29 Terrorism as an International Security Problem

Martha Crenshaw

INTRODUCTION

After the attacks on New York and Washington in September 11, 2001, terrorism was recognized as a major international security problem.[1] It has remained on the international agenda because the problem has not been solved. The trend in terrorism that produced the 9/11 catastrophe did not abate but continued. Other issues associated with terrorism also remain troubling, particularly those connected to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, conditions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and the future of Kashmir and Indo-Pakistani relations.

The immediate impact of the attacks was dramatic. For the United States, 9/11 led to the declaration of a "global war on terrorism," military intervention in Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban regime and destroy Al Qaeda's base, and in 2003 a preemptive war in Iraq. At home, the government undertook fundamental organizational reforms, including establishing a Department of Homeland Security and reorganizing the nation's intelligence bureaucracy into a National Counterterrorist Center. At the international level, terrorism also became a top priority. The United Nations, NATO, and the EU moved immediately to develop counterterrorism policies based on international cooperation. In 2001, for example, NATO invoked its collective defense provision for the first time.

Dr. Martha Crenshaw started investigating terrorism and armed groups long before September 11, 2001. She has written extensively on the issue of political terrorism; her first article, "The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism," was published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* in 1972. Her recent work includes the chapters "Coercive Diplomacy and the Response to Terrorism" in *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (United States Institute of Peace Press) and "Terrorism, Strategies, and Grand Strategies" in *Attacking Terrorism* (Georgetown University Press) and "Counterterrorism in Retrospect" in the July–August 2005 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Presently, Dr. Crenshaw is a senior fellow in the Center for International Security and Cooperation and the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, as well as professor of political science by courtesy, at Stanford University. From 1974 to 2007 she taught in the Department of Government at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. She serves on the editorial boards of the journals *International Security, Orbis, Political Psychology, Security Studies,* and *Terrorism and Political Violence*. She coordinated the working group on political explanations of terrorism for the 2005 Club de Madrid International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security. She is a lead investigator with the new National Center for the Study of Terrorism and the Response to Terrorism at the University of Maryland, funded by the Department of Homeland Security. She is also the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2005–06. She serves on the Committee on Law and Justice and the Committee on Determining Basic Research Needs to Interrupt the Improvised Explosive Device Delivery Chain of the National Research Council of the National Academies of Science. Her current research focus is on why the United States is the target of terrorism and on the distinction between "old" and "new" terrorism, as well as how campaigns of terrorism come to an end.

© Crenshaw 2008

However, the initial international consensus against terrorism has become frayed in large part because the war in Iraq has increasingly turned into a civil and sectarian war, with extraordinarily high levels of violence including an unprecedented number of suicide bombings. The war in Iraq has provided both a source of renewed motivation and a training ground for Al Qaeda and related groups, particularly Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia led by the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The conflict has also produced serious spillover effects. Zarqawi's group was directly responsible for bombings in Jordan. The bombings of public transport in Spain in 2004 and London in 2005, as well as the interrupted plot against airliners crossing the Atlantic in 2006, can also be linked to opposition to the war in Iraq, which has focused the grievances of discontented fringes in the Muslim diaspora on the United States and on American allies.

Another problem that has drawn terrorism into the domain of international politics is the difficult question of how to deal with political organizations that use or have used terrorism but are democratically elected to positions of power. The contemporary examples we have before us in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are Hamas and Hezbollah. How should the international community deal with an armed state within a state or an armed party that leads a government? Iranian support for Hezbollah and its recalcitrance before the world community's effort to restrain its nuclear ambitions underscore the seriousness of this problem. (It is interesting that the war in Iraq began with the presumption that its purpose was to remove Iraq's weapons of mass destruction in the interest of curbing nuclear proliferation; we have now returned to the same threat with Iran, which has profited by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to fill a power vacuum in the Middle East.)

This analysis addresses four questions:

1. What is terrorism today?
2. What are its causes?
3. Why is terrorism a threat to international security?
4. How has the international community responded, and what does the future look like?

DEFINING THE THREAT

Terrorism is a contested concept. Its use is often subjective and pejorative, meant to convey condemnation of an adversary. It is not easy to use the term and to be understood objectively. Accordingly, it has been difficult to reach agreement on a definition at the international level. Since it was first discussed in 1973, despite the passage of twelve anti-terrorism conventions, the United Nations has yet to decide on an official definition. As the 2004 Secretary-General's High-level Panel Report explained, disagreement has centered first on whether the term applies only to nonstates. Should states also be considered "terrorist" when their armed forces or security services attack civilians, whether deliberately or not? A second problem concerns moral justifications for violence. Should the use of violence by a resistance movement confronting foreign occupation be categorized as terrorism? Does the end excuse if not justify the means? The panel concluded that terrorism is never acceptable, no matter how legitimate or popular the cause it is meant to serve. Terrorism is "any action . . . that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such act, by its

nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act."[2]

Although the current threat is largely associated with radical or "jihadist" Islamist movements, terrorism has a long history and contemporary terrorism is not entirely unprecedented. The present must be seen in historical perspective. Organizations associated with a variety of beliefs and ideologies—nationalism, revolutionary socialism, right wing extremism, and religion—have all practiced terrorism. Its modern form began in the late nineteenth century with Irish nationalists, Russian revolutionaries, and anarchists in Europe and the United States. Their activities constituted precedents for indiscriminate attacks on civilians as a way of undermining society (anarchists for whom no bourgeois was innocent, for example), loosely organized local conspiracies acting out of inspiration rather than central direction, and utopian and transnational goals. Furthermore, some groups that did not act on an international scale and had no religious affiliation, such as Sendero Luminoso in Peru in the 1980s, were both apocalyptic and murderous. It is not only "religious" terrorism that is lethal. The resumption of violence in Sri Lanka in 2006, including suicide bombings in Colombo, is a sad reminder of the persistence of nationalist violence.

However, since the 1990s, Al Qaeda and its affiliates and offshoots, which together loosely comprise a global Salafist or jihadi movement, have constituted the heart of the threat. What commentators mean by "Al Qaeda" is either or both the remnant of the central core of the organization that ordered the 9/11 attack and those that preceded it and local associates and imitators around the world. The threat is thus composed of local and transnational elements. Since 2001 attacks have taken place in Indonesia, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Spain, and Great Britain. The presence of these successor groups is clearly global, including cells within immigrant Muslim communities in the West, particularly Britain. Whether these groups are completely self-recruited or self-generated or instigated or even directed by Al Qaeda operatives directly is unknown. The answer may be different in each case, since the Madrid bombers apparently were not linked to "Al Qaeda central" but the two British-based groups may have been, via connections in Pakistan. In Iraq, the group that became Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia was originally independent but later joined forces with the central leadership. Subsequently it tried to shed some of its foreign appearance by merging into an Iraqi Moudjahidin Shura Council. Its violence found support in anti-regime Sunni groups in Iraq who also seek destabilization. Some of them may now seek an Islamic state as well as a return of the Sunni elite to power.

It is important to locate the current threat in its historical context. How did this now diffuse movement emerge and grow?[3] Its origins lie in the anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan, which is where the links among individuals and different national groups were forged. Al Qaeda was established under Osama bin Laden in 1988 in Pakistan as a hierarchical, centralized, and bureaucratic organization. Its later decentralized structure was forced upon it by the strong international response to 9/11. From the beginning, bin Laden was strongly influenced by the views of his mentor, Abdullah Azzam, who organized Arab support for the moudjahidin fighting against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Bin Laden was also close to Ayman al-Zawahiri and his Egyptian Islamic Jihad

organization, which aimed to overthrow the Egyptian government and eventually merged with Al Qaeda.[4] Bin Laden was determined to train an army for jihad first against the Soviet Union, and when that mission was completed (although the role of the "Arabs" in the Soviet withdrawal was nowhere near as important as he thought) against the new occupier of Muslim lands and supporter of Israel, the United States.

Returning to his home in Saudi Arabia, bin Laden offered to help defend the kingdom against Iraq after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, but his offer was rejected. He became increasingly critical of the Saudi government for having invited American troops onto Muslim soil, but also for its corruption and inefficiency. His initial appeal was for reform, not for the overthrow of the regime. However, he became sufficiently troublesome that he had to remove himself and his business enterprises to the Sudan, which fortuitously had recently come under Islamic rule. From there he helped train and finance jihad in conflicts in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, taking advantage of the dissolution of multinational empires and states. In fact, he offered support wherever Muslims were fighting secular governments, including the Philippines and Indonesia. He was also involved in opposing the American intervention in Somalia. In 1994, Saudi Arabia stripped him of his family wealth, and in 1996, under pressure, Sudan expelled him. He then returned to Afghanistan, where the Taliban was on the verge of taking power after the civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal.

After jihad ended in apparent triumph in Afghanistan, those who took credit for the victory diffused around the globe. Many of the former fighters in Afghanistan returned home with training and expertise and also with a sense of having fulfilled a transcendental mission, sometimes accompanied by an exalted reputation, to alter the course of local conflicts (in Algeria, for example). Others, whether by choice or because their own governments would not permit their repatriation, joined or formed Islamist groups in diasporas in the West. Other men who were too young to have fought in Afghanistan were either recruited by these experienced operatives or emulated what they saw as the jihadist model. Zarqawi was one of those who trained in Afghanistan, although at that time he and bin Laden were hostile to each other.

The importance of resources to the development of Al Qaeda should be stressed. Initially it was a socially-sanctioned and officially-sanctioned movement and in part as a consequence was well financed beyond bin Laden's personal fortune. The government of Saudi Arabia, in particular, generously supported the Arab moudjahidin. Wealthy individuals and charities gave copious amounts to the cause. Bin Laden, unlike Zawahiri, was not a rebel at the outset. And he gained power not just because of his ideas and ambitions but because of the money he controlled. Furthermore, Al Qaeda could not have developed had it not had secure bases first in Pakistan, then in Sudan, and last in Afghanistan. It was not so much failed states as protective states and access to networks of support that provided critical space in which to act.

Today the convictions driving this movement are vehemently anti-Western and anti-American, but these views developed gradually. Although Zawahiri was determined to seize power in Egypt from the earliest days, bin Laden came slowly to opposing the Saudi regime. It is possible that both bin Laden and Zawahiri realized that they could not overthrow the "near enemy," the apostate Muslim regimes in Saudi Arabia and Egypt,

unless American support for them were withdrawn. Jihadists are thought to wish not only to create Islamic states on the Salafist model in majority Muslim countries and re-establish a version of the early Islamic Caliphate, which would extend to territories such as Andalusia, but also to diminish Western influence worldwide, which they see as a threat to Islam.[5]

Scholars and policy makers debate the question of whether Al Qaeda is genuinely motivated by the conflicts in Palestine or whether references to these grievances are opportunistic. Certainly bin Laden was deeply opposed to the 1994 Oslo Accords, which he saw as a betrayal of Islamic principles. His mentor Azzam was Palestinian. Sadat was assassinated by Islamist militants opposed to the peace agreement with Israel. Whether sympathy for the Palestinian cause is genuine or not, conflicts that pit Muslims against non-Muslims help extremists to justify their position that Islam is on the defensive and that jihad is a moral obligation incumbent on individual Muslims.[6] In providing evidence for claims that Muslims are victims of Western oppression, the war in Iraq may have revived a fading movement. The summer 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah also added fuel to the flame.

Scholars also debate the extent to which terrorism is determined by environmental conditions, as opposed to specific historical circumstances such as those outlined above. The "root causes" that are typically mentioned are globalization, lack of democracy, and religion, particularly Islam. All of these arguments are problematic, especially as they decontextualize the problem.

With regard to globalization, one suggestion is that resentment over being left behind inspires terrorism in areas of the world that do not benefit but feel exploited by the West. However, it is not clear that the most disadvantaged parts of the world, those that profit least from globalization of the means of production, produce more terrorist conspiracies than those more advantaged. This issue relates to the debate over whether poverty and underdevelopment yield terrorism.[7] However, even in poorer countries most of the individuals who become terrorists are better educated and more prosperous than other members of their societies, many members of Al Qaeda came from Saudi Arabia, and other jihadists are citizens of the West. Such individuals are the products of globalization, not those left behind. They seem to be material beneficiaries of the modern world who are socially and politically unassimilated and spiritually adrift. They are caught between traditional families and communities and modernity. Thus they may be left behind by globalization on a psychological rather than material level. They feel a keen sense of injustice and victimization, but it can be vicarious rather than directly experienced.[8]

More convincing is the proposition that permeability of borders, mobility of persons, and instantaneous worldwide communication via the internet and the news media provide important resources for terrorist conspiracies. Underground organizations can take advantage of all the developments that make the world a smaller place. It is easy to travel, communicate, and transfer money. Islamist-oriented groups that call for a return to the past, paradoxically, are quite adept in using the tools of the modernity they ostensibly reject. They establish websites to promote the cause, talk via cell phones, watch satellite television, and jet around the globe.[9] Their main targets are public

transportation systems, the facilities that are emblematic of modernity. Just as businesses, NGO's, and universities find it easier to integrate their activities and reach consumers and clients on a transnational scale, so do too the users of terrorism. It would be surprising if it were otherwise.

Another condition thought to be linked to terrorism is the presence or absence of democracy. Repression of peaceful means of political dissent may force opposition movements into the underground and encourage their resort to violence, as it did in both Saudi Arabia and Egypt. When the political process is open to the expression of diverse viewpoints and oppositions are represented in the structures of power, violence may be less likely. However, at least two caveats are in order before we equate democracy with the absence of terrorism. First, the process of democratization is often violent. As the war in Iraq shows, removing a repressive government will not automatically produce democracy in the absence of norms that promote compromise and functioning security institutions. Second, established liberal democracies have also confronted terrorism, not only from outside their borders, but from discontented citizens of their own. Before the 9/11 attacks, the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City was the most destructive act of terrorism in American history. Timothy McVeigh, who was executed for the crime, was a follower of far right militia groups. Similarly, a completely domestic Japanese religious cult conducted the 1995 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subways.

Since the 1980s, religion has often cited as a cause of terrorism.[10] The argument is based on the assumption that values and beliefs cause terrorism. In the United States, for example, one school of thought equates religious orientation with increased lethality of terrorism.[11] The availability of an ideology, secular or religious, that justifies and legitimizes violence, emphasizes martyrdom, and promises eternal reward as well as personal redemption is undoubtedly a contributing factor. Normative justification is probably necessary to terrorism, although it is not a sufficient explanation in and of itself. But the specific doctrines that extremists espouse are typically narrow, inconsistent, and selective interpretations of wider bodies of thought. Furthermore, the decision to use violence may come first, at least on the part of the leadership, which then crafts a borrowed doctrine out of bits and pieces of established ideology or religion in order to support what is in essence a political goal.

Three conclusions emerge from this discussion. First, any conditions that generate a sense of profound injustice can provide a pool for terrorist recruiting. Grievances act both as motivation for the individual and as a mobilizing device for the organization. Second, the groups that use terrorism see such actual or potential constituencies as available and accessible and wish to attract their support in order to grow from small underground conspiracies to genuine social movements with political influence. They script their message accordingly, to channel and direct popular emotions. Third, such conditions facilitate the transnational expansion of local movements.[12] Television conveys emotionally powerful visual images around the globe. Even the presence or absence of democracy has a border-crossing dimension, in that oppositions that cannot succeed against a repressive local regime can redirect their activities either against local targets outside the country or against outside powers thought to be supporting the local regime. Their anger is thus displaced and exported. Democracies that tolerate dissent may find

themselves harboring terrorist conspiracies, as Germany did on the eve of the 9/11 attacks and as Britain discovered in 2005 and 2006.

Thus terrorism cannot be explained exclusively in terms of "root causes." Millions of people live under conditions of severe deprivation and are exposed to radical ideologies but few become terrorists.[13] Terrorism is not a spontaneous reaction to circumstances. Groups confronting the same conditions choose different responses. The central question concerns the combination of incentives and opportunities that affects decisions to use terrorism. Terrorism can serve four purposes: provocation, polarization, mobilization, and compellence.

First, terrorism, especially random attacks on civilian populations, can be a means of provoking a government into over-reaction. For example, Al Qaeda's attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon may have been intended to provoke a massive and indiscriminate American response that would justify the charge that the United States wished to destroy Islam and was an enemy of the Muslim world. Such strategies are thought to be particularly effective against democratic governments because they are both responsive to public opinion (and thus outrage accompanied by calls for revenge) while simultaneously restrained by human rights norms.[14] A more ruthless regime could respond by crushing all opposition and censoring media coverage of the threat.

Second, terrorism can be used to drive divided societies further apart through indiscriminate attacks on representatives of the "other" community, whether ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic. Thus in Iraq, Sunni terrorism is directed against Shi'ites, and Shi'ite militias have infiltrated government security forces to avenge themselves against Sunnis. Indiscriminate and high-casualty attacks on marketplaces, mosques, and even funeral processions have divided the two communities. Similar terrorism has occurred in Pakistan and Kashmir. Sinhalese were targeted by the LTTE in Sri Lanka. Catholics and Protestants attacked each other in Northern Ireland.

Third, terrorism can mobilize and invigorate supporters.[15] It demonstrates power, even if striking a blow accomplishes nothing concrete. It satisfies demands for vengeance and overcomes feelings of humiliation and resentment. Terrorism can define issues and put previously ignored grievances on the world agenda by attracting international press coverage. For example, before the Palestinian hijackings of the late 1960s and early 1970s the issue before the world was "Arab refugees," not Palestinian nationalism. The hijackings as well as the 1972 attack on the Munich Olympics made it impossible to ignore Palestinian claims, even though their methods were condemned. Carefully targeted terrorism helps frame grievances, so that the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon defined American economic and military might as the problem. Terrorism is a highly symbolic form of violence, and the action itself communicates a message.

Terrorism can also assist in distinguishing a group from its non-violent or less violent competitors who seek support from the same constituencies. For this reason, competitiveness among organizations can lead to imitation, as in Israel where Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade competed for public support and recruits in the grim game of suicide bombings during the second intifada. In the 1970s, there was rivalry among different nationalist factions. For example, once the

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had inaugurated the tactic of hijacking aircraft in 1968, other groups quickly followed suit. Similar competition may characterize the conflict in Iraq.

Fourth, groups may regard terrorism as useful in compelling withdrawal from foreign commitments through a strategy of punishment and attrition.[16] The point is to make the commitment so painful that the government will abandon it. Like provocation, this strategy may work best against democracies where governments are accountable to the people and where there is a free press. To some people, the 2004 and 2005 Madrid and London bombings were meant to force the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Bin Laden pointed to the success of such tactics of compellence elsewhere, particularly in Lebanon in 1983, when the bombing of the U.S. Marines Barracks at the Beirut airport led to American withdrawal.[17] He also claimed credit for the American withdrawal from Somalia. Bombings in France in the 1980s were apparently meant to halt French support for Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. The aim of expelling a foreign occupier is plainly evident in the tactics of the post-2003 insurgents in Iraq. Even the United Nations and humanitarian aid workers, in addition to private contractors, have been targeted in an effort to drive out any stabilizing forces and prevent the restoration of order and prosperity.

Terrorism is not invariably successful in accomplishing these purposes. For example, the perceived success of a strategy of compellence may be illusory. The American withdrawal from Lebanon may be an exception, not the rule. In most cases, it cannot be shown conclusively that terrorism was the cause of specific government actions (such as the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip). Furthermore, there are numerous counterexamples. India, for example, has not bowed to terrorist pressure in Kashmir. Russia did not withdraw from Chechnya. The opposite reaction to terrorism may indeed be more common: a reinvigorated determination to resist demands.

WHY CONTEMPORARY TERRORISM IS A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

After the shock of 9/11, analysts of international relations called for a new approach to terrorism. Most argued that while in the past it had been a second order foreign policy issue, it should now be recognized as a major threat to national and international security.[18] What is at stake? Why was and is terrorism perceived as a major threat? States do not face "mutual assured destruction" as they did during the Cold War, despite the gravity of the attack on the United States in 2001 and the prospective downing of multiple airliners over the Atlantic Ocean in the summer of 2006. Even the prospect that terrorists could acquire "WMD" is not an existential threat. Clearly the magnitude of the threat does not depend on material consequences such as numbers of killed and injured or infrastructure destroyed. The subjective aspect of the threat is as important as the objective aspect. It is the perception of the threat that matters.

For the public, much of what makes terrorism a potent threat lies in the essence of the phenomenon, which has not changed. Terrorism creates uncertainty because it is unpredictable. The time, the place, and the identity of the perpetrator come as a surprise. It often targets civilians going about their daily lives. They cannot know who among their fellow subway or bus or airplane passengers, among those standing next to them in a

crowded spot or sitting next to them in a restaurant, aims to attack. Acts of terrorism themselves, even if relatively minor, are constant reminders of individual vulnerability. Even threats carry weight. The Cold War was punctuated by the occasional acute and frightening crisis that reminded the world of the precariousness of the "balance of terror," but individuals did not experience a taste of the threat itself, in the sense of a nuclear exchange. Terrorism, on the other hand, is visible as a real and present danger, even if most residents of Western societies are more likely to die in a household accident than in a terrorist attack. People who normally live in stable societies, whose daily lives are not constantly threatened, are unaccustomed to this risk, although the inhabitants of the many war-torn countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East unfortunately are. And the perception of risk is magnified by media coverage, especially television.

For governments, terrorism is a threat to sovereignty, reputation, and credibility as well as the safety of their citizens. National leaders must be sensitive to the challenge to the prestige of the state itself as well as to the security of their territories and populations. In democracies, leaders must respond to public opinion. They cannot afford to appear complacent or neglectful.[19]

Today's terrorism also appears more threatening than in the past because of its global diffusion that makes it seem omnipresent, the willingness and ability of its users to cause large numbers of civilian casualties, and the tenacity and resilience of the jihadist movement that inspires it. Our awareness of all these factors is also more acute than ever because of the modern communications era.

Although past terrorism had a transnational dimension (especially the anarchist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), the contemporary threat has a broader and more sustained territorial reach in terms of the geographical diversity of the location of attacks, the sites where plots are laid and resources gathered, and the nationalities of the individuals involved. In an era of instantaneous mass communication, the audience for terrorism is also global. Nobody who has access to modern communication systems can escape awareness of the danger. Reminders are constant. Terrorism is visible on a daily basis, whether it occurs in Baghdad, London, or Jerusalem. Television, in particular, is a medium well suited to transmitting the information that makes the threat vivid and salient.[20] Terrorists, of course, know this quite well.

The extreme lethality of the 9/11 attacks, causing the deaths of almost three thousand people in a single morning, permanently altered expectations of what terrorists could accomplish. Threats that might not have appeared credible in the past now became real. Some anticipate that Al Qaeda or those inspired by its message might acquire weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear—in order to engage in truly catastrophic terrorism. Others think that such fears are exaggerated and that sufficient harm can be done with "ordinary" weapons at a much reduced cost to the perpetrators. Coordinated sequences of suicide bombings, for example, have a profound impact on perceptions of security.

Finally, in the United States in particular, the prevalent image of Al Qaeda and jihadist terrorism is that it aims to undermine the values on which Western civilization is built. It is seen as a threat to democracy, tolerance, and freedom. The American government's view is that they hate us because of who we are. In 2002, President Bush observed

that "we're not facing a set of grievances that can be soothed and addressed. We're facing a radical ideology with inalterable objectives: to enslave whole nations and intimidate the world. No act of ours invited the rage of the killers—and no concession, bribe, or act of appeasement would change or limit their plans for murder."[21] Terrorism is thus seen as a threat to identity rather than interests. Regardless of the accuracy of this portrayal of the motives behind terrorism, the argument has a powerful emotional impact.

THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE AND THE FUTURE OF TERRORISM

The 9/11 attacks generated an initial surge of international solidarity with the United States and support for overturning the Taliban regime and destroying Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. However, discord has replaced consensus. The 2003 decision to invade Iraq introduced a period of intense disagreement. As the war in Iraq became an increasingly divisive issue, other background disagreements related to the war on terrorism also came to the fore.

The shock of the 9/11 attacks produced a genuine sense of collective security, in that the attack on the US was perceived as an attack against all. For the first time there appeared to be a solid and comprehensive international consensus against terrorism. This was true even though the use of military force to destroy a terrorist organization and overturn the government of the state that supported it was unprecedented, since previous American retaliations had been brief and limited.[22] Admittedly, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 might be regarded as a precedent. However, Israel restricted its actions to driving the PLO out and occupying a security zone. It did not occupy all of Lebanon or remove the Lebanese government from power. Furthermore, Lebanon was a neighboring state, not a distant country from which attacks had been launched.

The war in Afghanistan was widely approved as a legitimate response, since the Taliban had refused repeated requests to surrender bin Laden and was under UN sanctions. The Taliban regime enjoyed little diplomatic recognition. Even Pakistan abandoned its previous support for the Taliban and joined the American side, albeit under some pressure. The US also stepped up military assistance programs for states threatened by Al Qaeda–related terrorism, such as in the Philippines.

Although American policy makers framed the response as a "war" on terrorism and insisted that the "terrorism as crime" model had been decisively rejected, much of the practical response to 9/11 consisted of coordinating police and intelligence work around the world. The United Nations focused on improving capacity. Governments cracked down on terrorist financing, for example, conspiracies were progressively uncovered and dismantled, and hundreds of Al Qaeda operatives were arrested in countries around the world.

This aspect of the response to terrorism did have a harder edge than in the past, thus deviating from a strict criminal justice mode. For one thing, the US was more inclined to use covert operations, including strikes against Al Qaeda leaders in Yemen and Pakistan. The US also increased its reliance on the practice of rendition (which had commenced under the Clinton administration) rather than extradition or deportation of terrorist suspects. And it introduced the controversial concept of "unlawful combatants" to justify holding suspects in military detention centers in Afghanistan and at Guantanamo Bay in

Cuba and then trying them in military rather than civilian courts. These practices were criticized as violations of international law and of human rights from the outset, both at home and abroad.

Serious divisions, however, began with the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which divided the US from most of its closest allies. Prior to that move, the US was viewed as a benevolent superpower or hegemon; after the intervention in Iraq, the US appeared assertive and unilateralist even to some of its allies. The military offensive followed closely upon the adoption of a new security strategy for the United States, one based on military preemption of threats, including forceful regime change. President Bush declared that in the war on terrorism, countries were either with the US or against it. There could be no middle ground.

Some critics saw the engagement in Iraq as a distraction from the task of securing Afghanistan and dealing with what President Bush had termed the other two axes of evil: North Korea and Iran. The fact that the UN had not sanctioned the use of force to overthrow the Iraqi government influenced many views. Turkey refused to allow American forces to use its territory. France and Germany objected strenuously, and among major powers only Britain remained a staunch American ally. The publics of countries that did support the US often disapproved of their governments' positions.

When the charge that Iraq possessed chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons turned out to be false, the US shifted its emphasis to building democracy in Iraq. This task was seen as a stepping stone to transforming the politics of the Middle East region, producing democracy, stability, and a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These goals were laudable, but the inadequacy of postwar planning for such an effort damaged the credibility of the policy. Resistance to American occupation only gained strength, as the Sunni minority rejected accommodation with a new Iraqi government dominated by Shi'ites and Kurds. A "war of ideas" to convince Muslims that the US was a trustworthy partner and to lay the groundwork for democratization stalled. Instead Iraq became a magnet for foreign sympathizers and a locus for suicide bombings, the numbers of which quickly surpassed those in other conflicts such as Palestine and Sri Lanka. Within three years the conflict deteriorated into a full-scale insurgency with extensive sectarian violence. To critics, the war in Iraq gave Al Qaeda a new life in a second generation of leaders such as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

With relations already strained, revelations of mistreatment of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq led to outrage. Concern mounted over the use of torture by US forces or by the countries to whom suspects were sent. To these issues were added questions about the defensive side of coping with terrorism: the effect of counterterrorist measures on civil liberties at home. Even preventive measures revealed divisions among allies: Britain, for example, was thought before the July bombings of 2005 to be far too tolerant of Islamic extremism. The reaction was then thought to go too far in the other direction, by restricting free speech. Legal coordination of the response to terrorism within the EU remained problematic. Asylum and immigration policies came into question.

An effective international response based on a restored consensus requires that terrorism be recognized as a political problem, to be solved through political means. The resort to military force to crush terrorism will not produce democracy or stability. Deploying combat troops and relying on air power is likely to provoke more terrorism.

Even if military force succeeds in destroying organizations in the short run, terrorism will persist as long as recruitment of new cohorts is possible. Rather, multilateral cooperation in police and intelligence work is the basis of an effective response, which requires that counterterrorism remain a priority on the policy agenda at all levels of government. Diplomacy is a valuable tool. Furthermore, such a response must be scrupulous in its adherence to the rule of law. In addition to firmness toward the users of terrorism, policy must also have a noncoercive dimension. "Soft" rather than "hard" power is an important resource in dealing with nonstates as well as states.[23] The sources of popular support for terrorism, even passive support, must be addressed. Otherwise the terrorist networks that are eliminated will only grow back.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has identified the main elements of an international counterterrorist strategy in terms of five "D's": dissuading those who are dissatisfied from resorting to terrorism; denying them the means to act; deterring state supporters; developing the capacity of states to deal with terrorism; and defending human rights.[24] He has called for global recognition of the unacceptability of terrorism under any circumstances and in any culture. At the same time he has stressed that good governance and respect for human rights are essential to an effective strategy against terrorism. The problem for the international community is how to implement these principles. How, for example, is good governance to be promoted? How can norms that reject terrorism be constructed?

In the meantime, the world must live with the unpredictable threat of terrorism. It can be reduced but not eliminated. Unfortunately, a small number of people with modest resources can create disproportionate disruption. They need not represent a mass movement. In the modern world both targets and resources are increasingly easy to come by. The ideas that motivate terrorism are transnational. Thus terrorism, particularly attacks on civilians, will always be an attractive strategy for radical minorities who seek recognition and attention, whatever their specific beliefs or objectives.

Moreover, the danger should be put in perspective: terrorism should not be ignored but it is not a threat to the existence of any state. The audiences that are targeted must resist the terrorists' logic, recalling that they intend to provoke over-reaction, polarize communities, mobilize support, and compel the abandonment of commitments. Only a response that is firm, respects democratic values, and rewards peaceful means of expressing opinion can make terrorism illegitimate.

NOTES

Paper originally presented at the Conference on *Terrorismo e relações internacionais* (Terrorism and International Relations) at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, August 14, 2006.

1. Some of this analysis draws on Martha Crenshaw, "Terrorism and Global Security," in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, edited by Chester Crocker, Fen Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
3. See Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) and Peter Bergen, *The Osama bin Laden I Know* (New York Free Press, 2006).
4. See Montasser Al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004, translated from the Arabic edition published in Cairo in 2002).

5. For the texts of speeches, see Bruce Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden* (London: Verso, 2005).
6. For some of the debate over Al Qaeda's goals, see Quintan Wiktorowicz and John Kaltner, "Killing in the Name of Islam: Al-Qaeda's Justification for September 11," *Middle East Policy* 10, 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 76–92; Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); and Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
7. See Michael Mousseau, "Market Civilization and Its Clash with Terror," *International Security* 27, 3 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 5–29; Comments, "The Sources of Terrorism," by C. Knight, M. Murphy, and M. Mousseau, *International Security* 28, 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 192–198; and Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, 4 (November 2003), pp. 119–144.
8. See Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs,* translated from the French by David Macey (London: Pluto Press, 2005).
9. One useful source on this subject is Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006).
10. On the subject of religion and terrorism see Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
11. See, for example, Steven Simon, "The New Terrorism: Securing the Nation Against a Messianic Foe," *The Brookings Review* 21, 1 (Winter 2003), p. 18.
12. Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
13. For another overview see Karin von Hippel, "The Roots of Terrorism: Probing the Myths," pp. 25–39 in Lawrence Freedman, ed., *Superterrorism: Policy Responses* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).
14. Robert Pape suggests that this is the case for suicide terrorism meant to compel withdrawal from occupied territory in *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).
15. See Ian Lustick's discussion of solipsistic terrorism in "Terrorism in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Targets and Audiences," in *Terrorism in Context*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).
16. Compellence is the companion of deterrence; it is meant to make an adversary do something rather than prevent the adversary from doing something.
17. See *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*, edited and introduced by Bruce Lawrence (London: Verso, 2005).
18. See Martha Crenshaw, "Terrorism, Strategies, and Grand Strategies," pp. 74–93 in *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy,* edited by Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2004).
19. Martha Crenshaw, "Counterterrorism Policy and the Political Process," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, 5 (2001), pp. 329–338.
20. See Pippa Norris, Montague Kern, and Marion Just, eds., *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government, and the Public* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
21. Graduation Speech, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, June 1, 2002.
22. In 1986 the Reagan administration bombed targets in Libya in response to the La Belle disco bombing in Germany, in 1993 the Clinton administration bombed targets in Baghdad because of Iraq's attempt to assassinate former President Bush during a visit to Kuwait, and in 1998 the Clinton administration used air power against the Sudan and Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in response to the embassy bombings in East Africa.
23. The post-9/11 rehabilitation of Libya is a case in point.
24. See his address to the Madrid Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security, March 10, 2005. Available at un.org.