**Explaining Terrorism : the contribution of collective action theory ***


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Violence for political ends is common. States, international organizations, citizen groups, communal groups, etc. undertake it, and justify it as self-defense, a worthy cause impossible to attain by non-violent means, or retaliation. At one time or another, violence has been justified against tyrannical, oppressive, corrupt  rulers, for national self-determination, against exploitation and for instituting social justice, in the name of humanitarian intervention to save a people from genocide, to name but some common reasons. In the arena of public opinion, some causes and ends more persuasively justify violent methods than others (e.g. resistance to a foreign invasion more than violence against an abortion clinic), just as some modes of violence are said to be more justified than others (e.g. blowing up a military vehicle more so than blowing up a school bus with children). Rather than accepting a facile relativism that holds that "one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter," we have to dwell on the claims to moral justification for violence by both insurgents and targets and  how these are  received by publics and third parties. Moreover, we have to analyze both the instrumental and normative restraints that might limit violence in a conflict. Absent any limits violence may spiral into carnage and butchery void of any defensible political purpose.

Although terrorism can be treated as a distinct topic, it is not useful to think of a distinct theory of terrorism. Rather, in confrontations between insurgents and states, between challengers and elites, terrorism is one of several modes of confrontation. These range from peaceful and conventional political actions to extremes of group violence. The theory of collective action applied to the political arena is an appropriate and available tool for explaining the entire spectrum of modes of conflict, including terrorism.

There is no totally agreed upon definition of terrorism. Laqueur (1987:72) defines it as "the use of covert violence by a group for political ends", and this characterization is accepted by many. His definition highlights four key attributes of terrorism. It is collective action, not individual; it is political, not criminal; it is covert, not conventional warfare; it is of course violent The political ends sought – national independence, social justice, equal treatment for a minority – are widely viewed as legitimate political goals and have often much popular support. What is distinctive about terrorism is not its ends but the means: violence by a covert group striking without warning and often indiscriminately victimizing, even purposely targeting, innocent bystanders.

Terrorism is neither recent nor uncommon. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Russian revolutionaries targeted members of the autocratic Tsarist government, and radical nationalists -- Irish, Serbs, Armenian and others – used terrorism repeatedly. After World War II terrorism has been often associated with national and ethnic minorities, and has been part of broader, more conventional and non-violent nationalist movements. Terrorism has also long been associated with religious and class conflicts,

and social justice ideologies and issues. And current fears about weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists actually go back three decades. In 1975 a State Department official told a Senate hearing that a growing threat was "nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare weapons" falling into the hands of terrorists "prepared to die for the cause." (US Senate, 1975).

Although heads of states, high officials, diplomats, and the police and military have been traditional terrorist targets, the late twentieth century has seen an increasing trend towards the targeting and victimization of civilians, innocent bystanders, and third parties. State sponsorship, transnational terror, and suicide bombers have been frequent in the Middle East since the 1960s. What was novel in the September 11 World Trade Center and Pentagon suicide attacks was not transnational state supported suicide terrorism, but the extraordinary size of the civilian casualties, the use of passenger airplanes as deadly missiles, the targets on the territory of the US itself and not on a distant Middle Eastern airstrip or military barracks, and suicide terrorists who had lived, trained and plotted not in a distant desert camp but in South Florida, New Jersey, and European cities.

Because terrorism has manifest continuities with its past hundred years, one should be skeptical of explanations that put the accent on novelty, like globalization and clash of civilizations, though these influences should also be analyzed in addition to others. Against this backdrop I discuss a number of topics. What issues and conflicts give rise to and sustain terrorism? What is the dynamic of violence that drives terrorism and the fight

against terrorism? How does terrorism end? How explain Islamist and Al Qaeda terrorism? What is the future of terrorism?

*The four dimensions of collective action applied to terrorism.*

Terrorism is not the act of madmen or of political and religious sociopaths, but of political agents who choose covert, violent means to achieve political goals, be they ethno-national, religious or ideological. Terrorism is explained in the same way as other forms of collective action, be they insurgencies, social movements, dissidents, guerrillas (Oberschall 1995: chap.1). Each of the four dimensions of collective action has to be considered: discontent, ideology feeding grievances, capacity to organize, and political opportunity. A positive value on each dimension is necessary for collective action.

First, there have to be widespread discontent and dissatisfaction for which the usual means of relief are thought to be lacking. Absent such discontent, a terrorist group will be defined as a criminal gang seeking personal goals, and not as "social bandits."

Second, there has to be an ideology or belief system, spread widely in a population, that frames discontent into legitimate grievances. The ideology holds political leaders and elites responsible, transforms discontent into grievances, legitimizes a change or reform

sought as a remedy for problems, and justifies violent means by the challengers of the status quo. Without a legitimizing ideology, terrorist violence will lack justification and acceptance in the population that gives cover to the terrorists. These two conditions create a large sympathetic support pool from which the political activists and much smaller group of terrorists will be drawn.

The third dimension of analysis is the capacity to organize: recruitment, fund raising, leadership, internal communication and decision making, and the like. These processes are subsumed under the concept of "mobilization." For a small secret group engaged in criminal violence, and which the authorities are trying to penetrate, there must be unusually high levels of trust in one another and dedication to the shared cause. Often terrorists have known each other for years at the university where they shared in a dissident political subculture , as was true for the Red Brigades and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna/ETA (Wieviorka, 1993; Kurlansky, 1999); or else, as was the case for the Irish Republican Army/IRA, a Republican tradition ran in families and neighborhoods, and young men were expected to follow their fathers' and uncles' footsteps (Moss, 1972). For Islamist terrorism the recruitment and socialization was through the religious infrastructure of fundamentalist religious teachers, schools, mosques and foundations in which many young men became encapsulated (Rashid, 2001). The point is that terrorists are bred through and in preexisting groups and subcultures which are viewed as legitimate, not deviant. Within this infrastructure terrorists recruit new members, secure funds and weapons, hide in safe places to escape detection, coordinate with one another,

communicate with their constituency and their adversaries using the mass media, gather intelligence on targets and social control agents.

The fourth dimension of analysis is political opportunity. Public opinion support, political allies, a favorable international climate, in the case of terrorism state support and sponsorship, or on the contrary, the loss of such opportunities for terrorism, are analyzed and factored in with the other three dimensions.

For terrorists, one has to explain why a small group chose to break from or differentiate from a larger political movement that pursues similar political goals with less violent (sometimes completely non-violent), overt, more conventional means. The start of a terrorist campaign is a precipitating incident or condition which turns a group to going underground and to violence. In Greece November 17 started after the Greek military government crushed student led protests with tanks and troops in 1973. The IRA restarted terrorism in Northern Ireland after 1969 when the British army, sent to stop the civil strife between Catholics and Protestants, was perceived by Catholics to side with the Protestants (Moss, 1972). The Islamic Salvation Army in Algeria started insurgency and terrorism when the Algerian army ousted the legitimately elected Islamic Salvation Front government in 1992 and arrested and imprisoned many of its members (Kalyvas, 1999). Other dissidents become terrorists more gradually. Basque nationalist students who formed ETA became impatient with the slow pace of opposition of the Basque Nationalist Party. At first they painted nationalist graffiti on walls, then destroyed Spanish property, later murdered members of the Guardia Civil who beat them and

tortured them. The justification for violence was that the Franco dictatorship outlawed non-violent modes of opposition (Kurlansky, 1999). Even tolerant democratic states can be targeted by terrorists: the Jura Liberation Movement in Switzerland, and the South Moluccans in the Netherlands.

*The dynamic of violence*

Episodes of violent actions and confrontations should be analyzed as strategic interactions. The strategy of the target (the state; social control agents; politicians) is as important as that of the terrorists. The bloody drama is played before an audience, and its reactions are important for the outcome. Conflict between a state and  dissidents can escalate to terrorist modes on both sides, as the Algerian FLN and the OAS within the French army did during the Algerian war of independence, and more recently in the same country the military government and the Islamist insurgents are engaging in. This happened elsewhere in Latin and Central America where insurgency and terror begot state terror, and vice versa.

In conflict between states, norms have been codified in treaties, conventions, charters and international law on how war should be waged, the rights of combatants, the treatment of prisoners and the injured, the protection of civilians. On top of normative restraints, states limit their choice of actions because there will be retaliation in kind. The principle of deterrence is well established in international relations. The limited use of poison gas in World War One and its non-use in the Second, and the non-use of nuclear weapons in the

Cold War come to mind. When a state violates norms deemed important by other states, they can impose sanctions directly or by way of the United Nations. Although there is considerable violence in state-to-state relations around the world, nevertheless self-interest and conventions, deterrence and norm enforcement, limit the incidence of violence below what it might well be, as well as make its manifestations less destructive and brutal.

In civil wars, insurgencies, communal violence, and terrorism, there are fewer norms and deterrence opportunities through legal channels for the target state, especially against terrorists. They are a small group, hiding in a large, often friendly, sometimes besieged and traumatized population. They have hundreds of targets to strike at, at the time of their own choosing. To protect all targets is impossible; to deter a small, covert group by sanctions (freezing their assets) cannot be done prior to identifying them and their allies; successfully prosecuting them for specific crimes when witnesses, juries, judges, and their families are intimidated and killed, is far more difficult than in ordinary crime, even in organized crime. In particular the police and military, the most common targets of terrorists, come to believe that the criminal justice system is completely inadequate in dealing with terrorists and in protecting them as the most exposed targets. They also believe they know who the terrorists and their closest supporters are, even if the evidence can't stand up in court and prosecutors fail to act. They are therefore tempted to use illegal covert methods – torture, assassination, collective reprisals – carried out by "death squads" against the terrorists and their sympathizers, and eventually all people who are alleged to be opponents of the government. State terrorism, either sponsored or condoned

by the authorities, tends to displace legitimate social control. It often expands and escalates the insurgency and the terrorism even if in the long run it is successful. Even democratic governments facing terrorism take extraordinary measures of social control. The United Kingdom faced with the Irish Republican Army and Protestant paramilitaries altered its usual criminal justice system to deal with terrorists. Witnesses and informants testifying in court needed anonymity; some form of preventive detention of suspects was at times resorted to; breaking down a detainee's resistance with methods that critics call "torture" (sensory deprivation, isolation, white noise) were used. Social control of terrorism tends to burst the limits of legality, and in some cases escalates to state terrorism.

The logic of violence on the terrorist side also tends to escalation, more violence, more targets, more brutal violence. The greatest threat for terrorists is infiltration by informants, traitors, information given to the authorities by third parties (e.g. former activists, neighbors, acquaintances). For self-protection, the terrorists will assassinate such spies and collaborators, even mere suspects. More violence. Sooner or later some terrorists will be arrested and tried and imprisoned. To free their comrades, the terrorists take hostages for exchange with the authorities. These will be bankers, businessmen, and prominent civilians. Yet more violence. Terrorists will run out of funds. They will now rob banks, engage in the drug trade, extort money from businesses: even more violence. As death squads and paramilitary groups form against them and their supporters, tit for tat revenge killings and bombings generate a steady stream of violence. Then comes violence between terrorist factions. Last but not least is violence against the moderates in

their own camp who might have a credible plan for a political solution to the conflict that could leave the terrorists out in the cold, and have to be silenced. Thus there are powerful forces for escalation of violence on the terrorist side.

*The termination of terrorism*

Nevertheless, terrorists pursue political goals, and they need public opinion support in some segment of the population. Their actions can be understood in instrumental terms. The IRA (but not the breakaway faction Real IRA) frequently warned the police and the media about a bomb they planted to give time for the public to be evacuated. The intention was to demonstrate the incapacity of the authorities to crush the organization, not to kill and maim and outrage the public. Terrorists and authorities have made agreements kept by both sides. Authorities have released prisoners in exchange for hostages taken and released by terrorists. Even the most barbaric acts of violence, the bombing of innocent civilians, are denied or given some justification by perpetrators, which implies that they admit that some acts of violence are indeed barbaric and unjustified. They are compelled to engage in an understandable moral discourse with the public about their own and that of their enemies. The most common argument is to claim that one's enemies have done the same and deserve retaliation in kind, or to actually blame one's enemies for such actions. Arab media after 9/11 spread the rumor that it was the Israelis who destroyed the World Trade Center and are responsible for the civilian casualties. As for Osama bin Laden, head of al Qaeda, he claimed on an Oct.7 2001 Al Jazeera TV network broadcast that the US was killing a million children in Iraq (allusion

to the sanction regime) and had killed hundreds of thousands of civilians in World War Two (allusion to the atom bombs dropped on Japan). The message was that the US was getting no more than it was responsible for and deserved its deaths.

Terrorists have ceased violence when they have attained their goals. Although no state has been toppled by terrorists, terrorism has been repeatedly successful. Terrorist bombing against US Marines occasioned US military withdrawal from Lebanon and later from Somalia. The British recognized the Irish Free State in 1921 when the cost of fighting terrorists there became too great. After World War Two, Zionists, Greek Cypriots, and Arab nationalists in Aden succeeded in driving the British out. Prominent terrorists have become conventional political leaders: Israeli prime minister Begin at one time a leader of the Zionist terrorist group Irgun; Michael Collins, the Irish revolutionary terrorist turned peace negotiator, who signed the peace treaty with Britain in 1921( and was shortly assassinated for doing so); Martin McGuiness, the IRA leader, and now minister of education in the Northern Ireland government. Of terrorist groups who abandoned armed struggle and violence when their adversaries agreed to power sharing and/or a new constitution are the South African ANC, the IRA in Northern Ireland, the FLQ in Quebec, and probably the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka who are currently negotiating important constitutional changes and power sharing with the government. A political settlement to a violent conflict usually makes provision for partially amnestying the militants of both sides for political violence, terrorists as well as security forces, in extraordinary quasi-judicial institutions. The South African Truth and Reconciliation process has been the most publicized. Most of the Central American insurgencies of the

1980s in which terror and state terror figured ended with negotiated settlements and some type of amnesty process.

Negotiations with terrorists to end violent conflict are difficult. On the government side, and typically with lots of public pressure not to negotiate unless the terrorists cease violence, the government digs in and demands that the insurgents, terrorists and other opponents renounce violence before negotiations begin, and interrupts negotiations after a violent incident. Such a strategy seldom works. The insurgents are a complex entity. Some practice conventional politics, others mix both violent and non-violent means, still others are terrorist extremists. The non-violence precondition for negotiation automatically puts the most extreme group into the driver's seat in the confrontation. They can torpedo negotiations and defeat any agreement on substantive issues and scuttle the peace process by perpetrating yet an other bombing. Where governments and moderate opponents have successfully negotiated a peace agreement, they did so despite continued terrorist violence, as the Blair government in Britain did with the Unionists and Nationalists in reaching the Northern Ireland Peace Agreement of 1998. Eventually the IRA has come around to extending a succession of cease fires into a permanent cessation of violence, to allowing international monitors to inspect its weapons stores, and decommissioning the weapons (disabling them for use). More recently the Albanian insurgency in Macedonia was negotiated to a successful end with the mediation of the EU without a prior end to all violence. In both cases the authorities and the mediators understood that their adversaries do not control all the violent groups and factions who claim to act on behalf of the insurgent side.

*Islamist terrorism and Al Qaeda*

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 spawned and sponsored radical Islamic movements and groups in the Muslim world, especially among the Shi'ites. Ayatollah Khomeini branded the US as the "Great Satan" responsible for the ills of the Muslim countries, and proclaimed a holy war against the US, Israel and Arab states such as Saudi Arabia that were allegedly clients and willing agents of the West. According to Khomeini and Arab radicals, the troubles of the Muslim world were many: underdevelopment and poverty, military backwardness and humiliating defeat of Arab armies by Israel, autocrats backed by the West (as the Shah had been), dependence on the West, squandering of oil wealth to favor a few privileged, and much else (Lewis, 2001). Arab nationalism under Gamal Abdel Nasser had failed; Baathist socialism in Syria and Iraq had failed; secularism in Turkey was said to have failed. For some the response to failures was not more modernization and Western influence but return to the original Muslim faith, society and theocratic polity that had existed at the time of Arab and Muslim greatness. According to Bernard Lewis (2001), "Muslim fundamentalists are those who believe the troubles of the Muslim world …are the result not of insufficient modernization but excessive modernization…i.e. imposing and importing infidel ways on Muslim peoples. The task is to remove [modernizing] rulers and expel their foreign patrons and protectors, and return to purely Islamic ways of life in accord with the principles of Islam. " Osama bin Laden's video statement after 9/11 echoes these beliefs (NYT, 10/8/01). He refers to "our Islamic nation" that has been "tasting humiliation and disgrace, its sons killed and their

blood spilled, its sanctities desecrated" for over 80 years, i.e. when the Middle East was colonized by the West following the fall of the Ottoman empire.

Urged on by Khomeini and backed by the resources of revolutionary Iran and its revolutionary cadres, religious leaders, mosques, schools and media, the ideology of Islamic revival and crusade (jihad) diffused in the Muslim world , with special resonance among minority Shi'ites. Khomeini proclaimed " Islam and the teaching of the Koran will prevail all over the world…weapons in our hands are used to realize divine and Islamic aspirations." (Wright 2001:27)

The Iranian religious zealots who captured the US embassy and precipitated the 1979 hostage crisis – a public humiliation of the Great Satan – pioneered in the early 1980s the covert organizational structure that became the model of subsequent Muslim terrorist groups and networks, like Al Qaeda. Under the protection and with the help of the Association of Militant Clerics in Teheran, the Council for the Islamic Revolution, and the Revolutionary Guard Corps, the call went out throughout the Muslim and Arab world for young men to come to Iran and become holy warriors. They came from Libya, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other places. At various centers and training camps, they were subjected to religious indoctrination, weapons training and other studies. A select few, the elite for the jihad, became volunteers for martyrdom. They returned to their own countries to start local cells of revolutionary organizations; others were enlisted in the Iran-Iraq war as revolutionary fighters.

The first terrorist campaign of these Iranian-trained holy warriors was against the Sunni-dominated Gulf State rulers and against Saudi Arabia. The aim was to overthrow their rulers and to replace them with an Iranian-style theocracy. The most traumatic terrorist assault against the traditional Arab rulers was the seizure and occupation of the Great Mosque of Mecca, the holiest shrine of Islam, with 40,000 pilgrims trapped inside. On November 20, 1979, a band of at least 200 heavily armed Muslim radicals seized it and fought off the Saudi security forces for ten days. Their stated goal was to purify Islam, liberate the holy land of Arabia from the House of Saud and from corrupt religious leaders. They denounced Westerners as destroyers of fundamental Islamic values, and accused the Saudi government of being the West's accomplice. (Wright, 2001:146-153). Altogether 255 pilgrims, troops and terrorists were killed in the retaking of the Mosque, and some 500 were injured. Until 9/11 it was the most destructive terrorist Islamist action, and it was against a 100% Muslim target.

The jihad extended beyond the Arabian peninsula and the civil war in Lebanon to Egypt. When President Sadat clamped down on the Muslim Brotherhood in anticipation of a jihad seizure of power and arrested militants, closed publications, outlawed Islamic societies, and took over independent mosques, he was assassinated on October 6, 1981. The jihad had penetrated the armed forces. The militants also blamed him for having signed a peace treaty with Israel and of having given the deposed Shah a refuge in the last year of his life (Wright ,2001:178-79). Syria and Tunisia also crushed Islamist uprisings.

The response of the Saudi and Gulf rulers to Islamist radicalism in the Arab world and the Iranian-sponsored hostile propaganda, jihad and terrorism against them was to become more militantly pious and puritanical than their Islamic critics and adversaries (Rouleau, 2002). Building on the austere Wahabism, the state religion of the House of Saud , they enforced the Islamic religious codes (the Shariah) with their religious police, following a policy of not to be outflanked by an extremist, Islamic, religious right. In Arabia as well as in neighboring countries, the Saudis supported and bankrolled through religious foundations fundamentalist mullahs and mosques, religious schools, social service and charitable organizations, which, in addition to serving legitimate religious and social purposes,  became a religious infrastructure for jihads and religiously motivated terrorists, including eventually against the Saudis themselves (Luttwak, 2001). Nor was such  mobilization unusual. In the theory of collective action (Oberschall 1995:chap.1) the surest, quickest, low cost way of mobilizing a social, political, or religious movement is to use an already existing infrastructure and convert it to new uses. In their response to Iranian and Shi'ite pressure, and on top of the Iranian sponsored religious infrastructure in the Middle East, the Saudis added and spread their variety of Islamist organization and activities. The military government of Pakistan also supported Islamist militants and their religious schools as a cheap way to promote terrorism in Kashmir and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The military government ended creating a culture of violence that is now turned against itself (Stern, 2000).

The next jihad was not against the US but against the Soviet army and the communist backed government in Afghanistan. Using the model created by the Iranian

Revolutionary Guards for assembling a jihad and backed by his own and Saudi money, Osama bin Laden in the 1980's established recruitment centers for Mujahedeen in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Volunteers flocked to Pakistani camps where they were trained and indoctrinated, and readied for guerrilla combat in Afghanistan. The US backed the Afghan resisters, including the Mujahedeen and supplied them sophisticated anti-aircraft missiles. Osama bin Laden later told a journalist (Rashid, 2001:132): "To counter these atheist Russians, the Saudis chose me as their representative in Afghanistan.I settled in Pakistan in the Afghan border region. There I received volunteers from the Saudi Kingdom and from all over the Arab and Muslim countries. I set up my first camp where these volunteers were trained by Pakistani and American officers.The weapons were supplied by the Americans, the money by the Saudis."

The transnational Mujahedeen mode of organization was later adapted by Osama bin Laden for Al Qaeda in the 1990's. An innovation was to extend the recruitment and funding of terrorists from Muslim countries to Western Europe and the United States wherever Muslim immigrants had created an encapsulating religious infrastructure of fundamentalist mullahs, mosques, schools and foundations which could be used as a cover. Given the extraordinary permissive and lax controls on travel, communications, financial transactions, foreign study, identification papers, and especially religious activity, and constitutional limits on social control, it is relatively easy to hide illegal, criminal and terrorist activities in democratic Western countries. Teams of terrorists can actually fly in for a terrorist action from far away places even as local cells provide intelligence on the targets, weapons, and safe places.

The war against the Soviets in Afghanistan was won. Then came the Gulf war after Iraq invaded and devastated Kuwait: one Arab state attacked another. The US-led Operation Desert Storm routed the Iraqi invasion and restored the state of Kuwait, yet it became a turning point in Osama bin Laden's radicalism. Half a million foreign soldiers were stationed in Saudi Arabia, infidels in the Muslim heartland, and twenty thousand remained after the war in military bases. He told CNN "the Saudi regime is but a branch or agent of the US. It has stopped ruling people according to what God revealed." (Wright,2001:251) In the 1998 manifesto entitled "The International Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders", bin Laden denounced the US for "occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest places, the Arabian peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, and terrorizing its neighbors…to kill Americans and their allies – civilian and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa mosque [Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip…" After the attack on the WTC, his message on video broadcast by Al Jazeera called the rulers of the Arabian peninsula "hypocrites" and "apostates" who followed "the wrong path", and called on all Muslims to "remove evil from the peninsula of Mohamed"( NYT,10/8/01). He called America and its allies the modern world's symbol of paganism. He blamed the US for supporting Israeli repression of the Palestinians. He threatened that "America will not have peace before peace reigns in Palestine and before all the army of infidels depart the land of Mohamed." Among instructions to the suicide skyjackers was the following (NYRB, 1/17/02): "Remember the battle of the Prophet …against the infidels, as he went building the Islamic state."

Many western academics are fixated on a poverty – social injustice – exploitation interpretation of discontent and grievance in the Third World, and their twin secular ideologies and justifications for action. They are confused and bewildered by religious crusaders who dedicate their lives to realizing God's will on earth, by violence if necessary. Nothing quite like it has existed in the Western world since the persecution of religious heretics and the wars of religion. When bin Laden proclaims that "the world is divided into two camps, the camp of the faithful and the camp of the infidels" it strikes one as alien and archaic. Yet consider some of the actions the Taliban took. and the reasons for them. Barring women from work and girls from schooling has nothing whatever to do with ameliorating poverty, realizing social justice or fighting imperialism. To the contrary these measures create poverty for women and children, many of whom were war widows and orphans. Stoning women to death when convicted of adultery hardly advances an anti-poverty agenda. A religious police that confiscates video cassettes, prevents children from flying kites, enforces a dress code, and fines people for playing music has a religious, not a secular, explanation. When the Taliban demolished the magnificent and unique Buddha rock statues despite universal pleas and opposition, in a country where Buddhism hadn't existed for centuries and the Buddha were not worshipped by anyone, it was because they were sacreligious.

However much poverty and social injustice there may exist in the Muslim world, bin Laden and his associates turned on Arab rulers and the US for politico-religious and not

for other reasons. If their purpose is to establish Muslim theocracies in the Middle Esat, then they were and are entirely correct in thinking that the US military and economic presence in the region is the major obstacle. For the Unites States has gone to war to keep Kuwait out of unfriendly hands, and it surely would go to war if Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states were in danger of falling to forces hostile to the US.

Bin Laden's hostility to the Saudi rulers led to his expulsion from Saudi Arabia in1991, and loss of citizenship in1994. After the Soviet- Afghan war, with over 500 Mujahedeen, lots of money and weapons, he moved from Afghanistan to the Sudan, then back to Afghanistan (Rashid, 2001). More important he put into effect a long term plan to strike within the US. He planted Al Qaeda cells and agents in Western Europe and the US. and used the cover of legitimate Muslim immigrant communities. The reason Al Qaeda brought terrorism to the US is because the damage it inflicted on US installations abroad was not traumatic enough to change US foreign policy in the Middle East, and because it was fairly cheap and low risk , i.e. opportunity was good in view of the inefficiencies of US counter - intelligence and security organizations for monitoring and interdicting transnational terrorist activity, and the unsuitability of US military might for stopping terrorism.

*The future of terrorism*

The conditions conducive to the rise of terrorist collective action are present today to a high degree . On the first dimension – discontent -- there is no shortage of ethno-national

minorities who resent discrimination by a majority and by oppressive state policies. Moreover political solutions – power sharing (as in Northern Ireland), autonomy (as in Macedonia), federation or confederation (as for the Basque provinces), independent statehood (as in Kosovo and Palestine) , self-determination (as in Kashmir) – may look appropriate and workable to outsiders, but it is frequently  blocked and rejected by important segments of the population and some of the states who are major players in the conflict. Ethno-nationalism is not rooted in economic misery and underdevelopment. Yugoslavia  had a European standard of living and modern social institutions before it was dismantled in wars and civil wars. As these conflicts fester, sometimes for decades, terrorism looks to some as the only way to advance their cause. Ethno-nationalism and separatism is alive and well, and here to stay. Still, some violent conflicts, including terrorism, end with a negotiated political solution.

Religious and ideological radicalism is not about to vanish from the face of the earth either, and also do not depend on poverty and misery. Hindu revival in India has grown rapidly even as the country has prospered more than any time since independence. Resentment of foreign ways is a common response to foreign economic, military and cultural penetration. Collective identity and the sanctioned way of life are endangered. A common response is a religious revival  that reverses acculturation, encapsulates adherents in a tight religious community, and mobilizes a diaspora to defend tradition. And one would predict that it is precisely when modernization under Western auspices is making some inroads, but partial or failing,  that   religious and political radicalism will have the most resonance. Because there is a lot of failed modernization in the world, one

can expect an abundance of religious and political movements that can nurture terrorism. To these there are no negotiated solutions, for their currency is identity, symbols, dignity and not material and political goods. Does it make sense to negotiate the destruction of only 50% of all sacrilegious statues? Tolerance took many centuries to become institutionalized in the West, and grew from very fragile roots. It will take a long time elsewhere as well.

Capacity to organize by terrorists is difficult to obstruct, especially in democratic states that adhere to the rule of law. The principal reason is that violent groups are embedded and hide in an ethnic or religious social infrastructure that is legitimate and legal, isolates its members from outsiders, and resists penetration by agents of social control. The IRA has thrived in the Catholic-Nationalist community in Northern Ireland. ETA remains active among Basque nationalists, though the separatist party it is closest to gets no more than 10-15% votes in elections (Kurlansky, 1999). Only a minority of the people that terrorists claim to act for needs to be in favor of terrorism. Terrorists kill moderates, informers, witnesses, jury members; they extort money from businesses; they recruit by intimidation and not just persuasion. The government is unable to protect those it needs to fight terrorism. Weak non-democratic states have resorted to state terrorism which has led to horrible civil war with huge civilian casualties, atrocities, and massacres, as in Algeria. These violent conflicts complicated by foreign interventions can drag on for decades, as is happening in Colombia (La Violencia started sometime in the 1940's) and until recently in Angola (for about 30 years).

Denying political opportunity is the most feasible strategy of control, at least in transnational terrorism. Much terrorism is supported or condoned by a state friendly to the cause of the terrorists and the larger movement, or if not openly supportive, unwilling to curb resources and recruits raised on its territory on behalf of terrorists. Denying terrorists a safe base for their operations is a powerful means of control. The IRA raised a great deal of money in the U.S.; France for many years did not bother to curb Basque separatist activity on its side of the border; money , weapons and recruits came to Kosovo for the Kosovo Liberation Army from Albania, Switzerland, and other diaspora sites; the Tamil Tigers had a safe base in the state of Tamil Nadu; Kashmiri terrorists were supported from Pakistan; all the Palestinian terrorist groups have state sponsors (Iran, Syria); Al Qaeda had the Taliban (before that the Sudan) until the recent Afghan war. There is no question that through diplomacy, sanctions, exclusion from international bodies, and in the last resort war – the instruments that states have in dealing with one another – state support of terrorists stands the best chance of being denied, and  their capacity to organize and operate  of being weakened. The states in question may however insist that a political solution to the conflict be reached, as in Kashmir and in Palestine, before they curb their support, and that can recycle the conflict to an impasse that was responsible for the violence in the first place. Nevertheless, as in the case of the 1970's air piracy, international cooperation against terrorism is the second best prospect for weakening it. The first is finding a political solution to the conflict.

What of terrorists inspired by an ideological crusade, as Al Qaeda is? Will they multiply? How will they end? Any attempt to realize God's purpose and commandments on earth

by a religious movement ends up being subverted by what Max Weber termed the routinization of charisma. In time the religious virtuosos will yield to temptation and sin, and reveal themselves as cynical and corrupt, just as the religious institutions and reforms they introduced and enforced fall short of solving sinfulness, poverty, social inequities, and other ills they promised to alleviate. In the end they also fail to restore national grandeur and past glories. A new generation grows up that knows nothing of the revolution. The institutions enthusiastically adopted by the parents are experienced as a stifling burden and the theocracy as oppressive. Iran thirty years after the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic revolution is the most appropriate example of the routinization of charisma and how a previous enthusiastic endorsement turns to contemporary conformity through fear and repression (Wright, 2001b). In the last several elections, the Islamic religious movement got about 30% of the vote whereas the reformists who want a more secular state and better relations with the U.S. got 70%. The minority clerical party holds on to power because of the peculiar constitutional structure of Iran. The Iranian case has an important lesson for the understanding of the Muslim world, because Iran was the first contemporary Muslim theocracy and also one of the first state sponsors of Islamist terrorists. As is true for all fundamentalist, radical movements, the Islamist jihad will set up its own dynamic of disenchantment and disillusion among its adherents. It will become absorbed with its own domestic problems and be unlikely to continue aggressively exporting its faith and institutions. That change will also apply to state support for Islamist terrorism. Although the trend to moderation is slow and will give little comfort to victims and targets of terrorism, it is nonetheless very real. On top of the

social control from without by denying terrorism political opportunity, there is an inhibitor from within as well, albeit a slow one.

*Footnote*

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