THE EVOLUTION OF TERRORISM AS A GLOBAL TEST OF WILLS:
A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT AND PERSPECTIVE

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Preface

When I started to write this article I found that I was largely drawing on material from a number of my publications. I was initially concerned that I would not take advantage of the extensive material that now exists in the field of terrorism, but I reconsidered my concern when I realized that the use of my writings could provide a personal narrative on the evolution of a scholar and his chosen specialty long before the study of contemporary terrorism was recognized as a field of academic inquiry and of public and governmental action. Moreover, the use of this material enabled me to see how the development of my studies over the years reflected changes in our understanding of terrorism and assessments of the future of an enduring threat. In effect, I had the opportunity to look backwards and forwards in regards to my research and writing on what is now a major threat in regards to national and international security.

I hope that this study raises issues that most assuredly should be discussed in understanding the causes, dynamics and outcomes of terrorism. I also hope that this monograph will act as an incentive for the public to use the excellent material available for them at the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) and its recently acquired Professor Stephen Sloan Collection. I hope to continue through my writing to contribute additional material to it and to the important work of the MIPT.

Introduction

  Threats, acts and campaigns of terrorism remain a central concern for those responsible for domestic, regional and international security. Moreover, immediately after each incident the public feels more vulnerable and uncertain, as traditional and new threats impact the perception of their security as individuals, families, friends, communities and members of the public. While people will naturally seek to return to a sense of normalcy after an attack, the next bombing, hostage taking or other form of terrorist violence will add yet another sense of physical and mental vulnerability to the next potential victims of terrorism. Despite the rhetoric of determination that "the war on terrorism" is slowly being "won," the politics of anxiety are manifestations of success by those who have declared their own war against all. Terrorists have continued to enhance their ability to intimidate a global audience.

  When one considers that despite its ancient lineage modern terrorism was only initiated in the 1960s, it is shocking to see how it was refined with murderous efficiency in the decades that followed. Moreover this new century unfortunately has all the hallmarks of becoming a new era of terrorism that may guide the directions of political and civil life in the years to come. Despite the evolution of terrorism, there is a lack of clarity much less consensus on what should be done to prevent or counter this "clear and present danger." The current debate, especially in the U.S. Presidential race, demonstrates the failure to fully comprehend the nature of the threat. As a result, all the candidates have failed to enunciate well thought out and cohesive policies that they would act on if elected. At this time there is no reason to believe that a major incident before or immediately after the election would not again lead to an overreaction by national, state and local governments as well as the public at large.

  As an academic who has been involved in the study of political violence in the 60s and has engaged in research, teaching and consulting on terrorism since the 70s, one could say that I was almost present at the creation when there was a very slow and grudging recognition of the need to understand and counter a threat that was primarily viewed within the United States as "what happens to other people in other countries."[1] The failure within the public and corporate sectors as well education on

all levels to address the challenges posed by terrorism would essentially remain until a series of mental and physical body blows forced the public to recognize that it could no longer be business as usual when confronted with determined and increasingly sophisticated adversaries. The first bombing of the World Trade Center on February 26, 1993 was a wake-up call to the threat. But to many, however shocking the event, it was a manifestation of the dangers of living in a large, coastal city. The myth of the interior of the country being spared such threats remained until the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. Commentators often proclaimed the "end of the age of innocence in the heartland," but perhaps more telling was the fact that it was also the end of the age of insularity and parochialism. Large-scale terrorism was no longer what happened "to other people in other countries," or for that matter large cities.[2]

   Given my background in academia, I have been fortunate not to face the daily grinding pressures of those in the policy and operational arenas, who must continually deal with threats and acts of terrorism. I do have what practitioners might call "the luxury" to stand back and, as the Duke of Marlborough said, "look over the horizon" in regards to engaging in both mid- and long-term assessments of terrorists' tactics, strategies, motivations and capabilities. However, senior policy makers and officials must increasingly devote their energies to assessing longer term threats. Only then can they more effectively formulate strategies to deal with protracted and evolving challenges of terrorism as they impact on the security concerns ranging from the state and local jurisdictions to the realm of national and international affairs.

The Power of Conventional Wisdom in Academia and Beyond: The Victory of Inertia and Instrumentalism over Innovation

   Though academics had the luxury of not being burdened by immediate contingencies that required action, they often squandered the opportunities afforded them. There were a number of reasons for this. At the outset, the study of terrorism did not have an academic home and it should not come as a surprise that to some degree contemporary terrorism is still an academic orphan. While terrorism comes from a long tradition, the historical study of terrorism largely focused on the French Revolution and the reaction to it. The "Reign of Terror" and the activities

of the Committee of Public Safety provided the foundation for the study of modern terrorism with the emphasis on how states engaged in "terrorism from above," "regime terrorism" and "state terrorism." This focus would also be carried over to Political Science where the role of terrorism in revolutions would be an area for both comparative case studies and initial theory building. The emphasis on what was also called "establishment terrorism" would become particularly significant with the rise of modern totalitarian states.[3] Such studies proliferated especially after World War II, particularly addressing the German experience, and with the start of the Cold War, the state terrorism of the Soviet Union against its own citizens and those of the satellites.

What is especially striking in regards to the study of terrorism as an aspect of totalitarian rule and the more generalized study of political violence, conflict and warfare was the view within the social sciences that the resort to systemic violence was a form of political pathology that in effect was intellectually quarantined from the comparative study of government and the conduct of relations among nation-states. This focus may have been a manifestation of a general bias within American Political Science. That is, within the discipline there was the predilection to support the pluralistic consensus ideal where matters of interest group politics and policies would be resolved through compromise. This model, therefore, emphasized that the absence of physical conflict was the norm and that violence signified that something was wrong in the political system; political violence was somehow abnormal in political life. This orientation ignored a reality – in politics a political system could have a monopoly on legitimate force not solely based on consensus. In fact, in many countries it was the monopoly itself that enabled the political system to survive, not a democratic process and the will of the people. It could be suggested that force, which could be viewed to be violence clothed in legitimacy, was a major element, not an aberration of global political life. One could contend that there was "the functionality of violence," particularly in areas where there were authoritarian systems on one hand or weak, non-existent political systems on the other.[4] The myopic view of the key role of terrorism as an aspect of political violence is also a result of a form of intellectual amnesia in the United States. Certainly, there is a long history of extremism in the United States as practiced by such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, which in many instances engaged in terrorism with the support of state and local governments that fit within the realm of "terrorism from above." Moreover, in the

tumultuous 1960s, such groups as the Weather Underground, the Black Panthers and others that engaged in domestic terrorism, were perceived by many in the public and government to be a serious domestic threat at the time, despite their small numbers. They acquired a degree of legitimacy from their core members and supporters.   Such groups, however, were studied under the heading of political extremism, but not terrorism *per se*.

   This marginalization had another deleterious effect on terrorism as a discrete and legitimate line of political inquiry. That is, the study of terrorism did not fit into the often shallow and narrow "mainstream" of the discipline, a stream that was largely guided by the recognized scholars of the day. Terrorism would be placed on the backburner. Therefore, a graduate student interested in terrorism research would find it difficult to find a faculty advisor who shared this interest, much less an expert in a field that was yet to be recognized. Moreover, an assistant professor seeking tenure would not risk studying what was viewed to be a marginal topic; particularly one that did not offer meaningful publication opportunities until the 1970s, when the first journals dedicated to the study of terrorism were founded. In addition, since conventional research was primarily incremental, based on refining and contributing to past theories and their application, there was little incentive to commit oneself to the emergence of contemporary terrorism which represented a significant new force and, therefore, a discontinuity in the study of politics.

   There was, however, a growing body of literature on the role of terror tactics and strategies related to a particular type of warfare – insurgency. Initially, these studies analyzed anti-colonial conflict in such places as Malaya and Algeria, and they would become particularly salient to the United States as a result of the Vietnam conflict. The emphasis on analyzing terrorism as an aspect of an insurgency continues today, particularly in the face of events in Iraq and Afghanistan, but as we shall see, one can suggest that there is a new form of insurgency that does not fit within the characteristics of traditional insurgency. We are now confronted with the emergence of a form of insurgency that gives terrorism a global outreach.

The Failure to Recognize the Impact of Technology on the Changing Nature of Terrorism

Just as there was a grudging awareness of the terrorist threat until events outpaced inquiry, so was there another failure – the failure to recognize what could be called the first phase of modern terrorism. This failure of recognition still continues as an impediment to developing policies and other means to engage in effective counterterrorism.

The first failure was not the result of revolutionary, but rather, evolutionary technological change. Commercial aviation had matured in the 1950s and the jet age had just started. While the first skyjacking had taken place in 1931, the world was caught by surprise when terrorists began to seize aircraft at an alarming rate.[5] The multiple skyjackings at Dawson's Field from September 6 - 9, 1970 that led to the civil war in Jordan underscored the reality that terrorists were innovative in using technology while the authorities often missed such innovation. Governments and corporations were ill-prepared to deal with a new form of terrorism – "non-territorial terrorism" – a form of terror that is not confined to a clearly delineated geographical area.[6] As a result, terrorists could literally strike global targets of opportunity within a matter of hours and could seize hostages in the medium of the aerospace. Consequently, they could ignore the arbitrary boundaries of the nation-state, the limitation of sovereignty and the subsequent jurisdictional disputes that continue to act as major impediments to international cooperation today.

The second change was perhaps more revolutionary. For with the introduction of television and satellite communication, terrorists could dramatize their cause and engage in "armed propaganda" for a global audience. The Munich Massacre in September of 1972 was tragically perhaps the best example of the terrorist "spectacular." Again the terrorists, not the authorities, were on the cusp of using advancing technologies.

It was this transformation in communication that formed the basis for another revolution that now marked the second phase of modern terrorism. The development of the internet and the World Wide Web starting in the 1980s led to a new apex in terrorist innovation. Now they

could not only seize hostages in the aerospace, but also seize the ability to communicate to an ever-increasing global audience in the anonymity of cyberspace. Through the internet, they would develop an organizational form and capability that created a daunting challenge to the conventional governmental bureaucracies through the development of netwar. The impact of this profound change will be discussed later.

It is therefore ironic that while terrorists might justify their actions on the basis of their commitment to traditional values and a rejection of modernity, they are more than willing to employ technological innovation in the pursuit of their objectives.

The Failure to Recognize and Adjust to Fundamental Changes in the International Environment: Creating Further Opportunities for the Terrorists.

If policy makers, strategic thinkers and others could not predict, much less discern, how terrorists would effectively employ emerging technology, those in academia and those involved in the formulation and conduct of international relations were also caught by surprise by the fundamental changes that were taking place in international politics. While one can have the benefit of hindsight, the fall of the Soviet Union as a super power – a remarkably fast fall – did come as a shock to most academics. The conventional wisdom dictated that even if there was a "convergence" between Washington and Moscow, it would be a slow process, and therefore super power competition would continue to be an international fact of life. The fall of the Berlin Wall was also the fall of an old, "proven" set of assumptions based on theories of deterrence that "the balance of nuclear terror" prevented nuclear warfare. But both Washington and Moscow recognized how close they came to Armageddon during the Cuban Missile Crisis, so they chose to engage in proxy warfare instead of direct confrontation. The use of terrorism was viewed to be part of this indirect competition, leading to the questionable assumption that "A Terror Network" directed by Moscow and its surrogates had emerged to engage in indirect warfare against the West.[7] Regardless of whether such a Soviet network ever existed, the debate about these broad networks still exists, although now it is Iran, Syria and other governments that provide support and guidance for them.

In a broader and a more fundamental way, it was the loss of the bipolar framework of international politics that created even more confusion. The "New World Order" gave way to the "New World Disorder," where the international arena was increasingly ambiguous and new players replaced those whose policies, doctrines, capabilities and intentions were known by their national competitors. These new players included non-state actors, which are increasingly challenging the primacy and monopoly of force of the nation-state in international affairs. Such actors have been in existence even before the Westphalian model marked the recognition of the nation-state system. Crime syndicates, pirates and the use of mercenaries in support of a particular monarch show that current non-state actors have a long historical legacy. It is particularly ironic that the multinational corporation and its often major adversary – the non-territorial terrorists – both ignore the arbitrary boundaries of the nation-state and have their own armed units to defend or promote their objectives. As a result, there has been a quantum growth in highly trained, non-governmental security forces in what can be called "Privatizing Public Violence."[8] The playing field of politics has become even more ill-defined since we have now witnessed the emergence of "gray areas" – those regions where control has shifted from legitimate governments to new-half-political, half-criminal powers.[9] In this environment, the lines between family feud, clan warfare, tribal and ethnic conflict, and the activities of criminal organizations are no longer clear. In many instances marriages of convenience have replaced ideological or national allegiances.

Perhaps the most fundamental changes in the international system are the result of the yet to be fully understood disorderly processes of globalization. The impacts of globalization go far beyond the topic of this article, but one of its major characteristics may help in understanding the present and future developments in terrorism. That is, globalization, in a sense, represents both an expansion and a contraction of the international community. The expansion is largely the result of the impact of modern technology, ranging from advances in transportation to communication, especially now with the internet. We have become more interdependent, because we can now expand our personal horizons through our physical travel and our virtual travel on the internet. We are functionally more interdependent, since globally we are confronted with both the vulnerabilities and advantages of being increasingly tied to industrial and post-industrial technologies that have the capacity to make our lives

either easier or more difficult. The breakdown of an electric grid or a major virus in a computer system can cause individual and mass disruption. We are now suffering from acute technological dependency. We have also witnessed the profound impact that globalization and modernization has on those who may be willing to take advantage of modern technology but reject the secular culture, the call for democratization and the impact of a mass culture largely emanating from the West on their traditional social, political and religious order. These individuals and groups do not wish to "Go Back to the Future," but rather "Back to the Past." They may call for a contraction of their idea of what constitutes their community or its expansion in the international arena, in order to represent their own form of political/religious/social/economic self-determination (or a mixture of all of those) and other elements of identity. The veneer of the always potent force of separatism that was often hidden by super-power hegemony during the Cold War has been erased. However, this quest for community goes beyond traditional separatism from an existing state. As in the case of the Pan Slav Movement that led to World War I, the call for regional and transnational religious self-determination can be seen in the appeal of Islamic fundamentalism and those extremists who pursue their goal of a global Caliphate through terrorism. Given these developments those involved in understanding and combating terrorism will either adjust to the contradictory forces of globalization or let the terrorists remain the innovators of carnage and violence.

The Future Operational Environment: Old and New Threats

   As a long-term observer who has been involved in the study and analysis of terrorism, I fully recognize the dangers inherent in attempting to predict future threats, techniques, acts and campaigns of terrorism. In the first place, engaging in short-term assessment is vital if one is going to have actionable intelligence or prevent, deter or respond to a threat. But such short-term assessments are largely based on very perishable and outdated information, given the operational flexibility of the terrorists. Aside from the obvious high-value and symbolic targets, the terrorists have a vast constellation of physical and human targets from which to select. Moreover, even when obvious potential targets are hardened, security personnel for all intents and purposes are engaging in "target displacement." Secondly, the clandestine nature and small size of

terrorist groups (especially their combat cells) make them very difficult to penetrate through technical means. Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), for example, will not be effective if the adversaries employ face-to-face communication, and now the internet offers whole new areas to those who would seek to avoid the interception of their communication. What is of course vital is the use of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) assets, but it is exceedingly difficult to penetrate an organization where the price of admission may be to engage in an illegal act or one that is essentially based on family, clan and other close ties. In addition, even when there are well-established groups, it may be difficult to acquire the necessary information, since they have confused authorities by changing their names when taking credit for operations, or not taking credit at all. Finally, and perhaps most challenging, is the fact that increasingly there are single cells that may engage in an act and then recede into the shadows. Such homegrown groups may have little if any relationship to a broader organization and their only ties may be with a general movement or ideology. Nevertheless, the need to penetrate these groups remains vital, and hopefully a new generation in a growing counterterrorism community will be up to the task.

While it is also challenging, one can and should engage in a broader strategic analysis that can assist policy makers, analysts and operators to discern both continuity and change in longer-term terrorist threats and operations. Such an assessment is always fraught with dangers, as predictive capabilities in the longer-term are difficult. In addition, this assessment well recognizes that existing major conflicts may not only continue but be expanded, although there is always hope that apparently intractable conflicts can be resolved, as in the case of Northern Ireland. At the outset, one can expect traditional, territorial-based terrorism as part of an insurgency and driven by such groups as separatists will not only continue, but also intensify. As noted earlier, the reaction against globalization will continue to appeal to ethnic, religious and other groups that will engage in terrorism in pursuit of their own form of self-determination. This trend will probably be aided by the fact that the old legalistic boundaries of existing nation-states are increasingly challenged by the existence of psycho-social boundaries that ignore the constructs of the often colonial imposed borders. Moreover, the existence of the areas where no one government or group dominates will give further opportunities for both sub- and transnational groups to assert their right to independence. We may be entering a period of self-determination gone

wild.   The strategic demands to counter terrorism will also be onerous given the fact that in addition to combating those who use terrorism as a tactic in traditional territorial insurgences, we will now have to address non-territorial terrorism that has morphed into a global insurgency. While countering such an insurgency can in part draw on past doctrine to fight so-called "small wars," the reality is that in a global insurgency, counter insurgency organizations can no longer solely rely on the techniques involved in strengthening a threatened government or winning public support away from the insurgents. What government should be strengthened if the insurgency is international in scope? What population is to be won over if the terrorist attacks are initiated thousands of miles from a disputed strife zone? How does one engage an enemy who justifies his actions, for example, as a response to the crusades in medieval times? [10]

These separatist movements that often occurred in the past in the Third World will increasingly appear, but not as the result of the imposition of arbitrary boundaries during the colonial period. One can suggest that the post-industrial states of Europe (which have had their share of separatist movements) and increasingly Asia will be future major battlegrounds for separatist terrorism. This does not mean that such groups will succeed, but they will engage in terrorism as an assertion of their identity and frustration, fed by their sense of marginalization as a rapidly growing minority inspired or supported by transnational ideologies, movements and groups. Certainly the Jihadists have and will encourage terrorism in their "war" against the West.

Terrorism may also be exacerbated in North America and particularly the United States fed by the increasingly heated debates on immigration that could move beyond political rhetoric and political mobilization to violence and terrorism between anti-immigration vigilantes and illegal immigrants and their respective supporters. It should, however, be noted that there have been successful or progressing campaigns that are lessening the demands by separatists in various countries. The experience in Northern Ireland and the Canadian use of political resolution of potential conflicts, for example, hold out hope that deeply rooted animosities can be resolved through effective political, economic and social campaigns and programs.

It should be noted that while contemporary attention has focused on international terrorism, the reaction against immigration, the distrust of government at all levels and a survivalist desire to return to an idealized past may feed the anger of right-wing individuals and groups that created the environment where Timothy McVeigh in part found his source of inspiration to bomb the Murrah Building. Domestic acts of terrorism by American citizens will be a continuing threat, despite the current focus on international terrorism. This Rightist drift will probably also continue to impact European politics in the long-term. The reaction against immigration has found willing support in the United Kingdom, France and now the traditionally liberal, open societies of Denmark, The Netherlands and Sweden, which will probably continue to face the threat of modern terrorism on their soil.

Particularly significant areas of long-term future terrorist strife will, in all probability, include Africa, both north and south of the Sahara. In the former case, domestic terrorism will continue to be fueled by the Jihadists in Morocco and the adjoining states. South of the Sahara, the low level of legitimacy of government, the rampant corruption and deeply entrenched ethnic tensions may resurface in a particularly virulent form of mass terrorism, ethnic cleansing and genocide. The open scars of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the continued violence in Darfur, the reassertion of ethnic conflict and the reluctance of present leaders to accept the results of open elections will promote more terrorism against and by regimes.

Clearly, terrorism motivated or justified by religious belief, which was not viewed to be an incubator of international terrorism until the fall of the Shah in Iran, will in all likelihood remain an enduring threat. Islamic extremists should be taken at their word. Al Qaeda and the others are committed to a protracted conflict justified by their interpretation of their history and their interpretation of Islam. They have the capacity to engage in individual acts and sophisticated campaigns of domestic, regional and international terrorism in their pursuit to establish the Caliphate. While it may be a vision that will not become a reality, it is a compelling one to the "True Believer." It is a vision that is recruiting a new and educated generation of young men and women, many of whom may not be religious but are attracted to the cause as a result of their feelings of marginalization from society and their desire to establish their own identity.[11]

One can unfortunately also anticipate that various cults will follow in the tradition of Aum Shinrikyo, whose sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system on March 20, 1995 is often cited as the first major use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists. The specter of a disaffected, college-educated individual with impressive technological training and who may turn his education against the technological order cannot be understated. While the fear of nuclear threats has largely focused on "rogue" and highly unstable states with a potential for acquiring nuclear weapons, the possibility that a "techno-cult" could develop its own forms of weapons of mass destruction cannot be dismissed as a nightmare scenario in a novel.

What is especially troublesome is that the cult and the religious extremist who practices terrorism may share the following trait. Whether in the former case they wish to destroy society or in the latter case totally transform it, in both instances they are not concerned about public opinion. In the cult, the eclectic beliefs of the charismatic leader may justify any action; to the extremist the justification may be given in a religious interpretation, however erroneous. Unfortunately, mass terrorism by technology will probably increase in the next decades.

Finally, as noted earlier, we are now confronted by "the privatization of violence," which will probably become even more significant in the years to come. The proliferation of private security groups and companies will probably accelerate, as governments may feel that they lack the capabilities and resources to effectively provide security for their citizens and the citizens share the belief. These "new mercenaries" will increasingly have the trained personnel, equipment, resources and organization to rival the security forces of respective governments.[12] At the same time, they will not, unless appropriate legislative action is taken, be accountable for their actions to the degree of a regular police or military force. Moreover, they will not have the legal constraints placed on governmental intelligence agencies to acquire information. They will use open sources to acquire what they desire. In a number of instances, they will be employed by a government to provide both legitimate and unfortunately illegal services. We will also see these security forces being involved in a rapidly growing counterterrorism industry. It is troublesome to wonder what would happen if these government-sanctioned security forces were used to support regime repression in

various countries. It is even more vexing to consider that they might be involved in warfare and terrorism as free standing private entities. One must keep in mind that the line between countering terrorism and engaging in it is blurred. Moreover, the skills required by the counterterrorists may also be utilized in engaging in terrorism. There is a danger that these security groups will cross the line and be the "hired guns" for various criminal enterprises, and for that matter, even terrorist groups. The old mercenary, "The Dog of War," may be transformed into the new mercenary, "The Dog of Terrorism."

The Technological Enhancement of Terrorist Organizations – Netwar

As noted earlier, the introduction of the internet led to the development of netwar, a development that initiated a second phase of contemporary terrorism. In addressing netwar, one is tempted to focus on its technology. Certainly, such a technology is important either to deny terrorists a means of communication or by the same token to provide governments with the capabilities to protect their businesses and the public against attacks on the internet, which can be quite disruptive to our daily lives. Moreover, the internet can be an offensive weapon used by both sides to engage in one of the aspects of information warfare. What is especially striking and a particular challenge to government is that netwar provides the terrorists with an organizational structure that governments find hard to adjust to, much less counter. The following definition does not specifically focus on terrorism, but it effectively lays out the type of organizational structure that terrorists have so effectively developed and used over the years. Netwar

> "is an emerging mode of conflict (and crime) at societal level
> short of traditional military warfare in which the protagonists
> use network forms of organization and related doctrines,
> strategies and techniques attuned to the information age.
> These protagonists are likely to consist of dispersed organizations,
> small groups and individuals who communicate, coordinate and
> conduct their campaigns in an internetted manner, often without
> a precise central control. This netwar differs from modes of
> conflict and crime in which the protagonists develop formal, stand-
> alone hierarchical organizations, doctrines and past strategies."[13]

The influence of the internet as a form of netwar has enhanced the capabilities of terrorists in a number of ways. Two stand out. In the first place, terrorists will increasingly use the internet as a means to engage in propaganda, recruitment and developing and disseminating terrorist tradecraft and plans for individual or coordinated acts of terrorism. Through the medium of cyberspace, they can now initiate increasingly complex operations without being limited by the need for face-to-face communication and can enhance their ability not to be compromised, since they are relatively anonymous in the vacuum of cyberspace. They now have the advantage of continuing the use of compartmentalized cells, but such cells will no longer act as a barrier for the sharing of intelligence and plans. The ability of the cellular structure of terrorist groups to coordinate operations has been electronically enhanced by enabling present and future individual terrorists and organizations to achieve a degree of unity of action without revealing their intentions, capabilities and actions to authorities. As noted earlier, authorities are seeking to neutralize this technology advantage, but terrorist innovation remains an increasing challenge with the continuing evolution of netwar.

Secondly, the terrorist will continue to refine their capabilities to use the internet as an offensive weapon against the vulnerable information infrastructure of the government and the private sector. More specifically, they will seek to engage in what could be called an asymmetric form of netwar where the terrorists can make the possession of extensive and complex counterterrorism databases a liability to the governments who increasingly rely on them. The terrorists also have the capability to engage in the disruption of the particularly complex tasks associated with information handling in the digital age. Moreover, in the future, those who engage in netwar may not always have to resort to physical acts of terrorism to achieve their goals.

We may be witnessing the emergence of "virtual terrorism," where the terrorists will have the ability to "to alter and magnify their threat capabilities by altering the perception of the people watching through the use of the internet and other forms of communication," by either staging or effectively creating rumors that an act of terrorism has taken place.[14] Virtual terrorism may have a particularly long shelf life in the world of alternative global communication that is the mark of web sites, chat rooms and the ever-changing technology associated with the internet.

Perhaps the most onerous challenge in countering netwar will not be in the realm of technological innovation, which governments and post-industrial societies are very capable of engaging in, but rather in the more demanding task of breaking away from the inertia that still characterizes modern, large-scale bureaucracies.

The fact is that the major characteristics of bureaucracy may not be essentially suited for combating terrorists and their organizational structure. The emphasis on large bureaucracies, specialization, the differentiation between line and staff functions and complex hierarchies of different organizations that may not interact are characteristics least likely to counter terrorist organizational innovation. Traditionally, terrorist organizations consisted of small cells, were essentially flat (since leadership often was embedded in the cell), had a great deal of flexibility in selecting targets and had a unity of purpose. These aspects gave them a major advantage over cumbersome governmental bureaucracies. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that even if there is a significant hierarchy, local cells can still largely act independently as a result of the internet without compromising their security. Moreover, we have now witnessed the development of single cell organizations composed of individuals who may take inspiration from an organization, ideology or movement, but act on their own. Consequently, to combat terrorist organizations, governments need to consider mirroring their organization, by developing their own counterterrorism organizational designs. For in the world of terrorism, small may not only be beautiful, but also lethal.

Admittedly, there are major problems associated with developing counterterrorist cadres, especially in a democratic political system, given the following consideration. The challenge of giving such an organization the necessary flexibility to carry out its work, yet at the same time hold it accountable for its actions, is a challenge that has characterized the whole spectrum of clandestine and special operations in the past. Accountability will only take place if there is meaningful oversight based on an agreement by those involved as to what are the limits to utilizing a necessary counterterrorism organization to not only prevent, but also to preempt terrorism.[15] Unfortunately, the response, especially in the United States, has emphasized the need for reorganization and size to counter terrorism since 9/11. This response has led to the development of the Department of Homeland Security, with its 22 agencies and over 180,000

employees. While this approach is still to be fully tested, the concern is that such a centralized and large organization has added yet another barrier to combating those who engage in asymmetric warfare. Turf battles and jurisdictional gridlock at the national, state and local levels still take place precisely at a time when a unity of action is required. This does not mean to suggest that progress has not been made in various areas. As Homeland Security evolves, there hopefully will emerge both a formal and perhaps, more significantly, an informal counterterrorism community that moves beyond traditional hierarchy and is willing to share information at all levels, both horizontally and laterally, not only within the United States, but also with foreign governments. A community of counterterrorism need not be a distant dream.[16]

Conclusion: Points to be considered

   Having consulted and worked with those responsible for countering terrorism on the domestic, regional and international levels, I have a deep appreciation of the problems a growing counterterrorism community faces, as well as the challenges posed by the continuity and change that mark the continuing evolution of terrorism as a global security threat. I wish there could be some "silver bullets" to solve the crisis, but that of course is not the case. However, I would suggest some basic points that should be considered in refining our capabilities both in the United States and internationally to not only effectively defend against, but also to take the initiative against those who engage in terrorism.

   First, it is imperative that the political leadership at all levels convey to the public that terrorism is a protracted and often non-territorial form of violent conflict. Unless the message can be effectively conveyed to the public, we will continue to overreact after each major attack and then fall into complacency until the next incident. There needs to be a recognition that, ultimately, the struggle against terrorism is a global test of wills. Unfortunately, it is too often the terrorists who have the determination to engage in a long term war of their own making, for in their view, they have time, history and religion on their side. Moreover, episodic government responses to terrorist attacks in the form of increased funding and reorganization are no substitute for long-term, consistent policies within and among states to strengthen the will of the people to meet a protracted danger.

Second, in meeting the danger, the public needs to be educated in regards to the major elements of terrorism. They must understand the goals of the terrorists, and that they are not engaging in "mindless violence" but seek to intimidate a global audience through fear. By so doing, terrorists wear down the resolve of the governments and their citizens. An informed public will not simply react viscerally to the latest carnage they see through the mass media. Certainly, an emotional reaction is understandable, but armed with knowledge the viewer will not give in to fear and anger, which in the final analysis are major goals of those who practice terrorism. Equally important, the public must recognize that overreaction plays into the hands of their adversary, by enabling the terrorist to engage in a self-fulfilling prophesy. That is, the terrorists will seek to have their provocative acts create a public demand for government action, which may result in draconian, authoritarian measures taken in the name of security. There is a vital need for finding the complex middle ground between reconciling security and civil liberties, but it is a ground that must continually be sought.

Third, there is a related requirement to develop educational programs on terrorism at all levels. Even on the primary level, students should have a basic understanding of terrorism, for they see it each day on the media and portrayed in movies and video games. By not understanding the nature of terrorism, their fears are amplified. Too often, for children and adults, it is what we don't understand that we are most fearful of. It is through education that the generalized fear of terrorism can be lessened, thereby countering the "fear multiplication" intentionally caused by acts of terrorism.[17] Curriculum should be developed on understanding terrorism as an integral part of education in middle and high schools. It is important to develop courses that do not promote anxiety but rather give the students an understanding of a threat that is and will continue to be a reality in their own and political life. Finally, in colleges and universities, terrorism education will enable individuals to address such complex issues as reconciling security and civil liberties in a democratic system. But beyond that, such an education may not only help to promote interest in international affairs, but also hopefully provide the foundation for those who wish to be involved either in academia or in government as specialists on terrorism. Well-educated students with a background on terrorism are vitally needed if we are to

have a new generation of individuals who will specialize in the study of a major form of international violence.[18]

Fourth, we will not develop the necessary policies and resolve to combat terrorism unless the government and the public at large develop the political will to combat terrorism. This will not take place if there is a failure of leadership, particularly on the national level accompanied by extreme partisanship. There are and will continue to be good and valid disagreements particularly in regards to the current conduct of U.S. foreign policy in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond as well as in reference to "the war" on terrorism, but one must keep in mind that the terrorist threat is very real and there will be additional attacks on U.S. interests overseas and also domestically. Despite impressive advances in countering the threat, there can never be a fully fail-safe system, especially in the open society in which we are fortunate to live in. It is incumbent now (especially among those vying for the Presidency) to move beyond the sound bites and rhetoric that accompany campaigns and more fully elaborate on what their policies would be if they assumed office. In developing such policies, it would be useful if they could find a common ground against a common enemy. Such common ground could encourage the development of a bipartisanship that is so badly needed today and in the years to come.[19]

Finally, one must recognize that there are real limits in regards to what the United States can do either unilaterally or multilaterally in countering the potent force of those who engage in terrorism and justify it through their misinterpretation of the basic precepts of a great religion. Ultimately, it will have to be the Islamic community that will have the challenge of decoupling terrorism from their religion and supporting more moderate voices to take the lead in addressing the challenges Islam faces in reconciling modernization and tradition, a challenge other religions also face. The stakes are especially high since the "war on terrorism" is, in a sense, not only a battle for men's hearts and minds, but also for men's souls.

Notes

(1) Stephen Sloan, "Almost Present at the Creation: A Personal Perspective of a Continuing Journey," *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, Summer 2004. My interest in political violence and terrorism was in large part the result of my field experience. In 1965, I went to Indonesia to study indoctrination programs under the Sukarno government. However, my research abruptly changed as I witnessed a watershed time in Indonesian History – the attempted coup that started on September 30, 1965. In the period following the attempt, perhaps more than 500,000 people were killed. The full figure will never be known. See my first book, *A Study in Political Violence: The Indonesian Experience*, Rand McNally, 1972.

(2) Like other Oklahomans, the bombing of the Murrah Building had personal meaning to me, my wife Roberta and daughter Maya. We lived 10 blocks from the bomb site, and I was there from about 40 minutes after the explosion and would be there for the next two weeks. As a specialist on international terrorism, I was always concerned about domestic threats and ironically had my students in my terrorism class engage in surveys of potential targets in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, which included the Murrah Building. I never thought terrorism would almost literally come home as our house shook during the explosion. My long term concern about the possibility of domestic attacks was shared with one of the great supporters of my early research and simulations of terrorists incidents – Michael T. McEwen. In 1978, we conducted one of the first surveys on terrorism preparedness, or the lack thereof, on the state and local level. See: Michael T. McEwen and Stephen Sloan, *Terrorism Preparedness on the State and Local Level: An Oklahoma Perspective* for the Clandestine Tactics and Technology Series of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Gaithersburg, Maryland. In this ground-breaking effort, we had the support of the Oklahoma National Guard and the Department of Public Safety, who were willing to look ahead to future threats. In the ensuing weeks, on local, national and

international television and in the print media, I sought to place terrorism in a context that was understandable. It was not the result of "mindless violence." I continue to be amazed by the way the public banded together in the wake of that tragedy. After September 11, 2001, the same spontaneous willingness of a community to help in a major tragedy impressed me. My daughter, a high school student at the time, insightfully described the community to a BBC reporter when she said (alluding to the play *Six Degrees of Separation*) that in Oklahoma City "There were only four degrees of separation."

(3)   For an early reader on the study of political conflict and politics see: Harry Eckstein (ed.). *Internal War: Problems and Approaches,* New York: The Free Press, 1964. For a pioneering and particularly useful framework to analyze terrorism see: Richard Shultz, "Toward a Typology of Political Terrorism," *Journal of International Affairs,* Spring/Summer 1978. The Editor is Chief of the Journal was Alan D. Buckley, a graduate of the University of Oklahoma. I was a Special Consulting Editor for the issue.

(4)   Stephen Sloan, "The Functionality of Violence in the New States of Asia and Africa," a paper delivered at the 1971 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

(5)   See the Chronology in Sean K. Anderson and Stephen Sloan, *The Historical Dictionary of Terrorism,* Second Edition, Lantham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2002, p. xxiv. A third edition is scheduled for publication.

(6) Stephen Sloan, *The Anatomy on Non-Territorial Terrorism: An Analytical Essay,* for the Clandestine Tactics and Technology Series International Association of Chiefs of Police, Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1978, p. 3.

(7) See: Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism,* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.

(8) For a discussion of the transformation of the international

environment see: Stephen Sloan, "International Terrorism: Conceptual Problems and Implications," *Journal of Thought,* summer, 1984. For the issue of privatization see Sloan, "Privatizing Public Violence," *IEEE Technology and Society Series Magazine,* Summer, 1991.

(9) Xavier Raufer, "Gray Area: A New Security Threat," *Political Warfare: Intelligence, Active Measures and Terrorism Report,* 1992, p. 1

(10) There is a growing recognition of the transformation of Insurgency. In the latest *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* the following quote illustrates the awareness. "All elements of the United States Government – and those of our allies in this Long War that has been well described as a "Global Insurgency" campaign must be integrated into the effort to build stable and secure societies that can secure their own borders and do not provide safe havens to terrorists." See: *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual,* with forewords by General David H. Petraeus, Lt. General James F. Amos and Lt. Colonel John A Nagl, with a new introduction by Sarah Sewall, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p. xix. But, note the emphasis on securing physical geographical borders in response to "non-territorial terrorism which can be viewed to be part of a global insurgency.

(11) For two excellent studies on the process by which individuals are attracted to the vision in the United States and internationally see: Mitchell D. Silbert and Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,* New York, Police Department of New York and *Marc* Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004 and *Leaderless Jihad Terror Networks in the Twenty –First Century,* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

(12) For an excellent book on the topic see: P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry,* Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 2007.

(13) For a fine collection of articles on the topic see John Arquilla and

David Ronfeldt, "The Advent of Netwar (Revisited)," and the book they co-edited, *Networks and Netwars,* Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation 2001, p. 6.

(14) Stephen Sloan with a Foreword by John C. Bersia and an Appendix by J.B. Hill and Joshua A. Smith, *Terrorism: The Present Threat in Context,* Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2006, p.109

(15) Stephen Sloan, *Beating International Terrorism: An Action Strategy for Preemption and Punishment*, Second Edition, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 2000.

(16) The outstanding "Program on Terrorism and Security Studies" at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies are at the forefront of building a network. Its regularly scheduled courses and accompanying seminars bring together counterterrorism specialists from the expanded NATO countries and beyond as well as major international leaders who are responsible for combating terrorism. I had the pleasure of being a seminar leader during one of the early iterations. But there are real challenges ahead. The broader evolution of homeland security will be of particular concern especially where the line between domestic and international security has and will increasingly be blurred. Given the expanded international role of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and the other members of the intelligence community involved in domestic collection, it is not clear what the scope of "homeland" in homeland security really means legally and operationally. Moreover, the expanded mission of the military in domestic terrorism preparedness and response also raises serious constitutional questions in reference to military/civilian relations.

(17) Stephen Sloan, *Present at the Creation,* p.2

(18) For an extensive treatment of the development of terrorism as a field of inquiry with particular reference to the requirements necessary to educate and train a new generation of specialists on terrorism see: Stephen Sloan, "Educating the Next Generation of Counterterrorism Specialists," *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century,* Vol 3, *Lessons From the Fight*

Against Terrorism, James J. Forest, ed., Westport, Connecticut, Praeger Security International, 2007.

(19) Questions on national, regional and international policies on meeting the threat of terrorism have been addressed in two conferences sponsored by the Global Perspectives Office of Central Florida headed by John Bersia where I am a Fellow and University Professor. These meetings brought together leading officials, scholars and others involved in combating terrorism. The White Paper was published on September 11, 2006. It has been widely disseminated to policy makers at all levels. The second will be shortly published. See: *Global Assessment of Terrorism: Perspectives From Current and Future Leaders on Policy, Doctrine and Operational Implications*, Orlando, Florida, Terrorism Studies Program, Global Perspectives Office and the Global Connections Foundation, 2006.

About the Author

Dr. Stephen Sloan is a Senior Fellow at the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism where he served on the steering committee that established the MIPT. He has been involved in the study of terrorism for almost 40 years. He pioneered the planning and conduct of full-scale simulations for military and police forces in the United States and overseas. He has also consulted with the armed forces and civilian agencies and officials who are responsible for combating terrorism. The author of over ten books and numerous articles, Dr. Sloan is a Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Oklahoma where he was on faculty for 38 years. He is currently a University Professor and Fellow in the Office of Global Perspectives at the University of Central Florida. His latest book is, *Terrorism: The Present Threat in Context*, Berg Publishers, 2006.