bombers

Farhana Ali

Introduction

Suicide bombings in Chechnya, Israel, Iraq, and, most recently, Jordan have raised questions about the role of women in armed struggle and in terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda. While women have historically played a role in warfare, their participation in suicide operations is little understood and under-explored. Some of the literature on female operatives in contemporary terrorist groups suggests that women choose to participate for reasons other than survival; instead, a woman conducting a terrorist operation is making a statement in the name of her gender, thereby acting as a motivator for other women to commit attacks. Many conservative clerics regard women as just as capable as men in striking the perceived enemy (i.e., the West), but with greater advantages, given a Muslim woman's ability to mask her involvement in operations and conceal her identity.[1] For both men and women, the one common feature in or near the battlefield is the psychological wounds of living in a region in which women are violated, threatened, or unable to live a "normal" life, all of which could factor in her decision to use violence and possibly inspire Muslim men to fight to restore and protect her honor from the perceived invader.

This article examines a growing trend: the use of Muslim women, called jihadists or the mujahidaat,[2] to support the global jihad. Equally important to this phenomenon is the ongoing debate among al Qaeda and like-minded groups, and leading clerics, on the permissibility of suicide as a legitimate tactic in warfare, particularly the role of a Muslim woman in violent jihad.[3]

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[1] While men and women are regarded equally in matters of faith, Islam does not require women to take part in physical war. However, she is not barred from fighting in wartime and plays an essential role in motivating the men of her household to fight, as well as providing essential logistics and financial support to jihad.

[2] *Mujahidaat* in this context refers exclusively to Muslim women who participated in the actual fighting in the early Islam period and is used to describe contemporary female fighters who either support operations or participate in them. Broadly, this term can be used to include women who do not fight but provide logistics and facilitation support.

[3] *Jihad* is the most misunderstood term in the West today. In this article, jihad refers to the use of violence to wage an unjust war against the perceived enemies of Islam and the targeted state or groups of individuals. The more accurate definition of jihad as it is practiced by millions of Muslims worldwide is "to struggle" or to aspire to do good and avoid evil. For a more complete definition, refer to Bernard Lewis and Heath W. Lowry, eds., *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*, Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996; also see Jalal Abualrub, *Holy Wars...Crusades...Jihad*, Madinah Publishers, 2002.

Female Warriors—An Emerging Trend

Muslim women are increasingly joining the global jihad. Some are motivated by religious conviction to change the plight of Muslims under occupation; others are actively recruited by al Qaeda and local terrorist groups strained by increased arrests and deaths of male operatives to fight in the name of Islam. Attacks by the mujahidaat are arguably more deadly than those conducted by male jihadists for several reasons. If covered in Muslim dress, a female bomber could evade detection and escape arrest, enabling her to conduct an attack without raising prior suspicions from authorities. Attacks by women have historically generated greater public interest—and concern—from television and print media, which allows her and the terrorist organization she is a part of to receive attention at little operational cost. Like any good actress, a Muslim woman "plays to and for an audience, and solicit[s] audience participation."[4]

Although women enlisted and played a pivotal role in operations in previous decades, including the veteran Palestinian female Leila Khalid, who participated in myriad successful hijackings in the late 1960s and early 1970s, counterterrorism experts and analysts rarely focused on female terrorists. According to Marc Sageman, a forensic psychiatrist, the notion of a woman perpetrating acts of violence "runs counter to Western stereotypes and misconceptions of female terrorists; we assume that women are second-class citizens and rely on the men to run the organization," rather than challenging Western prejudices of women in these terror networks.[5] But women have participated in warfare since the early days of Islam, and their stories of heroism are remembered by generations of Muslims. Religious extremist and terrorist groups take out of context the brave acts of the first female fighters; violent groups and individuals argue that if women of the past could join the jihad to protect their men, then women in the modern world have an obligation, if not a religious justification, to wage war against the perceived enemies of Islam. Protection of the faith and honor of the men are among the many reasons women are recruited into or self-select for attacks.

Today, there is no one set of conditions or factors to determine which women are likely to join jihadist networks, but previous precedent set by women in a particular conflict or country has been shown to encourage other women to follow by example. While most scholars of terrorism study terrorism movements at large, it is significant that women—the nurturers of society—have begun to participate in some of the world's most deadly suicide bombings. Although the overall number of female suicide bombers is fewer than 50, attacks committed by the mujahidaat will continue to inspire other women to participate in violence, particularly when women perceive that there is no solution to their present conflict. With no end in sight to ongoing conflicts and armed struggles, women can become vulnerable to recruitment by al Qaeda and other terrorist groups or, at the very least, more willing to perpetrate an act voluntarily, as has been demonstrated by the first contemporary Palestinian female bombers.

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[4] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 131.

[5] Interview, Marc Sageman, October 2005.

Why Now?

Since at least 2000, there has been a gradual progression of suicide attacks conducted by Muslim women in new theaters of operation, including Iraq, Uzbekistan, Egypt, and, more recently, Jordan.[6] An Iraqi woman, Sajida Mubarak Atrous al-Rishawi, confessed in November 2005 on Jordanian state television that she had tried to detonate explosives around her waist during the late-November attacks on three hotels in Amman.[7] Al-Rishawi told viewers that she learned how to detonate the bomb from her husband, who also participated (and died) in the attacks, but when her bomb failed to explode, she escaped until her capture at a safe house in the capital city.

While the involvement of a husband-and-wife "hit team" shocked terrorism experts, the attack in Talafar, northern Iraq, by a female suicide bomber was less of a surprise, given the steady increase of suicide bombers in Iraq. Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the coup de main at an army recruitment center on September 28, 2005, by a "blessed sister." The Iraqi woman hid her weapon beneath her dress as she stood among job applicants, a similar tactic used by women in the Irish Republican Army who carried bombs beneath their clothing feigning pregnancy or wheeling weapons in baby carriages. The attack in late September was not the first by an Iraqi woman; in April 2003, two women, one pretending to be pregnant, blew up their car at a coalition checkpoint, killing three coalition soldiers.[8] Although attacks by women in Iraq are still relatively a new trend, women could play a wider role in operations, but only after gaining acceptance by the male-dominated Sunni insurgency. Once terrorists in Iraq open the space to women, they could judge that participation in suicide attacks, for example, could help mobilize an entire population against the perceived enemy. That leaves Iraq vulnerable to attacks by female suicide bombers in the near future.

The attacks in Egypt earlier this year by two women remain an anomaly. For years, Egyptian men, not women, cradled the growth of the jihad movement, which led to the formation of different groups, varying in their membership and orientation. However, the April 30, 2005, shooting on a tourist bus in Cairo by two veiled Egyptian women is evidence that women in the Arab Muslim world can play an increasing role in operations. The women, both in their twenties, were related to a male perpetrator, Ehab Yousri Yassin: Negat Yassin was the bomber's sister, and Iman Ibrahim Khamis, his fiancée. The two women reportedly shot at the bus in revenge for Yassin's death (he died earlier the same day while attempting to escape

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[6] Two female suicide bombers killed themselves and three U.S. Army Rangers at a checkpoint in western Iraq. One of the women appeared to be pregnant and, as she exited the vehicle, screamed for assistance, according to a U.S. military officer. This attack by Iraqi women was the second in less than a week. Liz Sly and Hugh Dellios, "Women Kill 3 Rangers in Suicide Bombing," *Chicago Tribune*, April 5, 2003.

[7] "Iraqi Woman Confesses to Role in Jordan Blasts," Associated Press, November 13, 2005, online at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9979747/ (as of May 2006).

[8] "Woman Suicide Bomber Strikes Iraq," *BBC News*, September 28, 2005, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4289168.stm (as of May 2006).

Egyptian authorities) and then shot themselves.[9] It remains unclear whether the two women intended to commit suicide or chose the tactic to evade an arrest by Egyptian police.

While little is known about the two Egyptian women and their intentions for suicide, the story of a young Uzbek girl illustrates her determination to participate in a suicide attack in March 2003. Nineteen-year-old Dilnoza Holmuradova detonated explosives at Tashkent's Chorsu Market, killing at least 47 people, including 10 police officers.[10] Dilnoza came from a solid middle-class background, was well educated, spoke five languages, and unlike the vast majority of Uzbek women, had a driver's license.[11] After dropping out of the police academy she was attending in 2002, Dilnoza began praying regularly, and in January 2004 she and her sister left home without a word to their parents, taking the Islamic literature in the house with them.[12] Her recruitment by the Islamic Jihad Group, a radical offshoot of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, likely resulted in her decision to carry out the operation. But Dilnoza's actions are reflective of a larger problem in Uzbekistan. According to an independent sociologist, the ideological vacuum that resulted in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union—in which people became "impoverished and demoralized"—partly explains why Uzbek women were susceptible to being influenced by extremist organizations.[13]

The attacks by women in Iraq, Egypt, and Uzbekistan—three women unrelated in culture, religion, and national identities—are reflective of a crisis in Muslim societies. In all instances, women who had never before conducted terrorist operations challenged their perceived enemies and male-only terror groups. Their actions could provide an impetus for other Muslim women to either enlist in extremist organizations or volunteer for future attacks.

Historical Precedence for Jihad

For centuries, Muslim women in different struggles and communities have joined men on the front lines of war and have died alongside them. The most prominent example of an early Muslim woman in jihad is Nusayba bint K'ab, who lost an arm while defending the Prophet Muhammad in the Battle of Uhud (625 CE).[14] The Prophet's own female relatives took part in jihad; one of his wives, Ayesha, led the Battle of the Camel, and his granddaughter Zaynab bint Ali fought in the Battle of Karbala. Other women were recognized for tending to the

[9] "Attacks Injure Nine in Egypt," *Columbia (Mo.) Daily Tribune*, May 1, 2005, online at http://www.showmenews.com/2005/May/20050501News020.asp (as of May 2006).

[10] Institute for War & Peace Reporting (IWPR) Staff in Central Asia, "Uzbekistan: Affluent Suicide Bombers," RCA No. 278, April 20, 2004.

[11] IWPR Staff in Central Asia, "Uzbekistan," 2004.

[12] IWPR Staff in Central Asia, "Uzbekistan," 2004.

[13] IWPR Staff in Central Asia, "Uzbekistan," 2004.

[14] Assad Nimer Busool, *Muslim Women Warriors*, Chicago: Al Huda, 1995.

wounded, donating their jewelry for the jihad, and encouraging their male family members to fight to ensure the survival of Islam.[15]

The involvement of early Arab women in jihad is celebrated today throughout the Muslim world, providing icons and serving as a precedent[16] for contemporary Muslim women who choose suicide operations. But before suicide became the preferred tactic of several groups, Muslim women proved their military skills on the battlefield. For example, the late Ayatollah Khomeini extolled the participation of Iran's women in the 1979 war: "We are proud that our women, young and old, [fight] side by side with men.... Women who are capable of fighting take military training, which is a major prerequisite for the defense of Islam and the Islamic state.... They have bravely discarded the superstitions created by enemies of Islam and by the inadequate knowledge of friends of Islamic tenets."[17] Khomeini's support of women on the war front was unique, but other male terrorists soon adopted the strategy of including women into their organizations to gain the upper hand, or at the very least, score a few successes against their targets.

In modern-day resistance movements, a Christian Lebanese woman, Loula Abboud, "may have been the model for the first Palestinian women who became suicide bombers in 2002."[18] Before Palestinian women made headlines for conducting a series of terrorist attacks beginning in 2002, Abboud, a dark-eyed, petite 19-year-old, conducted a suicide operation in the Bekaa Valley of southern Lebanon in April 1985, "exceeding all expectations" for men and women in war.[19] Described by her brother as a woman "fighting for the liberation of her own homeland," Abboud's struggle for "self-defense" and to "save the children" is echoed by other women around the world, including the women of the first Palestinian *intifada* who led a campaign to reopen schools, taught underground classes for children, and played an important role in "street activism that directly confronted the occupations forces."[20]

However heroic the modern-day female fighter may be regarded by her community, contemporary women warriors do not compare with their predecessors, whose sacrifice for Islam is venerated by the community in Islamic textbooks, stories, and historical memory. The involvement of early women in jihad is recognized in the Qur'an and *hadith* (Muslim traditions). Women were acknowledged for their valor only after one early Muslim woman questioned the Prophet about the lack of rights for women performing the same duties as men. Her reply came

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[15] Busool, *Muslim Women Warriors*, pp. 34–35.

[16] Qur'an, verse Al-Ahzab 33/35.

[17] "The Ashura Uprising" in *The Words & Messages of Imam Khomeini*, Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of the Works of Imam Khomeini, 1995, p. 11.

[18] Joyce Davis, *Martyrs: Innocence, Vengeance and Despair in the Middle East*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2003, p. 68.

[19] Davis, *Martyrs*, pp. 68–72.

[20] Hanadi Loubani, founding member of Women for Palestine, quoted in Jennifer Plyler, "Palestinian Women's Political Participation: An Interview with Hanadi Loubani," WHRnet, November 23, 2003, online at http://www.whrnet.org/docs/interview-loubani-0311.html (as of May 2006).

in the form of a verse, "Lo! Muslim men and Muslim women, and believer men and believer women, and men who obey and women who obey... Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward."

No Two Conflicts Are Alike

Local conflicts are critical motivators, but each one is unique and must be viewed from a specific set of circumstances, such as the historical framework from which conflict emerges, to assess the factors that drive women in various parts of the world to suicide terror. For instance, aside from being linked by gender, the mujahidaat in Chechnya have little in common with women in Palestine, and women in Saudi Arabia have almost nothing to share with their "sisters" in Uzbekistan. Therefore, different people generate different reactions to local and global conflicts.

Like men, women understand the importance of the propaganda (i.e., the "CNN factor") and fighting for a cause they believe in. No different from men, women have chosen suicide attacks to call attention to their conflict, raising the level of awareness among the world community of the heightened frustration, alienation, and despair experienced in local conflicts. Increasing awareness with instant media coverage, however, has not always guaranteed an end to conflict or increased involvement by regional or other actors, such as the United States, to mediate for a peaceful solution to conflict. In some cases, news of female bombers helps to create more anger and disillusionment from the general population and to motivate other women to commit the same act. For example, four Palestinian women committed suicide attacks within four months after Wafa Idriss's suicide bombing.[21]

While conflicts and motivations vary, a woman's decision to pursue violent action is affected by personal experiences and outcomes. Coupled with the absence of change in her own local conflict, of which she is a part, a woman is more apt to volunteer or be recruited for a terrorist operation to end her own suffering or that of the people she identifies with. Identifying herself with the al Qaeda organization and its goals to reinstate an Islamic rule of law, the leader of women's organization Umm Usama said in a March 2003 interview with the London-based Arab newspaper *Al Sharq al-Awsat*: "We are building a women's structure that will carry out operations that will make the US forget its own name."

Suicide is the preferred tactic when Muslim women believe that their social structure, which is the fabric of an Islamic society, is threatened or has been violated by the prevailing authority. Veteran Palestinian jihadist Leila Khaled said, "[W]e are under attack... the Palestinians are ready to sacrifice themselves for the national struggle for the respect of their just rights," extolling such female bombers as Wafa Idriss.[22] In October 2003, following Idriss's

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[21] Wafa Idriss was the first Palestinian female suicide operative in January 2002. She detonated explosives at a Jerusalem shopping district, killing one Israeli and injuring more than 150 people. Some analysts have argued that she was seeking revenge against occupation and retribution from her husband for being barren and divorced. While personal reasons are cited for her attack, it remains unclear and unknown whether Idriss's unmarried status and other personal factors were taken into consideration before she committed the attack.

[22] Toby Westerman, "Cheerleader for Female Suicide Bombers," WorldNetDaily.com, January 31, 2002.

bombing, Hanadi Jaradat detonated a bomb in the Arab-owned restaurant Maxim in Haifa, Israel, killing 19 people. In a prerecorded excerpt aired by *Al Jazeera* on August 16, 2005, Hanadi said: "By the power of Allah, I have decided to become the sixth female martyrdom-seeker, who will turn her body into shrapnel, which will reach the heart of every Zionist colonialist in my country."[23]

The perceived threat against Islam also serves as a powerful motivator that has justified the use of violence as an effective means of communication. Convinced that the local Muslim community can no longer afford inaction, some Muslim women enlist in operations to ensure the survival of the Muslim community. For the believer of martyrdom, subjugation to the faith (i.e., Islam) is rewarding. The individual, knowing that death is likely, "inspires other Muslims to continue the struggle and the martyr's death is kindling wood for jihad and Islam."[24]

In Islam, the rewards of martyrdom are guaranteed for both men and women alike, regardless of gender, and can be a strong motivation for women seeking to end life with a "bang." Assured of the rewards of martyrdom, women, like men, perceive that they have nothing to lose. Printed in the Hamas monthly publication *al-Muslimah*, Palestinian operative Reem Rayishi said: "I am proud to be the first female HAMAS martyr. I have two children and love them very much. But my love to see God was stronger than my love for my children, and I'm sure that God will take care of them if I become a martyr."[25]

Other women join extremist groups or participate in warfare to protect their honor and dignity. Women in Jammu and Kashmir have formed armed groups to protect their interests, their homes, and their families from Islamic militants, rather than kill in the name of Islam. According to one female fighter, "[W]e were subjected to mental and physical harassment by militants who would force us to provide them with food and shelter, and in some cases, sexual favors,"[26] which prompted women to use guns and grenades for their own survival.

Broadcasting the Mujahidaat

Among the many functions women serve, their increasing role in exploiting the media and technology affords them a greater possibility of broadening their chances for recruitment, even within the most patriarchal Muslim societies, such as Saudi Arabia. The "CNN factor" enables the female fighter to "generate a huge amount of publicity for the cause… [which] enables global awareness."[27] Television, print media, and now the colossal impact of the Internet have raised the profile of the female suicide bomber, enabling her to garner public sympathy and support for her cause as well as motivate other Muslim women worldwide to join the fight.

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[23] "Al Jazeera Airs Special on Female Suicide Bomber," *Al Jazeera*, August 24, 2005.

[24] Ian S. Lustwick, "Terrorism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Targets and Audiences," in Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1995, p. 536.

[25] *Al-Muslimah*, February 2004.

[26] Prakriiti Gupta, "Muslim Women Take Up Arms Against Islamic Militants in Kashmir," *Asharq Alawsat*, September 10, 2005.

[27] Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. p. 39

The use of the Internet has afforded Muslim women in restrictive societies—which adhere to the strict space separation between men and women—the ability to initiate contact with Muslim men, develop relationships, and possibly become full members of radical organizations. For example, Sawt *al-Jihad*, the propaganda arm of the Saudi-based al Qaeda network, could have a significant impact on drawing women to the fight. Its first issue of *Al-Khansaa*—the new online women's magazine and also the name of a pre-Islamic poetess who lost four sons to jihad—made its debut in August 2004. The publication implores Muslim women worldwide to join the war on terror against the perceived enemies of Islam. For example, in an article titled "What Role Can Sisters Play in Jihad?" the anonymous author says, "there are many ways a Muslim woman can participate in Jihad ... the sisters' role on the battlefield [include]: 1. participation in the actual fighting; 2. supporting the fighters in the battlefield; 3. Guard duty and protection."[28] *Al-Khansaa* also glorifies martyrs, including Abu Hajir, the former al Qaeda leader in Saudi Arabia,[29] and celebrates the lives of the early Muslims who have died in battle.

Support for Female Martyrs

To isolate this study from the ideological underpinnings of suicide terror, as delineated by some members of the Muslim clergy, would be to misplace the importance of scripture in determining when and how violence can be used. The debate now being waged in various Islamic circles about the utility of suicide—and, moreover, the use of women in warfare—has divided the Muslim *ummah* (community). Of equal importance is the debate within male-oriented terrorist organizations over the rights of women in jihad.

The Muslim clergy have failed to reach consensus on whether suicide is an acceptable means of warfare, but several scholars in the wake of 9/11 and the July 2005 attacks in London have issued various fatwas (provocations) condemning suicide bombings. The former head of the Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee, Shaykh 'Atiyyah Saqr, has argued that the Prophet Muhammad said anyone who committed suicide would be prohibited from entering Paradise.[30] More recently, a prominent Syrian cleric, Abdel Mon'em Mustafa Abu Halima, issued a fatwa prohibiting suicide operations. And a resident of London, Abu Halima, also known as Abu Naseer al-Tartusi, has said that "whoever hurts a Muslim has no Jihad reward," and has quoted the Prophet as saying:

> [W]hoever murders a non-Muslim enjoying protection under the Islamic state would never smell the scent of Paradise.[31]

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[28] Strategic Arabic Translations, *Al Khansaa*, August 2004.

[29] Abu Hajir was killed by Saudi security forces in June 2004.

[30] "Ask the Scholar," IslamOnline.net, May 21, 2003.

[31] "Salafi Jihadi Trend Theorist Turns Against al Qaeda and Issues a Religious Opinion of the Impermissibility of Suicidal Operations," *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, September 2, 2005.

However, suicide is justified by other clerics, including Doha-based Shaykh Yusuf Qaradawi. Objecting to the term "suicide" because it is "incorrect and misleading," Qaradawi chooses to call suicide attacks "heroic operations of martyrdom." In an interview in an Egyptian newspaper, Qaradawi permitted the use of suicide on the basis that it is the weapon of the weak,[32] and following attacks by Palestinian women in Israel, he issued a fatwa on IslamOnline.net in March 2004, in which he said that "[w]hen Jihad becomes an Individual Duty, as when the enemy seizes the Muslim territory, a woman becomes entitled to take part in it alongside men," even if it means taking off her hijab (headscarf) to carry out an operation.[33]

Riding the Wave of al Qaeda's Success

Once male jihadists gain new recruits and score a few successes in the war on terror, the liberal door that now permits women to participate in operations will likely close. At the same time that a Muslim woman is indispensable to male-dominated terrorist groups and the war effort, she also is expendable. The sudden increase in female bombers over the past year may represent nothing more than women riding the wave of al Qaeda's success, rather than a lasting effort in the global jihad. Male fighters could find it difficult to accept a female operative as the revolutionary vanguard of Islam, while younger members of al Qaeda and like-minded groups could encourage Muslim women to join their organizations. However, there is little indication that these men would allow the mujahidaat to prevail in positions of authority and replace images of the male folk hero. There is also no evidence that Muslim female operatives will have contact with senior male leaders—except to execute attacks—calling into question male leaders' willingness to directly deal with women on an equal footing.

While a female fighter might not enjoy the same status and rank as her male counterpart, her participation in suicide bombings could, in the near-term, provide impetus for other women to participate in future operations. A Muslim female academic states that "by resorting to this tactic [suicide], women would most likely appeal to the female Muslims in the world; that is, to those who are not aware, or have been prevented from becoming aware of the actual teachings of the Qur'an."[34] Suicide arguably attracts women who have a narrow understanding of Islam; that is, they have subscribed to the patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an, rather than casting the religious verses in their historical context. Coupled with the dire sociopolitical conditions under which some Muslims live, these women probably believe that they have nothing to lose in this life but have everything to gain from the Hereafter.

Should suicide attacks become a trend among Muslim women, it would be the exception rather than the rule. After all, the jihad movement is obviously not homogenous, and there are places where social mores are perhaps conducive to more "progressive" treatment of women's

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[32] Middle East Media Research Center, "Debating the Religious, Political and Moral Legitimacy of Suicide Bombings," Inquiry and Analysis Series No. 53, May 2, 2001.

[33] "Ask the Scholar," IslamOnline.net, March 22, 2004.

[34] Interview with female Muslim professor in the United States who teaches courses on Islam and gender, September 2005.

status. Even in Muslim societies in which female fighters are the norm (e.g., Palestinian territories), it still remains unclear whether traditional societal norms will make adjustments to afford women equal rights once the conflict ends.

Subversion and Terrorism: Understanding and Countering the Threat

William Rosenau

Introduction

The ongoing counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the broader international struggle against what has been described as the "global jihad," has reawakened interest in the question of how insurgents and terrorists employ subversion. In Iraq, according to the director of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, "[s]ubversion and infiltration of emerging government institutions [and] security and intelligence services" pose major problems for the Iraqi government.[1] In Bruce Hoffman's opinion, "political subversion combined with armed action is a perennial dimension of insurgency."[2] And in the view of David J. Kilcullen, al Qaeda and the broader jihadist nebula struggling to restore the caliphate are employing subversion to undermine existing governments.[3]

Not since the Cold War have government officials, scholars, and military officers expressed this level of interest in the problem of subversion. Yet despite this renewed recognition that terrorists and insurgents employ subversion—and a general agreement with the late J. Bowyer Bell's assertion that armed rebels are "practiced subversives"[4]—little systematic attention has been devoted to the topic in recent years. This is in sharp contrast to the broader subjects of insurgency and counterinsurgency, which have enjoyed a level of military, academic, and journalistic notice unseen since the mid-1960s. Scholars and practitioners have recently reexamined 19th- and 20th-century counterinsurgency campaigns waged by the United States and the European colonial powers, much as their predecessors during the Kennedy administration mined the past relentlessly in the hope of uncovering the secrets of revolutionary guerrilla warfare.[5] The professional military literature is awash with articles on how the armed services should prepare for what the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) refers to as "irregular war-

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[1] Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, "Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States," statement for the record, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 17, 2005, p. 8.

[2] Quoted in Edward Wong, "We've Seen the Enemy and They Are ... Who, Exactly?" *New York Times*, October 17, 2004, section 4, p. 3.

[3] David J. Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, August 2005, p. 600.

[4] J. Bowyer Bell, "The Armed Struggle and Underground Intelligence: An Overview," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, No. 17, 1994, p. 135.

[5] See, for example, Timothy K. Deady, "Lessons from a Successful Counterinsurgency: The Philippines, 1899–1902," *Parameters*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 2005.

fare," and scholars, after a long hiatus, have sought to deepen our understanding of the roles that insurgency, terrorism, and related forms of political violence play in the international security environment.[6]

Perhaps the lack of systematic analysis can be explained by lingering Cold War–era connotations surrounding the word "subversion," which for some people undoubtedly conjures up disturbing images of McCarthyite red-baiting, political witch hunts, and *Spycatcher*-style paranoia. Indeed, during the Cold War, American policymakers sometimes described the threat of subversion in almost comical, over-the-top language, as Secretary of State Dean Rusk did in April 1962, when he declared that urgent action was required before the "enemy's subversive politico-military teams find fertile spawning grounds for their fish eggs."[7]

Whatever the reason for the current inattention, it would be useful to explore the subversive challenge in more depth. As the conflict in Iraq enters its fourth year and the U.S. global war on terrorism approaches its sixth, it seems certain that terrorist and insurgent threats are likely to remain at the top of the U.S. national security agenda. Indeed, the term "long war" is used increasingly by senior U.S. military officers to characterize the campaign against al Qaeda and the wider jihadi movement.[8] If analysts, military officers, and policymakers are correct in claiming that subversion is an important part of the terrorist and insurgent repertoire, then it will be necessary to develop effective countersubversive measures.

As a first step in developing a more complete understanding of subversion, and what is required to counter it, this article will first discuss the definitions of subversion. Next, it will use a set of case studies to analyze more fully the elements of subversion identified in the section on definitions. In conclusion, this article will provide a set of preliminary recommendations for combating subversive activities in the context of the "long war" against global terrorism.[9]

But first, three caveats are in order. First, it should be recognized that terrorism and insurgency, while sharing some common characteristics (e.g., both are forms of violence employed by non-state actors to further political objectives),[10] are in fact distinct phenomena. Specifically, terrorism is a tactic, while insurgency is a political-military strategy.[11] However,

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[6] For example, see Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, November–December 2005; Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005; and John Mackinlay, "Defeating Complex Insurgency: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan," Whitehall Paper No. 64, Royal United Services Institute, December 2005.

[7] Quoted in William Rosenau, *US Internal Security Assistance to South Vietnam: Insurgency, Subversion, and Public Order*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 88.

[8] See, for example, Patrick Walters, "It's the New Cold War, and It May Go On Even Longer" *Weekend Australian,* February 11, 2006, p. 19, and Francis Harris, "Strategic Rethink as US Digs in for the Long War," *Daily Telegraph* (London), February 4, 2006, p. 14.

[9] For more on this concept, see Simon Tisdall and Ewen MacAskill, "America's Long War," *The Guardian* (London), February 15, 2006, p. 19, and Sharon Behn, "Terrorist Growth Overtakes US Efforts," *Washington Times*, March 2, 2006, p. 13.

[10] David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, "Restructuring Special Operations Forces for Emerging Threats," *Strategic Forum [Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University]*, No. 219, January 2006, p. 1.

[11] The term *terrorism*, as used in this article, is taken from the U.S. Department of State definition, which categorizes it as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandes-

the line between terrorism and insurgency has become blurred. Groups that clearly meet the definition of insurgencies—for example, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarios de Colombia*, or FARC)—have been designated by the U.S. State Department as "foreign terrorist organizations." Labeling a given group "terrorist" is, among other things, a normative judgment—after all, no one wants to be categorized as such—and, as Conor Gearty has observed, "governments will often attempt to condemn their opponents as terrorists, since the public relations victory achieved by this linguistic sleight of hand can be crucial in any ensuing struggle for popular support."[12] While hoping to avoid any further muddying of the definitional waters, this article will consider the use of subversion by groups to which both labels have been applied.

Second, this article will mention the subversive activities of "Dawa-oriented" organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb-ut-Tahrir, which propagate extremist ideology through their missionary activities.[13] While ostensibly nonviolent, and thus falling outside the strict definitions of terrorism or insurgency, movements like Hizb-ut-Tahrir, with its extremist ideology and large, transnational, and clandestine structure, serve as important recruiting grounds for violent Islamist extremist groups.[14] Finally, although some definitions identify propaganda as a component of subversion, propaganda will not be considered directly in this article, since terrorist and insurgent use of such techniques has already been covered extensively in recent academic and professional military literature.[15]

Definitions

Subversion, like terrorism and insurgency, has no universally accepted definition. To scholars such as Charles Townshend, the term is so elastic as to be virtually devoid of meaning, and its use does little more than convey "the enlarged sense of the vulnerability of modern systems

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tine agents." U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2004*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, April 2005, online at http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/45323.htm (as of May 2006). Insurgency is defined as "a protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations." This definition was used by the CIA during the 1980s, and it remains useful today. Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1405-OTI, 2001, p. 4.

[12] Conor Gearty, *Terror*, London: Faber & Faber, 1992, p. 15.

[13] Central Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), *From Dawa to Jihad: The Various Threats from Radical Islam to the Democratic Legal Order*, The Hague: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom, December 2004, p. 27.

[14] Alisher Khamidov, "Countering the Call: The US, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and Religious Extremism in Central Asia," Analysis Paper No. 4, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institution, July 2003, p. 6.

[15] See, for example, Gabriel Weimann, *www.terror.net: How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet*, Special Report No. 116, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, March 2004, and Ron Schleifer, "Reconstructing Iraq: Winning the Propaganda War in Iraq," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 2003, online at http://www.meforum.org/article/735 (as of May 2006).

to all kinds of covert assaults."[16] Indeed, during the Cold War, the British Security Service ("MI5") defined subversion simply as a generalized "hostility to democratic processes."[17] Similarly, within the U.S. national security institutions during this period, subversion was a catchall phrase to describe internal security threats to U.S. friends and allies.[18] And although neither power would accept the label, both Washington and Moscow employed subversion as a tool in their global competition. In the case of the United States, examples include Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) support to the anticommunist (and ultimately victorious) Christian Democrats in the 1948 Italian elections[19] and covert assistance to trade unionists, politicians, military officers, and others in Argentina opposed to President Salvador Allende, who was overthrown in a 1973 coup d'état.[20] Soviet subversion was even more extensive and included the destabilization of democratic governments in Central and Eastern Europe during the late 1940s, covert support for liberation movements opposed to pro-Western regimes (e.g., to the Sandinista National Liberation Front [*Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*, or FSLN] in Nicaragua during the 1960s and 1970s), and secret financial aid to pro-Soviet political parties, such as the Congress Party in India.[21]

For American and British military institutions, the term has different connotations today. For DoD, subversive activities are those actions "designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of regime" that do not fall into the categories of "treason, sedition, sabotage, or espionage."[22] The British Army contributes a useful refinement by identifying subversion as activities "short of the use of force" to erode the strength of the state.[23] Under this definition, subversion can have violent manifestations (e.g., fomenting riots) and is typically employed as part of a broader armed terrorist or insurgent campaign, but it is essentially non-martial in nature. In effect, subversion might be seen as a form of "non-violent

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[16] Charles Townshend, *Making the Peace: Public Order and Public Security in Modern Britain*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 116.

[17] UK Security Service, "About MI5—Cold War: Subversion," undated, https://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/Page126.html (as of May 2006).

[18] See, for example, U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Castro-Communist Subversion in the Western Hemisphere: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., March 4, 1963.

[19] Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, New York: The New Press, 1999, p. 239.

[20] See, for example, U.S. Congress, Senate, Staff Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Covert Action in Chile 1963–1973*, 94th Cong., 1st Sess., December 18, 1975, online at http://foia.state.gov/Reports/ChurchReport.asp (as of May 2006).

[21] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World*, New York: Basic Books, 2005, particularly chs. 3, 17, and 18, passim.

[22] Joint Publication 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, U.S. Department of Defense, April 12, 2001 (as amended through August 31, 2005), online at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/data/s/05148.html (as of May 2006).

[23] British Army, Army Field Manual, Vol. 1, *Combined Arms Operations*, Part 10, "Counterinsurgency Operations" (Strategic and Operational Guidelines), Issue 1.0, July 2001, p. A-3-2.

terrorism."[24] Frank Kitson, the British counterinsurgency practitioner and theorist, defined subversion with characteristic directness as "all illegal measures short of the use of armed force taken by one section of the people of a country to overthrow those governing the country at the time, or to force them to do things they do not want to do."[25] Although Kitson and other authors claim that subversion is sometimes employed in the expectation that such nonviolent actions on their own will lead to a government's downfall,[26] examples of regime change by subversion alone are difficult if not impossible to find. More typically, terrorists and insurgents employ a double-edged sword, with subversion forming one edge and the "armed struggle" the other.

Subversion sometimes precedes armed conflict; this was certainly the case with Maoist insurgencies during the Cold War. Analysts recognized the importance of identifying and counteracting subversion during the early stages of an insurgency, since the failure to do so would give the movement a time advantage that would be difficult and costly for the incumbent power to overcome.[27] As such "popular" insurgent organizations matured, and their mass base expanded, subversive activities typically became more overt, with riots and other "physical" manifestations forming a larger part of the movement's seditious repertoire.[28] The current insurgency in Iraq has followed a different pattern. Unlike classic Maoist movements, there was no protracted period of subversion (and apparently no real political preparation of any kind) before the insurgents took up arms. Insurgent violence broke out shortly after the downfall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003.

However, it is worth noting that while most insurgent movements use subversion, a far fewer number of terrorist groups employ it. A lack of manpower is part of the explanation; small terrorist entities simply lack the personnel to engage in subversion in any substantial way. During the 1980s, left-wing European terrorist groups such as the Revolutionary Organization 17 November, the Red Army Faction (*Rote Armee Fracktion*, or RAF), and Action Directe each had fewer than 50 full-time members, and the Islamist *groupuscules* that carried out the 2004 Madrid railway station bombing and the 2005 attacks on the London transport system were even smaller. Terrorists may also be more favorably disposed to violent (as opposed to nonviolent or "less-than-violent") political behavior. While the subject of terrorist motivation is beyond the scope of this article,[29] it should be mentioned in passing that violence appears to occupy a much more prominent place in the terrorist *imaginaire* than it does in the insurgent

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[24] This phrase is taken from Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon: A Study of Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952, p. 238.

[25] Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping*, London: Faber & Faber, 1971, p. 3.

[26] Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, p. 83; Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1967, p. 28.

[27] Adrian H. Jones and Andrew R. Molnar, *Combating Subversively Manipulated Civil Disturbances*, Washington, D.C.: American University, Center for Research in Social Systems, October 1966, p. 61.

[28] George K. Tanham, "Indicators of Incipient Insurgency," unpublished paper, 1988, p. 16.

[29] For more on individual and group motivations, see Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998, and Rex A. Hudson, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why: The 1999 Government Report on Profiling Terrorists*, Guilford, Conn.: The Lyons Press, undated.

worldview. Analysts have detected among individuals who become terrorists a burning desire to "escape the words"[30] and accelerate history through violent action. In the words of one member of the Weather Underground, "We are tired of tiptoeing up to society and asking for reform, we are ready to kick it in the balls."[31] Finally, blood-drenched attacks are more likely than subversion to draw the media's gaze and with it the all-important attention of a wider audience (both domestic and international).[32]

Forms of Subversion

In addition to fomenting riots, what other activities might be characterized as subversive? Subversive actions can be grouped into three interrelated categories: (1) establishing front groups and penetrating and manipulating existing political parties; (2) infiltrating the armed forces, the police, and other institutions of the state; and (3) generating civil unrest through demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts. These categories will be discussed in turn below and will be explored more fully in the case studies.

Front Groups

To gain public credibility, attract new supporters, generate revenue, and acquire other resources, terrorist and insurgent groups need to undertake political activities that are entirely separate, or appear to be entirely separate, from the overtly violent activities of those groups. Sometimes this is achieved by infiltrating political parties, labor unions, community groups, and charitable organizations. Working in and through existing organizations, which provide a facade of legitimacy that might otherwise be unobtainable, terrorists and insurgents can bolster political allies, attack government policies, and attract international support. For situations in which infiltration is too difficult, terrorists and insurgents may establish their own front groups— that is, organizations that purport to be independent but are in fact created and controlled by others. Front groups, notes John Thompson, "can draw the sting of disapproval away from the cause and re-direct it against the state or institution that the terrorists are attacking."[33] During the Cold War, front groups were established by many insurgent and terrorist groups, including the Farbundo Martí National Liberation Front (*Frente Farbundo Martí de Liberación Nacional*, or FMLN), the Viet Cong, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), and

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[30] The phrase is from Nathan Leites, "Understanding the Next Act," *Terrorism: An International Journal*, Vol. 3, Nos. 1–2, 1979, p. 32. In her study of Italian left-wing terrorism, Donatella della Porta notes that "previous experience in violent political activities predisposes individuals to involvement in terrorist groups." Donatella della Porta, "Recruitment Processes in Clandestine Political Organizations: Italian Left-Wing Terrorism," in B. Klandermans, ed., *International Social Movement Research*, Vol. I, Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1988.

[31] Quoted in della Porta, "Recruitment Processes in Clandestine Political Organizations," Klandermans, *International Social Movement Research*, 1988, p. 34.

[32] As McCormick observes, "In a political sense, at least, terrorists begin to disappear when they drop off the headlines." Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 6, 2003, p. 496.

[33] John Thompson, "Other People's Wars: A Review of Overseas Terrorism in Canada," Mackenzie Institute, 2003, http://mackenzieinstitute.com/2003/other_peoples_wars4.htm (as of May 2006).

Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path"), and today, groups as diverse as al Qaeda, the Kurdistan People's Congress (KONGRA-GEL, formerly known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK), Lashkar-i-Taiyibah in Jammu and Kashmir, and the LTTE operate through political, social, and charitable fronts.[34]

Infiltration

Terrorists and insurgents who penetrate state institutions derive at least five obvious benefits. The first is information: Infiltrating organs of the state, particularly the security forces, can help generate invaluable information about the government's capabilities, intentions, and weaknesses. Such infiltration, therefore, might be considered a form of intelligence collection against the state. Second, penetration can give terrorists and insurgents opportunities to plant false information, redirect the state's potentially lethal attention, force authorities to misallocate resources, and otherwise derail the state's campaign. This too is a type of intelligence operation; like counterintelligence carried out by government intelligence services, it aims to (secretly) disrupt the organization and operations of enemy forces. Third, successful infiltration may lead to opportunities to steal government funds, weapons, equipment, and other resources. Fourth, penetration allows insurgents and terrorists to "talent spot" potential recruits and to identify candidates for blackmail or bribery. Finally, infiltration can contribute to the terrorist and insurgent strategy of weakening and delegitimizing the state.[35] Just as infiltrators can help derail the state's counterterrorist or counterinsurgency campaign, so too can they degrade the state's ability to provide key public services by misdirecting resources, stealing funds, and spreading false and divisive rumors among the government workforce.

Infiltration of government institutions has been a tactic of revolutionaries at least since the time of Lenin, who concluded more than a century ago that "unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of a serious struggle. That we must work among the troops goes without saying."[36] But the tactic is by no means confined to Marxist-Leninist groups. Al Qaeda reportedly claims to have infiltrated key government agencies within the United Arab Emirates,[37] and in Iraq, as mentioned above, insurgents have reportedly infiltrated the armed forces, the police, and intelligence services.[38] Such penetrations can have deadly consequences. An insurgent mortar attack on an Iraqi National Guard

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[34] Rohan Gunaratna, "The Post-Madrid Face of al Qaeda," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Summer 2004, p. 95; Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Pakistan: NGO Linked to UBL, Kashmiri Militants Appeal for Funds*, SAP 20021211000125, December 11, 2002; Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, "Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK)," undated.

[35] For more on delegitimization strategy, see Christopher C. Harmon, "Five Strategies of Terrorism," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Autumn 2001.

[36] V. I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 11, 1965 (originally published in 1900).

[37] Niles Lathem, "Qaeda Claim: We 'Infiltrated' UAE Gov't," *New York Post*, February 25, 2006, online at http://www.nypost.com/news/worldnews/64126.htm (as of May 2006).

[38] Inspectors General, *Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training,* Washington, D.C.: Departments of State and Defense, July 15, 2005, p. 22; "Insurgents 'Inside Iraqi Police,'" *BBC News*, September 21, 2005, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4266304.stm (as of May 2006).

base north of Baghdad in October 2004 killed four and wounded 80. According to a press account, the attack "came at the exact time guardsmen were mustering for a ceremony, which is seen by experts as an indication that those firing off the mortars held inside information."[39]

Civil Unrest

As with infiltration, fomenting riots, organizing strikes, and staging demonstrations can have a corrosive effect on the power, presence, and capabilities of the state. Such unrest is first and foremost an affront to governmental authority, and the failure to suppress it can have damaging political repercussions for the state by demonstrating that it is incapable of living up to its fundamental responsibility to maintain public order. At the same time, however, overreaction by the security forces can play into the hands of terrorists and insurgents by seeming to confirm the a typical opposition claim, namely that the state is a fundamentally violent, repressive institution. The death of a demonstrator at the hands of the Berlin police in 1967 helped radicalize a generation of German young people, who came to believe that the Federal Republic of Germany was a fledgling Nazi state—a key component in the ideology of subsequent terrorist groups, most notably the RAF.[40]

Civil unrest can prove useful in a variety of other political and operational ways. Large-scale discord can deplete the resources of the state by forcing the authorities to deploy additional police, pay overtime, and in some cases send troops into the streets. With the security forces otherwise occupied, insurgents and terrorists gain a respite from the incumbent's campaign against them.[41] Additionally, the greater presence of the security forces in response to unrest, in the form of patrols, roadblocks, and searches, can help the cause of the terrorists and insurgents by seeming to confirm the opposition's inevitable charge that the state has "militarized" the conflict and is now "at war" with the people.

Strikes can cause serious economic damage. As Carlos Marighella observed in his *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, perhaps the most widely read revolutionary "how-to" manual of the 1960s:

> [S]trikes ... although they are of brief duration, cause severe damage to the enemy ... [by] disrupting daily life, occurring endlessly, one after the other, in true guerrilla fashion.[42]

Even less violent forms of unrest, such as worker absenteeism, passive resistance, boycotts, and deliberate attempts to cripple government agencies by "overloading the system" with false

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[39] Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, "Estimates by US See More Rebels with More Funds," *New York Times*, October 22, 2004, p. 1.

[40] For more on this point, see Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2004, p. 39, and Jillian Becker, *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang*, Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1977, pp. 42–43.

[41] U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, "The Urban Threat: Guerrilla and Terrorist Organizations," *Small Wars Journal*, 1999, online at http://www.smallwarsjournal.com/documents/urbanthreat.pdf (as of May 2006).

[42] Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, undated, online at http://web.archive.org/web/20010421163235/www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1587/miniman.htm (as of May 2006).

reports, can have powerfully disruptive effects, both economically and politically.[43] According to one scholar associated with Hizb-ut-Tahrir, "a regime could be brought down through acts of civil disobedience such as strikes, non-cooperation with the authorities, or demonstrations."[44]

Case Studies

Although virtually all insurgent groups, and some terrorists, employ subversive tactics, three organizations in particular are worth particular attention, given the high degree of emphasis they devoted to these covert and clandestine activities. These cases are not intended to be representative; instead, they illustrate the high end of subversive capabilities. One group is contemporary, and the other two are from the Cold War era. While none is Islamist, the three cases taken together provide insights that can be useful in the context of the current "long war" against al Qaeda and other jihadi groups.

Viet Cong: The Proselytizing Program

The communist opposition in South Vietnam embraced a strategy that employed both violent and nonviolent methods in an interconnected way. What Douglas Pike termed the National Liberation Front for the Liberation of Vietnam's (NLF's) "violence program"[45] included terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and conventional military operations. The NLF's "political struggle" included a range of actions intended to build support among the Vietnamese people, mobilize the population, and weaken the ability of the Saigon government to prosecute the war. For the NLF, however, the political struggle was by no means secondary to the armed campaign; rather, these two elements were conceptualized as equal and complementary components of the overall campaign against the Saigon regime.[46]

Particularly significant in terms of subversion were the front associations of farmers, teachers, students, and other sectors of Vietnamese society that allowed the NLF to exert control over the population, weaken the family and other social institutions, and offer a new form of security and belonging, which would be provided by the revolutionary movement.[47] Front groups further aided the political struggle by spreading antigovernment rumors and mounting

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[43] Andrew R. Molnar, *Undergrounds in Insurgent, Revolutionary, and Resistance Warfare*, Washington, D.C.: Special Operations Research Office, November 1963, p. 102.

[44] Quoted in International Crisis Group, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Responding to Hizb ut-Tahrir*, Asia Report No. 58, Brussels, June 30, 2003, p. 7.

[45] Douglas Pike, *Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam*, Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1966, p. 85.

[46] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, "The Vulnerability of Non-Communist Groups in South Vietnam to Political Subversion," record 31052, CIA Collection, May 27, 1966, p. 14.

[47] U.S. Information Service, Office of Policy and Research, *The Viet Cong: The United Front Technique*, R-13-67, record 128321, Douglas Pike Collection, April 20, 1967, p. 21.

demonstrations intended to disrupt tax collection, conscription, or Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) operations against the Viet Cong.[48]

What the NLF termed the *binh van*, or "proselytizing," program, aimed at suborning ARVN and civilian government personnel, was a key feature of communist subversion in South Vietnam. From its beginning in 1961, the program worked to

- Encourage unit and individual desertions from the ARVN
- Create discord between ARVN forces and government personnel and their U.S. advisors
- Lower the morale of troops and civil servants, and encourage them to perform their duties in a mediocre manner
- Promote pro-NLF activities and sentiment within government agencies and the armed forces[49]
- "Creat[e] an antiwar movement among the US troops to weaken their fighting spirit and make them fear a protracted war."[50]

What techniques and tactics did the binh van program employ? Proselytizers used a spectrum of appeals, ranging from the target's sense of nationalism to anti-U.S. sentiment to the supposed inevitability of the NLF's victory.[51] These appeals were conveyed through leaflets and radio broadcasts, but direct person-to-person communication was most important. Pike describes what he terms a "classic binh van struggle":

> [It] typically would involve a sharp-tongued old woman buttonholing a young and ignorant private in the market place of a small village, berating him because of the killing and destruction of the war ... and in general making him feel alien, miserable, and unpatriotic.[52]

Blackmail and other forms of coercion sometimes played a role; soldiers and civil servants would be entrapped in a crime and then induced to serve as NLF agents.[53] Promises of leniency and monetary rewards were offered to encourage desertion or defection. ARVN defectors and captured troops, using pamphlets, letters, and loudspeakers, urged their former comrades among Saigon's "puppet troops" to join the revolution.[54] Families of soldiers were also key targets for NLF proselytizers. In the words of one NLF document, "the families of the ene-

[48] U.S. Information Service, *The Viet Cong* , p. 20.

[49] U.S. Information Service, *The Viet Cong*, pp. 256–258.

[50] South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces, "Binh Van Work in 1971," record 150003, Douglas Pike Collection, 1971.

[51] U.S. Information Service, *Viet Cong*, p. 258.

[52] U.S. Information Service, *Viet Cong*, p. 264.

[53] U.S. Information Service, *Viet Cong*, p. 260.

[54] "Quang Da PRP Zonal C.C. Directive on Binh Van Activities," record 151475, Douglas Pike Collection, June 20, 1972, p. 4.

my's soldiers had to be convinced of the Revolution's righteousness."[55] To lower troop morale, family members were encouraged to write to their sons in the ARVN about death, disease, and destruction on the home front.

The overall effectiveness of binh van is difficult to judge. Although Pike concludes that the program failed to achieve its ultimate goal of degrading Saigon's ability to wage war against the Viet Cong,[56] we do know that tens of thousands of NLF members and supporters penetrated police and paramilitary forces, the intelligence services, the civil service, and the ARVN,[57] and that these institutions were plagued by low morale, corruption, and incompetence. Whether these deficiencies were a function of NLF subversive actions or simply by-products of more systematic problems within South Vietnam is hard to assess. But given the size of the binh van effort, and the competence and sheer fanaticism NLF cadres, it seems safe to conclude that subversion had some corrosive effect on Saigon's war effort.

The FMLN: Activating the Masses

El Salvador's FMLN, an umbrella organization composed of Marxist-Leninist political parties and guerrilla armies, employed many of the same subversive tactics perfected by the Viet Cong.[58] As with the NLF, the FMLN throughout the 1980s employed a two-pronged strategy against the U.S.-backed government designed to weaken the regime militarily and politically and, ultimately, force it to collapse. FMLN military operations were intended to demonstrate feebleness of the El Salvador armed forces and thus the pointlessness of American security assistance.[59] Alongside the armed struggle was a sophisticated political campaign intended to activate the masses and garner international support for the FMLN and international condemnation of the El Salvador government. As in Vietnam, front groups of peasants, workers, teachers, and students were employed widely. These fronts, in the words of a 1987 State Department study, functioned as

> manpower pools for the guerrillas and have been used to stage demonstrations, disseminate propaganda, and occupy public buildings—churches, foreign embassies, and government offices—as well as to augment guerrilla units.[60]

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[55] "NLF Binh Van Program: Circa 1968," Record 14887, Douglas Pike Collection, 1968.

[56] U.S. Information Service, *Viet Cong*, pp. 267–268.

[57] John Prados, "Impatience, Illusion, and Asymmetry: Intelligence in Vietnam," in Marc Jason Gilbert, ed., *Why the North Won the Vietnam War*, New York: Palgrave, 2002, p. 139.

[58] FMLN leaders in fact made a close study of Vietnamese struggles against the French, Japanese, and Americans. Max G. Manwaring and Court Prisk, eds., *El Salvador at War: An Oral History*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988, pp. 162–164.

[59] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *El Salvador—Guerrilla Capabilities and Prospects Over the Next Two Years: An Intelligence Assessment*, Directorate of Intelligence, MORI DocID 761619, October 1984, p. 17.

[60] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "The Insurgency in El Salvador," May 8, 1981, p. 5.

They did so as part of the FMLN's strategy to isolate the government domestically and internationally and to gain political and financial support for the insurgency.[61]

The FMLN's use of subversion differed from the NLF's in several interesting respects. First, given the relatively more industrialized nature of the Salvadoran economy, infiltration of labor unions and the creation of labor fronts were far more important elements in the FMLN's strategy. Factions and disarray within democratic trade unions made them vulnerable to penetration by the FMLN and its supporters. During the mid-1980s, unions dominated by or sympathetic to the rebels engaged in frequent work stoppages and mounted major demonstrations against government ministries and private-sector firms,[62] with more than 100 work stoppages and strikes taking place in 1985 alone, according a U.S. government estimate.[63]

And while the NLF relied on international front groups to raise funds and build support abroad for the revolution, the FMLN's use of foreign support networks was more formalized and gave the insurgency considerable strategic depth. In the United States, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) was reportedly founded at the urging of Farid Handal, brother of Jorge Shafik Handal, the general secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador, an FMLN component organization, to agitate on behalf of the insurgency.[64] The FMLN also recognized the importance of the international human rights movement and exploited the real vulnerability of the Salvadoran government to charges that it systematically murdered and otherwise abused its political opponents. Human rights organizations created or infiltrated by the FMLN systematically echoed charges of abuse leveled by FMLN-controlled student and labor groups.[65] Human rights activists linked to the FMLN maintained extensive ties to sympathetic trade unionists, clergy, students, and politicians in North America, Western Europe, and Latin America, and were successful in persuading Dutch, German, and Greek parliamentarians to publicly criticize the Salvadoran government's admittedly abysmal human rights record.[66] Finally, the FMLN was innovative in its use of domestic and international humanitarian and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to generate financial resources. Donations from Western NGOs to FMLN fronts were a major source of insurgent funds.[67] Money from legitimate aid projects focusing on food, construction, medical care, and agricultural development was routinely skimmed by individuals deemed "politically reliable"

[61] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador's Insurgents: Resurrecting an Urban Political Strategy," MORI DocID 761621, Directorate of Intelligence, September 1986, p. 7.

[62] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador: A Net Assessment of the War: An Intelligence Assessment," MORI DocID 761620, Directorate of Intelligence, February 1986, pp. 13–14.

[63] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador's Insurgents," p. 3.

[64] Ron Arnold, "No 'Regular Ordinary Person,'" *San Diego Union*, July 6, 1987, p. B7.

[65] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador's Insurgents," p. 6.

[66] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador's Insurgents," p. 6.

[67] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador: Government and Insurgent Prospects," Directorate of Intelligence, February 1989, p. 16.

by the FMLN and then transferred to the guerrillas. Donors, of course, were never told that a portion of their contributions was destined for the FMLN.[68]

As in the case of the NLF, it is difficult to assess the overall effectiveness of the FMLN's subversion campaign. American intelligence reports from the time suggested that despite widespread infiltration of trade unions, FMLN control was hardly total, as demonstrated by the fact that the insurgents were never able to call a general strike.[69] The gradual improvement of the government's human rights performance during the late 1980s undermined the credibility of FMLN-controlled human rights groups.[70] That said, other aspects of the FMLN's subversive campaign must be judged a success. Front groups operating outside El Salvador appear to have helped generate considerable international support for the FMLN and reduced the international standing of the El Salvador government. In addition, front groups made a notable contribution to insurgent resources by attracting donations and diverting them from abroad.

The LTTE: Subversion on Five Continents

The operational sophistication of the Tamil Tigers is remarkable. The LTTE's cadre of suicide bombers, the so-called Black Tigers, have turned suicide terrorism into an art form, having murdered Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa in May 1991 and India's former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi two years later. But as remarkable as the LTTE's military capabilities are, the depth and sophistication of the group's subversive activities are even more impressive and are probably without parallel among contemporary insurgent and terrorist organizations.

The LTTE operates a staggering number of front groups across five continents, including the Tamil Rehabilitation,[71] the World Tamil Association, the World Tamil Movement (WTM), and the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils (FACT).[72] In South Africa, the LTTE has infiltrated legitimate Tamil diaspora groups, including the Natal Tamil Federation and the South African Tamil Federation, and has established a network of sympathetic Tamil organizations across the country.[73] As well, LTTE operatives have reportedly infiltrated South African military units and intelligence services.[74]

LTTE front groups serve (1) as tools for hounding critics of the LTTE through demonstrations, mobs, and harassing phone calls, emails, and letters; (2) to spread LTTE propaganda within Tamil diaspora communities and among wider non-Tamil audiences; and (3) to raise

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[68] Defense Intelligence Agency, "JTIC Special Advisory 05-90—Salvadoran Insurgent Repopulation of Their Strategic Rear Guard Areas, Part I," November 1990, section 6.

[69] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador: Government and Insurgent Prospects," p. 11.

[70] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "El Salvador's Insurgents," p. 6.

[71] Stewart Bell, "RCMP Calls Tamil Fundraising Group for Tsunami Victims 'Front for Tamil Tigers,'" *National Post* (Toronto), January 19, 2005.

[72] U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, April 2003, p. 114.

[73] Rohan Gunaratna, "LTTE Chase the Propaganda War in the ANC's South Africa," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (online edition), April 1999.

[74] Rohan Gunaratna, "Intelligence Failures Exposed by Tamil Tiger Airport Attack," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (online edition), September 2001.

funds. During the late 1990s, the LTTE raised an estimated $1.5 million a month in just the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia combined.[75] However, the LTTE has relied on other sources of funds beyond Tamil diasporas. As with the FMLN, the Tamil Tigers skim money donated to fronts and LTTE-dominated NGOs that provide social services and other support to Tamils in Sri Lanka and in the diaspora.[76] According to the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, "It is part of the LTTE modus operandi to siphon off funds that are intended for rehabilitation programs in Sri Lanka."[77]

Through CISPES, the FMLN sought to influence politics and policy within the United States by lobbying members of Congress, generating favorable press coverage, and mobilizing public support. In Canada, home to one of the world's largest overseas Tamil populations, the LTTE has mounted an even more sustained and sophisticated campaign to shape the political environment. Through its fronts, the Tamil Tigers have made a major effort to cultivate politicians, including members of parliament; parliamentarians have attended pro-LTTE rallies staged by the WTM.[78] In July 2000, the minister for international cooperation, Maria Minna, and the finance minister, Paul Martin (who later served as prime minister), attended a Tamil New Year's celebration in Toronto organized by FACT, a group designated an LTTE front by the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS).[79]

As with the other two cases examined in this article, it is difficult to definitively judge the overall effectiveness of LTTE subversive activities. Although reportedly urged by CSIS to ban the LTTE, Martin's Liberal Party government repeatedly refused to do so, but whether this was a function of Tamil Tiger subversion or a product of some other concern (e.g., civil liberties) is hard to say.[80] However, as in the case of the FMLN, the LTTE clearly has employed front groups to attract and divert donations to the insurgency.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Subversion is perhaps most closely associated with Cold War–era, mass-based, Marxist-Leninist groups. While it is certainly true that communists from the time of Lenin onward have used subversion, a wide variety of other violent underground movements continue to employ these tactics. These movements range from ethno-nationalist terrorists, such as Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA), which has operated hundreds of political front groups in

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[75] Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, p. 50.

[76] Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, p. 51.

[77] Quoted in Bell, "RCMP Calls Tamil Fundraising Group for Tsunami Victims 'Front for Tamil Tigers.'"

[78] Stewart Bell, *Cold Terror: How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism Around the World*, Mississauga, Ontario: John Wiley & Sons Canada, 2005, p. 57.

[79] Tonda MacCharles, "Alliance Questions Why Assets Not Frozen," *Toronto Star*, November 10, 2001, p. A6. The government of Martin's successor, Stephen Harper, designated the LTTE a terrorist group on April 10, 2006.

[80] Stewart Bell, "Tories Would List Tigers as Terrorists," *National Post* (Canada), January 18, 2006, online at http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/story.html?id=1f4d7889-519a-42ef-a081-b655df64347e (as of May 2006).

Spain's Basque region,[81] to jihadists, who use Muslim NGOs, such as the International Islamic Relief Organization, to covertly fund terrorist activities.[82] There are indications that elements of movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb-ut-Tahrir, which serve as terrorist recruitment pools and as covert "transmission belts" for radical ideologies, are attempting to infiltrate the civil service, the judiciary, and schools in the Muslim world and elsewhere.[83] Infiltration of government ministries and the security forces, the use of front groups, and fomenting civil unrest are likely to remain key elements of the subversive repertoire of the terrorist and the insurgent. Indeed, even within the United States itself, possible terrorist infiltration of police forces poses a very real threat, according to the deputy chief of the Los Angeles Police Department.[84] In sum, subversion cannot be dismissed as a Cold War problem irrelevant to the "long war."

Developing a more complete understanding of how terrorists and insurgents use subversion is an obvious first step in developing more effective responses. Policymakers should also consider three additional measures: (1) improving counterintelligence, (2) building police capacity, and (3) developing public information strategies to expose subversive measures.

Strengthen Counterintelligence

Al Qaeda operatives, according to published accounts, have penetrated the security services of several Middle Eastern countries.[85] Iraq's armed forces appear to be heavily infiltrated, and, given the prominent internal security role of the military in many developing countries, it seems likely that terrorists and insurgents will continue to view this institution as an enticing target for subversion. Given that U.S. counterterrorism strategy requires the close cooperation of the intelligence services of friendly nations, effective counterintelligence is required.[86] Unfortunately, much of the U.S. counterintelligence capacity developed during the Cold War has atrophied. Within agencies such as the CIA, DoD, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, counterintelligence has long been viewed as a professional backwater. In addition, counterintelligence has been starved of resources relative to other intelligence activities, and as a result, according to the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (known as the Silberman-Robb commission), U.S. counterintelligence remains "fractured, myopic, and only marginally effective."[87] In the words of one

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[81] Giles Tremlett, "Court Bans Eta Front Groups," *The Guardian* (London), May 5, 2003, p. 13.

[82] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Information on U.S. Agencies' Efforts to Address Islamic Extremism*, Washington, D.C., GAO-05-852, September 2005, p. 17.

[83] AIVD, *From Dawa to Jihad*, pp. 40–41.

[84] Michael Berkow, "Homeland Security: The Internal Terrorists," *Police Chief*, Vol. 71, No. 6, June 2004, online at http://policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_arch&article_id=319&issue_id=62004 (as of May 2006).

[85] Faye Bowers, "US Unready for Rising Threat of Moles," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 8, 2005, p. 1.

[86] For more on U.S. efforts to bolster the countersubversive capabilities of friendly governments during the Cold War, see Rosenau, *US Internal Security Assistance to South Vietnam*, particularly chs. 1 and 5.

[87] Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, *Report to the President of the United States*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2005, p. 486.

senior U.S. intelligence official, "counterintelligence is not a priority."[88] Admittedly, counter-intelligence includes a variety of missions beyond countersubversion, such as penetrating and disrupting hostile intelligence services. But counterintelligence provides an invaluable set of tools and tactics for identifying, monitoring, and neutralizing the subversive activities of terrorists and insurgents.

Build Police Capacity

Subversion is far more than just an intelligence problem. Well-trained, professional police attuned to local conditions and capable of building and maintaining strong relationships with the public can play an invaluable role. But if police are to be effective, they will also have to be trained to identify patterns—to "connect the dots," to use a post-9/11 cliché—so that subversive activity can be spotted and neutralized. Effective countersubversive policing creates a detailed picture of a community in a way that allows anomalies—the arrival of outsiders, the influx of large amounts of cash, or the change in leadership of a community group—to be detected. In this respect, countersubversive policing is a form of community policing that identifies emerging threats and works to neutralize them with the aid of local individuals and groups.[89] Countersubversive policing also entails criminal investigation, but as Dennis J. Duncanson concludes, uncovering and neutralizing subversion goes well beyond routine detection:

> There is a farreaching [*sic*] conspiratorial network available to cover the culprits' traces. Witnesses and informants are frightened to speak without elaborate precautions, while the detectives themselves may be exposed to the same perils as the people they are trying to free from fear.[90]

Develop Public Information Strategies

Some aspects of countersubversion require covert or clandestine approaches (e.g., developing human sources within the organizations engaged in subversion). However, in many cases, exposing and publicizing subversive activities can do much to help neutralize them. The ability to remain invisible is arguably the most powerful weapon at the disposal of the terrorist and insurgent. This is particularly true during the early stages of the conflict, when the state has an enormous material superiority but typically is unable to "see" the opposition. Losing that invisibility, and being exposed to the gaze of authorities, can be lethal for an underground movement. Committing terrorist acts, and maintaining what Gordon McCormick terms a "violent presence," is essential for attracting recruits and resources and for sustaining the group

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[88] Bill Gertz, "Counterintelligence Posts Vacant," *Washington Times*, February 10, 2006, p. 1.

[89] For more on the police role in counterterrorism, see Paul Howard, *Hard-Won Lessons: How Police Fight Terrorism in the United Kingdom*, New York: Manhattan Institute, December 2004, and Timothy P. Connors and Georgia Pellegrini, *Hard-Won Lessons: Policing Terrorism in the United States*, New York: Manhattan Institute, July 2005.

[90] Dennis J. Duncanson, "The Police Function and Its Problems," in Dennis J. Duncanson, Richard A. Yudkin, and Barry Zorthian, *Lessons of Vietnam: Three Interpretive Essays*, New York: Asian-American Educational Exchange, 1971, p. 18.

over time, but it brings with it the danger of exposure.[91] Subversion is a form of deception. Donations are solicited on false pretexts, individuals are misled concerning a front group's true purpose, and morale-shattering lies are spread within military units and government ministries. A public education campaign that exposes such deceit could do much to undercut the nonviolent elements of the insurgent or terrorist campaign.[92]

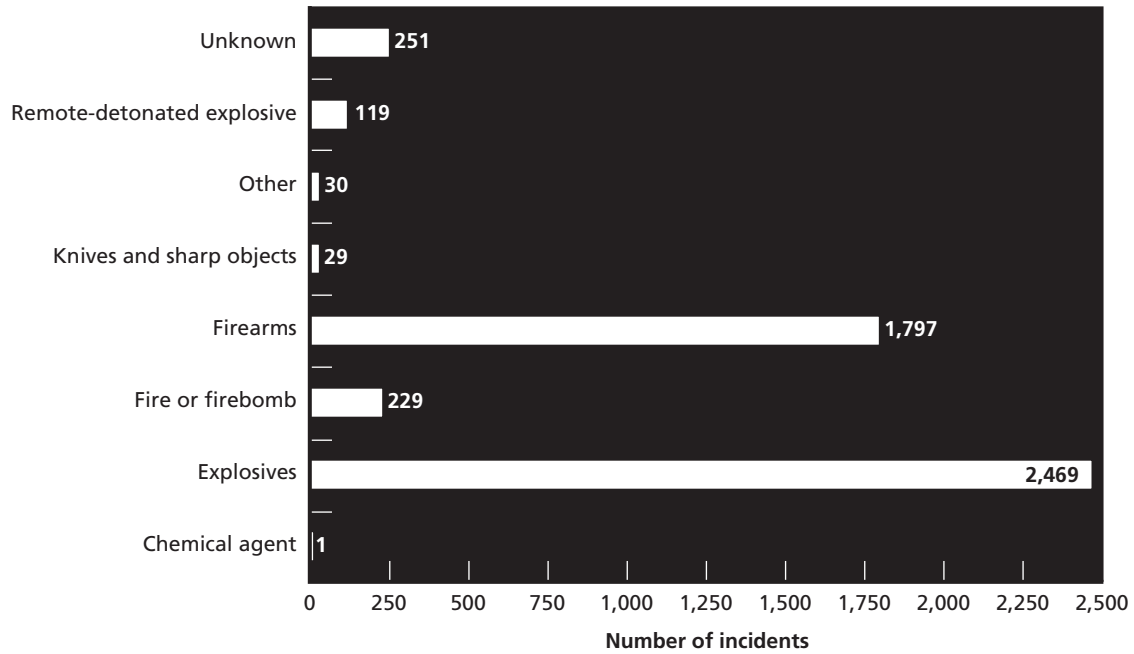[91] McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," p. 496.

[92] A similar point is made in Stephen T. Hosmer and George K. Tanham, *Countering Covert Aggression*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, N-2412-USDP, January 1986, p. 11.
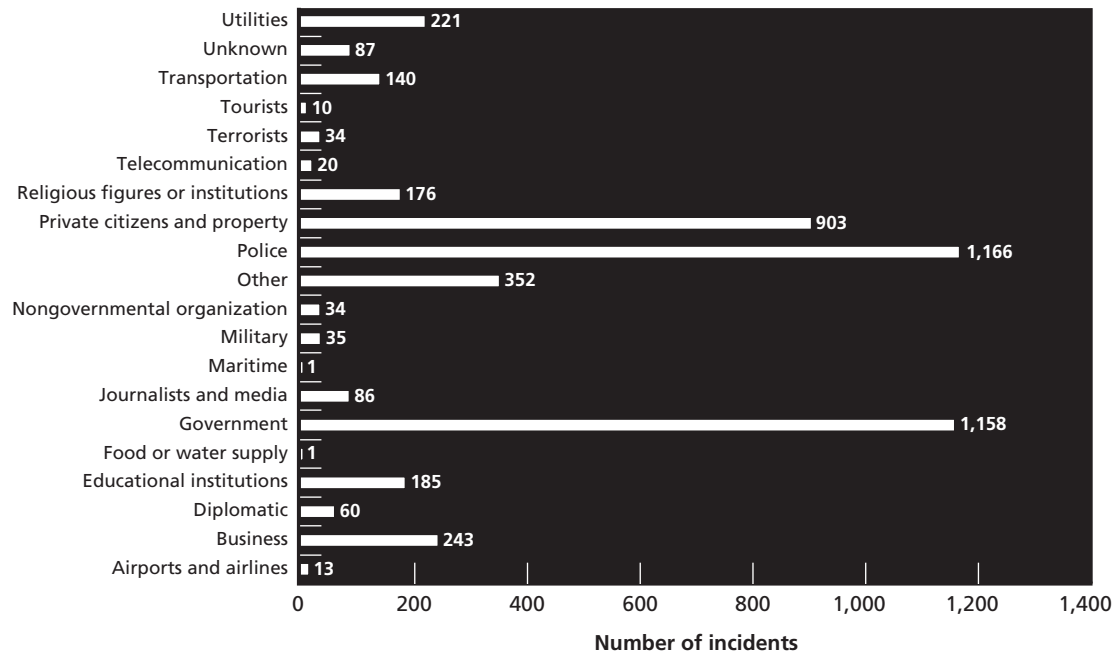
Database

Terrorism Statistics for 2005

The following figures are based on RAND-MIPT Terrorism Incidence data, captured from January 1, 2005, to December 31, 2005.

Incidents by Weapon

Weapon	Number of incidents
Unknown	251
Remote-detonated explosive	119
Other	30
Knives and sharp objects	29
Firearms	1,797
Fire or firebomb	229
Explosives	2,469
Chemical agent	1

Number of incidents

Incidents by Target

Target	Number of incidents
Utilities	221
Unknown	87
Transportation	140
Tourists	10
Terrorists	34
Telecommunication	20
Religious figures or institutions	176
Private citizens and property	903
Police	1,166
Other	352
Nongovernmental organization	34
Military	35
Maritime	1
Journalists and media	86
Government	1,158
Food or water supply	1
Educational institutions	185
Diplomatic	60
Business	243
Airports and airlines	13

Number of incidents

International Incidents by Regions

Western Europe
7%

East and
Central Asia
1%

Africa
2%

Eastern Europe
2%

Southeast Asia
and Oceania
3%

Latin America
5%

South Asia
14%

North America
0%

Middle East/Persian Gulf
66%
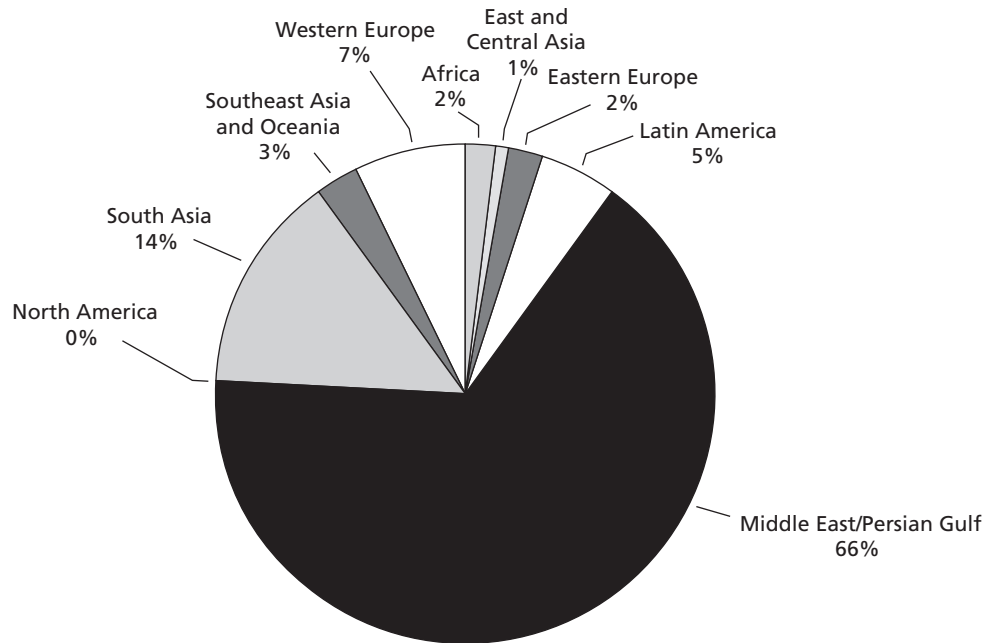
Domestic Incidents by Region

Western Europe
5%

East and
Central Asia
0%

Africa
1%

Eastern Europe
3%

Southeast Asia
and Oceania
9%

Latin America
3%

South Asia
18%

North America
0%

Middle East/Persian Gulf
61%