Course Learning Outcomes for Unit II

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

   1.1 Discuss the four waves of terrorism.

2. Classify terrorism in the United States and abroad.
   2.1 Examine right- and left-wing terrorism, movements, and ideologies.
   2.2 Examine the different typologies of global terrorism.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 7:
Typologies of Terrorism: State-Involved and Single or Special Issue Movements

Chapter 8:
Typologies of Terrorism: The Right and Left Wings and Separatist or Nationalist Movements

Unit Lesson

This unit will classify terrorism and the different typologies that exist in the United States of America and abroad. Typologies are methods of classification, and in this unit we will discuss the classification systems of terrorist organizations. Typologies rationally group related concepts and other data of systems into specific categories. There are as many typologies of terrorism as there are analysts. Further, this unit will discuss the historic and current views on right- and left-wing terrorism and extremist views. Lastly, this unit will discuss the following typologies and classifications of terrorism:

- state terrorism,
- state-enabled/involved terrorism, and
- state-sponsored terrorism.

State-Sponsored Terrorism

The United States Department of State (2014) defines a state-sponsor of terrorism as meeting specific implications designating countries that repeatedly support international terrorism (i.e., placing a country on the "terrorism list"), and as listed in the Country Reports on Terrorism 2014 (Ch. 3, para. 1), imposes four main sets of U.S. Government sanctions:

1. A ban on arms-related exports and sales.
2. Controls over exports of dual use items, requiring 30-day Congressional notification for goods or services that could significantly enhance the terrorist-list country's military capability or ability to support terrorism.
3. Prohibitions on economic assistance.
4. Imposition of miscellaneous financial and other restrictions.

Four Waves of Terrorism

The "Four Waves of Modern Terrorism" is a typology that was developed by David Rapoport (2004) to better understand terrorism from a local, state, federal, and global perspective. The four waves of terrorism are anarchist, anti-colonial, new left, and religious. Rapoport's (2004) views came from examining the history of
terrorism from the 1880s to post-9/11. The waves of terrorism were identified as the "new" major global threats and shifts in today's society. These four waves provide a framework in which to summarize the various political, cultural, and religious ideologies historically developed to this point. (Rapoport, 2004).

The first wave of terrorism was the anarchist wave: "Roughly 1880-1920, anti-authoritarian and revolutionary concept that in pure form exists as a society without any government" (Taylor & Swanson, 2016, p. 159).

- Example: A present day example of an anarchist wave of terrorism is the situation and crisis in Somalia. Jeffrey Gettleman (2009) described Somalia as the "most dangerous place in the world" because it is a failed government, unable to control its own territory. This makes it an ideal safe haven for all types of terrorist groups.

The second wave of terrorism was the anti-colonial wave: “Prevalent during the 1920s-1960s, Colonies sought independence from major powers controlling them” (Taylor & Swanson, 2016, p. 160).

- Example: Colonies sought their own independence; when that failed, they turned to terrorism.

The third wave of terrorism was the new left wave: This wave “concluded that terrorism was the way to reform governments” (Taylor & Swanson, 2016, p. 160).

- Example: The Vietnam War produced widespread opposition across the United States and abroad. Many groups resorted to terrorism in order to express their views, to include the violent leftist revolutionary terrorist group called the Weather Underground.

The fourth wave of terrorism is the religious wave: This wave of terrorism began with the Islamic Revolution in Iran and continues today, post-9/11.


Right-Wing Terrorism and Extremist Views

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2009), Right-Wing Extremism Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment, states the following:

The DHS/Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) has no specific information that domestic rightwing terrorists are currently planning acts of violence, but rightwing extremists may be gaining new recruits by playing on their fears about several emergent issues. The economic downturn and the election of the first African American president present unique drivers for rightwing radicalization and recruitment. (p. 2)

Right-wing terrorism examples:

- 1995: Oklahoma City, OK, bombing
- 1999: London subway bombings (London Nail Bomber)
- 2008: Knoxville church shooting
- 2011: The Norway attacks
- 2012: Sikh temple shooting
- 2014: Jewish Community Center mass shooting
- 2015: Charleston church shooting

Current right-wing terrorist group examples:

- KKK-Ku Klux Klan
- Neo-Fascists
- Lord's Resistance Army
- Antibalaka
- The Aryan Nations
Left-Wing Terrorism and Extremists Views

Shortly after 9/11/2001, in 2002, Dale. L. Watson testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in Washington, DC, on the changing trends of both domestic and global terrorism. Specifically he focused on right and left wing terrorism and extremists' views and how they will impact the United States and the global community. Below, one can review the testimony that he provided on left wing terrorism to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in Washington, DC, which was outlined on the Depart of Justice: Federal Bureau of Investigations website (FBI, 2002):

The second category of domestic terrorists, left-wing groups, generally profess a revolutionary socialist doctrine and view themselves as protectors of the people against the “dehumanizing effects” of capitalism and imperialism. They aim to bring about change in the United States and believe that this change can be realized through revolution rather than through the established political process. From the 1960s to the 1980s, leftist-oriented extremist groups posed the most serious domestic terrorist threat to the United States. (para. 19)

Left-wing terrorism examples:

- 1901: assassination of President McKinley
- 1920: the bombing of Wall Street
- 1933: attempted assassination of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the murder of the mayor of Chicago
- 1978-1995: the Unabomber attacks

Current left-wing group examples:

- Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC)
- Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party-Front in Turkey
- Revolutionary Organization 17 November in Greece

References


Suggested Reading

These resources provide further information about state sponsored terrorism and the four waves of terrorism, which is a typology and classification system developed by David Rapoport to better understand terrorism from both a global and domestic perspective.


The below article can be found in the CSU Online Library International Security and Counter Terrorism Reference Center database.