

The Emotive Context of Terrorism: Let's Stop Demonizing & Instead Try to Understand "Terrorism" as "Political Violence"

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Let's Start With FOUR Terrorism Myths

- #1: Most terrorism is perpetrated by Muslims from the Middle East;
 - #2: Terrorists are crazy;
 - #3: Terrorism can be defeated;
 - #4: Terrorists are poor, uneducated, and have few prospects.
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- All four are FALSE.
 - You should ask: What drives these biases & representations?

The Emotive Context of Nuclear Terrorism

- Announcement, Friday afternoon, Washington, D.C., THE WHITE HOUSE:
- Robert Gibbs, Press Secretary to President Obama, announced at the of the briefing: “April 12th and 13th the President will host the Nuclear Security Summit at the Washington Convention Center -- obviously here in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the summit is to discuss steps we can collectively take to secure vulnerable nuclear materials and prevent acts of nuclear terrorism. As the President stated in Prague, in April 2009, nuclear terrorism is the most immediate and extreme threat to global security.”

Recent Acts of Terrorism

Specific Acts of Terrorism – Any Commonalities for Our Understanding?

World Trade Center I Attack, February 26, 1993
Oklahoma City April 19, 1995
US Embassy Bombings August 7, 1998
USS Cole October 12, 2000
September 11, 2001
Madrid Train, March 11, 2004
London, July 7, 2005
Mumbai, November 2008
Austin, TX, **two weeks ago**, February 2010

Defining Terrorism

Definitions

- Many
- Ambiguous
- Are terrorists “freedom fighters”?
- Matter of perception?
- What is the relationship between insurgency and terrorism? Are all insurgents terrorists? Are all terrorists insurgents?

Defining Terrorism: Problematic

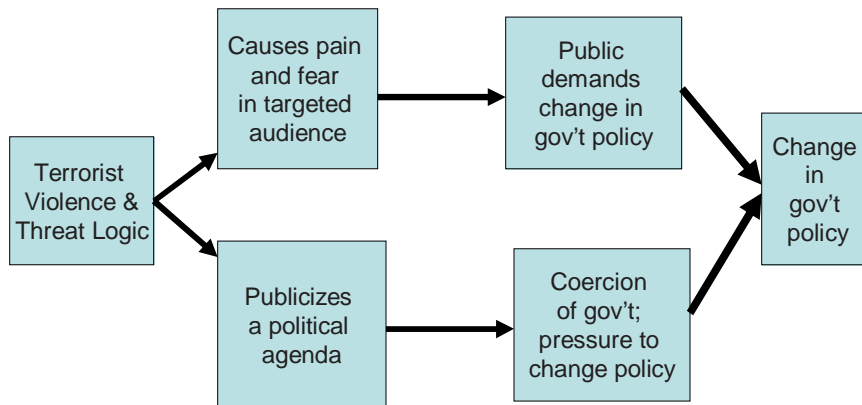
1. Political Agenda
2. Violence/Threat of as the method(s)
3. Civilians as Targets
4. Emotive Context (includes Publicity & Psychological Effects of Actions)
5. Rational? Thoughtful? A Political (Electoral) Campaign of Sorts?
6. Structural and/or Ecological Explanations? Directed Network effects?

1. Political Agendas: See URLs

- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
- HAMAS Covenant (Islamic Resistance Movement, see: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/mideast.asp for more info)
- Sinn Fein home page (political wing of Provisional Irish Republican Army, www.sinnfein.org)
- Hizbollah home page (see: <http://english.hizbollah.tv/index.php>)

2. Violence: The Terrorist “Logic”

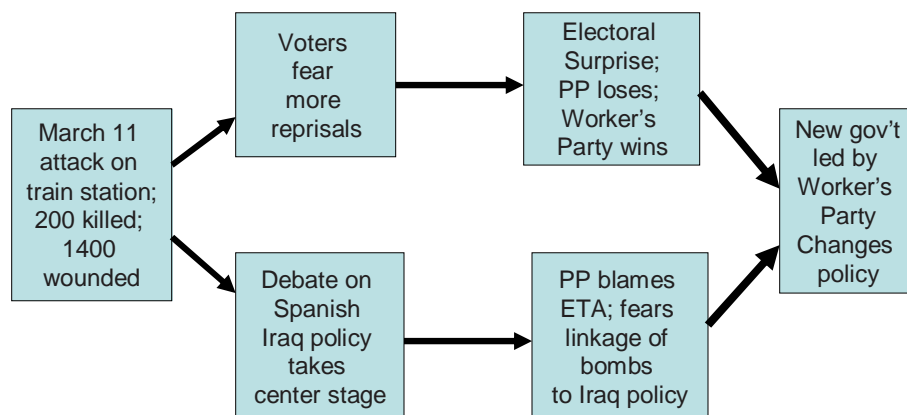
Assumption: You cannot beat the enemy in a direct fight, so...



The “Logic” at Work: Spain 2004

- Spain supports US in Iraq
- People’s Party (PP) in favor of Spanish intervention
- Socialist Worker’s Party wants to withdraw;
- AQ warns Spain to leave or face reprisal;
- Parliamentary elections on 3/14;
- PP favored, but targeted, both militarily (civilian soft targets) and politically in electoral terms

The “Logic” at Work: Spain 2004



Madrid Bombing, March 11, 2004



3. Target Civilians

Marriott Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia, August 2003



4. Emotive Context: Publicity & Psychological Spillover Effects



Munich 1972



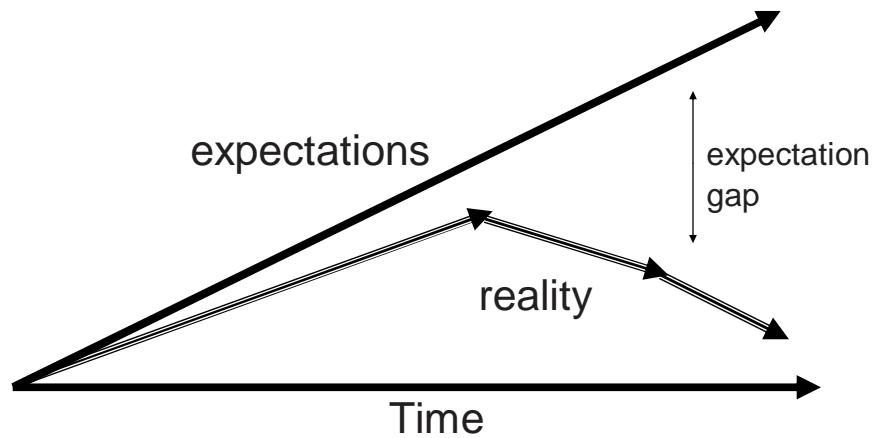
5. What is Terrorism?

Is it criminal? Or
War? Or is it a form of
political violence, common
to world history and politics?
Does it have an “agenda” to
it, a campaign of sorts?

Typology? A Start

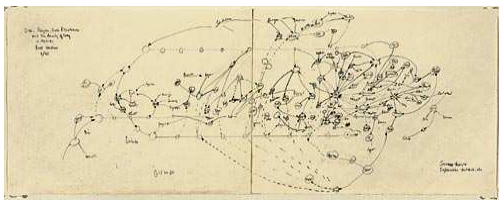
1. Ideological
2. Ethno-nationalist/separatist
3. Narco-Terrorism
4. Religious nationalism/extremism
5. Linked, network effects or
hierarchies?

Expectation and Frustration



Relationships Between Operations, Support, Administration, & Leaders

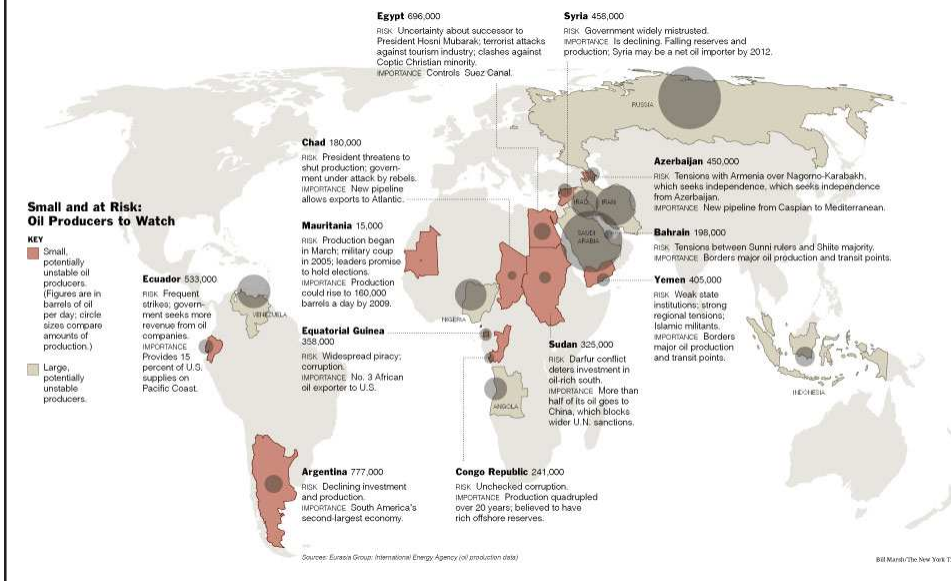
“The Visual Complexity of Terrorism”



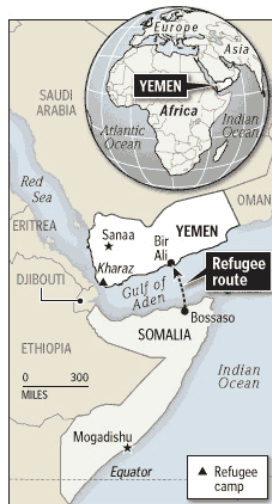
Religious Splits & Terrorism - Example



Example of Expectation & Frustration Gap in the World



Threat & Technique(s) – Critical for Validity: Suicide Bombing as Example

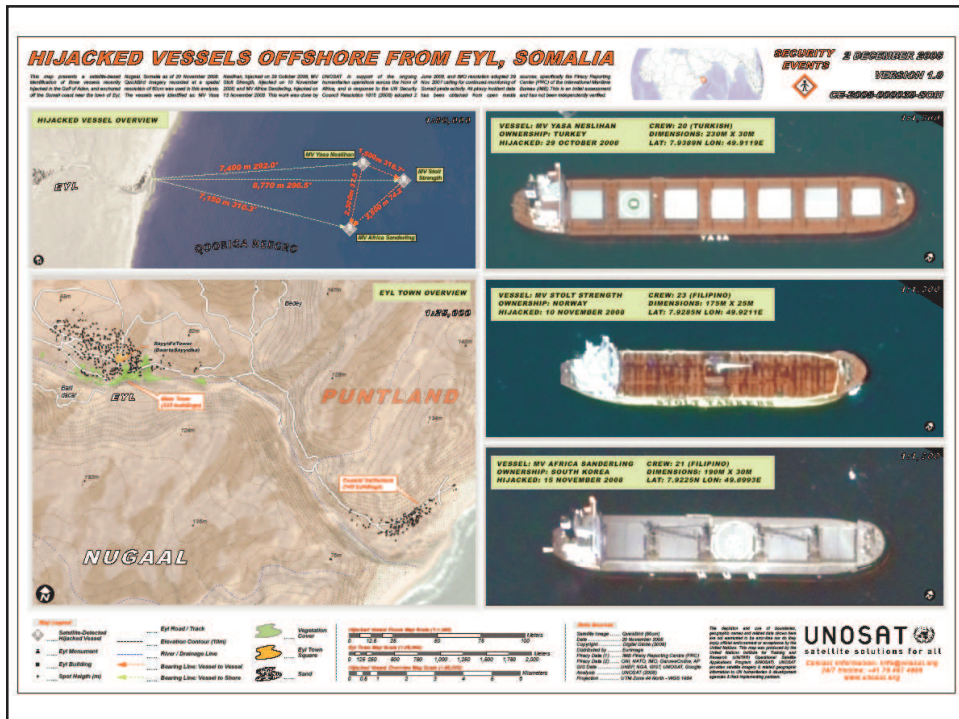
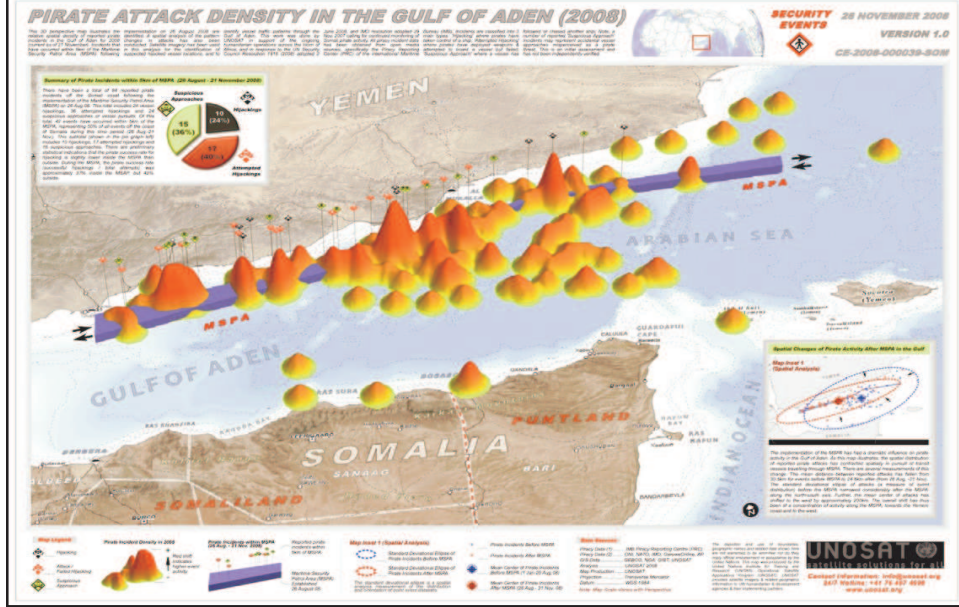


M.K. Cannistra/The Washington Post

Geography = Tactics & Techniques

Threat & Technique: On the High Seas

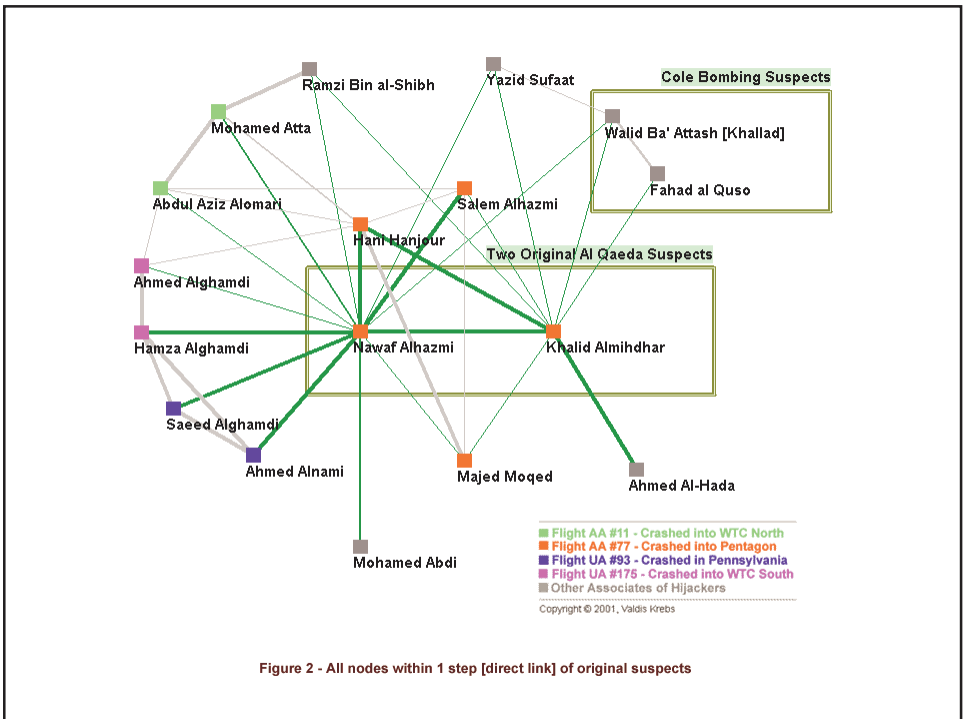
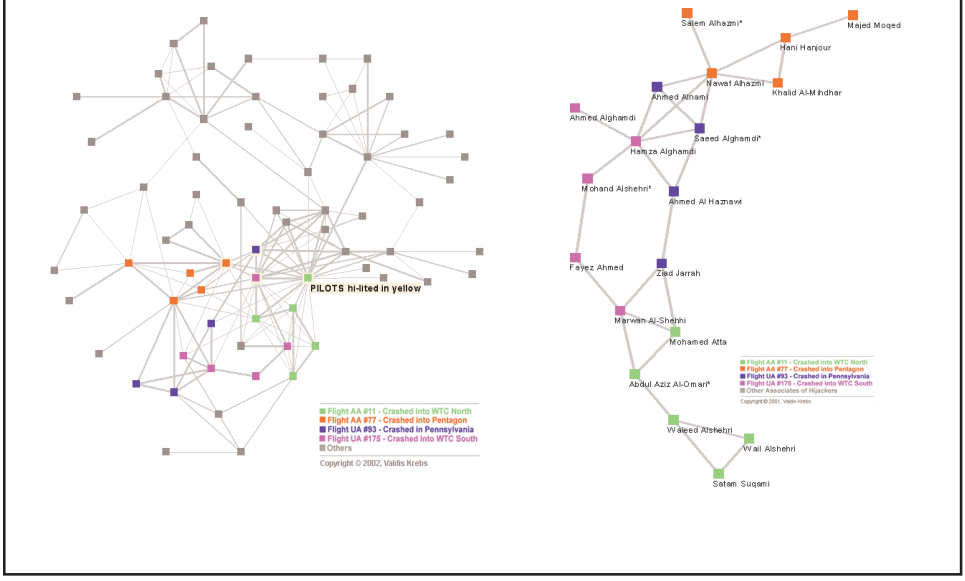
<http://www.icc-ccs.org/>

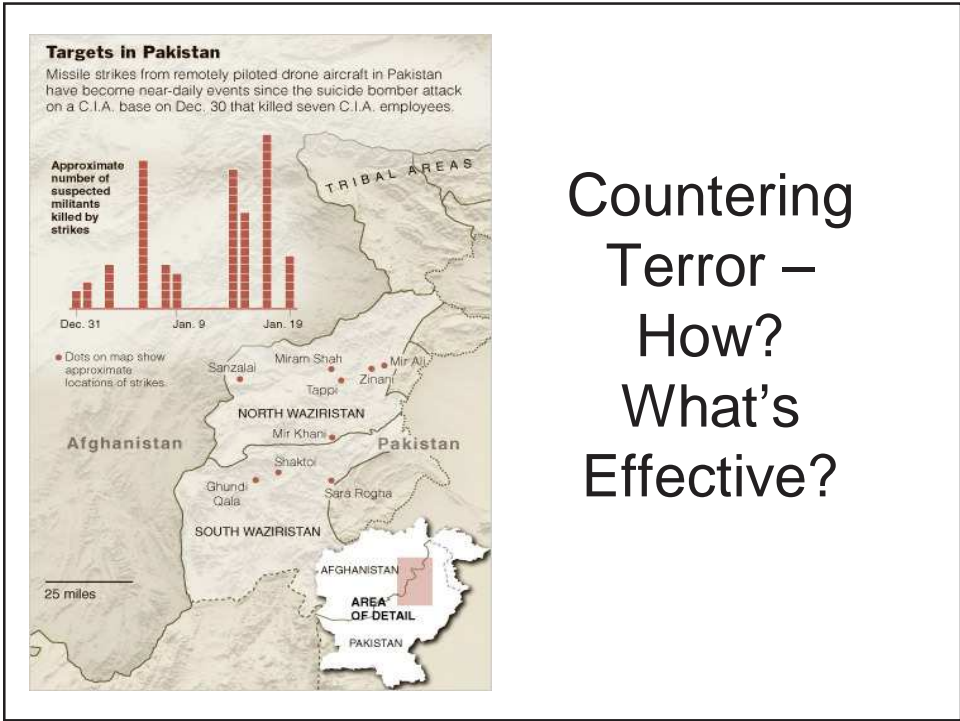


Motives: London, July 7, 2005

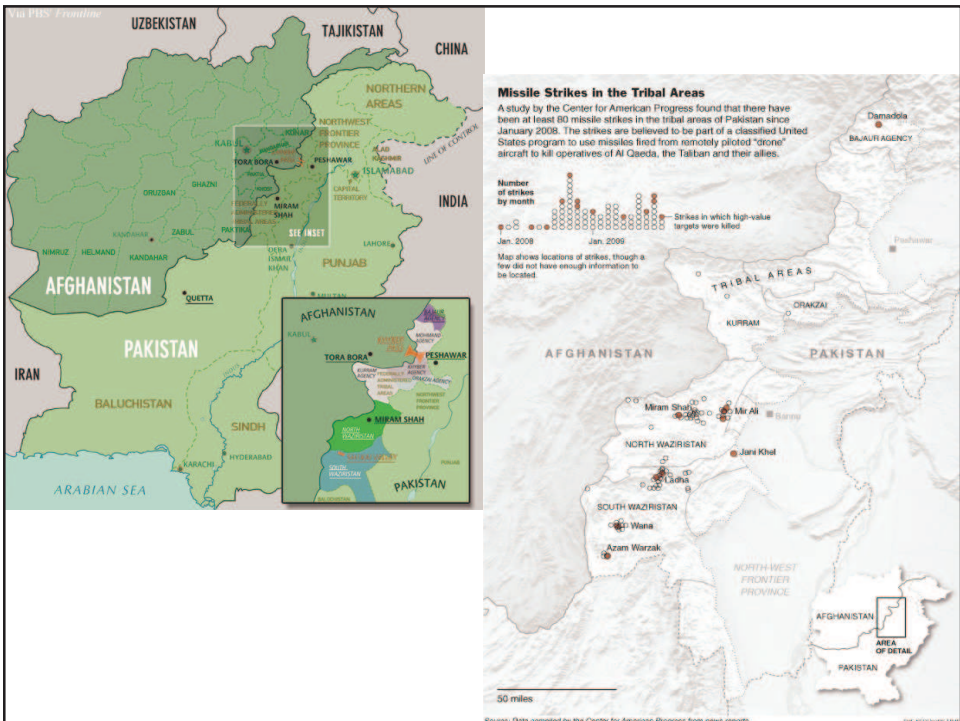


Networks of Like-Minded Communities of Individuals? Or Organizational Hierarchies? Or a “Club” of Interests?





Countering Terror – How? What’s Effective?



Tracking the Terror Threat – Tests of Credibility

- Organizational links, tools
- Operational links, tools
- Which groups have motivation & tools to wage credible attacks?
- Which groups can adapt to pressure & CT influences while undergoing transition?
- Where / when are groups vulnerable?
- When / under what conditions do groups find it difficult to operate?
- Can you / how do you “split” cells of terrorists?

6. Structure & Effects: Terrorism is about means not ends!

Compare two independence movements



Key Question For Students of Terrorism & Political Violence: So, what distinguishes “terrorism’ in the post-9/11 era?

Three operating variables:

1. Goals;
2. Methods; and
3. Organization

of ‘new’ terror groups as opposed to ‘old’ terror groups