

GUS MARTIN

UNDERSTANDING  
**TERRORISM**

7<sup>e</sup>

CHALLENGES,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND ISSUES



- September 5, 1977** ◆ The German Red Army Faction kidnapped industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer, whose body was later found in the trunk of a car.
- October 1977** ◆ West German commandos attacked an airport in Mogadishu, Somalia, to rescue hostages taken when a Lufthansa Boeing 737 was hijacked by Palestinian supporters of Red Army Faction prisoners held in West German prisons.
- 1978–1995** ◆ During a 17-year FBI manhunt, Theodore Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber, killed three people and injured 22 in a series of bombings.
- March 16, 1978** ◆ Former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro was kidnapped in Rome and murdered by the Red Brigade.
- December 1979** ◆ The Soviet army invaded Afghanistan. Fighting alongside the Afghani resistance were thousands of “Afghan Arabs,” including Osama bin Laden.
- 1980s** ◆ Colombian drug cartels killed hundreds of public officials, including police officers, judges, presidential candidates, and criminal justice employees.
- May 1981** ◆ A Brinks armored car was robbed in Nyack, New York, by former members of the Weather Underground Organization, Students for a Democratic Society, Black Panther Party, the Republic of New Afrika, and the Black Liberation Army.
- April 1983** ◆ A neo-Nazi group calling itself the Order initiated a campaign of violence, hoping to foment a race war in the United States.
- December 16, 1983** ◆ The Provisional Irish Republican Army bombed Harrods department store in London.
- June 1985** ◆ Hijackers belonging to Lebanon’s Hezbollah hijacked TWA Flight 847, taking it on a high-profile and media-intensive odyssey around the Mediterranean.
- December 27, 1985** ◆ The Abu Nidal Organization carried out simultaneous attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports.
- November 1987** ◆ Operatives from North Korea bombed a Korean Air Lines flight, killing more than 100 people.
- 1994** ◆ Marauding Hutu and Tutsi militias in Rwanda committed genocide against civilians of these ethnic groups, leaving more than 500,000 dead.
- March 1995** ◆ The Japanese religious cult Aum Shinrikyō released sarin nerve gas into the Tokyo subway system. Twelve people died, and thousands were injured.
- April 19, 1995** ◆ The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, by rightist extremists.
- January 1996** ◆ Yehiya Ayyash, Hamas’s expert bomb maker, known as the Engineer, was assassinated when his cell phone exploded next to his ear as he was using it.
- January 1997** ◆ Two bombs were detonated in Atlanta, Georgia, at a family health clinic that provided abortion services.
- January 16, 1997** ◆ Two bombs exploded at an abortion clinic in Sandy Springs, Georgia. The Army of God was suspected.
- August 7, 1998** ◆ Two car bombs exploded at the U.S. embassies in Kenya, and Tanzania, killing more than 250 and wounding about 5,000.
- September 8 and 13, 1999** ◆ Bombs destroyed two Moscow apartment complexes, killing hundreds. Chechen terrorists carried out the attacks.
- September 11, 2001** ◆ Terrorists hijacked four airliners. Two of the planes were crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, causing them to collapse. One plane was crashed into the Army section of the Pentagon building. The final plane crashed into rural Pennsylvania.
- Late 2001** ◆ Letters containing anthrax were sent through the U.S. postal system in the New York and Washington, D.C., areas.
- June 18, 2002** ◆ A 22-year-old Hamas terrorist detonated the 69th suicide bomb in 21 months. During that period, 547 Israelis and 1,712 Palestinians were killed. The terrorist’s family proudly referred to him as a “martyr.”
- October 12, 2002** ◆ A large bomb exploded in a pub in Kuta, on the Indonesian island of Bali. As patrons and others rushed into the street, a more powerful second bomb hidden inside a van was detonated; 202 people were killed and 209 injured.
- May 12, 2003** ◆ Three housing compounds for expatriate workers in Saudi Arabia were bombed. Dozens were killed and about 140 injured.
- October 23–26, 2003** ◆ Chechen terrorists took more than 700 people hostage in a Moscow theater. After special forces troops pumped anesthetic gas into the theater and attacked, all of the hostage takers were killed, as were 129 of the hostages.
- March 11, 2004** ◆ Ten bombs were detonated on several commuter trains in Madrid, Spain, killing 191 people and wounding more than 1,500.
- September 1–3, 2004** ◆ Heavily armed Chechen terrorists seized a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, taking 1,200 hostages. As explosives were detonated and special forces retook the school, more than 330 people were killed, most of them schoolchildren.
- November 2, 2004** ◆ A Dutch citizen of Moroccan descent murdered filmmaker Theo van Gogh. The assailant shot his victim repeatedly on a busy Amsterdam street and then slit his throat. Van Gogh had been a critic of Islam.
- February 14, 2005** ◆ Rafiq Hariri, former prime minister of Lebanon, was assassinated by a car bomb; 20 other people were killed. Syrian agents were suspected.
- July 2005** ◆ On July 7, 2005, four bombs exploded in London. The attacks killed more than 50 people and injured more than 700. Two weeks later, on July 21, an identical attack was attempted but failed when the explosives misfired. British-based cells—sympathizers of Al-Qa’ida—were responsible.
- November 9, 2005** ◆ Three hotels were bombed in Amman, Jordan, killing 59 people, including more than 20 at a wedding reception. Al-Qa’ida in Iraq claimed credit for the attacks via an Internet posting. The group stated that all were carried out by suicide bombers—including a husband-and-wife team.
- April 11, 2006** ◆ More than 50 Sunni worshippers were killed by a suicide bomber in Karachi, Pakistan.
- June 15, 2006** ◆ In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers bombed a bus, killing nearly 70 people.
- July 31, 2006** ◆ Two unexploded suitcase bombs were deactivated on trains near Dortmund and Koblenz, Germany.
- November 21, 2006** ◆ In Beirut, Lebanon, anti-Syrian politician Pierre Gemayel was assassinated.

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# Understanding Terrorism

7th Edition

*This book is dedicated to the peacemakers.*

*Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Understanding Terrorism

## Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues

7th Edition

Gus Martin

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# INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

**W**elcome to the seventh edition of *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues*. This edition has been revised in several respects to enhance the educational quality of the study of terrorism. In the same spirit as the first six editions, *Understanding Terrorism*, seventh edition, is a comprehensive textbook for students and professionals who wish to explore the phenomenon of modern terrorist violence. Readers who fully engage themselves in the recommended course of instruction offered in the pages that follow will acquire a solid foundation for understanding the nature of terrorism. Readers will also discover that their facility for critically assessing terrorism in general—and terrorist incidents in particular—will be greatly improved.

At the outset, it is important to understand that the study of terrorism is, first and foremost, a study in human behavior. It is an investigation of highly volatile human interaction. Courses that investigate terrorism must therefore review the events, ideas, motivations, theories, and histories that result in terrorist violence. None of these factors can be discussed in isolation from one another if the reader wishes to develop a facility for critically evaluating the nature of terrorism. Thus, the study of terrorism is one of the most multidisciplinary subjects in the social sciences. It is also one of the most dynamic subjects.

This book is designed to be a primary resource for university students and professionals who require fundamental expertise in understanding terrorist violence. The content of *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues* is directed to academic and professional courses of instruction whose subject areas include terrorism, homeland security, international security, criminal justice administration, political conflict, armed conflict, and social environments. It can be incorporated into classes and seminars covering security studies, the administration of justice, the sociology of terrorism, conflict resolution, political theory, and other instruction in the social sciences. The intended level of instruction is undergraduate- and master's-level university students as well as professionals who require instruction in understanding terrorism.

No prerequisites are specifically recommended, but grounding in one of the following disciplines would be helpful: political science, government, administration of justice, sociology, history, or philosophy.

## COURSE OVERVIEW AND PEDAGOGY

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*Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues* introduces readers to terrorism in the contemporary era, focusing on the post–World War II period as its primary emphasis. It is a review of nations, movements, and individuals who have engaged in what many people would define as terrorist violence. It is also a review of the many kinds of terrorism that have existed in the postwar era. Of most importance, a serious exploration will be made of the underlying causes of terrorism—for example, extremist ideologies, religious intolerance, and traumatic episodes in the lives of nations and people.

The pedagogical approach of *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues*, seventh edition, is designed to stimulate critical thinking by readers. Students, professionals, and instructors will find that each chapter follows a sequence of instruction that builds on previous chapters and thus incrementally enhances the reader's knowledge of each topic. Chapters incorporate the following features:

- **Chapter Learning Objectives.** Using Bloom’s taxonomy, chapter objectives are summarized at the beginning of each discussion.
- **Opening Viewpoints.** At the beginning of each chapter, the Opening Viewpoint presents relevant examples of theories and themes discussed in the chapter and serves as a “reality check” for readers.
- **Chapter Introduction.** Each chapter is introduced by an overview of the subject under investigation. The introduction provides perspective for the incorporation of each chapter’s topic into the broader themes of the textbook.
- **Chapter Perspectives.** Chapters incorporate focused presentations of perspectives that explore people, events, organizations, and movements that are relevant to the subject matter of each chapter.
- **Chapter Summary.** A concluding discussion recapitulates the main themes of each chapter and introduces the subject matter of the following chapter.
- **Discussion Boxes.** These boxes present provocative information and pose challenging questions to stimulate critical thinking and further debate.
- **Key Terms and Concepts.** Important terms and ideas introduced in each chapter are listed for review and discussion. These Key Terms and Concepts are further explored and defined in the book’s Glossary.
- **Recommended Readings.** Suggested readings are listed at the end of each chapter for further information or research on each topic.

## CHAPTER GUIDE

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This volume is organized into four thematic units, each consisting of several chapters. Two appendixes and a glossary are included after the substantive chapters.

### Part I. Terrorism: A Conceptual Review

The first section of the book is a comprehensive discussion of definitions of terrorism and the root causes of violent political extremism. Readers develop comprehensive, contextual, and critical skills for defining terrorism and for understanding the many causes of terrorist behavior.

#### Chapter 1. Terrorism: First Impressions

The introductory chapter presents an introduction to modern terrorism and extremism. This chapter begins with an overview of basic concepts that are developed in later chapters. It continues with a discussion of conceptual considerations of terrorist violence, such as the significance of symbolism and the just war doctrine. The discussion also explores historical perspectives and criminal skill.

#### Chapter 2. The Nature of the Beast: Defining Terrorism

The definitional discussion in this chapter investigates the reasons underlying why certain groups, movements, and individuals are labeled as terrorists or freedom fighters. The characteristics of extremism are defined and investigated in this chapter. Terrorism is discussed at length by sampling official definitions, reviewing the American context, and summarizing several types of terrorism. Readers are introduced to several perspectives of terrorism that are relevant for definitional discussions.



### **Chapter 3. Beginnings: The Causes of Terrorism**

This chapter helps readers become familiar with central factors in the personal and group histories of individuals and groups who become associated with terrorism. The motives of extremists and several explanations of terrorism are explored, including sociological, psychological, and criminological explanations and acts of political will. The morality of political violence is also discussed. An important discussion probes the degree to which a fresh generation of new terrorists is being forged in reaction to how the post–September 11, 2001, war on terrorism has been conducted by the West and its allies.

## **Part II. Terrorist Environments and Typologies**

Part II educates readers about the many manifestations of terrorism by developing skills to critically assess and understand historical and modern examples of political violence. In particular, state- and dissident-initiated terrorism are discussed, compared, and contrasted. Readers develop the facility to distinguish religious, ideological, and international terrorism as well as the emerging environments of gender-selective and criminal dissident terrorism.

### **Chapter 4. Terror From Above: Terrorism by the State**

This chapter investigates state-initiated repression and terror. A state terrorism paradigm is offered to explain state sponsorship of terrorism. A detailed discussion explores terrorism as foreign policy and terrorism as domestic policy. Important examples of state terrorism include the deployment of death squads in Latin America and “cleansing” campaigns ordered by repressive regimes.

### **Chapter 5. Terror From Below: Terrorism by Dissidents**

This chapter critically evaluates terrorism emanating from dissident movements. A dissident terrorism paradigm is offered to explore the different typologies of dissident terrorism, and dissident terror in the era of the New Terrorism is investigated. The discussion includes the problems of antistate dissident terrorism and communal terrorism. Important examples of dissident terrorism include the modern use of child soldiers by extremists and Chechen terrorism against Russia.

### **Chapter 6. Violence in the Name of the Faith: Religious Terrorism**

In this chapter, the historical and modern origins and quality of religious terrorism are evaluated. The purpose of this presentation is to engender critical discussion on the subject of religious terrorism and to develop a contextual perspective on the modern era of religious terrorism. Because religious terrorism has become so prominent in the modern era, it is instructive for readers to investigate the different manifestations of religious violence and to understand the contexts of regional case studies.

### **Chapter 7. Violent Ideologies: Terrorism From the Left and Right**

The nature of ideological political violence is investigated in this chapter, which compares and contrasts radical and reactionary ideological tendencies, identifies the causes of left-wing and right-wing terrorism, and explores the qualities of ideological violence. Because both ideological poles were inextricably intertwined during the 20th century, and adherents continue to be active in the 21st century, it is essential for readers to grasp the importance of the ideologies of class struggle, national liberation, order, and race. This chapter also discusses regional examples of ideological terrorism. Unlike the other chapters, this chapter presents two Discussion Boxes, one each for the left and the right.

## **Chapter 8. Terrorist Spillovers: International Terrorism**

This chapter logically concludes the presentation of common terrorist environments prior to the discussion of emerging environments. In this chapter, recent and historical examples of international terrorism are discussed. Our analysis of this subject defines what is meant by *international terrorism* and explores the reasons for terrorist spillovers. The phenomenon of international terrorist networks is discussed, as is the concept of stateless revolutionaries. In this regard, readers evaluate newly emerging threats from movements and networks that have adapted and advanced the Al-Qa’ida example as a prototypical model.

## **Chapter 9. Emerging Terrorist Environments: Gender-Selective Political Violence and Criminal Dissident Terrorism**

This chapter incorporates two examples of emerging terrorist environments. The purpose is to stimulate critical thinking among readers on the questions of gender-selective political violence and the nexus between criminal enterprises and terrorist violence. The discussion of gender-selective terrorist violence begins with an overview of political violence specifically targeted against women and men. This introduction orients readers to an emerging recognition that many terrorist environments direct their violence specifically against enemy women or men. The discussion investigates gender-selective state-sponsored and dissident-sponsored terrorism. The section on criminal dissident terrorism distinguishes political violence conducted by traditional criminal enterprises from that of violent criminal-political enterprises and discusses regional case studies of criminal dissident terrorism.

## **Part III. The Terrorist Trade and Counterterrorism**

Part III discusses the “nuts and bolts” of the terrorist trade, including the informational war that is waged between adversaries and the role of the mass media. Readers explore how the applications of the concepts of propaganda by deed and armed propaganda have historically been common features of extremist violence. With the availability of high-yield weaponry in the arsenals of terrorists and the globalization of information, it is important for readers to grasp the significance of the terrorist trade in the modern world. Readers also investigate the case of terrorism in the United States. Readers will review methods of counterterrorism and will evaluate counterterrorist options.

## **Chapter 10. Tools of the Trade: Tactics and Targets of Terrorists**

This chapter investigates the methodology of terrorism. Terrorist objectives, methods, and targets are analyzed at length, as is the question of whether terrorism is “effective.” Recent data and examples identify new challenges in the new era of terrorism, including examples of the use of the Internet and social networking media to post incidents and communiqués, and the plausible threat from cyberterrorism.

## **Chapter 11. The Information Battleground: Terrorist Violence and the Role of the Media**

The centrality of the media and mass communications in the modern era of political violence is investigated and evaluated. The chapter first discusses the nature of mass communications and reporting in the context of terrorist environments. An investigation is made of the war of manipulation for favorable media coverage. In particular, readers assess the manipulation of information technologies and the media by modern terrorists, including the utility of extremist manipulation of social networking media. The chapter also presents a discussion of the efficacy of regulating the media.

## Chapter 12. The American Case: Terrorism in the United States

This chapter presents an overview of terrorism in postwar America. It probes the background of political violence from the left and right and presents a detailed discussion of leftist and rightist terrorism in the United States. The chapter also evaluates international terrorism and prospects for violence emanating from modern extremists on the left and right and from religious extremism.

## Chapter 13. Counterterrorism: The Options

This chapter explores counterterrorist options and security measures. Several categories of responses are assessed: the use of force, repressive operations other than war, conciliatory operations other than war, and legalistic responses. Contemporary controversies are explored, such as the status and treatment of captured suspects.

## Part IV. Securing the Homeland

Part IV presents the concept of homeland security. Readers investigate the homeland security environment from both theoretical and organizational perspectives. Projections for political violence in the future are also explored.

## Chapter 14. A New Era: Homeland Security

This chapter explores the concept of homeland security in Europe and the United States. Readers are challenged to critically assess options, trends, and other factors that shape the homeland security bureaucracy. The missions of agencies are explained and assessed. The role of intelligence agencies is assessed in the context of homeland security. The case of the United States is explored in the contexts of the reorganization of homeland security bureaucracies and the legal foundations for counterterrorist policies. Civil liberties controversies stemming from the application of homeland security laws and policies are presented and discussed. The final discussion examines achieving security when liberal democracies are beset by threats to national security.

## Chapter 15. What Next? The Future of Terrorism

Readers are challenged to critically assess trends and other factors that can be used to project the near future of terrorism. In particular, this chapter presents theoretical models for evaluating terrorist environments and applying these models to project and evaluate emerging trends. Fresh discussions and data are offered for assessing the near future of ideological terrorism, religious terrorism, international terrorism, gender-selective political violence, and criminal dissident terrorism. A theoretical model is offered for assessing the decline and ending of terrorist campaigns.

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

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- Expanded discussion of the history of political violence and how to define terrorism
- Added learning objectives
- New examination of
  - nonterrorist mass violence in the United States
  - characteristics of right-wing terrorists and the terrorist right in the new era
  - the symbolism of terrorist targets in the United States
- Expanded
  - nationalist activism
  - scapegoating tactics
  - use of social media by terrorist networks

- Movements
  - Boko Haram's use of child soldiers and female suicide bombers
  - Sudan's efforts to be removed from the U.S. terrorist watch list
  - radical socialism
  - ISIS gender-selective terrorism
  - stochastic terrorism
  - asymmetric warfare and the contagion effect
- Events
  - suicide bombings at churches and other sites in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019
  - Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election
  - 2016 pipe bomb clusters in Manhattan and New Jersey
  - the 2018 shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



# TERRORISM

## A Conceptual Review



A grieving widow who lost her husband and two children during the bombing at St. Sebastian's Church yells toward the graves during a mass burial for victims at a cemetery near the church in Negombo, three days after a string of suicide bomb attacks on churches and luxury hotels across the island on Easter Sunday 2019, in Sri Lanka.

Thomas Peter/Reuters/Newscom

# TERRORISM

## Chapter Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable readers to do the following:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical context of modern terrorist violence.
2. Discuss the significance of symbolism.
3. Explain the conceptual consideration of whether political violence is *mala prohibita* or *mala in se*.
4. Apply the moral considerations of the just war doctrine.
5. Discuss cases of terrorism and criminal skill.

## Opening Viewpoint: The Ideology of Al-Qa'ida

Prior to his death in May 2011, **Osama bin Laden** established Al-Qa'ida as an international network that came to symbolize the globalization of terrorism in the 21st century. The network is perceived by many to represent a quintessential model for small groups of like-minded revolutionaries who wish to wage transnational insurgencies against strong adversaries. Although Al-Qa'ida certainly exists as a loose network of relatively independent **cells**, it has also evolved into an idea—an ideology and a fighting strategy—that has been embraced by sympathetic revolutionaries and guerrilla insurgencies throughout the world. What is the ideology of Al-Qa'ida? Why did a network of religious revolutionaries evolve into a potent symbol of global resistance against its enemies? Which underlying commonalities appeal to motivated Islamist activists?

Al-Qa'ida leaders such as the late Osama bin Laden and his successor as leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, consistently released public pronouncements of their goals, often by delivering audio and video communiqués to international news agencies such as Al Jazeera in Qatar. They also became quite adept at using online Internet outlets and social networking technologies as communications resources. Based on these communiqués, the following principles frame the ideology of Al-Qa'ida:<sup>a</sup>

- The struggle is a clash of civilizations. Holy war is a religious duty and is necessary for the salvation of one's soul and the defense of the Muslim nation.
- Violence in a defensive war on behalf of Islam is the only course of action. There cannot be peace with the West.
- Because this is a just war, many of the theological and legal restrictions on the use of force by Muslims do not apply. Killing civilians in this war is acceptable.

- Only two sides exist, and there is no middle ground in this apocalyptic conflict between Islam and the forces of evil. Western and Muslim nations that do not share Al-Qa'ida's vision of true Islam are enemies.
- A new pan-Islamic caliphate must be established.
- Islamic governments that cooperate with the West and do not adopt strict Islamic law are apostasies and must be violently overthrown.
- Western influence must be eliminated from the Muslim world.
- Israel is an illegitimate nation and must be destroyed.

These principles have become a rallying ideology for Islamist extremists who have few, if any, direct ties to central Al-Qa'ida. Thus, the war on terrorism is not solely a conflict against established organizations but is also a conflict against an entrenched belief system.

#### Note

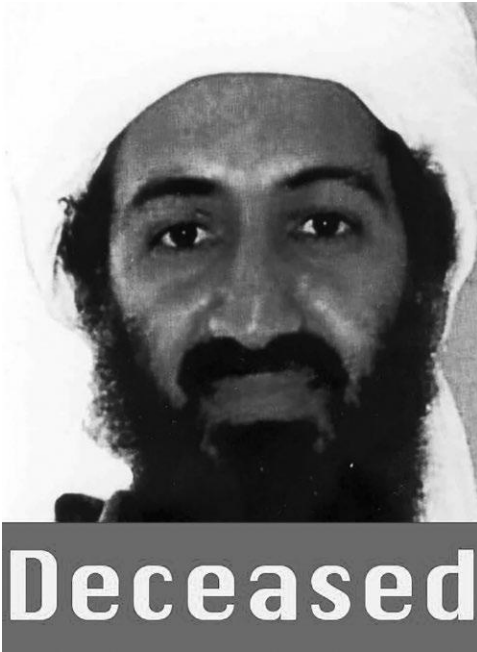
a. Adapted from U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2019.

**T**errorism has been a dark feature of human behavior since the dawn of recorded history. Great leaders have been assassinated, groups and individuals have committed acts of incredible violence, and entire cities and nations have been put to the sword—all in the name of defending a greater good. Terrorism, however defined, has always challenged the stability of societies and the peace of mind of everyday people. In the modern era, the impact of terrorism—that is, its ability to terrorize—is not limited to the specific locales or regions where the terrorists strike. In the age of television, the Internet, satellite communications, and global news coverage, graphic images of terrorist incidents are broadcast instantaneously into the homes of hundreds of millions of people. Terrorist groups understand the power of these images, and they manipulate them to their advantage as much as they can. Terrorist states also fully appreciate the power of instantaneous information, so they try to control the “spin” on reports of their behavior. In many respects, the 21st century is an era of globalized terrorism.

Some acts of political violence are clearly acts of terrorism. Most people would agree that politically motivated planting of bombs in marketplaces, massacres of enemy civilians, and the routine use of torture by governments are terrorist acts. As we begin our study of terrorism, we will encounter many definitional gray areas. Depending on which side of the ideological, racial, religious, or national fence one sits on, political violence can be interpreted either as an act of unmitigated terrorist barbarity or as freedom fighting and national liberation. These gray areas will be explored in the chapters that follow.

**September 11, 2001: The Dawn of a New Era.** The death of Al-Qa'ida leader Osama bin Laden in May 2011 occurred prior to the 10th commemoration of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland. The attacks were seen by many as a turning point in the history of political violence. In the aftermath of these attacks, journalists, scholars, and national leaders repeatedly described the emergence of a new international terrorist environment. It was argued that within this new environment, terrorists were now quite capable of using—and very willing to use—weapons of mass destruction to inflict unprecedented casualties and destruction on enemy targets. Terrorist movements also became quite adept at using social networking technologies and the Internet to recruit





► **Photo 1.1**

Osama bin Laden.  
From the U.S. Federal  
Bureau of Investigation  
most-wanted terrorists  
website. Bin Laden was  
killed during a raid by a  
U.S. naval special forces  
unit in Abbottabad,  
Pakistan, on May 2, 2011.

and inspire individuals to carry out mass-casualty attacks against “soft” civilian targets. These attacks seemed to confirm warnings from experts during the 1990s that a New Terrorism,<sup>1</sup> using “asymmetric” methods, would characterize the terrorist environment in the new millennium.<sup>2</sup> (Asymmetric warfare is discussed further in Chapters 8 and 10.)

Several questions about this new environment have arisen:

- How has the new terrorist environment affected traditional terrorist profiles?
- How has traditional terrorism been affected by the collapse of revolutionary Marxism?
- What is the likely impact of “stateless” international terrorism?

Readers will notice that these questions focus on terrorist *groups* and *movements*. However, it is very important to understand that terrorist *states* were responsible for untold millions of deaths during the 20th century. In addition, genocidal fighting between *communal groups* claimed the lives of many millions more. Our exploration of terrorism, therefore, requires us to consider every facet of political violence, from low-intensity campaigns

by terrorist gangs to high-intensity campaigns by terrorist governments and genocidal paramilitaries.

This chapter is a general introduction to the subject of terrorism. It is an overview—a first glance—of basic concepts that will be developed in later discussions. The following themes are introduced here and will be explored in much greater detail in subsequent chapters:

- First Considerations
- Conceptual Considerations: Understanding Political Violence
- The Past as Prologue: Historical Perspectives on Terrorism
- Terrorism and Criminal Skill: Three Cases From the Modern Era

## FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

At the outset, readers must develop a basic understanding of several issues underlying the study of terrorism. These issues are ongoing topics of research and debate among scholars, government officials, the media, and social activists, and all of them will be explored in detail in later chapters. The discussion here introduces the following:

- An Overview of Extremism and Terrorism
- Terrorism at First Glance
- Sources of Extremism and Terrorism

### An Overview of Extremism and Terrorism

**Extremism** is a quality that is “radical in opinion, especially in political matters; ultra; advanced.”<sup>3</sup> It is characterized by intolerance toward opposing interests and divergent opinions,

and it is the primary catalyst and motivation for terrorist behavior. Extremists who cross the line to become terrorists always develop noble arguments to rationalize and justify acts of violence directed against enemy nations, people, religions, or other interests.

Extremism is a radical expression of one's political values. Both the *content* of one's beliefs and the *style* in which one expresses those beliefs are basic elements for defining extremism. Laird Wilcox summed up this quality as follows:

Extremism is more an issue of style than of content. . . . Most people can hold radical or unorthodox views and still entertain them in a more or less reasonable, rational, and nondogmatic manner. On the other hand, I have met people whose views are fairly close to the political mainstream but were presented in a shrill, uncompromising, bullying, and distinctly authoritarian manner.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, a fundamental definitional issue for extremism is *how* one expresses an idea, in addition to the question of *which* belief one acts upon. Both elements—style and content—are important for our investigation of fringe beliefs and terrorist behavior.

Extremism is a precursor to terrorism—it is an overarching belief system terrorists use to justify their violent behavior. Extremism is characterized by what a person's beliefs are as well as how a person expresses their beliefs. Thus, no matter how offensive or reprehensible one's thoughts or words are, they are not by themselves acts of terrorism. Only those who violently act out their extremist beliefs are terrorists.

**Terrorism** would not, from a layperson's point of view, seem to be a difficult concept to define. Most people likely hold an instinctive understanding that terrorism is

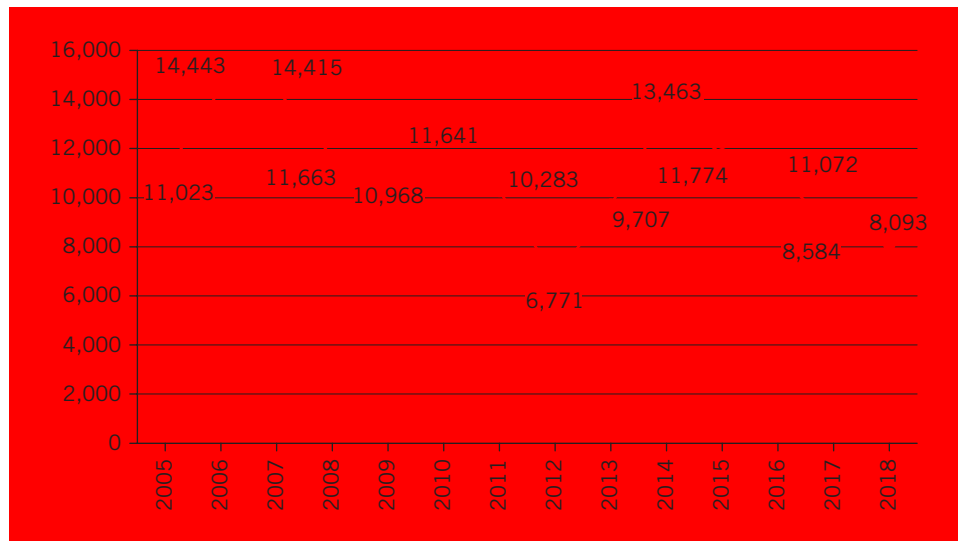
- the use of politically motivated violence,
- usually directed against **soft targets** (i.e., civilian and administrative government targets),
- to communicate a message to a larger group (i.e., “propaganda by the deed”),
- with an intention to affect (terrorize) a target audience.

This instinctive understanding would also hold that terrorism is a criminal, unfair, or otherwise illegitimate use of force. Laypersons might presume that this is an easily understood concept, but defining terrorism is *not* such a simple process. Experts have for some time grappled with designing (and agreeing on) clear definitions of terrorism; the issue has, in fact, been at the center of an ongoing debate. The result of this debate is a remarkable variety of approaches and definitions. Walter Laqueur noted that “more than a hundred definitions have been offered,” including several of his own.<sup>5</sup> Even within the U.S. government, different agencies apply several definitions. These definitional problems are explored further in the next chapter.

## Terrorism at First Glance

The modern era of terrorism is primarily (though not exclusively) a conflict between adversaries who on one side are waging a self-described war on terrorism and on the other side are waging a self-described holy war in defense of their religion. It is an active confrontation, as evidenced by the fact that the incidence of significant terrorist attacks often spikes to serious levels. For example, the number of terrorist incidents worldwide has annually been documented as consistently robust, as reported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (see Figure 1.1).<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1.1 The Number of Terrorist Incidents Worldwide**



**Source:** U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2012–2018*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State.

Although such trends are disturbing, it is critical for one to keep these facts in perspective because the modern terrorist environment is in no manner a unique circumstance in human history.

It will become clear in the following pages that the history of terrorist behavior extends into antiquity and that common themes and concepts span the ages. State terrorism, dissident terrorism, and other types of political violence are found in all periods of human civilization. It will also become clear to readers that many common *justifications*—rooted in basic beliefs—have been used to rationalize terrorist violence throughout history. For example, the following concepts hold true regardless of the contexts of history, culture, or region:

- Those who practice revolutionary violence and state repression always claim to champion noble causes and values.
- Policies that advocate extreme violence always cite righteous goals to justify their behavior, such as the need to defend a religious faith or defend the human rights of a people.
- The perpetrators of violent acts uniformly maintain that they are freedom fighters (in the case of revolutionaries) or the champions of law and social order (in the case of governments).

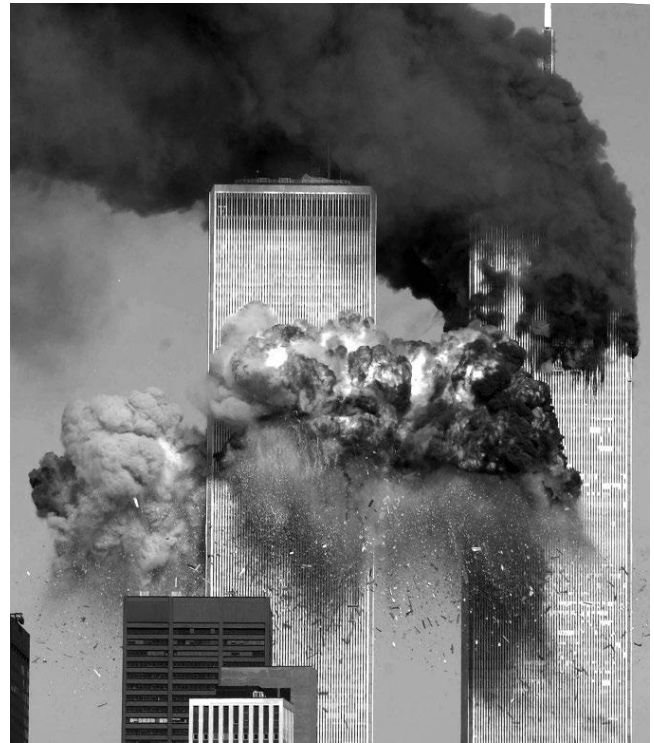
### Sources of Extremism and Terrorism

The underlying causes of terrorism have also been the subject of extensive discussion, debate, and research. This is perhaps because the study of the sources of terrorism spans many disciplines—including sociology, psychology, criminology, and political science. The causes of terrorism will be explored in detail in Chapter 3. For now, a general model will serve as a starting point for developing our understanding of which factors lead to terrorist violence. To begin, we must understand that “political violence, including terrorism, has systemic

origins that can be ameliorated. Social and economic pressures, frustrated political aspirations, and in a more proximate sense, the personal experiences of terrorists and their relations, all contribute to the terrorist reservoir.”<sup>77</sup>

Nehemia Friedland designed “a convenient framework for the analysis of the antecedents of political terrorism,” outlined as follows: “First, terrorism is a group phenomenon . . . perpetrated by organized groups whose members have a clear group identity—national, religious or ideological. . . . Second, political terrorism has its roots in intergroup conflict. . . . Third, ‘insurgent terrorism,’ unlike ‘state terrorism,’ . . . is a ‘strategy of the weak.’”<sup>8</sup>

One should appreciate that these issues continue to be a source of intensive debate. Nevertheless, working definitions have been adopted as a matter of logical necessity. Let us presume for now that terrorist acts are grounded in extremist beliefs that arise from group identity, intergroup conflict, and a chosen strategy.<sup>9</sup>



Spencer Platt/Getty Images News/Getty Images

## CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS: UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The term *terrorism* has acquired a decidedly pejorative meaning in the modern era, so that few if any states or groups who espouse political violence ever refer to themselves as terrorists. Nevertheless, these same states and groups can be unabashedly extremist in their beliefs or violent in their behavior. They often invoke—and manipulate—images of a malevolent threat or unjust conditions to justify their actions. The question is whether these justifications are morally satisfactory (and thereby validate extremist violence) or whether terrorism is inherently wrong.

### The Significance of Symbolism

**Symbolism** is a central feature of terrorism. Most terrorist targets at some level symbolize the righteousness of the terrorists’ cause and the evil of the opponent they are fighting. Symbolism can be used to rationalize acts of extreme violence and can be manipulated to fit any number of targets into the category of an enemy interest. Terrorists are also very mindful of their image and skillfully conduct public relations and propaganda campaigns to “package” themselves. Modern terrorists and their supporters have become quite adept at crafting symbolic meaning from acts of violence.

Symbolism can create abstract ideological linkages between terrorists and their victims. This process was seen during the wave of kidnappings by Latin American leftists during the 1970s, when terrorists seized civilian business executives and diplomats who the kidnappers said symbolized capitalism and exploitation. Symbolic targets can also represent enemy social or political establishments, as in the Irish Republican Army’s (IRA’s) assassination of Lord Louis Mountbatten (the uncle of Prince Philip Mountbatten, husband of Queen Elizabeth II) in 1979 and the IRA’s attempted assassination of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1984. In some cases, entire groups of people can be symbolically labeled and slaughtered, as during

#### ► Photo 1.2

Hijacked United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center and explodes at 9:03 a.m. on September 11, 2001, in New York City.



► **Photo 1.3**

An elderly Rohingya Muslim man carries his grandson as they walk in an alley at a camp for Rohingya people in Ukhiya, near Cox's Bazar, a southern coastal district 296 kilometers (183 miles) south of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

- ***Mala prohibita*** acts are “crimes that are made illegal by legislation.”<sup>11</sup> These acts are illegal because society has declared them to be wrong; they are not inherently immoral, wicked, or evil. Examples include laws prohibiting gambling and prostitution, which are considered to be moral prohibitions against socially unacceptable behaviors rather than prohibitions of fundamental evils.
- ***Mala in se*** acts are crimes “that are immoral or wrong in themselves.”<sup>12</sup> These acts cannot be justified in civilized society, and they have no acceptable qualities. For example, premeditated murder and rape are *mala in se* crimes. They will never be legalized.

Are terrorist methods fundamentally evil? Perhaps so, because terrorism commonly evokes images of maximum violence against innocent victims carried out in the name of a higher cause. However, is terrorist violence always such a bad thing? Are not some causes worth fighting for? Killing for? Dying for? Is not terrorism simply a matter of one's point of view? Most would agree that basic values such as freedom and liberty are indeed worth fighting for, and sometimes killing or dying for. If so, perhaps “where you stand depends on where you sit.” Thus, if the bombs are falling on your head, is it not an act of terrorism? If the bombs are falling on an enemy's head in the name of your freedom, how can it possibly be terrorism?

Conceptually, right and wrong behaviors are not always relative considerations, for many actions are indeed *mala in se*. However, this is not an easy analysis because violence committed by genuinely oppressed people can arguably raise questions of *mala prohibita* as a matter of perspective.

## The Just War Doctrine

The **just war doctrine** is an ideal and a moralistic philosophy. The concept is often used by ideological and religious extremists to justify acts of extreme violence. Throughout history, nations and individuals have gone to war with the belief that their cause was just and their opponents' cause unjust. Similarly, attempts have been made for millennia to write fair and just laws of war and rules of engagement. For example, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the **Hague Conventions** produced at least 21 international agreements on the rules of war.<sup>13</sup>

This is a moral and ethical issue that raises the questions of whether one can ethically attack an opponent, how one can justifiably defend oneself with force, and what types of force

the genocides of the **Nazi Holocaust** (pseudo-racial), in the killing fields of Cambodia (social and ideological), in Rwanda (ethnic and social), in the Darfur region of Sudan (racial), and against the Rohingya people in Myanmar (ethno-religious).

## Political Violence: *Mala Prohibita* or *Mala in Se*?

It is helpful to use two concepts from the field of criminal justice administration. In criminal law, the terms *mala prohibita* and *mala in se*<sup>10</sup> are applied to behaviors that society defines as deviant acts. They represent concepts that are very useful for the study of terrorism.



are morally acceptable in either context. The just war debate also asks who can morally be defined as an enemy and what kinds of targets it is morally acceptable to attack. In this regard, there are two separate components to the concept of just war (which philosophers call the “just war tradition”): the rationale for initiating the war (a war’s ends) and the method of warfare (a war’s means). Criteria for whether a war is just are divided into *jus ad bellum* (justice of war) and *jus in bello* (justice in war) criteria.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, *jus in bello* is correct behavior while waging war, and *jus ad bellum* is having the correct conditions for waging war in the first place. These concepts have been debated by philosophers and theologians for centuries. The early Christian philosopher **Saint Augustine** of Hippo concluded in the 5th century that war is justified to punish injuries inflicted by a nation that has refused to correct wrongs committed by its citizens. The Christian religious tradition, especially that of the Roman Catholic Church, has devoted a great deal of intellectual effort to clarifying Augustine’s concept. Augustine was, of course, referring to warfare between nations and cities, and Church doctrine long held that an attack against state authority was an offense against God.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, The Hague Conventions dealt only with rules of conflict between nations and afforded no legal rights to spies or antistate rebels. Neither system referred to rules of engagement for nonstate or antistate conflicts.

In the modern era, both dissidents and states have adapted the just war tradition to their political environments. Antistate conflict and reprisals by states are commonplace. Dissidents always consider their cause just and their methods proportional to the force used by the agents of their oppressors. They are, in their own minds, freedom fighters waging a just war. As one Hamas fighter said, “Before I start shooting, I start to concentrate on reading verses of the Koran because the Koran gives me the courage to fight the Israelis.”<sup>16</sup>

Antiterrorist reprisals launched by states are also justified as appropriate and proportional applications of force—in this case, as a means to root out bands of terrorists. For example, after three suicide bombers killed or wounded scores of people in Jerusalem and Haifa in December 2001, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon justified Israeli reprisals by saying, “A war of terrorism was forced on us [by the terrorists]. . . . If you ask what the aim of this war is, I will tell you. It is the aim of the terrorists . . . to exile us from here. . . . This will not happen.”<sup>17</sup>

From the perspective of terrorism and counterterrorism, both dissident and state applications of force are legitimate subjects of just war scrutiny, especially because dissidents usually attack soft civilian targets and state reprisals are usually not directed against standing armies. The following “moral checklist” was published in the American newspaper *The Christian Science Monitor* during the first phase of the war on terrorism begun after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks:

- Is it justified to attack states and overturn regimes to get at terrorists?
- Can the U.S. legitimately target political figures like Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar?
- What are U.S. obligations in terms of minimizing civilian casualties?
- What type of force should be used?
- When should U.S. forces take prisoners, rather than killing Afghan troops?
- Is there a plan for peace?<sup>18</sup>

These questions are generically applicable to all state antiterrorist campaigns as well as to antistate dissident violence. Rules of war and the just war tradition are the result of many motivations. Some rules and justifications are self-serving, others are pragmatic, and still others are grounded in ethnonationalist or religious traditions. Hence, the just war concept can easily be adapted to justify ethnic, racial, national, and religious extremism in the modern era.

## THE PAST AS PROLOGUE: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM

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### The Historical Scope of Violence

Conflict between societies has been an attribute of human interaction from the dawn of history. When humans lived primarily within tribes, clans, or social groups, conflict was conducted in a relatively controlled and lower scale of violence. The evolution of settled societies and large populations witnessed a concomitant increase in intensities of conflict. Ancient city-states and empires fought both limited and total wars, and they violently suppressed dissent when deemed necessary. Medieval societies regularly employed brutal tactics when waging war, occasionally resulting in regional declines in population. In the modern era, the 20th century witnessed a convergence of political violence waged by nations and insurgencies, using modern weaponry and technology, resulting in unprecedented casualties and destruction.

Whether the appellation of *terrorism* is applied to ancient and modern examples of political violence, there is little debate about the striking similarities in motives, origins, and rationales for extreme beliefs and violent behavior. From the perspective of the perpetrators of such violence, it has always been a justifiable practice. From the perspective of victims of political violence, there has been universal condemnation. Thus, the historical scope of violence is a continuum of similar moral and political rationalizations used to justify behavior that would be classified as terrorism in the modern era.

It is perhaps natural for each generation to view history narrowly, from within its own political context. Contemporary commentators and laypersons tend to interpret modern events as though they have no historical precedent. However, terrorism is by no means a modern phenomenon; in fact, it has a long history. Nor does terrorism arise in a political vacuum. Let us consider a brief summary of several historical periods to illustrate the global and timeless sweep of terrorist behavior.

### Antiquity

In the ancient world, cases and stories of state repression and political violence were common. Several ancient writers championed **tyrannicide** (the killing of tyrants) as for the greater good of the citizenry and to delight the gods. Some assassins were honored by the public. For example, when the tyrant Hipparchus was assassinated by Aristogeiton and Harmodius, statues were erected to honor them after their executions.<sup>19</sup> Conquerors often set harsh examples by exterminating entire populations or forcing the conquered into exile. An example of this practice is the Babylonian Exile, which followed the conquest of the kingdom of Judea. Babylon's victory resulted in the forced removal of the Judean population to Babylon in 598 and 587 BCE. Those in authority also repressed the expression of ideas from individuals whom they deemed dangerous, sometimes violently. In ancient Greece, Athenian authorities sentenced the great philosopher Socrates to death in 399 BCE for allegedly corrupting the city-state's youth and meddling in religious affairs. He drank hemlock and died among his students and followers.

### The Roman Age

During the time of the Roman Empire, the political world was rife with many violent demonstrations of power, which were arguably examples of what we would now call state terrorism or genocide. These include the brutal suppression of Spartacus's followers after the Servile War of 73–71 BCE, after which the Romans crucified surviving rebels along the Appian Way's route to Rome. **Crucifixion** was used as a form of public execution by Rome for offenses committed against Roman authority and involved affixing condemned persons to a cross or other wooden platform. The condemned were either nailed through the wrist or hand or tied on the platform;

they died by suffocation as their bodies sagged. Crucifixion was considered to be a shameful death and was generally reserved for slaves and rebels, so Roman citizens were usually exempted from execution by crucifixion.

Warfare was waged in an equally hard manner, as evidenced by the final conquest of the North African city-state of Carthage in 146 BCE. The city was reportedly allowed to burn for 10 days, the rubble was cursed, and salt was symbolically ploughed into the soil to signify that Carthage would forever remain desolate. During another successful campaign in 106 CE, the Dacian nation (modern Romania) was eliminated, its population was enslaved, and many Dacians perished in gladiatorial games. In other conquered territories, conquest was often accompanied by similar demonstrations of terror, always with the intent to demonstrate that Roman rule would be imposed without mercy against those who did not submit to the authority of the empire. Julius Caesar claimed in his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*<sup>20</sup> to have exterminated Germanic tribes numbering 430,000 people at the Rhine river in 55 BCE during his conquest of Gaul. In essence, Roman conquest was predicated on the alternatives of unconditional surrender by adversaries or their annihilation.

**Regicide** (the killing of kings) was also common during the Roman age. Perhaps the best-known political incident in ancient Rome was the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE by rivals in the Senate. Other Roman emperors also met violent fates: Caligula and Galba were killed by the Praetorian Guard in 41 and 68 CE, respectively; Domitian was stabbed to death in 96 CE; a paid gladiator murdered Commodus in 193 CE; and Caracalla, Elagabalus, and many other emperors either were assassinated or died suspiciously.<sup>21</sup> These events were rather common in Roman political culture, as evidenced by the fact that at least 23 emperors are known to have claimed imperial supremacy between 235 CE and 284 CE.

## The Ancient and Medieval Middle East

Cases exist of movements in the ancient and medieval Middle East that used what modern analysts would consider to be terrorist tactics. For example, in *History of the Jewish War*—a seven-volume account of the first Jewish rebellion against Roman occupation (66–73 CE)—the historian Flavius Josephus describes how one faction of the rebels, the **sicarii** (named after their preferred use of *sica*, or short, curved daggers), attacked both Romans and members of the Jewish establishment.<sup>22</sup> They were masters of guerrilla warfare and the destruction of symbolic property, and they belonged to a group known as the **Zealots** (from the Greek *zelos*, meaning ardor or strong spirit), who opposed the Roman occupation of Palestine. The modern term *zealot*, used to describe uncompromising devotion to radical change, is derived from the name of this group. Assassination was a commonly used tactic. Some *sicarii* zealots were present at the siege of Masada, a hilltop fortress that held out against the Romans for 3 years before the defenders committed suicide in 74 CE rather than surrender.

Another important historical case, the Assassins in 13th-century Persia, is discussed in Chapter 6. Both the Zealots and Assassins are important historical examples because they continue to inform modern analyses of terrorist violence and motives.

## The Dark Ages: Prelude to Modern Terrorism

During the period from the Assassins (13th century) to the French Revolution (18th century), behavior that would later be considered terrorism was commonly practiced in medieval warfare. In fact, a great deal of medieval conflict involved openly brutal warfare. However, the modern terrorist profile of politically motivated dissidents attempting to change an existing order, or state repression to preserve state hegemony, was uncommon. Nation-states in the modern sense did not exist in medieval Europe, and recurrent warfare was motivated by religious intolerance and political discord between feudal kings and lords. The post-Assassin Middle East also witnessed periodic invasions, discord between leaders, and religious warfare,



## The Gunpowder Plot of Guy Fawkes<sup>a</sup>

The reign of James I, King of England from 1603 to 1625, took place in the aftermath of a religious upheaval. During the previous century, King Henry VIII (1509–1547) wrested from Parliament the authority to proclaim himself the head of religious affairs in England. King Henry had requested permission from Pope Clement VII to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon when she failed to give birth to a male heir to the throne. His intention was to then marry Anne Boleyn. When the Pope refused his request, Henry proclaimed the Church of England and separated the new church from papal authority. The English crown confiscated Catholic Church property and shut down Catholic monasteries. English Catholics who failed to swear allegiance to the crown as supreme head of the church were repressed by Henry and later by Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603).

When James I was proclaimed king, Guy Fawkes and other conspirators plotted to assassinate him. They meticulously smuggled gunpowder into the Palace of Westminster, intending to blow it up along with King James and any other officials in attendance on the

opening day of Parliament. Unfortunately for Fawkes, one of his fellow plotters attempted to send a note to warn his brother-in-law to stay away from Westminster on the appointed day. The note was intercepted, and Fawkes was captured on November 5, 1605, while guarding the store of gunpowder.

Guy Fawkes suffered the English penalty for treason. He was dragged through the streets, hanged until nearly dead, his bowels were drawn from him, and he was cut into quarters—an infamous process known as hanging, drawing, and quartering. Fawkes had known that this would be his fate, so when the noose was placed around his neck he took a running leap, hoping to break his neck. Unfortunately, the rope broke, and the executioner proceeded with the full ordeal.

For a history of the life and times of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot, see Holland, Nick. *The Real Guy Fawkes*. South Yorkshire, UK: Pen and Sword Books, 2017.

but not modern-style terrorism. It was not until the rise of the modern nation-state in the mid-17th century that the range of intensity of conflict devolved from open warfare to include behavior the modern era would define as insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism.

## The French Revolution

During the French Revolution, the word *terrorism* was coined in its modern context by British statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke. He used the word to describe the *régime de la terreur*, commonly known in English as the **Reign of Terror** (June 1793 to July 1794).<sup>23</sup> The Reign of Terror, led by the radical Jacobin-dominated government, is a good example of state terrorism carried out to further the goals of a revolutionary ideology.<sup>24</sup> During the Terror, thousands of opponents to the Jacobin dictatorship—and others merely perceived to be enemies of the new revolutionary Republic—were arrested and put on trial before a **Revolutionary Tribunal**. Those found to be enemies of the Republic were beheaded by a new instrument of execution—the guillotine. The guillotine had the capability to execute victims one after the other in assembly-line fashion and was regarded by Jacobins and other revolutionaries at the time as an enlightened and civilized tool of revolutionary justice because it provided a quick death.<sup>25</sup>

The ferocity of the Reign of Terror is reflected in the number of victims: Between 17,000 and 40,000 persons were executed, and perhaps 200,000 political prisoners died in

prisons from disease and starvation.<sup>26</sup> Two incidents illustrate the communal nature of this violence: In Lyon, 700 people were massacred by cannon fire in the town square, and in Nantes, thousands were drowned in the Loire River when the boats in which they were detained were sunk.<sup>27</sup>

The Revolutionary Tribunal is a symbol of revolutionary justice and state terrorism that has its modern counterparts in 20th-century social upheavals. Recent examples include the “**struggle meetings**” in revolutionary China (public criticism sessions, involving public humiliation and confession) and the *komiteh* (ad hoc “people’s committee”) of revolutionary Iran.<sup>28</sup>

## Nineteenth-Century Europe: Two Examples From the Left

Modern, left-wing terrorism is not a product of the 20th century. Its ideological ancestry dates to the 19th century, when anarchist and communist philosophers began to advocate the destruction of capitalist and imperial society—what Karl Marx referred to as the “spectre . . . haunting Europe.”<sup>29</sup> Some revolutionaries readily encouraged the use of terrorism in the new cause. One theorist, Karl Heinzen in Germany, anticipated the late-20th century fear that terrorists might obtain weapons of mass destruction when he supported the acquisition of new weapons technologies to utterly destroy the enemies of the people. According to Heinzen, these weapons could include poison gas and new, high-yield explosives.<sup>30</sup>

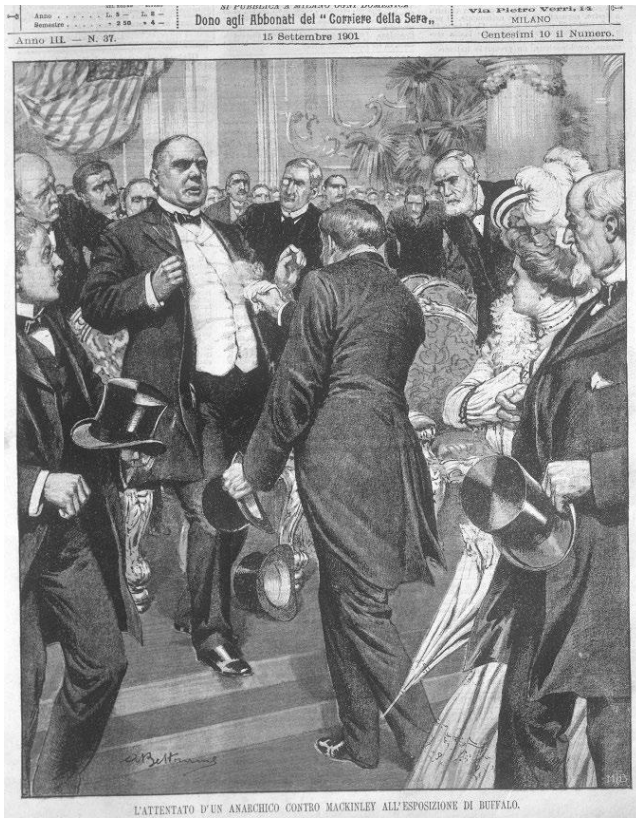
During the 19th century, several terrorist movements championed the rights of the lower classes. These movements were prototypes for 20th-century groups and grew out of social and political environments that were unique to their countries. To illustrate this point, the following two cases are drawn from early industrial England and the semifeudal Russian context of the late 19th century.

The **Luddites** were English workers in the early 1800s who objected to the social and economic transformations of the Industrial Revolution. Their principal objection was that industrialization threatened their jobs, so they targeted the machinery of the new textile factories. Textile mills and weaving machinery were disrupted and sabotaged. For example, they attacked stocking looms that mass-produced stockings at the expense of skilled stocking weavers who made them by hand.

A mythical figure, Ned Ludd, was the supposed founder of the Luddite movement. The movement was active from 1811 to 1816 and was responsible for sabotaging and destroying wool and cotton mills. The British government eventually suppressed the movement by passing anti-Luddite laws, including establishing the crime of “machine breaking,” which was punishable by death. After 17 Luddites were executed in 1813, the movement gradually faded out. Although historians debate whether Luddites clearly fit the profile of terrorists, modern anti-technology activists and terrorists, such as the Unabomber in the United States, are sometimes referred to as neo-Luddites.

**People’s Will (Narodnaya Volya)** in Russia was a direct outgrowth of student dissatisfaction with the czarist regime in the late 19th century. Many young Russian university students, some of whom had studied abroad, became imbued with the ideals of anarchism and Marxism. Many of these students became radical reformists who championed the rights of the people, particularly the peasant class. A populist revolutionary society, Land and Liberty (Zemlya Volya), was founded in 1876 with the goal of fomenting a mass peasant uprising by settling radical students among them to raise their class consciousness. After a series of arrests and mass public trials, Land and Liberty split into two factions in 1879. One faction, Black Repartition, kept to the goal of a peasant revolution. The other faction, People’s Will, fashioned itself into a conspiratorial terrorist organization.

People’s Will members believed that they understood the underlying problems of Russia better than the uneducated masses of people did, and they concluded that they were therefore better able to force government change. This was, in fact, one of the first examples of a revolutionary vanguard strategy. They believed that they could both demoralize the



#### ► Photo 1.4

U.S. president William McKinley is shot on September 6, 1901, by anarchist Leon Czolgosz, who hid his gun in a handkerchief and fired as the president approached to shake his hand. McKinley died 8 days later.

- desired acquisition of high-intensity weapons and weapons of mass destruction
- politically vague, religious, or mystical motivations
- asymmetric methods that maximize casualties
- skillful use of the Internet and social networking media, and manipulation of the mass media

The New Terrorism should be contrasted with traditional terrorism, which is typically characterized by the following:

- clearly identifiable organizations or movements
- use of conventional weapons, usually small arms and explosives
- explicit grievances championing specific classes or ethnonational groups
- relatively “surgical” selection of targets

New information technologies and the Internet create unprecedented opportunities for terrorist groups, and violent extremists have become adept at bringing their wars into the homes of literally hundreds of millions of people. Those who specialize in suicide bombings, vehicular bombings, or mass-casualty attacks correctly calculate that carefully selected targets will attract the attention of a global audience. Thus, cycles of violence not only disrupt normal routines; they also produce long periods of global awareness. Such cycles can be devastating.

czarist government and expose its weaknesses to the peasantry. People’s Will quickly embarked on a terrorist campaign against carefully selected targets. Incidents of terror committed by People’s Will members—and other revolutionaries who emulated them—including shootings, knifings, and bombings against government officials. In one successful attack, Czar Alexander II was assassinated by a terrorist bomb on March 1, 1881. The immediate outcome of the terrorist campaign was the installation of a repressive police state in Russia that, although not as efficient as later police states would be in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, succeeded in harassing and imprisoning most members of People’s Will.

### The Modern Era and the War on Terrorism

It is clear from human history that terrorism is deeply woven into the fabric of social and political conflict. This quality has not changed, and in the modern world, states and targeted populations are challenged by the New Terrorism, which is characterized by the following:

- loose cell-based networks, which by design have minimal lines of command and control

**Table 1.1 Ten Countries With the Most Terrorist Incidents, 2018**

Country	Total Incidents	Total Deaths	Total Injured	Kidnapped/ Hostages
Afghanistan	1,294	9,961	7,039	1,111
Syria	871	3,875	2,631	240
Iraq	765	1,520	1,829	140
India	671	917	784	107
Nigeria	546	3,331	1,190	375
Somalia	526	2,063	1,317	109
Philippines	350	483	635	45
Pakistan	329	766	1,130	7
Yemen	224	3,038	1,095	45
Cameroon	224	3,038	1,095	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,783</b>	<b>26,569</b>	<b>17,904</b>	<b>2,507</b>

*Source:* U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2018*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2019.

For example, during the winter and spring of 2005, Iraqi suicide bombings increased markedly in intensity and frequency, from 69 in April 2005 (a record rate at that time) to 90 in May.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, the renewal of sectarian violence in 2014, exacerbated by intensive combat with ISIS, was a reinvigoration of the sectarian bloodletting that occurred during the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq in the early 2000s.<sup>32</sup> These attacks resulted in many casualties, including hundreds of deaths, and greatly outpaced the previous cycle of car bombings by more than two to one.

All of these threats offer new challenges for policy makers about how to respond to the behavior of terrorist states, groups, and individuals. The war on terrorism, launched in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, seemed to herald a new resolve to end terrorism. This has proven to be a difficult task. The war has been fought on many levels, as exemplified by the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the disruption of terrorist cells on several continents. There have been many serious terrorist strikes such as those in Madrid, Spain; Bali, Indonesia; London, England; Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt; Paris, France; Brussels, Belgium; and Orlando, United States. In addition, differences arose within the post-September 11 alliance, creating significant strains. It is clear that the war will be a long-term prospect, likely with many unanticipated events. Table 1.1 reports the scale of terrorist violence in 2018 for 10 countries with the most active terrorist environments for that year.

## **TERRORISM AND CRIMINAL SKILL: THREE CASES FROM THE MODERN ERA**

Terrorism is condemned internationally as an illegal use of force and an illegitimate expression of political will. Applying this concept of illegality, one can argue that terrorists are criminals and that terrorist attacks require some degree of criminal skill. For example, the radical Islamist

network Al-Qa'ida set up an elaborate financial system to sustain its activities. This financial system included secret bank accounts, front companies, offshore bank accounts, and charities.<sup>33</sup> Al-Qa'ida is an example of a stateless movement that became a self-sustaining revolutionary network. It is also an example of a sophisticated transnational criminal enterprise.

Terrorist attacks involve different degrees of criminal skill. The following cases are examples of the wide range of sophistication found in incidents of political violence. All three cases are short illustrations of the criminal skill of the following individual extremists:

- Anders Breivik, a Norwegian right-wing extremist who detonated a lethal bomb in Oslo and went on a killing spree at a youth camp in July 2011
- Ted Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber, who was famous for sending mail bombs to his victims and who eluded capture for 18 years, from 1978 to 1996
- Ramzi Yousef, an international terrorist who was the mastermind behind the first World Trade Center bombing, in February 1993

### Case 1: Anders Breivik

Many terrorist incidents are the acts of individual extremists who simply embark on killing sprees, using a relatively *low degree* of criminal sophistication. For example, domestic “lone-wolf” attacks in Europe and the United States have usually been ideological or racially motivated killing sprees committed by individual extremists who are often neo-fascists, neo-Nazis, or racial supremacists.<sup>34</sup> One of these attacks occurred on July 22, 2011, in and around Oslo, Norway, when a right-wing extremist murdered nearly 80 people.

**Anders Breivik**, a self-professed right-wing ideologue, detonated a car bomb in the government district of Oslo and methodically shot to death dozens of victims at a Norwegian Labor Party youth summer camp on the island of Utøya. His victims were government workers, bystanders, and teenage residents of the camp. The sequence of Breivik's assault occurred as follows:

- Breivik detonated a car bomb in Oslo's government district using ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO) explosives. The blast killed eight people and wounded at least a dozen more.
- He next drove nearly 2 hours to a youth summer camp on the island of Utøya. The camp was sponsored by the youth organization of the ruling Norwegian Labor Party, and hundreds of youths were in attendance. Breivik was disguised as a policeman.
- When Breivik arrived on the island, he announced that he was a police officer who was following up on the bombing in Oslo. As people gathered around him, he drew his weapons and began shooting.
- Using a carbine and semiautomatic handgun, Breivik methodically shot scores of attendees on Utøya, most of them teenagers. The attack lasted approximately 90 minutes and ended when police landed on the island and accepted Breivik's surrender.

In August 2012, Breivik was convicted of murdering 77 people and received Norway's maximum sentence of 21 years' “containment” imprisonment, which under Norwegian law means his incarceration may be extended indefinitely if he is deemed to be a risk to society.

The Breivik case illustrates how the lone-wolf scenario involves an individual who believes in a certain ideology but who is not acting on behalf of an organized group. These individuals tend to exhibit a relatively low degree of criminal skill while carrying out their assault.



## Case 2: Theodore “Ted” Kaczynski

Using a *medium degree* of criminal sophistication, many terrorists have been able to remain active for long periods of time without being captured by security agents. Some enter into “retirement” during this time, whereas others remain at least sporadically active. An example of the latter profile is **Theodore “Ted” Kaczynski**, popularly known as the Unabomber. The term *Unabomber* was derived from the FBI’s designation of his case as **UNABOM** during its investigation of his activities.

In May 1978, Kaczynski began constructing and detonating a series of bombs directed against corporations and universities. His usual practice was to send the devices through the mail disguised as business parcels. Examples of his attacks include the following:

- A bomb caught fire inside a mail bag aboard a Boeing 727. It had been rigged with a barometric trigger to explode at a certain altitude.
- A package bomb exploded inside the home of the president of United Airlines, injuring him.
- A letter bomb exploded at Vanderbilt University, injuring a secretary. It had been addressed to the chair of the computer science department.
- A University of California, Berkeley, professor was severely injured when a pipe bomb he found in the faculty room exploded.
- Two University of Michigan scholars were injured when a package bomb exploded at a professor’s home. The bomb had been designed to look like a book manuscript.
- An antipersonnel bomb exploded in the parking lot behind a computer rental store, killing the store’s owner.

During an 18-year period, Ted Kaczynski was responsible for the detonation of more than 16 bombs around the country, killing three people and injuring 22 more (some very seriously). He was arrested in his Montana cabin in April 1996. Kaczynski was sentenced in May 1998 to four consecutive life terms plus 30 years under a plea agreement in lieu of a death sentence. He was incarcerated in the ADX “supermaximum” federal prison in Florence, Colorado.

## Case 3: Ramzi Yousef

Involving a *high degree* of criminal sophistication, some terrorist attacks are the work of individuals who can be described as masters of their criminal enterprise. The following case illustrates this concept.

On February 26, 1993, **Ramzi Yousef** detonated a bomb in a parking garage beneath Tower One of the World Trade Center in New York City. The bomb was a mobile truck bomb that Yousef and an associate had constructed in New Jersey from a converted Ford Econoline van. It was of a fairly simple design but extremely powerful. The detonation occurred as follows:

The critical moment came at 12:17 and 37 seconds. One of the fuses burnt to its end and ignited the gunpowder in an Atlas Rockmaster blasting cap. In a split second the cap exploded with a pressure of around 15,000 lbs per square inch, igniting in turn the first nitro-glycerin container of the bomb, which erupted with a pressure of about 150,000 lbs per square inch—the equivalent of about 10,000 atmospheres. In turn, the nitro-glycerin ignited cardboard boxes containing a witches’ brew of urea pellets and sulphuric acid.<sup>35</sup>



► **Photo 1.5**

Ramzi Yousef, master terrorist and mastermind of the first bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City in 1993.

According to investigators and other officials, Yousef's objective was to topple Tower One onto Tower Two "like a pair of dominoes,"<sup>36</sup> release a cloud of toxic gas, and thus achieve a very high death toll.

Ramzi Yousef, apparently born in Kuwait and reared in Pakistan, was an activist educated in the United Kingdom. His education was interrupted during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, when he apparently "spent several months in Peshawar [Pakistan] in training camps funded by Osama bin Laden learning bomb-making skills."<sup>37</sup> After the war, Yousef returned to school in the United Kingdom and received a Higher National Diploma in computer-aided electrical engineering.

In the summer of 1991, Ramzi Yousef returned to the training camps in Peshawar for additional training in electronics and explosives. He arrived in New York City in September 1992 and shortly thereafter began planning to carry out a significant attack, having selected the World Trade Center as his target. Yousef established contacts with former associates already in the New York area and eventually became close to Muhammed Salameh, who assisted in the construction of the bomb. They purchased chemicals and other bomb-making components, stored them in a rented locker, and

assembled the bomb in an apartment in Jersey City. They apparently tested considerably scaled-down versions of the bomb several times. After the attack, Yousef boarded a flight at JFK Airport and flew to Pakistan.

This case is a good example of the technical skill and criminal sophistication of some terrorists. Ramzi Yousef had connections with well-funded terrorists, was a sophisticated bomb maker, knew how to obtain the necessary components in a foreign country, was very adept at evasion, and obviously planned his actions in meticulous detail. As a postscript, Ramzi Yousef remained very active among bin Laden's associates, and his travels within the movement took him far afield, including trips to Thailand and the Philippines. In an example of international law enforcement cooperation, he was eventually captured in Pakistan in February 1995 and sent to the United States to stand trial for the bombing. Yousef was tried, convicted, and sentenced to serve at least 240 years in prison in the ADX "supermaximum" federal prison in Florence, Colorado.

As a first consideration, this chapter introduced readers to an overview of extremism and terrorism, whereby their sources and interrelationship were summarized; these subjects are explored in detail in subsequent chapters. Conceptual considerations include the symbolism and criminality of political violence as well as the concept of the just war. Whether terrorist acts are *mala in se* or *mala prohibita* is often a relative question. Depending on one's perspective, there are gray areas that challenge us to be objective about the true nature of political violence.

Some of the historical and modern attributes of terrorism were also discussed, with a central theme that terrorism is deeply rooted in the human experience. The impact of extremist ideas on human behavior should not be

underestimated because there are historical examples of political violence that in some ways parallel modern terrorism. For example, we noted that state terrorism and antistate dissident movements have existed since ancient times.

Most, if not all, nations promote an ideological doctrine to legitimize the power of the state and to convince the people that their systems of belief are worthy of loyalty, sacrifice, and (when necessary) violent defense. Conversely, when a group of people perceives that an alternative ideology or condition should be promoted, revolutionary violence may occur against the defenders of the established rival order. In neither case would those who commit acts of political violence consider themselves to be unjustified in their actions, and they certainly would not label themselves terrorists.

In Chapter 2, readers will be challenged to probe the nature of terrorism more deeply. The discussion will center on the importance of perspective and the question of how to define terrorism.

The following topics are discussed in this chapter and can be found in the glossary:

cells 2	<i>mala in se</i> 8	soft targets 5
crucifixion 10	<i>mala prohibita</i> 8	“struggle meetings” 13
extremism 4	Nazi Holocaust 8	symbolism 7
Hague Conventions 8	regicide 11	terrorism 5
<i>jus ad bellum</i> 9	Reign of Terror ( <i>Régime de la Terreur</i> ) 12	total war 19
<i>jus in bello</i> 9	Revolutionary Tribunal 12	tyrannicide 10
just war doctrine 8	<i>sicarii</i> 11	UNABOM 17
<i>komiteh</i> 13		

The following names and organizations are discussed in this chapter and can be found in Appendix B:

Al-Qa’ida 3	Kaczynski, Theodore “Ted” 17	Saint Augustine 9
bin Laden, Osama 2	Luddites 13	Yousef, Ramzi 17
Breivik, Anders 16	People’s Will (Narodnaya Volya) 13	Zealots 11

## DISCUSSION BOX

### TOTAL WAR

This chapter’s Discussion Box is intended to stimulate critical debate about the legitimacy of using extreme force against civilian populations.

**Total war** is “warfare that uses all possible means of attack, military, scientific, and psychological, against both enemy troops and civilians.”<sup>a</sup> It was the prevailing military doctrine applied by combatant nations during the Second World War and was prosecuted by marshalling a total mobilization of industrial and human resources.

Allied and Axis military planners specifically targeted civilian populations. In the cases of German and Japanese strategists, the war was fought as much against indigenous populations as against opposing armies. The massacres and genocide directed against civilian populations at Auschwitz, Dachau, Warsaw, Lidice, and Nanking—and countless other atrocities—are a dark legacy of the 20th century.

The estimated number of civilians killed during the war is staggering:<sup>b</sup>

Belgium	90,000
Britain	70,000
China	20,000,000
Czechoslovakia	319,000
France	391,000
Germany	2,000,000
Greece	391,000
Japan	953,000
Poland	6,000,000
Soviet Union	7,700,000
Yugoslavia	1,400,000



An important doctrine of the air war on all sides was widespread bombing of civilian populations in urban areas (so-called saturation bombing); the cities of Rotterdam, Coventry, London, Berlin, Dresden, and

Tokyo were deliberately attacked. It is estimated that the American atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan killed, respectively, 70,000 and 35,000 people.<sup>c</sup>

## Notes

- a. Webster's *New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged*. 2nd ed. New York: Publishers Guild, 1966.
- b. Mercer, Derrik, ed. *Chronicle of the Second World War*. Essex, UK: Longman Group, 1990, p. 668.
- c. Jablonski, Edward. *Flying Fortress*. New York: Doubleday, 1965, p. 285.

## Discussion Questions

1. Are deliberate attacks against civilians legitimate acts of war?
2. Were deliberate attacks on civilians during the Second World War acts of terrorism?
3. If these attacks were acts of terrorism, were some attacks justifiable acts of terrorism?
4. Is there such a thing as justifiable terrorism? Is terrorism *malum in se* or *malum prohibitum*?
5. Is the practice of total war by individuals or small and poorly armed groups different from its practice by nations and standing armies? How so or how not?

The following publications provide an introduction to terrorism and the global environment:

Bergen, Peter I. *A Very Long War: The History of the War on Terror and the Battles With Al Qaeda Since 9/11*. New York: Free Press, 2011.

Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook, 2019–2020*. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2019.

Chenoweth, Erica, and Pauline Moore. *The Politics of Terror*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Coll, Steve. *The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century*. New York: Penguin, 2008.

Cronin, Isaac, ed. *Confronting Fear: A History of Terrorism*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002.

Farber, David, ed. *What They Think of Us: International Perceptions of the United States Since 9/11*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Gage, Beverly. *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terror*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Griset, Pamala L., and Sue Mahan. *Terrorism in Perspective*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013.

Haberfeld, M. R., and Agostino von Hassel, eds. *A New Understanding of Terrorism: Case Studies, Trajectories, and Lessons Learned*. New York: Springer, 2009.

Heinze, Eric A., and Brent J. Steele, eds. *Ethics, Authority, and War: Non-State Actors and the Just War Tradition*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

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Heymann, Phillip B., and Juliette N. Kayyem. *Protecting Liberty in an Age of Terror*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. *On Empire: America, War, and Global Supremacy*. New York: Pantheon, 2008.

Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. Revised and expanded edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

Kaczynski, Theodore. *Technological Slavery: The Collected Writings of Theodore J. Kaczynski, a.k.a. "The Unabomber"*. Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2010.

Laqueur, Walter, ed. *Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al-Qaeda, Hamas, and Other Terrorists From Around the World and Throughout the Ages*. New York: Reed Press, 2004.



# THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

## Chapter Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable readers to do the following:

1. Explain the importance of identifying the common characteristics of extremism and understanding the world view of extremist adherents.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the common features of formal definitions of terrorism.
3. Discuss whether violence should be classified as terrorism by recognizing the contextual perspectives of perpetrators and participants in terrorist environments.
4. Apply the Political Violence Matrix as a conceptual tool to interpret the quality of violence.

## Opening Viewpoint: Are “Hate Crimes” Acts of Terrorism?

**Hate crimes** refers to behaviors that are considered to be bias-motivated crimes but that at times seem to fit the definition of acts of terrorism. Hate crimes are a legalistic concept in Western democracies that embody (in the law) a criminological approach to a specific kind of deviant behavior. These laws focus on a specific motive for criminal behavior—crimes that are directed against protected classes of people because of their membership in these protected classes. Thus, hate crimes are officially considered to be a law enforcement issue rather than one of national security.

The separation between hate crimes and terrorism is not always clear because “hate groups at times in their life cycles might resemble gangs and at other times paramilitary organizations or **terrorist** groups.”<sup>a</sup> They represent “another example of small, intense groups that sometimes resort to violence to achieve their goals by committing . . . vigilante terrorism.”<sup>b</sup> Among experts, the debate about what is or is not “terrorism” has resulted in a large number of official and unofficial definitions. A similar debate has arisen about how to define hate crimes because “it is difficult to construct an exhaustive definition of the term. . . . Crime—hate crime included—is relative.”<sup>c</sup> In fact, there is no agreement on what label to use for behaviors that many people commonly refer to as “hate crimes.” For example, in the United States, attacks by White neo-Nazi youths against African Americans, gays, and religious institutions have been referred to with such diverse terms as *hate crime*, *hate-motivated crime*, *bias crime*, *bias-motivated crime*, and *ethno-violence*.<sup>d</sup>

Are hate crimes acts of terrorism? The answer is that not all acts of terrorism are hate crimes, and not all hate crimes are acts of terrorism. For example, in cases of **dissident terrorism**, terrorists frequently target a state or system with little or no animus against a particular

race, religion, or other group. Likewise, state terrorism is often motivated by a perceived need to preserve or reestablish the state's defined vision of social order without targeting a race, religion, or other group. On the other hand, criminal behavior fitting federal or state definitions of hate crimes in the United States can have little or no identifiable political agenda, other than hatred toward a protected class of people.

It is when *political* violence is directed against a particular group—such as a race, religion, nationality, or generalized “undesirable”—that these acts possibly fit the definitions of both hate crimes and terrorism. Terrorists often launch attacks against people who symbolize the cause that they oppose. In the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States, and elsewhere, many individuals and groups act out violently to promote an agenda that seeks to “purify” society. These crimes are committed by groups or individuals who are “dealing in the artificial currency of . . . ‘imagined communities’—utopian pipe dreams and idealizations of ethnically cleansed communities.”<sup>e</sup> For example, after German reunification, “street renegades [demanded] a new *Lebensraum* of a purified Germany whose national essence and coherence will not be weakened and ‘contaminated’ by ethnic and racial minorities.”<sup>f</sup> Their targeted enemies were Turkish, Slavic, and southern European immigrants and “guest workers.”

This chapter concludes with a Case in Point discussing the 2016 mass shooting in the United States in Orlando, Florida, within the context of incidents that can be defined as both an act of terrorism and a hate crime.

#### Notes

a. Barkan, Steven E., and Lynne L. Snowden. *Collective Violence*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2001, p. 105.

b. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

c. Perry, Barbara. *In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crimes*. New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 8.

d. Hamm, Mark S. “Conceptualizing Hate Crime in a Global Context.” In *Hate Crime: International Perspectives on Causes and Control*, edited by Mark S. Hamm. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson, 1994, p. 174.

e. Kelly, Robert J., and Jess Maghan. *Hate Crime: The Global Politics of Polarization*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998, p. 6. Citing Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: New Left, 1983.

f. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

**T**his chapter investigates definitional issues in the study of terrorism. Readers will probe the nuances of these issues and will learn that the truism **“one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter”** is a significant factor in the definitional debate. It must be remembered that this debate occurs within a practical and “real-life” framework—in other words, a nontheoretical reality that some political, religious, or ethnonationalist beliefs and behaviors are so reprehensible that they cannot be considered to be mere differences in opinion. Some violent incidents are *mala in se* acts of terrorist violence. For example, the **New Terrorism** of today is characterized by the threat of weapons of mass destruction, indiscriminate targeting, and intentionally high casualty rates—as occurred in the attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States; March 11, 2004, in Spain; July 7, 2005, in Great Britain; November 26–29, 2008, in India; January and November 2015 in France; March 22, 2016, in Belgium; and repeated attacks in Nigeria, Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan. The use of indiscriminate targeting and tactics against civilians is indefensible, no matter what cause is championed by those who use them.



### ► Photo 2.1

A protestor (right) from the Stand Against Communism rally, an event organized to oppose antifascist demonstrations and to support U.S. President Donald Trump, among other causes, argues with a counter-protestor (left) during May Day events in Seattle, Washington, in the United States, May 1, 2017.

The definitional debate is evident in the following examples drawn from state-sponsored and dissident terrorist environments:

- **State-Sponsored Terrorist Environments.** The *Régime de la Terreur* during the French Revolution was an instrument of revolutionary justice, such that terrorism was considered a positive medium used by the defenders of order and liberty. From their perspective, state-sponsored domestic terrorism was both necessary and acceptable to consolidate power and protect liberties won during the revolution. Modern examples of state terrorism such as Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia also sought to consolidate an ideological vision through internal political

violence—a racial new order in Germany and an egalitarian workers' state in the Soviet Union. The methods they used to build the ideological vision resulted in the deaths of many millions of noncombatant civilians, and both the Nazi and Stalinist regimes were by definition quintessential terrorist states.

- **Dissident Terrorist Environments.** The anticolonial and nationalist wars after World War II often pitted indigenous rebels against European colonial powers or ruling local elites. Many of these wars involved the use of terrorism as an instrument of war by both state and dissident forces. During these wars, as well as in subsequent domestic rebellions, the rebels were referred to as freedom fighters by those who favored their cause.<sup>1</sup> The counterpoints to these freedom fighters were the European and American “colonial and imperialist oppressors.” Thus, for example, indiscriminate attacks against civilians by rebels in French Indochina and French Algeria were rationalized by many of their supporters as acceptable tactics during wars of liberation by freedom fighters against a colonial oppressor.

The discussion in this chapter will review the following:

- Understanding Extremism: The Foundation of Terrorism
- Defining Terrorism: An Ongoing Debate
- A Definitional Problem: Perspectives on Terrorism
- The Political Violence Matrix

## UNDERSTANDING EXTREMISM: THE FOUNDATION OF TERRORISM

An important step toward defining terrorism is to develop an understanding of the sources of terrorism. To identify them, one must first understand the important role of extremism as a primary feature of all terrorist behavior.

Behind each incident of terrorist violence is some deeply held belief system that has motivated the perpetrators. Such systems are, at their core, extremist systems characterized by intolerance. One must keep in mind, however, that though terrorism is a violent expression of these beliefs, it is by no means the only possible manifestation of extremism. On a scale of activist behavior, extremists can engage in such benign expressions as sponsoring debates or publishing newspapers. They might also engage in vandalism and other disruptions of the normal routines of their enemies. Though intrusive and often illegal, these are examples of political expression that cannot be construed as terrorist acts.

Our focus in this and subsequent chapters will be on violent extremist behavior that many people would define as acts of terrorism. First, we must briefly investigate the general characteristics of the extremist foundations of terrorism.

## Defining Extremism

Political extremism refers to taking a political idea to its limits, regardless of unfortunate repercussions, impracticalities, arguments, and feelings to the contrary, and with the intention not only to confront, but to eliminate opposition. . . . Intolerance toward all views other than one's own.<sup>2</sup>

Extremism is a precursor to terrorism—it is an overarching belief system that is used by terrorists to justify their violent behavior. Extremism is characterized by *what* a person's beliefs are as well as *how* a person expresses their beliefs. Thus, no matter how offensive or reprehensible one's thoughts or words are, they are not by themselves acts of terrorism. Only persons who *violently* act out their extremist beliefs are labeled terrorists.

Two examples illustrate this point:

First, an example of extremist behavior. Daniel and Philip Berrigan were well-known members of the Roman Catholic pacifist left and were leaders in the antiwar and antinuclear movements in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. *What* they believed in was an uncompromising commitment to pacifism. *How* they expressed their beliefs was by committing a series of symbolic, and often illegal, protest actions. During one such action on May 17, 1968, they and seven other Catholic men and women entered the Baltimore Selective Service Board, stole Selective Service classification forms, took them outside to a parking lot, and burned several hundred of the documents with a homemade, napalm-like gelled mixture of gasoline and soap flakes. This was certainly extremist behavior, but it falls short of terrorism.<sup>3</sup>

Second, an example of extremist speech. The American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (AK-KKK) were an activist faction of the KKK that operated mostly in the Midwest and East during the 1990s. *What* they believed in was racial supremacy. *How* they expressed their beliefs was by holding a series of rallies at government sites, often county courthouses. They were known for their vitriolic rhetoric. The following remarks were reportedly taken from a speech delivered by the Imperial Wizard of the AK-KKK in March 1998 at a rally held at the county courthouse in Butler, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh:

Take a stand. . . . Join the Klan, stick up for your rights. . . . Only God has the right to create a race—not no black and white, not no nigger, not no Jew. . . . Yes, I will use the word *nigger*, because it is not illegal. . . . We are sick and tired of the government taking your money, and giving food and jobs to the niggers when the white race has to go without! Wake up America.<sup>4</sup>

This language is intentionally racist, hateful, and inflammatory, yet it falls short of advocating violence or revolution. A sympathetic listener might certainly act out against one of the enemy groups identified in the speech, but it reads more like a racist diatribe than a revolutionary manifesto.

## Common Characteristics of Violent Extremists

Scholars and other experts have identified common characteristics exhibited by violent extremists. These characteristics are expressed in different ways, depending on a movement's particular belief system. The following commonalities are summaries of traits identified by these experts and are by no means an exhaustive inventory.<sup>5</sup>

### Intolerance

Intolerance is the hallmark of extremist belief systems and terrorist behavior. The cause is considered to be absolutely just and good, and those who disagree with the cause (or some

aspect of the cause) are cast into the category of the opposition. Terrorists affix their opponents with certain negative or derisive labels to set them apart from the extremists' movement. These characterizations are often highly personalized so that specific individuals are identified who symbolize the opposing belief system or cause. Thus, during the Cold War, the American president was labeled by the pro-United States camp as the "leader of the free world" and by Latin American Marxists as the embodiment of "Yankee imperialism."<sup>6</sup>

### **Moral Absolutes**

Extremists adopt moral absolutes so that the distinction between good and evil is clear, as are the lines between the extremists and their opponents. The extremists' belief or cause is a morally correct vision of the world and is used to establish moral superiority over others. Violent extremists thus become morally and ethically pure elites who lead the oppressed masses to freedom. For example, religious terrorists generally believe that their one true faith is superior to all others and that any behavior committed in defense of the faith is fully justifiable.

### **Broad Conclusions**

Extremist conclusions are made to simplify the goals of the cause and the nature of the extremist's opponents. These generalizations are not debatable and allow for no exceptions. Evidence for these conclusions is rooted in one's belief system rather than based on objective data. Terrorists often believe these generalizations because in their minds, they simply *must* be true. For example, ethnonationalists frequently categorize all members of their opponent group as having certain broadly negative traits.

### **New Language and Conspiratorial Beliefs**

Language and conspiracies are created to demonize the enemy and set the terrorists apart from those not part of their belief system. Extremists thus become an elite with a hidden agenda and targets of that agenda. For example, some American far- and fringe-right conspiracy proponents express their anti-Semitic beliefs by using coded references to international bankers or a Zionist-occupied government (ZOG). White nationalist and neo-Nazi rightists degrade members of non-European races by referring to them as mud people or other pejorative appellations.

### **The World of the Extremist**

Extremists have a very different—and, at times, fantastic—worldview compared with nonextremists. They set themselves apart as protectors of some truth or as the true heirs of some legacy. For example, racial extremists within the American Patriot movement have argued that non-Whites are "Fourteenth Amendment citizens" and that only "whites are sovereign citizens whose rights are delineated, not by the government, but rather by a cobbled assortment of historical writings whose meaning is often subject to their fanciful interpretation."<sup>7</sup>

Extremists frequently believe that secret and quasi-mystical forces are arrayed against them and that these forces are the cause of worldwide calamities. For example, some bigoted conspiracy believers argue that the Illuminati or international Judaism mysteriously controls world banking and the media or that they run the governments of France and the United States. One conspiracy theory that became viral on the Internet, and was widely believed among Islamist extremists, in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks was that Israeli agents were behind the attacks; that 4,000 Jews either did not report to work or received telephone calls to evacuate the World Trade Center in New York; and therefore that no Jews were among the victims of the attack.

As in the past, religion is often an underlying impetus for extremist activity. When extremists adopt a religious belief system, their worldview becomes one of a struggle between supernatural forces of good and evil. They view themselves as living a righteous life in a manner that fits with their interpretation of God's will. According to religious extremists, those who