TERRORISM IN HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Chapter 1

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EIGHTH EDITION

TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES: CHAPTER 1

- Explain the reason terrorism is difficult to define.
- Summarize the impact of context on definitions of terrorism.
- Explain the impact the Enlightenment has on democracy and potential revolutionary thought.
- Summarize the origins of modern terrorism from the Enlightenment through the Napoleonic wars.
- Explain why terrorism became defined as a revolutionary activity after the European experience in 1848.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: CHAPTER 1

- Define socialism, anarchism, and communism.
- Summarize the differing meanings of terrorism in Russia from the Peoples’ Will through the Lenin and Trotsky.
- Summarize the early history of the Irish Republican Army.
- Define selective terrorism as used by Michael Collins.
Terrorism is difficult to define.

It is a social construct – terrorism is defined by different people within vacillating social and political realities.
The term has spawned heated debate because it is nebulous and pejorative.
- The term evokes a variety of politically charged responses.
- As a result there are many definitions of terrorism and no single accepted understanding.
THE DIFFICULTY WITH DEFINITIONS

Discussion

The topic of discussion, or debate, is the change in terminology when defining terrorism. It was stated that these changes are a “dangerous word game”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What is your view on this debate? Support your position.
Terrorism is defined within social and political contexts.
- Different meanings in different periods of time.
- Different meanings in different contexts within the same period of time.

Primary reason no single definition of terrorism will ever be successful.
Social context influences definition of terrorism, for example:

- U.S. State Department Anti-Terrorism Assistance views Hezbollah as terrorist group – Jordanians’ view Hezbollah as a legitimate militia.
- Israel views their actions as a means of self-defense – Lebanon views the same actions as acts of terrorism.
When the term terrorism was first introduced in Western history, governments adjusted their policies based on the way they defined terrorism.

- This process is evidenced by recent changes in American defense and law enforcement policy.
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This process is evidenced by recent changes in American defense and law enforcement policy.
Discussion:

- What is your understanding of the history of terrorism?
The 18th century Enlightenment period provided the intellectual climate to support modern democracy.

The ideology spawned revolutions in American colonies and France.
The French Revolution was the first revolution in the modern sense of the word.

The term terrorism appeared during the French Revolution.

- Terrorism described the actions of the new government.
The meaning of terrorism underwent a subtle transformation during the Napoleonic Wars.

- The meaning shifted away from governmental repression to the resistance of some people to governments.
  - This definitional change would continue through the 19th century.
Discussion

- In what ways did Robespierre and the French Revolution contribute to the use of terrorism?
- What methods (i.e., the Law of Suspects) were utilized against the people of France? How is this similar to current day acts of violence or terrorism?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ej5rceb4-hQ&playnext=1&list=PL6E0EDBC88012020D&feature/results_main
The meaning of terrorism shifted away from governmental repression to the resistance of some people to governments. In Spain, guerrilla warfare served as an asymmetrical method of resisting the French revolutionary army. Guerrilla warfare signaled an ideological transformation in the meaning of war. Guerrilla movements helped to set the stage for terrorism.
When a small minority of the radical democrats called for violence and terrorism people with political power began to label all types of activism, violent or not as terrorism.

Terrorism as it is known today came into its infancy.
Three strains of radical democrats coalesced after the failed revolutions of 1848:

- Communists
- Socialists
- Anarchists
Socialism: refers to controlling an economy by direct democracy and utilizing economic profits to ensure the well-being of citizens.

- Socialists believed that a strong state would ensure that profits from industry were distributed in an egalitarian manner.
Anarchism is a philosophical concept originating in ancient Greece.

In the 18th century anarchists generally disavowed the power of national governments.

- Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865)
Communism: in its ideal form is socialism where economic production and profits are owned and distributed by workers.

- Karl Marx (1818-1883)
- Fredrich Engels (1820-1895)
Discussion:

- What is your understanding of socialism?
- How would you compare/contrast socialism with anarchism and communism?
- In what way, in your view, would socialist lead to terrorism? Explain your view.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckii1ToNJHQ

19TH CENTURY SOCIALISM
Terrorism in the modern sense came from violent anarchists in the late 1800s.
The most successful actions took place in Russia before the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.
- Anarchist groups assassinated several Russian officials, including the czar.
Anarchism spread to the United States in the form of labor violence.  
- American anarchists saw themselves linked to organized labor.
Modern revolutionary terrorism is closely associated with a series of revolutionary activities that began with the Peoples’ Will and continued through the Communist Revolution.
Narodnaya Voyla (the Peoples’ Will) advocated violent socialist revolution.

Violent revolution was espoused by Russian writers; however, no single theme dominated the revolutionaries until it was imposed by the state under Lenin.

- Members of the Peoples’ Will came to believe that it was necessary to terrorize conservative organizations into submission.
Three groups in Russia after 1850 felt that they could reform and modernize the Russian state:

- Czar Alexander’s followers wanted to modernize Russia from the top down.
- The intellectuals wanted Russia to become a liberal Western democracy.
- Violent anarchists believed revolution was the answer.
Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) and Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) believed that terrorism should be used as an instrument for overthrowing the bourgeois, governments.

Once power was achieved, Lenin and Trotsky advocated terrorism as a means of controlling internal enemies.
The Irish have never ruled their island as a single political entity, and the Irish have experienced some type of foreign domination for hundreds of centuries.

By the 20th century the struggle in Ireland became a matter of the divisions between:
- Unionists, people wanting to remain in the Great Britain and Ireland, and
- Republicans, people wanting independence.
The Republican military solution came when the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) formed in the 1850s.

- Irish Republican Army (IRA) began with a campaign of violence sponsored by the IRB in the late 1800s.
The British had promised home rule to Ireland when World War I came to an end.

Easter in 1916, Patrick Pearse and James Connolly led a revolt in Dublin.

The 1916 Easter Rising enjoyed local success because it surprised everyone.
The British handed down several dozen death sentences and imprisoned hundreds more for the Easter Rising.

British actions virtually empowered Sinn Fein.
- Public sympathy shifted to the rebels.
Sinn Fein, the political party of Irish republicanism, continued its activities in spite of the failure of the Easter Rising.

British government rejected Home Rule at the end of WWI.

Sinn Fein moved into the arena by discrediting the Parliamentary Party.

- Moderation fell to the wayside as extreme republicanism increased.
Michael Collins developed a strategy called “selective terrorism”.

- Collins reasoned that indiscriminate terror was of no value.
- Random or large-scale attacks would alienate public opinion.
To be effective, terrorism had to selectively and ruthlessly target security forces and their symbols of authority.

- Collins’s men ambushed off-duty police and intelligence officers and murdered them.
- In crowded areas, IRA terrorists would throw bombs and shoot police officers, then disappear before authorities could respond.
In 1921, southern Ireland became the Free State – the Republic of Ireland.

- Collins along the majority of people in Ireland accepted the treaty.
- The IRA did not.

A civil war broke out in the newly formed republic – Ireland became a divided country.
Discussion:

- Would you say the IRA is similar to Middle Eastern terrorist groups? Support your position.
- How does the goal of the IRA impact view?
TERRORISM RESEARCH WEBSITE

http://www.terrorism-research.com

International Terrorism and Security Research

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What is Terrorism?

Terrorism is not new, and even though it has been used since the beginning of recorded history it can be relatively hard to define. Terrorism has been described variously as both a tactic and strategy: a crime and a holy duty; a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable abomination. Obviously, a lot depends on whose point of view is being represented. Terrorism has often been an effective tactic for the weaker side in a conflict. As an asymmetric form of conflict, it confers coercive power with many of the advantages of military force at a fraction of the cost. Due to the secretive nature and small size of terrorist organizations, they often offer opponents no clear organization to defend against or to deter.

That is why preemption is being considered to be so important. In some cases, terrorism has been a means to carry on a conflict without the adversary realizing the nature of the threat, mistaking terrorism for criminal activity. Because of these characteristics, terrorism has become increasingly common among those pursuing extreme goals throughout the world. But despite its popularity, terrorism can be a nebulous concept. Even within the U.S. Government, agencies responsible for different functions in the ongoing fight against terrorism use different definitions.

The United States Department of Defense defines terrorism as "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to incite fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological." Within this definition, there are three key elements—violence, fear, and intimidation—and each element produces terror in its victims. The FBI uses this: "Terrorism is the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." The U.S. Department of State defines terrorism to be "premeditated politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.

Outside the United States Government, there are greater variations in what features of terrorism are emphasized in definitions. The United Nations produced this definition in 1992: "An anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-)clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The most commonly accepted academic definition starts with the U.N. definition quoted above, and adds two sentences totaling another 77 words on the end, containing such verbose concepts as "message generators" and "violence based communication processes." Less specific and considerably less verbose, the British Government definition of 1974 is "...the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public..."
The United States has changed national security and law enforcement policies based partially on the way it defines terrorism. This is a situational definition as the meaning of terrorism changes within history. The ideas behind modern democracies were contained in the Enlightenment - Sparking the American and French Revolutions.
Terrorism was a product of the class-based revolution in France – the term described the actions of the government. It would go through many changes until it once again described government repression.