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Countering Transnational Terrorism

This contribution explores the characteristics of the new transnational terrorism, addressing questions on the nature of the threat. It then proposes five lines of defense to counter the new terrorist threat: intelligence as the first line of defense; "heroic composure" of the population and polycentricity to reduce the vulnerability of the state and society as the second line of defense; the third line of defense consisting of measures to be taken in the media field; a fourth line of defense consisting of an interoperable mix of law enforcement measures with military actions, assisted and facilitated by diplomacy and other policy instruments; and a fifth line of defense of an innovative international strategy, operational concepts and appropriate tactics, and specifically tailored asymmetries, which are desperately needed, but have yet to be invented and developed.

Fred Schreier*

Transnational terrorism is what its perpetrators have so often insisted: warfare. A form of warfare, however, in which the boundaries drawn by states, adherence to international law and international humanitarian law, and responses dictated by conventional military doctrine no longer play a role. There are no front lines, and there are no noncombatants. Often viewed today as a uniquely modern problem, transnational terrorism is the current stage in an evolution whose origins extend as far back as does human conflict itself. It is the contemporary name given to, and the modern permutation of, warfare deliberately waged against civilians with the purpose of destroying their will to support leaders or policies, and/or of destabilizing the social system and society that the agents of such violence find objectionable.

While the events of 9/11 saw terrorism produce its most destructive events to date, trends from the preceding decade showed an increasing trajectory of violence and multiplied indications that transnational terrorism would impact on politics and economics over the next decades. This was less because of growing imbalances between richer and poorer regions of the world, but more because of the increasing military imbalances between technologically advanced states and the rest of the world. Terrorism is not a weapon of the poor; rather, terrorism is a way for the weak to wage war. Thus, to a growing degree, transnational terrorism is superseding guerilla war, which had sort of the same function during the last century.

But the replacement of guerilla war by this new terrorism is more than an operational innovation on the part of those who can neither afford high-technology weaponry nor are able to maintain complex military systems. Guerilla war is in essence a defensive strategy. Experimentation in offensive guerilla war, as attempted by Che Guevara, failed miserably in the jungles of Bolivia. Guerillas are dependent on the support of local populations – which they only receive where they are ethnically and socially closely interconnected. In contrast, the new terrorism has at its core an offensive strategy.[1] Operating globally, the new transnational terrorism has freed itself from the absolute dependence on such local support.

It uses the infrastructure of the nations attacked as per 9/11, for example airplanes as missiles and kerosene as explosives. Logistics are stored in the shadows of the financial, transport and social networks created by globalization. Terrorists, formerly intrinsically interrelated with guerillas and one of its manifestations, have become independent strategic actors.

> The new terrorism has freed itself from territory. For violent acts and logistics, it is using the ultimately uncontrollable streams of modern societies.

The aim of guerilla warfare is control and dominance of territory. In contrast, the aim of transnational terrorism is the interruption of the global streams of commerce, services, capital, information, telecommunications, and human circulation – the elixir of life of modern societies. Guerillas are dependent on territory where they can amass and make available logistics, recruit and train fighters, and develop a new socio-political order – at least in the so-called liberated areas. The new terrorism has freed itself from territory. For violent acts and logistics, it is using the ultimately uncontrollable streams of modern societies. Guerillas have to attack continuously physically in as many places as is possible against an enemy superior in force. The new terrorists need only to strike intermittently, at one highly vulnerable target at a time, to achieve the psychological effects intended. At the same time, it has become a prerequisite for terrorist groups to organize in small cells and distributed networks in order to remain operational and survivable.

The destructive power of nuclear weapons and the high vulnerability and susceptibility of destruction of modern society have rendered interstate war an outdated model of diminishing usefulness. Today, the Westphalian world of the nation-state as the unchallenged pillar of international order, with defense against threats from outside as the primary mission of its armed forces, has been superseded by a far more complex reality which has brought back the *privatization and asymmetrization* of war and conflict. The rising levels of privatization of violence witnessed in civil strife and internal conflicts around the globe pit governmental forces and non-state actors against each other. Not only have these conflicts fueled the return of armed groups and paramilitaries led by *de facto* or self-proclaimed "warlords" at the periphery of well-established zones of prosperity. They have also initiated and accelerated the spreading use by states, multinational corporations, international and non-governmental organizations, various societal groups, and individuals of Private Military Companies and Private Security Companies – the new corporate mercenaries. And the asymmetrization we witness with transnational terrorism is the strategy that enables technologically and organizationally inferior actors to wage war against, and keep pressure upon, militarily largely superior adversaries.

In most wars and conflicts there are some asymmetries. The essence of the practice of war has always been to achieve an asymmetric advantage over the opponent in any terms, not just technological. If the opponent has found a way to negate that advantage, then one must fight in the battlespace he has set and on his terms. A feature of transnational terrorism is the increasingly stark asymmetry between the opponents. Just as bacteria naturally mutate to resist antibiotics, methods of waging war

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[1] Münkler, Herfried. *Die neuen Kriege*. Reinbek bei Hamburg; Rowohlt Taschenbuch, Februar 2004; p. 191.

Privatizing security – the U.S. security company "Blackwater" is said to procure armed *Tucano* aircraft from Brazil.

adapt to cope with superior strength. This is particularly true in cases where states with modern, powerful, well-equipped forces are set against non-state opponents who are much less well equipped, trained, and supported, but unwilling to accept the norms of international law, and who show scant regard for life and property.

Transnational terrorists strive to maximize the exploitation of asymmetry, which is dangerous because it produces threats we do not look for since we do not know what to look for. Being ignorant of its multifold potential, we neither know how to prevent its application nor how to counter it surgically. This increases uncertainty and unpredictability because the threats the new terrorism poses tend to be:

- unusual in our eyes;
- irregular in that they consist of means or capabilities unrecognized by the laws of war;
- unmatched in our arsenal of military capabilities and plans;
- highly leveraged against particular assets of a state;
- intended to work around, offset, and negate what in other contexts are our strengths;
- generally difficult to respond to, and
- particularly difficult to respond to in a discriminate and proportionate manner.[2]

[2] Gray, Colin S. "Thinking Asymmetrically in Times of Terror"; *Parameters;* Spring 2002; pp. 5–14.

Asymmetry means the absence of a common basis of comparison in respect to a quality, or in operational terms, a capability.

But thinking of the threat as only asymmetric misses the mark. The combination of *asymmetry* and the terrorists' ability continually to devise unconventional *idiosyncratic* approaches presents the real challenge. Asymmetry means the absence of a common basis of comparison in respect to a quality, or in operational terms, a capability. Idiosyncrasy means possessing a peculiar or eccentric pattern. It connotes an unorthodox approach or means of applying a capability – one that does not follow the rules, and is peculiar in a sinister sense. By attacking idiosyncratically at the point the new terrorists select in an attempt to avoid

The Khobar Tower bombing near Dhahran took place on 25 June 1996. Target of the Huzbullah Al-Hijaz terrorists was a housing complex of foreign militaries. 20 people were killed.

In search of German RAF (Red Army Fraction) terrorists 1977.

our operational advantages, and by exploiting our weaknesses or blind spots, the new terrorists are capable of inflicting havoc and harm at will. Their operational asymmetry is derived from their ability to continuously evolve new tactics, and by the cellular, networked, and compartmented nature of their organization and support structures. To this organization, they add a continuing flow of new, idiosyncratic means of attack. The terrorists' advantage lies in our inability to recognize these new structures of their operation and to predict their new attack vector.[3] Moreover, when applied strategically, asymmetry combined with unconventional idiosyncrasy simultaneously results in exploitable advantages also at the operational and tactical level.

Traditional terrorism, as it developed in Russia in the 19th century, in the anti-colonial wars of liberation, in China, Malaya, Vietnam, Algeria, and with revolutionary terrorist cells in Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century, is closely linked with social-revolution and civil war. Simplified, it was the three-phased model of revolutionary warfare: acts of terror being the first phase; guerilla war and armed rebellion in major agglomerations constituting the second phase; and the initiation of the final and decisive military engagement constituting the third phase. Thereby, traditional terrorism was the initial phase of armed combat, to be stridden through as quickly as possible. Simultaneously it was the default position of retreat in the event that the guerillas' second phase of operations came under sufficient pressure to force a retreat back into the "underground".

The interlinking of terrorism with social-revolutionary practices demanded very specific targeting and clear limits to violence. The targets of terrorist acts were the representatives and functionaries of the state's apparatus of repression and the elites: monarchs and politicians; judges and policemen; as well as exponents of socially dominant groups such as bankers, industrialists, entrepreneurs, and owners of large estates. In contrast, much had to be done to spare from damage all those the revolutionaries wanted to win over for the guerilla war and the revolution: socially defined groups and classes like peasants and farmers in agrarians' societies; the proletariat in urban and industrial societies; or, in the Third World, oppressed peoples.[4] Whether a nation within a multi-ethnic state, religious groups, or peoples discriminated against on racial reasons, all were addressees of the message being disseminated through acts of violence. Not only did those acts demonstrate the possibilities of resistance to oppressed groups; such "target audiences" had to be animated for future engagement in the fight, initially between a small group and the powerful state apparatus, and later – and through the audience's help with greater intensity – at a larger scale with higher probabilities of success. At the very same time, this was the most important factor limiting mass-violence and guaranteeing that weapons of mass destruction would remain outside terrorists' calculations as instruments inimical to the need for a population – in practical terms – to "feed off".

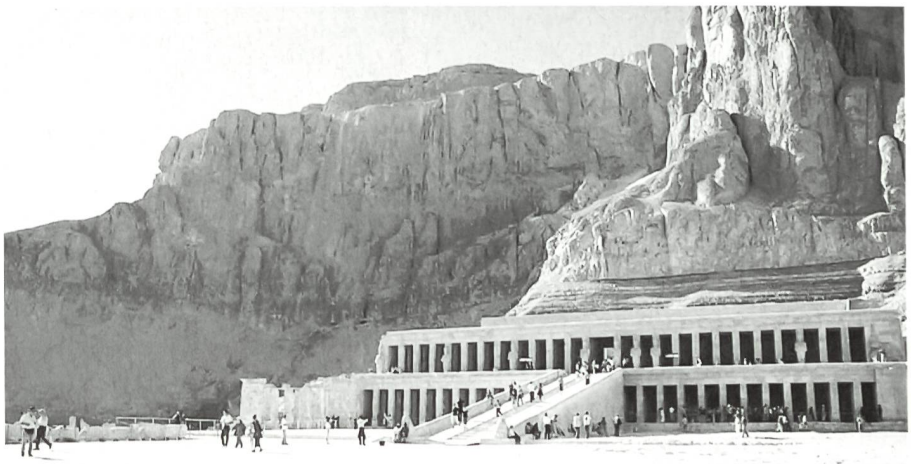
The new transnational terrorism, singularly committed to cause indiscriminate mass-violence, and increasingly using suicide attacks,[5] is organizationally, logistically, and operationally so different from traditional terrorism that the use of the common label "terrorism" is more misleading than enlightening. In the final analysis, the only commonality rests in the function of the acts of violence – the dissemination of fear, terror, and confusion. With traditional terrorism, fear and terror were aimed at the state apparatus and the reigning societal groups who were to be intimidated and provoked into irrational reactions. The masses that were to be won over initially remained spectators. The fear, terror, and confusion disseminated by the new terrorism, however, target the psychological infrastructure of whole societies that are to be forced into a radical change of attitudes. There are no societal groups to be won over, though hopes remain that groups sympathetic to the terrorists' cause may eventually develop. Moreover, the terrorist campaign is no longer a transitory phase in the frame of an overall strategy: it is the unique and sole level of confrontation. And this confrontation takes place where the opponent is weak and most vulnerable: the

> By causing unprecedented carnage, preferably linked with the destruction of icons of highly symbolic value, the new terrorism aims at altering Western attitudes and the global balance of power.

[3] Meigs, Montgomery C., "Unorthodox Thoughts about Asymmetric Warfare"; *Parameters;* Summer 2003; pp. 4–18.

[4] Münkler, Herfried, "Verwüstung statt Propaganda. Schrecken ist die einzige Botschaft des neuen Terrorismus", *Die Welt,* 8 September 2004; at: *http://www.welt.de/data/2004/03/16/251729.html*

[5] See: Conesa, Pierre, "A Cult of Murderous Self-Destruction. The Suicide Terrorists", undated paper.



Sixty-seven tourists were killed by terrorists at the Hatshepsut temple in Luxor in 1997, among them many Swiss.

critical national infrastructure, and the labile psychological state of mind of people in post-modern or "post-heroic" societies. Transnational terrorists have recognized that these societies, with their lifestyle and self-assurance, are particularly vulnerable to attack by individuals with values of martyrdom. By causing unprecedented carnage, preferably linked with the destruction of icons of highly symbolic value, the new terrorism aims at altering Western attitudes and the global balance of power. Concomitantly, the strategic aim is the interruption, or at least diversion or derouting, of the global streams of capital, telecommunication, information, commerce, movements of persons, and tourism. Confrontations with professionalized armed forces, in which modern societies have heavily invested for their national security, are avoided. Whenever and wherever possible, the new terrorists also steer clear of law enforcement. Figuratively, any confrontation with the "armored fist" of the enemy is eluded. Instead, the soft underbelly is attacked. To use a biological metaphor: once the convergence of strings of nerves and blood vessels is hit strongly enough, an "armored fist" will fall in on itself.[6]

Thus, if streams of tourists from Europe are interrupted after terrorist attacks such as those on the temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt, in 1997, the Synagogue on the Tunisian island of Djerba in 2002, or the "Casa de España" in Moroccan Casablanca in 2003, tourism may collapse across North Africa. If an economic crisis follows in these three countries heavily dependent on tourism, then the collapse of the political systems and their elites may become a real possibility. If this happens, the West will not only lose important business partners: the whole system of power in all of North Africa may be changed in the interests of the new terrorists.

Technology plays a critical role in the terrorists' new equation. Strategically, from financial markets to transportation systems to electric power grids, standards of living worldwide depend fundamentally on integrated technical systems that are susceptible to idiosyncratic terrorist threats. These systems may have internal safeguards against failure in normal operations, but they do not have an ability to avoid catastrophic failure when they are interrupted or attacked in an unexpected, unanticipated, and peculiar way that generates cascading or accelerating effects. The blackouts in the US Northeast in 1965 and 2003, and those in Sweden and Italy in 2003, exemplify the potential for catastrophic failure of technologically intensive systems with high degrees of interdependence. If terrorists can find a weakness through which safety factors can be overloaded or bypassed, they can cause imploding, catastrophic failure.

The security measures introduced after the terrorist strikes of 9/11 have led to a slow-down of commerce and passenger movements which, together with higher costs for security, have also had a negative impact on Western economies. Since time is money in free-market societies, transnational terrorism mainly uses this lever to succeed. And this approach already operates independent from real acts of indiscriminate mass-violence through constantly renewed warnings and alerts, and the permanent maintenance of preventive security measures at transport nodes, public events, and locations where people congregate.

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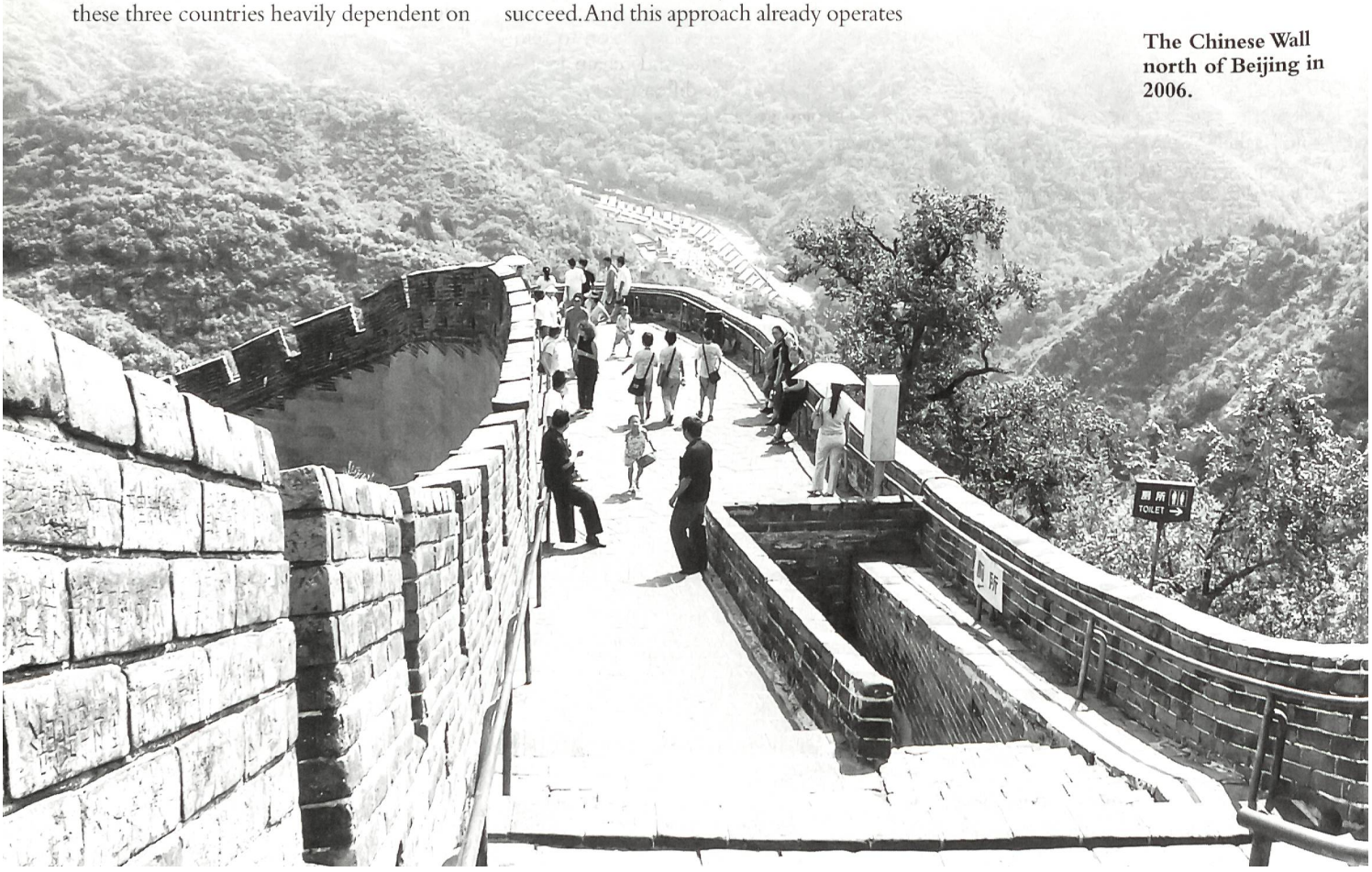
Hence, the new terrorism follows the model of the classical devastation and prey-catching campaigns conducted by nomads who broke into the peripheries of zones of prosperity of ancient empires, plundering, burning, and causing economic havoc. They showed no interest in engaging in decisive battles with "imperial" troops. Because they would not have prevailed in battle, they evaded military confrontation through superior mobility, speed, and swiftness. They forced their will unto the opponent by continuously causing economic damage, which was untenable for those societies and their rulers in the long term.[7]

[6] Münkler, Herfried, "Die Wiederkehr des Verwüstungskriegs", *Internationale Politik*, Nr. 2, Februar 2004, pp. 1–10.

[7] Idem.



The Chinese Wall north of Beijing in 2006.

In principle, there remained two possibilities of defense against such devastation campaigns: to fortify the borders or to invade offensively the spaces beyond the borders. The Roman Limes and the Great Chinese Wall are examples for the first possibility, constructing physical obstacles – as are the castles, and fortified churches of Medieval Europe. However, such fortified defense complexes not only incurred permanently high costs, they also had the disadvantage of inflexibility in defense while the enemy could concentrate his forces wherever he wanted to. He could choose the place and time of the attack while the defender constantly had to be on watch and alert. This is why the securing of the borders of the old empires was alternatively conducted with defense and attack: offensive incursions were made deep into the spaces beyond the defended borders, wherein logistics and infrastructures were devastated, and in which all attempts to assemble military might were eliminated out of necessity.

It is here that the analogy between the classical devastation campaigns and the new terrorism transpires. While in the campaigns of devastation the invaders banked on superior mobility, speed, and swiftness, the new terrorists now use clandestinity and stealth. They hide and conceal themselves in order to appear in the open solely for the terrorist strike itself, so that no time is left for taking appropriate defensive measures. They bank on stealth and surprise, and only this provides them the possibility to attack an opponent who is superior in almost all domains.

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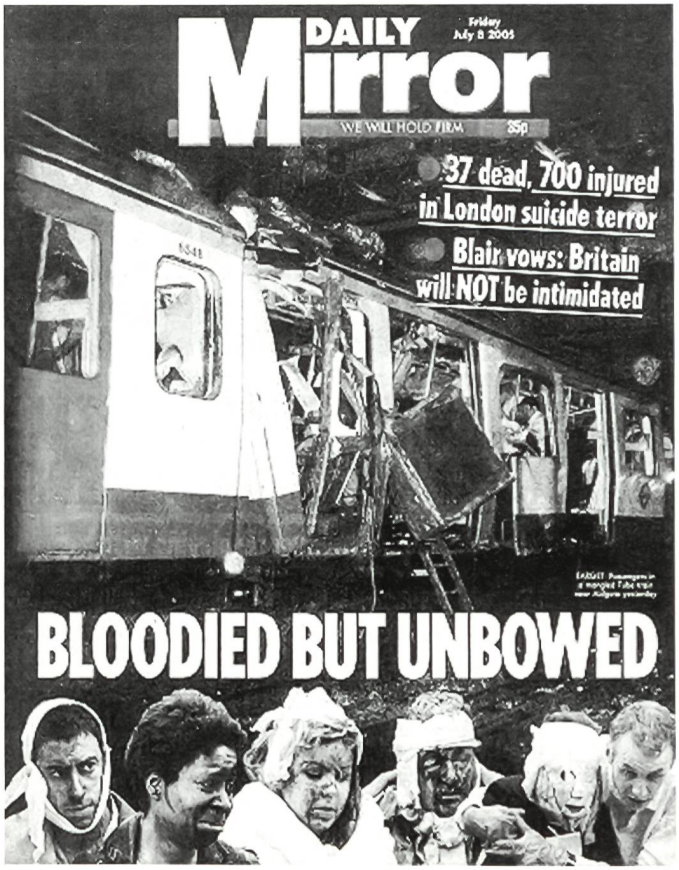
Only in two domains is this opponent unable to dominate: the disposition of available time and the possibility to count on the distinctive readiness or willingness of the population to make sacrifices. It is here where the strategy of transnational terrorism puts its weight. Through clandestinity the terrorists can control the rhythms of time. And by attacking civilian targets – thus taking advantage of the greatly diminished willingness to make sacrifices of the people in "post-heroic" Western societies – the terrorists can enlarge the pressure on the governments, who themselves may seek to achieve quick results in fighting terrorism or by making political concessions to rapidly end the threat.



Terrorist attack in London on 25 July 2005 – front page of the newspaper *Daily Mirror*.

Goals and motivations of transnational terrorists vary widely, from such grand schemes as the total remaking of society along fundamentalist religious or doctrinaire ideological lines; the fulfillment of some divinely inspired millenarian imperative; the "liberation of all Muslim land from aggression, inequity and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist-Crusaders alliance and their 'apostate' collaborators"; to the restoration of "the Muslim nation to reinstate its fallen caliphate and regain its lost glory".[8] Despite these differences, almost all new terrorist groups have one trait in common: they do not commit attacks randomly or senselessly. They want maximum publicity to be generated by their attacks. They not only seek to frighten and, by frightening, to dominate and control – they also want to impress. They play to and for an audience, and solicit audience participation. They want to attract attention and then, through the publicity it generates, to communicate their message.

The news media, as the principal conduit of information about terrorist acts, play a vital part in the terrorists' calculus.

The news media, as the principal conduit of information about terrorist acts, play a vital part in the terrorists' calculus. Without such coverage, the attack's impact is wasted, remaining narrowly confined to the victims of the act rather than reaching the wider "target audience" at whom the violence is aimed. Only by spreading the terror and outrage to a much larger audience can they gain maximum potential leverage that they need to effect fundamental political change.

Often, the media respond to such attacks with almost unbridled alacrity, proving unable to ignore what has been described as "an event … fashioned specifically for their needs". Some networks profess little or no concern when they move beyond reporting the news to actively helping to determine policy. Thus, terrorism and the media are bound together in a symbiotic relationship, each feeding off and exploiting the other for its own purposes.

All major terrorist groups have websites.

More recently, however, the weapons of terrorism are no longer limited to guns and bombs. They include Minicam and videotape; editing suite and production facilities; professionally produced and mass-marketed CD-ROMs and DVDs; computers, CD burners, e-mail accounts; Internet and World Wide Web access that have defined

[8] Al-Zawahiri, Ayman, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner: Meditations on the Jihadist Movement*, translated and published in FBIS, "Al-Sarq Al-Aswat Publishes Extracts from Al-Jihad Leader Al-Zawahiri's New Book", Document ID GMP20020108000197, December 2, 2001, p. 87.

the information revolution. All major terrorist groups have websites. Thus, the art of terrorist communication has evolved to a point at which terrorists themselves can now control the entire production process: determining the content, context, and medium over which their message is projected and targeting precisely the audience they seek to reach. With this, they challenge the monopoly on mass communication of the terrorist message that has so far been exercised by commercial and state-owned broadcasting outlets. This empowers the terrorists with the ability to shape and disseminate their own message in their own way, enabling them to bypass traditional media outlets. Unencumbered by the filter, screening, and spin of established media, the terrorists can portray themselves and their actions in precisely the light and context they wish. The ability to communicate in real time via the Internet, using a variety of compelling electronic media, has enabled the terrorists to reach a potentially vast audience faster, more pervasively, and more effectively than ever before.

Democratic governments have a particularly difficult position in the confrontation with this new terrorism. The terrorists know how to use the high media-density

In essence, it is now also such asymmetrical media constellations that characterize the new terrorist threat.

of modern societies to reinforce the psychological impact of their strikes. They use pictures and the Internet[9] since for the new terrorists, these have become prime means of communication and warfare. Governments, in contrast, cannot afford to control the media for the reinforcement of defense. This enables even weak actors to become a dangerous challenge for strong and rich modern nations. In essence, it is now also such asymmetrical media constellations that characterize the new terrorist threat.

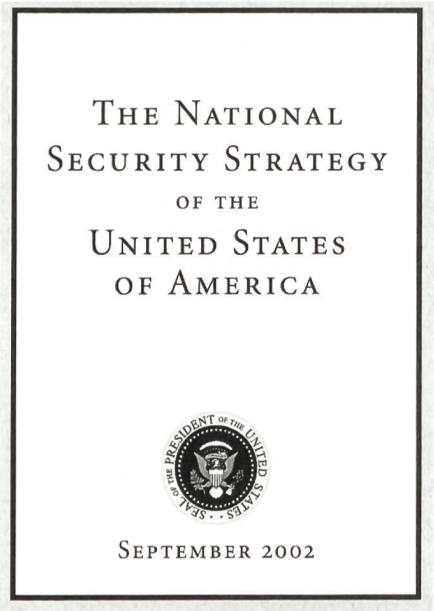
Although classical terrorism and the strategy of guerilla war were also forms of asymmetric warfare, the restriction being that asymmetry was the expression of the initial weakness of the insurgents or revolutionaries. They counted on gaining strength by guerilla war in order to transform the conflict step-by-step to a symmetrical war. To win the war by waging the final decisive battle in a symmetrical confrontation was the *end state* of almost all conceptions of guerilla warfare, as exemplified by the Maoist and Vietnamese doctrines. This, however, is no longer the case in transnational terrorism. Asymmetric confrontations

Thus, asymmetry – the salient feature of transnational terrorism – is no longer an emergency measure limited in time, but the key to success.

are no longer phases of an aspiration for eventual symmetry – symmetry itself is no longer sought after. This is the political-strategic innovation, and at the same time a realistic assessment of existing forces, by the planners of recent terrorist strikes. Thus, asymmetry – the salient feature of transnational terrorism – is no longer an emergency measure limited in time, but the key to success.

For the new terrorists, it remains all important to evade detection before committing atrocities and attacking the critical national infrastructure and the labile psychological state of mind of post-modern Western societies. To this end, the structure of terrorist organization in small groups of deterritorialized networks is the optimally adapted form, transforming terrorism into the more diffuse and amorphous phenomenon that it has now become. If hit, this adversary will adapt, regroup, generate new leadership, shift geographic locus, adjust tactics, and evolve into a new collection of cells and networks capable of self-healing, dispersal, reassembly, and innovation.

All these elements make evident that the new terrorism has become a new form of war – that yet again we are witnessing a mutation in the forms in warfare.



The National Security Strategy of the United States of America – front page of the 2002 edition.

Western reaction to the transnational terrorist threat

Strategically, the US has reacted against these new threats and challenges with a new National Security Strategy[10] that calls for preemptive use of military and covert force before an enemy unleashes weapons of mass destruction – underscoring the US willingness to retaliate with nuclear weapons for chemical or biological attacks on US soil or American troops oversees. The task of defending the nation is seen to have changed dramatically.[11] And the war against terrorists of global reach is seen as a global enterprise of uncertain duration that "will be fought on many fronts against a particularly elusive enemy over an extended period of time".[12] The consequence imposed by the asymmetrization of the new threat is the change from a reactive to a proactive posture "... to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists ..." recognizing "that our best defense is a good offense ...". "The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack".[13] For the last centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take actions to defend themselves against conventional symmetrical forces that present an imminent danger of attack.[14] Now, under asymmetric constel-

[9] Wright, Lawrence, "The Terror Web", *The New Yorker;* 2 August 2004, pp. 40–53.

[10] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,* Washington D.C., September 2002. The classified version is identified jointly as National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 17 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 4. This was followed by 5 additional National Strategies: (1) for Homeland Security; (2) for Combating Terrorism; (3) to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction; (4) for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets, and (5) to Secure Cyberspace.

[11] Foreword by the White House: "Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank. Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us. To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal – military power, better homeland defenses, law enforcement, intelligence, and vigorous efforts to cut off terrorist financing".

[12] Ibid., p. 5.

[13] Ibid., p. 6 and 15. "Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against an enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness".

[14] Preventive action is taken on the assumption that an offensive attack by the enemy will occur sooner or later. See: Slocombe, Walter B., "Force, Pre-emption and Legitimacy", in: *Survival,* Spring 2003, p. 124.

lations, the concept of imminent threat must be adapted to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries. To forestall or prevent indiscriminate hostile acts of devastation by adversaries exploiting asymmetry, the defender will have to act preemptively.[15] However, preemption should be used "only after other remedies have been exhausted and principally in cases where a grave threat could arise". Moreover, "the risks of waiting must far outweigh the risks of action".[16] Although preemption has been widely criticized as being in violation to international law, there are also strong arguments for it.[17] NATO does not exclude preemption.[18] Preemption is also the strategic doctrine adopted by Russia.[19] France,[20] Australia,[21] and even Japan[22] have reserved the right of preemptive defense. And in essence, we find the same diagnosis of the problem of asymmetric terrorist threats in the European Security Strategy.[23] "In an era of globalization, distant threats may be as much a concern as those that are near at hand ... The first line of defense will often be abroad ... Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early".[24] Thus, the European strategy calls for enlargement – building security in the European neighborhood. The future may show whether this is only a different choice of words, resulting from different military capabilities. It might well be that "prevention through enlargement" is just the regional equivalent of the global US strategy of preemption.

Although preemption has been widely criticized as being in violation to international law, there are also strong arguments for it.

There are three aspects of preemption that are giving cause for concern. First, preemption is particularly demanding in view of the extremely heavy burden placed on intelligence to provide the intelligence necessary for successful preemption – suggesting a degree of expectations about intelligence capabilities never before levied. The future will tell whether intelligence is able to fully cope with this challenge.

A more important second cause for concern is the fact that many authoritarian regimes, and even some democratic governments, are abusing the war on terror and preemption for the consolidation of power. The practice to declare all opposition or separatist resistance as acts of terrorism is only aggravating the problem, enlarging the list of those ready to engage in suicide attacks, and thus leading to massacres of ever greater dimensions. These regimes have to be singled out and forced into moderation, since tough policies do not protect, but only produce a mood conducive to more terrorist recruiting.

A third cause of concern is that preemption in the face of religious terrorism may – as traditional counterterrorism approaches – not be relevant, much less effective. Preemption is seen not only by Muslims, but by many others too, as symptomatic of a heavy-handed foreign policy. The tremendous international outpouring of sympathy and support that followed 9/11 has been vitiated to a great extent since by opposition to the US-led invasion of Iraq and more general complaints over the US administration's prosecution of the war on terrorism.[25] The revelations about prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and the indefinite detention of "enemy combatants" at Guantanamo Bay have further sharpened friction between the US and the Muslim world. Bin Laden's astonishing popularity among the populations of such key US allies in the war on terrorism as Pakistan, Jordan, and Morocco attests to the intense antipathy felt towards the US in North Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and other regions with large Muslim populations. This perception of Islam under attack by a predatory, aggressive, US-dominated West is of course eagerly exploited and expertly manipulated by al Qaeda and likeminded terrorist groups.

Detainees at Camp Delta in Guantanamo, Cuba.

[15] The proof of the intention to attack might possibly be the detonation of a nuclear device or biological weapon in a city. To wait for such a case would not be acceptable in view of the potential number of victims.

[16] Guidelines offered by the US National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, in a speech at the Manhattan Institute, 1 October 2002. Moreover, there are the other criteria (1) urgency of the threat; (2) plausibility of the danger, and (3) proportionality of the means – with intelligence remaining the basis for decision. None of these criteria are exactly measurable or enforceable.

[17] Houben, Marc, *Better Safe than Sorry. Applying the Precautionary Principle to Issues of International Security*, Center for European Policy Studies, CEPS Working Document No. 196, November 2003, at: *http://www.ceps.be*

[18] At the Prague summit in November 2002, NATO adopted a document (MC 472) in which, at least implicitly, preemption is discussed. Though "preemption" and "anticipatory self-defense" are not explicitly quoted in the new military concept of the Alliance for the fight against terrorism (because of the insistence of Germany and France), it is clear that NATO does not fundamentally rule out preemptive strikes. See also: Tanner, Adam, "NATO says could launch pre-emptive strikes". *Reuters*, Berlin; 31 October 2002.

[19] "Putin reaffirms Russia's right to preemptive strikes", *AFP*, Tuesday 4 November 2003. See also: Russian Chief of the General Staff, General Yury Baluyevsky: "We will take any action to eliminate terrorist bases in any region at the earliest stage", *RFE/RL*, 8 September 2004. And: "We will take steps to liquidate terror bases in any region" Baluyevsky told reporters at a meeting with US General James Jones, NATO's SACEUR. *AFP*, 8 September 2004.

[20] France, which not only opposed "Operation Iraqi Freedom" but also rejected the discussion over the principal option of preemption within the framework of NATO, explicitly mentions "capacité d'anticipation" and the necessity of the option of a preemptive strike in certain situations in its new "Programmation Militaire". See: Bunn, Elaine M., "Preemptive Action: When, How and to What Effect", *Strategic Forum*, No. 200, 2003, National Defense University, Washington D.C., p. 6.

[21] The prime minister of Australia, John Howard, expressly called for a change in the UN Charter to allow for preemptive military strikes against terrorist threats. See: Shaw, John, "Startling His Neighbors, Australian Leader Favors First Strikes", in: *New York Times*, 2 December 2002.

[22] General Shigeru, the Director General of the Japanese "Defense Agency" stated in January 2003 the readiness of Japan to launch a "counterattack" should North Korea bring its missiles into a "ready for takeoff" position. See: Ishiba. "Japan to 'Counterattack' if North Korea Prepares to Attack", in: *The Yomiuri Shimbun/Daily Yomiuri*, 25 January 2003.

[23] *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003.

[24] Ibid., pp. 6–8.

[25] See Pew Research Center for People and the Press, "Summary of Findings: A Year After the Iraq War – Mistrust of America in Europe Even Higher, Muslim Anger Persists", March 16, 2004, at: *http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=206*.

These developments may account for the shift in US foreign policy proposed during the spring of 2005. The change would move away from the global war on terrorism to a more subtle approach and mix of policy options now dubbed a "strategy against violent extremism". Although details remain sketchy, this reconfigured effort would specifically seek to ameliorate Muslim antipathy toward the US by undercutting support for radical Islam. This means that nothing less than a sea change might be required in our thinking about terrorism and the policies needed to counter it. A bridge needs to be found between mainstream society and these new terrorist militants so that they do no longer feel forced into aggressive stances and acts of violence directed against what they regard as a menacing, predatory society. The complexity, diversity, and often idiosyncratic characteristics of religious terrorism imply that there is no single superior solution that can be applied. Though the threat, and the problems that fuel it, can probably never be eradicated completely, there is a need for multiple creative solutions, if not to resolve, then at least to diminish both the underlying causes of religious terrorism and its violent manifestations. Only by expanding the range of possible responses will we be able to target our resources prudently and productively in ways that will have the greatest positive effect.

The complexity, diversity, and often idiosyncratic characteristics of religious terrorism imply that there is no single superior solution that can be applied.

How can the transnational terrorist threat be countered?

Basically, there are *five lines of defense* to counter the new terrorist threats.

1. Intelligence will remain the first line of defense and the most critical element in combating terrorism. The first and most immediate challenge is simply identifying the new terrorists. These ethereal, amorphous entities often lack the "footprint" or modus operandi of traditional terrorist organizations, making it more difficult for intelligence to get a firm idea or build a complete picture of their intentions and capabilities, much less their capacity for violence, before they strike.

The adaptable nature of the adversary demands an equally agile intelligence effort. Countering asymmetry and idiosyncrasy require an atypical approach. If asymmetric warfare involves an enemy's ability to constantly change form and method at will from the fragments of the old operation and recruiting base, then intelligence also needs to understand his organizational and operational tools to detect signs of his new operational shape, as well as the emergence of new families of capabilities – conventional and unconventional. Prerequisite for anticipating the outcomes of terrorist groups' effort to change is to gather information about the characteristics of the groups' structures and interconnections, membership, environment, and activities that are specifically relevant to assessing the likely outcome of their attempts to adapt and evolve. Then intelligence needs to find out in what areas this enemy might develop superior knowledge or some unprecedented, perverted use of a capability. It must filter out the capabilities the adversary has that we do not understand or expect. And it must detect the links to organized crime and how that source of assistance can be countered. For this, integrated multidisciplinary approaches have to be deployed at all levels of intelligence analysis and collection.

It must filter out the capabilities the adversary has that we do not understand or expect.

Exposing asymmetry goes hand in hand with isolating opportunities for idiosyncrasy. We have enough specialists who understand the capabilities that terrorists could exploit to produce mass effects. The problem is to discover in advance the unprecedented and eccentric ways in which substances or mechanisms of destruction may be delivered. Here, techniques like the "atypical signal analysis and processing schemes" can help to better connect the dots.[26] Moreover, they can help to better understand how the terrorists can exploit the synergistic nature of terror, deceit, brutality, and unpredictability.

As to the targets once these are known: all have to be analyzed with a three-dimensional matrix based on site, situation, and time, and each location rated along a continuum for each variable. These techniques also help to focus on secondary consequences, which can be greater than the primary ones. Such means, the German "Rasterfahndung", racial and geographic profiling, combined with unconventional exploitation of all relevant intelligence assets and capabilities can help to recognize and preempt the opponents' idiosyncratic approach. These techniques can at the same time help to find the backdoors that we are not watching.

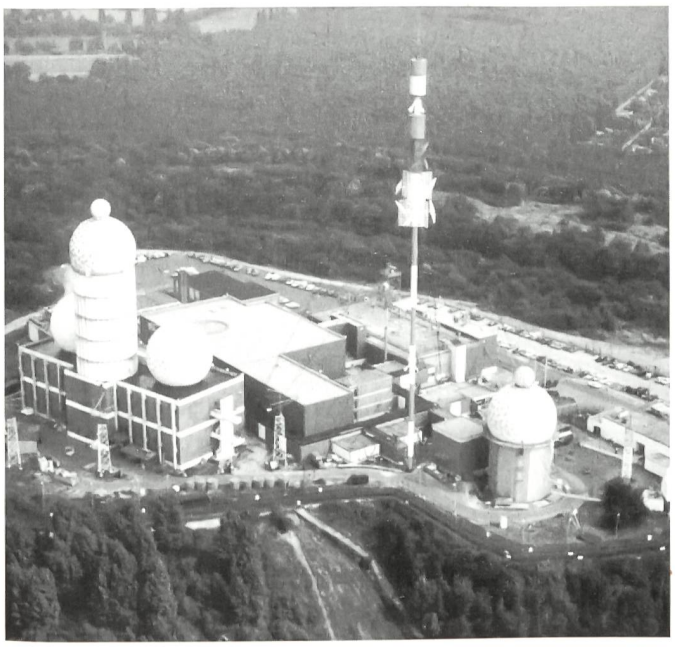
Success for the terrorists is dependent on their ability to keep always one step ahead of not only the authorities but also of counterterrorist technology. The terrorist group's fundamental organizational imperative to act also drives this persistent search for new ways to overcome or circumvent or defeat governmental security and countermeasures. Discerning how terrorist groups learn in a dynamic environment is thus most crucial for understanding terrorism. Hence, learning-focused analytical frameworks are needed for assessing collected intelligence to help capture and understand the learning implications of terrorist group activities. With increased understanding of group learning processes, intelligence will not only be better able to assess the level of threat posed by terrorist groups, to design and implement new strategies, and to appropriately allocate resources for combating terrorism. Intelligence will also be better able to shape countermeasures to resist efforts to circumvent or defeat them, to design novel counter-measures that specifically target the terrorist ability to adapt and change, and to seek out opportunities to use terrorist groups' learning activities against them by guiding their efforts or shaping the outcomes of those efforts to reduce the terrorists' capabilities and potential threat levels.

Discerning how terrorist groups learn in a dynamic environment is thus most crucial for understanding terrorism.

This is why the new terrorist threat requires more human intelligence collection (HUMINT) and infiltration of the networks with individuals who have the language and cultural skills, the savvy to take risks, and the willingness to do business with individuals sometimes of the most unsavory and corrupt kind.

Most of the new terrorist groups lack the type of large, fixed facilities and means that technical collection capabilities can most easily target. Costly high-tech intelligence systems designed for monitoring the elec-

[26] See: Hollywood, John, Snyder, Diane, McKay, Kenneth, and Boon, John, *Out of the Ordinary. Finding Hidden Threats by Analysing Unusual Behavior*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, 2004.



A photo of the eavesdropping site on the Teufelsberg in West-Berlin. It was part of the intelligence gathering efforts against the communist regime in east Berlin and the GDR.

tronic environment may be ineffective against the new terrorist organizations employing simpler methods of clandestine communications. This is why the new terrorist threat requires more human intelligence collection (HUMINT) and infiltration of the networks with individuals who have the language and cultural skills, the savvy to take risks, and the willingness to do business with individuals sometimes of the most unsavory and corrupt kind. At the same time, the nature of this threat has made HUMINT not only more difficult, but also much more dangerous for the collectors. And since clandestine penetration can no longer be made safe by using diplomatic cover, the counterintelligence function is gaining in importance.

Implicit in the intelligence mission objectives is the development of innovative ways to penetrate and analyze these most difficult targets that are also becoming better at hiding their intentions and capabilities. The challenge for intelligence is to move away from passive surveillance techniques toward more directed collection. Collection performance has to be enhanced in terms of precision and speed. HUMINT will have to focus less on collecting information than facilitating its collection by technical means. Clandestine collection will gather less through what its own spies hear than through a great variety of sensors

Smart dust can make it possible to track individual terrorists over great distances without detection.

they can put in place – hence by using already existing acoustic, seismic, magnetic and optical sensors, by full exploitation of the rapid progress that is occurring in the development of robotic technologies, tags, RFID,[27] and particularly in products born of the revolution in nanotechnology such as wireless micro-electro-mechanical and other sensors as small as a grain of sand in size. Scattering such "smart dust" sensors that can detect, compute and communicate by means of two-way-band radio terrorism-related activities, and changes in the level of such activities, can vastly improve the gathering of counterterrorism intelligence.[28] Smart dust can make it possible to track individual terrorists over great distances without detection. Thus, more probative intelligence about less detectable terrorist activity will require improved HUMINT, upgraded by the most modern collection technologies. HUMINT infiltration of terrorist networks has an additional advantage. Doubts in the ranks lead to operational problems and even intelligence windfalls for the authorities. Once it is known that the group has informers in its midst or has been compromised, internal suspicions grow and capabilities are further reduced.

Intelligence probably can break more codes by stealing code books than by breaking the codes with supercomputers

HUMINT can provide access to valuable SIGINT, which can validate information provided by HUMINT.

and mathematicians. There is more need for clandestine or unconventional signals intelligence (SIGINT) collection resources, because these can get better intelligence by getting closer to the targets than most other sources. Better cooperation between HUMINT and technical intelligence makes both stronger. HUMINT can provide access to valuable SIGINT, which can validate information provided by HUMINT. With hundreds of communications bundled into fiber optic lines, there is less for satellites to intercept. If SIGINT is to intercept those signals, it will have to tap into particular lines in specific places. And it will have to collect keystrokes straight from the personal computer, before software encrypts the message.[29] For imagery intelligence (IMINT) to become more effective, innovative adapting means are required, exploiting new parts of the spectrum, such as hyperspectral imagery,[30] to identify, for example, effluents from buildings, as well as better use of a range of measurement and signature intelligence (MASINT) technologies.[31]

Concomitantly, there is the critical need to improve the ability of SIGINT to handle the ever-increasing volume of communications traffic being intercepted. SIGINT processing, analysis, and reporting must become faster and more efficient if it is to be useful as a targeting tool against transnational terrorist organizations. Technology is available, albeit at considerable cost, which allows computers to screen large volumes of communications for items of potential intelligence interest. Artificial intelligence algorithms can be configured so as to identify intercepts which contain useful information based on keyword searches – part of a technology group generically referred to as "text and data mining".[32] New computer processing systems and techniques can extract information from vast amounts of collected data in a timely manner, and then collate, fuse, and correlate the data in such a

[27] Radio Frequency Identification Devices, that overtake the now familiar bar code as the best way to identify an item and confirm its authenticity, register its origin and date of manufacture, and record its price.

[28] Gormley, Dennis, "The Limits of Intelligence: Iraq's Lessons", London, IISS; *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 3, Autumn 2004; p. 10.

[29] Using for example TEMPEST monitoring devices.

[30] Hyperspectral imagery employs at least 60 narrow contiguous spectral bands, including visible light, infrared, ultraviolet, and radio wave segments of the electromagnetic spectrum, which allows detecting shape, density, temperature, movement, and chemical composition of objects.

[31] MASINT is officially defined as "technically derived intelligence that, when collected, processed, and analyzed results in intelligence that locates, tracks, identifies, or describes the signature of fixed or dynamic target sources". MASINT uses visible light, infrared, ultraviolet, multi- and hyperspectral data derived from spectral analysis of reflections from several bands across the spectrum of light as well as exploitation of physical or magnetic properties, emitted and reflected energy of radio frequencies, lasers, shockwaves, acoustics of mechanical sound, vibration, or motion, and materials sampling of soil, water, and air. MASINT offers not only means to detect capabilities and performance characteristics of missiles, space, aerial, and other military systems, but also for the detection of the presence of materials associated with weapons of mass destruction (WMD), related research, development, storage, or production.

[32] See: Waltz, Edward, *Knowledge Management in the Intelligence Enterprise*, Boston & London, Artech House, 2003.

way as to make it easy to use and manage for intelligence analysts. With properly set up software systems, the databases can identify patterns not patently obvious from individual items of intelligence information, such as cluster, link, and time series analysis. The applicability of those techniques to SIGINT is obvious. Data mining software available on the market can review in a matter of minutes millions of intercepted radio messages, telephone calls, faxes and e-mails to find individual items of intelligence, or identify patterns contained in the intercepts. With the proper voice recognition technology, these systems can also match voices contained in thousands of telephone intercepts, even if the speaker changes phones constantly while trying to avoid detection.

Another problem to solve is that of intelligence fusion. Mainly hampered by secrecy, compartmentalization, and stovepipes, intelligence fusion requires breaking down bureaucratic cultures and the vertical and horizontal barriers in and between the different organizations, as well as organizational measures that bring together, interconnect, and network the best brains for intelligence analysis and evaluation. The best analysis emerges from a competitive environment where different perspectives and dissenting opinion are welcomed, and alternative hypotheses are encouraged. Better fusion of intelligence can be achieved by pulling together data and information at centralized databases and collaborative workspaces using the most modern information technology available, enabling

Another problem to solve is that of intelligence fusion.

knowledge detection and exploiting new discovery methods. Developing "systems of systems" to provide interoperability, integration, and interdependence between these separate databases may be the key to greater overall intelligence effectiveness. The products based on fused intelligence can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation, sensibilize or alert all that have access to them to new risks and activities, reduce surprise and reaction time, improve and accelerate the tasking of collection, and so enhance efficiency, efficacy, and unity of effort.

The challenge facing intelligence management today is threefold: sifting through and processing unprecedented amounts of data and information to find the relevant knowledge for evaluation and assessment; to understand how best to leverage the capabilities of the private sector; and to concentrate intelligence collection on those specific areas in which intelligence has a comparative advantage in finding and interpreting the data and information that cannot be obtained from open sources or from the commercial sector.

2. The second line of defense in the confrontation with the new terrorist threat is an attitude of the population one might call "heroic calmness" or "heroic composure". Governments have a responsibility to produce balanced responses that do not feed the population's insecurities. Indiscriminate terrorist mass-violence aims foremost at the labile psychological infrastructure of modern societies in order to achieve, with modest investment,[33] tremendous effects and repercussions. If the greater part of these effects can be brought under control by the cold-blooded reserve of the population, rather than hysterical reaction, then neither the streams of tourists will be disrupted nor will airlines suffer economic ruin, and even the deflection of shares on stock markets may remain limited.

"Heroic composure" can be better achieved through polycentricity, which reduces vulnerability. A system composed of many different centers is more stable due to its variety, which enables parts to substitute for each other. When one part of the system is negatively affected, one or several other parts can take over. Policentricity is effective in reducing risk and uncertainty. It corresponds to the old saying that it is wise "not to put all your eggs in one basket". This basic insight from the field of sociobiology applies also to terrorism. A target's vulnerability is lower in a society composed of many centers than it is in a centralized society. The more centers of power there are in a country, the less terrorists are able to harm its functioning. Polycentricity reduces both the probability of terrorists launching an attack, and the damage caused in case of an attack.[34]

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A market economy is based on an extreme form of decentralization of decision-making and implementation. The advantages of the market as an efficient resource allocation mechanism break down when it is centralized via oligopolies or monopolies. Under competitive conditions, the suppliers are able to completely substitute for each other. If one of them is eradicated due to a terrorist attack, the other suppliers are able to fill the void immediately. Thus, 9/11 represents a triumph for the market, although it is rarely seen in these terms. The economic system as a whole was little affected. Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle or Houston, for example, were not directly affected at all and kept on functioning. Even in Manhattan the recovery was remarkably quick; most parts of the financial community were ready to take up work again in a few days or even a few hours after the attack. This dreadful blow was not able to seriously damage a decentralized economy like the American one.[35] Many of the high costs were the result of the political response to the attack, such as grounding the entire civilian air traffic, and closing down the Wall Street stock exchange, and not the result of the attack itself.

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Thus, decentralized economic, political and other social structures have three important beneficial effects with respect to the threat of transnational terrorism: First, the target is less attractive to terrorists. Second, the units are better able to solve their problems, which makes it more unlikely that a terrorist threat arises in the first place.[36] And third, the units are better able

[33] The costs of the 9/11 attacks were between $ 250000 and $ 500000, while the direct costs have been estimated at $ 30 billion. According to a study by the New York City Partnership, the attacks on the two buildings cost about $ 83 billion (in 2001 $) in total losses. The ratio between the direct costs to the terrorists and the direct costs to the US was something like 1:60000. Estimating the indirect costs is difficult as these are partly unknown and partly still evolving. Some of these are: (1) Insurance costs $ 40–50 billion; (2) New York City capital losses $ 30 billion; (3) New York City economic (taxes) losses $ 16 billion; (4) New York City clean-up costs $ 14 billion; (5) Government "bailout" for airlines $ 15 billion; (6) Increased security costs $ 10 billion; (7) Travel related losses $ 7 billion; (8) Private business losses $ 11.8 billion; (9) Individual and family wage earner losses $ 2.4 billion.

[34] Frey, Bruno S., *Dealing with Terrorism – Stick or Carrot?* Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2004, pp. 85–92.

[35] In contrast: the fact that centralizing units makes them more vulnerable has been demonstrated by the two terrorist attacks on New York's twin towers. The first attack in 1993 destroyed a central command post of the police force and other support units. Nevertheless, the Mayor of New York, Giuliani, ordered the establishment of a new central Office of Emergency Management in a building next to the World Trade Center. On 9/11, this Office, intended to coordinate all police and support units in the event of a catastrophe, including terrorist attacks, was again destroyed and proved useless.

[36] Alto Adige or South Tyrol in Italy is an example. For many years, it was plagued by terrorist activities, which substantially hindered its economic development, and tourism in particular. Once the area was accorded far-reaching rights of autonomy, it prevented a major eruption of terrorist violence between the Italian and German speaking community.

What was once the World Trade Center (WTC) – terrorist attack on 11 September 2001.

to react and to reorganize themselves in the event of a terrorist attack. These are important reasons why liberal democracies in the Western world have been remarkably resilient to terrorism. An anti-terrorist policy concentrating on decentralization has other attractive features: it strengthens democracy and liberalism. Strengthening political decentralization via the division of power and federalism contributes strongly to a country being less vulnerable to terrorism. The attraction for terrorists to take aggressive action is diminished.

3. The third line of defense consists of active measures to be taken in two media fields: First, actively influencing and counteracting the ways and means by which terrorists attract attention, determine the content and medium over which their message is projected and targeted at the audiences they seek. And second, by defusing media attention once a terrorist attack has taken place.

Terrorist organizations enlist followers by attracting and grooming potential recruits through Internet websites, chat rooms, and forums, and by leading them onto increasingly radical websites, involvement, and complicity.[37] The process of disseminating messages advocating terrorism and the support of violence runs in a continuous "Terrorist Information Cycle", from recruitment and mobilization, through facilitation and networking, sharing information, fund-raising, planning and coordination of operations, publicity, propaganda and media, public diplomacy and back to recruitment. Although their philosophy is abhorrent to them, Islamist radicals do on occasion meet, and on their websites make common cause for tactical reasons, with the action of antiglobalization, anarchist, far left, and other groups of extremists.

A key means for influencing and counteracting the ways terrorists attract attention and project their message at their audiences, and to deny certainty and time to terrorist groups, their followers and potential recruits, is to delay, confuse, distort, dilute effectiveness, jam and disrupt communications at their point of interface, on the web. Additional or alternative counteraction can be achieved through virtual deception, black propaganda, psychological and "false flag" operations. The terrorists maintain communication networks similar to the informal, unregulated *hawala* system of passing credited money from one trusted friend to another. Feeding false information into this system would go a long way toward disrupting terrorist groups' daily operations and eventually eroding internal trust. The case of Abu Nidal's organization, whose downfall can be attributed to the leader's loss of confidence in his people, shows that the vilest terrorist depends on the "honor" of an other terrorist to do his work. Once that honor or loyalty is viewed as breached, the system of trust – the glue of the organization – collapses.

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These measures translate more as delaying tactics than as longer-term solutions. Since they may, in addition, be legislatively questionable, and are also undermined simply by the scale of the situation,[38] concerted, internationally agreed judicial approaches are needed in the longer term to enable the prosecution of criminal use of the Internet and cyberspace to bridge the legislative voids, which currently allow crime to be organized in one country and perpetrated in another without sanction.[39] Technical interception to obtain intelligence and evidence can produce very tangible and effective deliverables,[40] but requires considerable assets in the form of multi-skilled personnel with expertise in intelligence, IT matters, and often obscure languages and dialects. However, to make judicial measures effective, international joint systems approaches and coordination are essential between law enforcement and security practitioners to ensure that the maximum amount of this open source information is gathered, assessed, processed and circulated appropriately and uniformly as evidence. All collection areas must be covered and duplication minimized. In order to counter the "Terrorist Information Cycle" in the future, governments have to plan now to mould and take ownership of the cyberspace in terms of increasing transparency, "watermarking", labeling information and messages, and to frame its architectures.

As far as commercial and state-owned media are concerned, these require a different handling by government. Media exert considerable influence through their reporting on terrorism. Media, and TV[41] in particular, systematically influence the behavior of both terrorists and governments.

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Apart from the fact that it tends to distort people's perceptions about the dangers of terrorism, which are often greatly overestimated,[42] the importance given in the media to terrorist activities does not change the media consumer's negative opinions

[37] Jihadist instructions are moving through more than 600 Arabic websites on the Internet, which intelligence services around the world are not yet recovering or translating in a comprehensive and timely fashion.

[38] There are up to 5,000 Islamist and similar extremist websites operating at any one time.

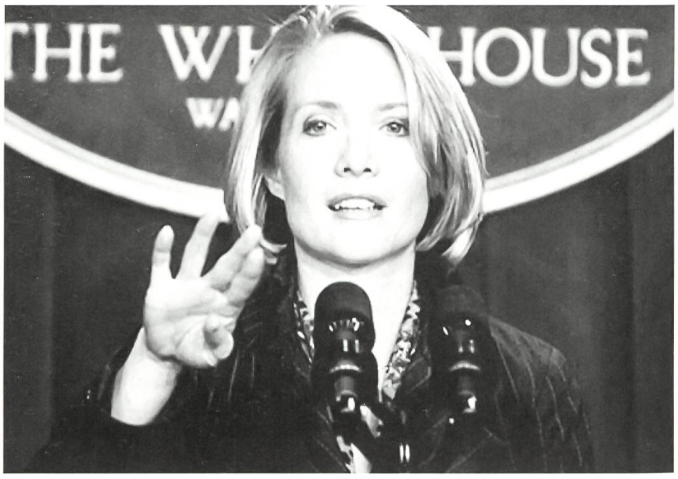
[39] An instructive example, addressed specifically at terrorism, is UN Security Council Resolution 1373. A second example is the Council of Europe Convention on Cyber-Crime, which is the first-ever international treaty to address criminal law and procedural aspects of various types of criminal behavior directed against computer systems, networks or data and other types of similar misuse. See de Borchgrave, Armaud et al., (eds.), *Cyber Threats and Information Security: Meeting the 21st Century Challenge*, 2001, Washington D.C., CSIS Press, p. 33.

[40] Investigation and exploitation of similarities in the methods of other new transnational, legitimate and criminal Internet use, including sports and music fan cultures, and even violent soccer gangs and pedophiles is likely to produce useful and not merely informative results.

[41] See the use made until recently by the Tamil Tiger rebels with TV broadcast to South and Southeast Asia via French satellites.

[42] A study by RAND found that, in 1989, 14 percent of Americans believed that, when flying, they were likely to be skyjacked or blown up by a bomb smuggled onto a plane by terrorists. In actual fact, the probability was just 0.001 percent for skyjacking.

about terrorism in general, or of particular terrorist movements.[43] Terrorists, however, profit from the news reported. They are often well informed about the intended actions of the government and can adjust their tactics accordingly. In this regard, direct coverage supports terrorist activities. Because of this, governments have long



White House press secretary Dana Perion. It is essential how top officials of western governments react to terrorist activities.

In this regard, direct coverage supports terrorist activities.

sought ways and means to control the media's stance towards terrorist events. But the authorities are unable to "take the media initiative". This is soon found out, seen as suspect, and depicted as spin. The media report on their own, not anyone else's "new agenda". Other than in a handful of dictatorial states, media has an innate resistence and distrust of anyone that seems to trespass on its autonomy and independence. The reality of official "media operations" is that the authorities' influence is limited to turning and reversing disinformation and prejudicial stories against them by providing frank and accurate information and allowing the media to make their own judgments. This, however, does not mean that the negative effects of the interaction between the media and terrorists have to be tolerated. Government can defuse media attention once a terrorist attack has taken place, in order to diminish the benefits terrorists can gain from the media reporting on violent terrorist acts.

As explained by Frey,[44] a specific way to ensure that terrorists derive lower benefits from terrorism consists in the government ascertaining that a particular terrorist act is not attributed to a particular terrorist group. This prevents terrorists receiving credit for the act and thereby gaining full public attention for having committed it. The government must see to it that no particular terrorist group is able to monopolize media attention.[45] Media attention may be dispersed by supplying more information to the public than desired by the perpetrators of a particular violent act. This can be done by making it known that several terrorist groups could be responsible for a particular terrorist act. The authorities have to reveal that they never know with absolute certainty which terrorist group may have committed the strike. Even when it seems obvious which terrorist group is involved, law enforcement can never be sure. The terrorist act may even have been committed by a politically opposed group. It may have undertaken the act in order to incriminate the more "obvious" groups and invite government action against the latter. Rather, it is only fair that the authorities publicly discuss various reasonable hypotheses. Government has to refrain from attributing a terrorist attack with any degree of certainty to a particular group, as long as the truth is not established. In a lawful country, based on the division of power, this is anyway the privilege of the courts, not of the executive branch.

Government has to refrain from attributing a terrorist attack with any degree of certainty to a particular group, as long as the truth is not established.

In contrast to the intelligible demands of the traditional terrorist groups of the past who mostly claimed credit for and explained their violent acts, some of the most heinous and lethal attacks perpetrated by terrorists over the last two decades have gone unclaimed.[46] In most of these cases, the perpetrators were later identified and are known today. But such knowledge did not exist when the event happened. At that time, many different terrorist groups, or even a combination of them, might have been credible aggressors. In other cases, however, several groups claim to have committed a particular attack.[47] The media are often quick to attribute an attack on uninvolved terrorist group, as it later turned out.[48]

The information strategy of refusing to attribute a terrorist act to one particular group has systematic effects on the behavior of terrorists. The benefits derived from having committed the terrorist attack decrease for the group having undertaken it. The group does not reap the public attention it hoped to get. The political goals it wants to publicize are not propagated as much as desired. This reduction in publicity makes the terrorist act to a certain degree pointless, as modern terrorism essentially depends on publicity. Terrorists who are ready to take high risks, and even risk death in order to publicize their political beliefs, feel deeply dissatisfied. The frustration is intensified by the feeling that

The information strategy of refusing to attribute a terrorist act to one particular group has systematic effects on the behavior of terrorists.

other political groups, not so brave as to have run the risk of undertaking terrorist acts, profit from the free riding. They reap the benefits of increased publicity free of charge. This frustration may be intense, because terrorist groups often tend to be in strong competition with each other, even if they have similar political beliefs. None of them is prepared to tolerate undertaking dangerous actions that another group receives credit for. Most terrorist groups would prefer that no one is credited than that the publicity goes to a rival group. The authorities in charge may exploit this rivalry among terrorist groups by pointing out to the media that, among the likely

[43] Wilkinson, Paul, *Terrorism Versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response*, London, Frank Cass, 2000, chapter 5.

[44] Frey, Bruno S., *Dealing with Terrorism – Stick or Carrot?* Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 2004, pp. 120–136.

[45] A counterterrorist policy should avoid making leaders like Bin Laden heroes or martyrs for Muslims. Even before the World Trade Center towers had collapsed, the government informed the media that the attacks were due to al Qaeda. In a number of countries, Bin Laden has become a hero and al Qaeda a household name. By seeking to prematurely identify the perpetrators propelled both into a position of prominence they could only have dreamed of.

[46] These include, among others, the Pan Am Flight 103 that crashed over Lockerby in 1988; the series of car bombings in Bombay in 1993; the truck bomb that destroyed a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1994; the bomb that destroyed the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City in 1995; the bombing of the US Air Force barracks at Khobar, Saudi Arabia, in 1996; and the bombings of apartment buildings in Dagestan and Moscow in 2004.

[47] In the terrorist attack on the discotheque "La Belle" in Berlin in 1986, the Anti-American Arab Liberation Front, the Red Army Faction, RAF, and an offshoot of the RAF, the Holger Meins Commando, all claimed responsibility for the blast.

[48] Laqueur, Walter, Terrorism, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977, p. 106.

perpetrators of a particular act, there may be terrorist groups known to be in competition with each other.

Hence, there are five advantages of diffusing media attention in these ways: First, the strategy is active, allowing the government to take the initiative and forcing the terrorists to react. Second, the strategy refuses to give terrorists the rewards that go with public attention. Third, the strategy lowers the rewards for undertaking terrorist action; terrorists' incentives to engage in future violent acts are reduced. Fourth, the strategy does not violate the freedom of the press and of other media: no voluntary agreements have to be reached, and no censorship enacted – both of which never work as intended. And fifth, the strategy does not infringe on human rights and civil liberties.

4. The fourth line of defense is of a more offensive character: consisting of an interoperable mix of law enforcement measures with military operations, assisted and facilitated by diplomacy and other policy instruments. Basically, terrorism can be viewed from three perspectives. The first is to think of terrorism in the context of an enemy to be defeated in war. The war analogy presumes that the use of military operations can be successful and that it is possible to achieve victory. A second perspective for dealing with terrorists is to rely on normal police techniques. The criminal analogy has two important negative implications. First, it suggests that terrorism, like crime, will not disappear; it can only be contained. Second, this approach is a reactive one – criminals are normally caught after they commit their crimes. The third perspective is to consider terrorism as a disease, emphasizing both symptoms and underlying causes. It assumes that there is a need for long-term strategies even if there can be successes along the way in treating symptoms. These three perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but they represent dominant ways in which terrorism is viewed. Some European nations continue to debate whether terrorism should be treated as war or as crime – with military force or through law enforcement. The fact is, that both are needed, as are much better coordination and cooperation between them and the additional actors involved. The aim being to keep up a sustained pressure of pursuit in order to restrict the capabilities of attack of terrorist groups, and to deny them time and control of the time-rhythms in the confrontation. Transnational terrorists cannot profit from unlimited resources. This is why, in priority, they need to be forced into a situation where they have to invest the greater part of these resources for their own survival – particularly the scarcest: attention. This in such a way, that they will have less time and energy for the planning, preparation and the conduct of new strikes of indiscriminate mass-violence.

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Thus, the often repeated claims that transnational terrorism cannot be combated by armed forces will have to be reconsidered. It is here where military operations have the mission to put terrorist groups under permanent stress, requiring much higher use of resources, and provoking the terrorists into committing mistakes. Obviously, such an engagement of the armed forces cannot aim at a fast and decisive military success as doctrine calls for in conventional military confrontations. These engagements are more comparable with the long-drawn-out preventive offensive operations by which the classical devastation campaigns of potential aggressors of old times were made less likely. Though by doing this, the new terrorism cannot be permanently eradicated, – neither as in the past renewed attacks by rapacious nomads could be fully eliminated – the terrorist capability of attack can be diminished as the probability of devastation campaigns could be reduced in ancient times.

5. A fifth line of defense remains which, however, will become effective internationally only in the mid and long-term. Investments and success can, moreover, not be predicted with sufficient confidence. These may be far-reaching and lead to the "dehydration" of the structures of terrorist groups. They may also remain marginal and meaningless. These efforts and investments must aim at the separation of the terrorist groups in the narrower sense from their supporting environment on the global scale – from the inflow of new fighters, from finances, the availability of arms and weapons of mass destruction, access to, and use of, training facilities, as well as undermining and retrieving ideological and political legitimacy. And there is the task of dismantling the "fifth columns" in urban centers. This by integrating simultaneous offensive and defense elements of operation. These elements, together with the terrorist leadership, the command and control networks, and the sanctuaries are the real centers of gravity which have to be eliminated – which also requires the development of further means for rapid identification of these key factors. Since the application of these measures implies a very long fight, sustainability will become of decisive importance.

Though this fifth line of defense is the most often and intensively publicly debated, so far no really convincing concepts have emerged: a strategy that describes the choices that allow available means to be turned into desired ends. These choices are difficult because they depend on the choices that others are making, possibly with the express purpose of frustrating one's own strategy. The desired effects are meant to influence the attitudes and behavior of terrorist individuals, groups, and supporting populations. Demonstrating the futility of terrorist acts is an essential part of a counterterrorist strategy. And the art of strategy is to shape the choices of others, friends and supporters as well as enemies and rivals. Terrorist too will have some capacity to exert power and be making their own decision. Thus, good strategy requires an ability to anticipate and adjust for the likely choices of terrorists. This is why strategy cannot be mere planning; it has to be geared to the efforts of terrorists in order to influence their future choices. For this reason strategies are interdependent. Thus, the quality of the strategy depends in the end on the quality of the terrorists' strategy. A state that overreacts to a terrorist outrage may provide the group with more credibility and support than it had any reason to expect.

Demonstrating the futility of terrorist acts is an essential part of a counterterrorist strategy.

Creating such a strategy and capabilities applicable and equally effective the world over is most important. It requires thinking unconventionally and pro-actively both offensively and defensively, deploying integrated multidimensional responses multinationally at all levels, and unconventional exploitation internationally of all relevant assets and capabilities that are not limited to repressive, let alone military measures. At present, terrorists can innovate more quickly than we can implement. As long as the requisite measures are only pleaded for and remain, as far as worldwide workable concepts are concerned, without consequence, no determinant results can to be hoped for from this line of defense. Hence, a more innovative international strategy, operational concepts, the development of appropriate tactics, and foremost the creation and application of specifically tailored asymmetries, which can also be engaged preemptively, are desperately needed. ●