

Terrorism AND Torture

An Interdisciplinary Perspective

EDITED BY

Werner G. K. Stritzke
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Terrorism and Torture

Terrorism and torture are twin evils that have dominated news headlines – particularly since the horrifying events of 9/11. In this thought-provoking volume, scholars from a diverse range of disciplines examine the complex motivational and situational factors contributing to terrorist acts and state-sponsored torture, and the potential linkage between those two heinous human behaviors. They also consider the strategies that might reduce the threat of future terrorist acts, and the perceived necessity to engage in morally reprehensible – and often illegal – torture practices. With its integrated synthesis of contemporary theories and research on the complex dynamics of the terrorism–torture link, this is an authoritative source for scholars and students of psychology, criminal justice, law, media, communication studies, and political science. It will also appeal to students of other disciplines with an interest in the study of terrorism and torture.

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Preface

A famous quote attributed to F. M. Dostoevsky notes that “while nothing is easier than to denounce the evil-doer, nothing is more difficult than to understand him.” Terrorism and torture are twin evils that have dominated news headlines in the years following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001. As the former ambassador from Pakistan to the United Nations, Ahmad Kamal, observed, the lines between good and evil become blurred when “terrorists” are often defined on the basis of their success or failure; those who succeed become heroes and even heads of state, whereas those who fail are labeled as terrorists (Kamal, 2002). Likewise, while torture is universally denounced by civilized nations as the dark side of evil, working on that “dark side” was considered “vital” by US Vice President Dick Cheney in responding to terrorist threat (Cheney, 2001). Understanding the architects of terror and torture goes beyond the simple differentiation of “you are either with us or against us” (Bush, 2001), and beyond vilification of those (e.g., multiple Grammy award winners The Dixie Chicks) who dare to cast a self-critical eye on the tensions between our own moral principles and amoral actions. Understanding the evil-doer is difficult, not the least because it also involves looking in the mirror and asking who one is, what one does, and how one is perceived by others. Terrorist acts and torture are not simply “evil”; they have knowable causes. This volume aims to illuminate the terrorism–torture link from multiple, interdisciplinary perspectives.

When we embarked on this project, our objective was two-fold. First, we wanted to ask scholars from a diverse range of disciplines to examine the complex factors contributing to terrorist acts and state-sponsored torture, the potential linkage between those two heinous human behaviors, and the strategies that might reduce the threat of terrorist acts and the perceived necessity to engage in morally reprehensible – and often illegal – torture practices. Our second objective was to facilitate an active and spirited dialogue between the contributors to this volume so that we could fruitfully bring to bear the viewpoints and expertise from different domains to a critical analysis of the complex dynamic

between terrorism and torture. To this end, we held in August, 2007, a three-day symposium at the University of Western Australia (UWA) in Perth, during which this group of international scholars forged an inter-disciplinary perspective of the terrorism–torture link.

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by a number of individuals and organizations in support of this project. Funding was provided by various discipline groups within the UWA, including first and foremost the Institute of Advanced Studies; the Faculty of Life and Physical Sciences; the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; the School of Psychology; the Crime Research Centre (Faculty of Law); and the School of Social and Cultural Studies. We thank Susan Takao and Terri-ann White from the UWA Institute of Advanced Studies for their unwavering support and tremendous efforts in coordinating the Terrorism and Torture Symposium in 2007. We would also like to thank Herb Jurkiewicz for his media support and Melanie Newton for her help with manuscript preparation.

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1 The terrorism–torture link: when evil begets evil

Werner G. K. Stritzke and Stephan Lewandowsky

Joshua Key, a 28-year-old US soldier and father of two, deserted the US army during a two-week leave in the early months of the second Iraq War (2003–). He described his most common duties while in Iraq as “busting into and ransacking homes” (Key, 2007). In the course of these routine duties, Key was troubled by the fact that he never found anything in those homes that appeared to justify “the terror we inflicted every time we blasted through the door of a civilian home, broke everything in sight, punched and zipcuffed the men, and sent them away.” When reflecting on the consequences of his actions, Key concluded that “we, the American soldiers, were the terrorists ... The ones we didn’t kill had all the reasons in the world to become terrorists themselves.”

What this disillusioned young soldier was doing in his reflections on his war-time experience is what Noam Chomsky (2007) calls *looking in the mirror*. Chomsky often uses the metaphor of looking in the mirror to remind us that to ask who one is, what one does, and how one is perceived by others, is an essential step toward understanding the dynamics that fuel the vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence. This book intends to provide a careful look into that mirror using the tools of an inter-disciplinary analysis, in order to shed light on what we consider to be a particularly invidious instantiation of the logic of fighting evil with evil; namely, the use of state-sponsored torture in the so-called “war on terror.”

Terrorism risk and torture

The smoke and dust from the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had not yet settled, when US Vice President Dick Cheney made it clear that the gloves had come off and that torture would be an essential tool for dealing with the threat of further terrorist attacks. In an appearance on *Meet the Press* five days after the attacks, Cheney put the world on notice that “we also have to work, though, sort

of the dark side ... A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion ... it's going to be vital for us to use any means at our disposal, basically, to achieve our objective" (Cheney, 2001). A few months later, Alberto Gonzales, the Chief Legal Counsel to the US President, made it clear that "this new paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions ..." (Gonzales, 2002).

Thus, the possibility of further atrocities against American civilians was used by leading administration figures to justify the use of torture largely unrestrained by international norms. Since then, more than 100 "suspects" have been rendered to countries with the intent of subjecting them to torture, and at least thirty-four American-held prisoners have been killed while in custody (Otterman, 2007). In 2008, the US President vetoed a bill that would have banned the use of the interrogation practices often employed by torturers (e.g., waterboarding, beating, electrocuting, burning, intimidating with dogs, stripping prisoners naked, forcing them to perform or mimic sexual acts). According to President Bush (2008), these interrogation methods are "one of the most valuable tools in the war on terror," notwithstanding his earlier admission that these practices, when exposed in the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, were "... the biggest mistake that's happened so far, at least from our country's involvement in Iraq" (Bush, 2006).

Torture is a mistake not only because it corrupts the moral standing of the nations practicing it, but because the fallout of the humiliating images of state-sponsored torture tends to radicalize the minds and hearts of entire communities to which the torture victims belong (Otterman, 2007). For that reason, there is a strong case to be made that torture does not reduce the risk of terrorism. To the contrary, state-sponsored torture arguably serves as a powerful recruiting tool for terrorist groups across the globe and ultimately undermines counter-terrorism efforts (Otterman, 2007).

Terrorism and torture provoke fear

A fundamental objective that is shared by both terrorists and torturers is to provoke intense fear. The United Nations *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* defines torture as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession ..." (United Nations, 1984). According to torture training manuals, the mechanism by which torture is thought to achieve its aim is to instill in

the victim an overwhelming sense of debility, dependency, and dread (Otterman, 2007). The intense fears and anxiety triggered by the threat of coercion can be more debilitating than the sensation of actual physical pain itself.

Provocation of intense fear is also the primary objective of terrorist acts. Terrorists not only aim to inflict pain and suffering on countless individuals, but they hope to spread fear among entire societies to shatter all sense of personal and community safety (Bongar, 2007). Moghaddam (this volume) defines terrorism as “politically motivated violence, perpetrated by individuals, groups, or state-sponsored agents, intended to instill fear and helplessness in a population in order to influence decision-making and to change behavior.” Thus, provoking debilitating fear is common to both terrorism and torture as a means of achieving political ends.

State-sponsored terrorism and torture

As the above definition of terrorism highlights, terrorism may also include acts where the state is not the target, but the sponsor. The tools of the state against threats from groups fighting perceived oppression by the state include imprisonment, torture, and death (McCauley, 2007). Indeed, in the twentieth century, for every civilian killed by non-state terrorism, 280 civilians were killed by state-sponsored terrorism (McCauley, this volume). These numbers suggest that the damage inflicted on innocents by state-sponsored terrorism in combating non-state terrorists far outstrips the damage suffered at the hand of non-state terrorists. Consider, for example, Tony Blair’s lament when he was British Prime Minister that terrorists “have no moral inhibition on the slaughter of the innocent. If they could have murdered not 7000 but 70 000 does anyone doubt they would have done so and rejoiced in it?” (Blair, 2001). This legitimate and welcome moral concern over the slaughter of innocents, shared by most people around the world, did not prevent Tony Blair from becoming one of the principal architects of the pre-emptive invasion of Iraq in 2003, based on a series of false intelligence statements fueling the public’s fear of an imminent terrorist threat. In the five years since then, about one million Iraqis have been killed, which represents over 300 times the number of innocents killed in the 9/11 terrorist attack (Burnham *et al.*, 2006; Opinion Research Business, 2007, 2008).

The moral reprehensibility of this slaughter of innocents – for at least part of which the invading Coalition forces cannot escape blame – along with the routine arbitrary imprisonment and harsh treatment of

civilians, was not lost on Joshua Key, the US deserter who came to view himself and his fellow soldiers as the “terrorists” during the invasion and occupation of Iraq. The arbitrary logic of pre-emptive war, the demeaning images of torture victims at Abu Ghraib, and the harrowing accounts of innocent civilians disappearing into “rendition” programs that outsource torture to secret locations across the globe, all raise the disturbing question: do political leaders who authorize torture as a “valuable tool” in the war on terror ultimately put their constituents at greater risk of becoming the innocent targets of terrorist acts? The London train bombings on July 7, 2005 are a case in point. In an al-Jazeera videotape broadcast about two months after the attack, Mohammad Sidiq Khan, the terrorist who detonated the Edgware Road bomb on that fateful day, justifies the targeting of innocent bystanders as follows: “Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetrate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters” (Tulloch, 2006, p. 219).

An interdisciplinary analysis of the terrorism–torture link

In this volume, experts from a diverse range of disciplines examine the complex dynamics between terrorism on the one hand, and state-sponsored torture of individual “suspects” on the other.

The law, criminal justice, and crime prevention

The first four chapters examine the terrorism–torture dynamic from the perspectives of legal codes, criminal justice, and crime prevention.

In Chapter 2, Alex Bellamy, from the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, explores why torture and terrorism tend to go hand in hand. Bellamy begins by identifying the flaws with the strategic-imperative argument, according to which torture is necessary as a lesser evil, because it prevents the greater evil of an imminent terrorist attack. He then argues that terrorism and torture are primarily linked because both violate the norms of non-combatant immunity, which in turn helps to create a normative environment in which the commission and validation of one type of violence makes it easier to justify the other type. For example, the moral double standards of democratic nations such as the United States, who condemn the use of torture in other countries while simultaneously endorsing its use in covert operations

around the globe, is a weakness that is exploited by terrorists in their justification for targeting civilians. Bellamy shows how a weakening of the norm of non-combatant immunity, as the principal moral inhibitor of both terrorism and torture, has an inflammatory effect on the terrorism–torture link (see [Figure 1.1](#)). It follows that the key to breaking the escalatory tension that fuels both types of violence lies in the reaffirmation of non-combatant immunity.

In Chapter 3, Ben Saul, the Director of the Sydney Centre for International and Global Law, draws on his expertise in anti-terrorism law, humanitarian law, international criminal law, and human rights law to examine the manipulative use of legal arguments that underlie the equivalent logic of torture and terrorism. He observes that justifications for state-sponsored torture and non-state terrorism are strikingly similar, often drawing on the same underlying logic. Both appeal to the language of human rights and both justify the use of violence on the basis of an asymmetry of power, with terrorism viewed as the only effective weapon available to the weak and disempowered, and torture considered a necessary weapon to respond to terrorists who are thought to hold all the cards within a society governed by democratic values. Saul examines the legal strategies often invoked to justify the use of exceptional means by torturers and terrorists alike. They include instrumentalist lawyering to fit the evil conduct within existing legal frameworks, the defense of necessity to excuse a ‘lesser’ evil to avert a ‘greater’ evil, and direct challenges to existing legal rules to escape punishment for evil done. Saul concludes that the absolute prohibition of torture in international law ought to be upheld and defended, but that there are inadequacies in the legal regulation of terrorism that allow international law to be instrumental in repressing legitimate struggles against political oppression.

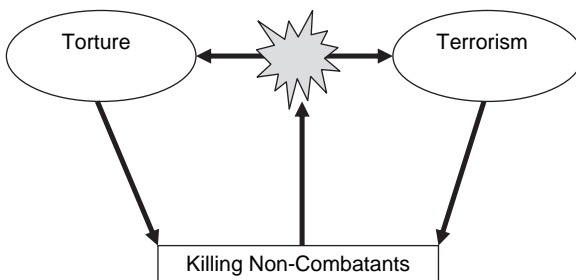


Figure 1.1 Escalation of terrorism and torture through violation of the norm of non-combatant immunity.

In Chapter 4, Clark McCauley, the Co-director of the National Consortium for Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (NC-START) in the United States, contrasts the conflicting implications of using military action and war versus police work and criminal justice to respond to terrorist acts. He reviews evidence that, since 9/11, success against terrorism has come from police work firmly grounded within a rights-oriented criminal justice system. In contrast, war and its rhetoric have been counter-productive in fighting terrorism and have magnified the problem rather than reducing the long-term threat of terrorist acts. The liability of war as a response to terrorism is two-fold: first, war plays into the hands of the terrorists directly, because the inevitable collateral damage to civilians creates a feeling of collective injustice, which is precisely what terrorists hope to exploit in gaining widespread support for their cause. Second, war undermines the effective response to terrorism indirectly, by putting on hold the values and successful operations of a criminal justice system that balances the rights of the accused and society's right to security (see [Figure 1.2](#)). McCauley further argues that torturing suspected terrorists is the strongest expression of the logic of war, which is to win at any cost. Because torture is one of the strongest sources of community grievance against state power, he concludes that torture, along with indiscriminate military action, is part of a failing logic in reducing the threat of terrorism and bringing terrorists to justice.

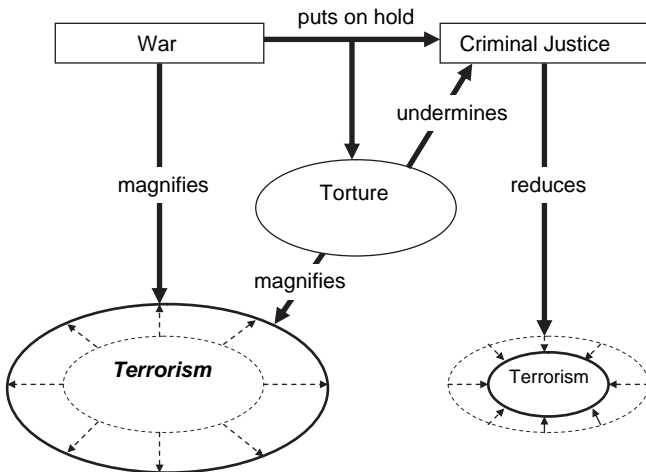


Figure 1.2 War versus criminal justice and the role of torture in response to terrorism.

McCauley’s conclusion that successful counter-terrorism stems more from police work supported by a rights-oriented criminal justice system, rather than from military action and torture practices that stretch the bounds of international laws and conventions, is consistent with the approach to counter-terrorism advocated by Ronald Clarke and Graeme Newman, who in Chapter 5 apply the principles and strategies of “situational crime prevention” as a framework for reducing the opportunities for terrorism. These authors draw on theories of environmental criminology that seek to predict the occurrence of a crime rather than to explain it by reference to the motivational, social, and biological roots of criminology. A fundamental tenet of this approach is that crime is the product of the interaction between a criminal disposition or motivation, and an opportunity to commit the crime (see Figure 1.3). In this approach, terrorism is treated as simply another form of crime, where the focus is not on the political motives underlying the crime, but on the protection of the most vulnerable targets, the control of the tools and weapons used by terrorists, and the modification of social and physical systems (e.g., limiting the volume of liquids passengers can carry onto airplanes) to make it harder for terrorists to operate. Clarke and Newman acknowledge that focusing on the reduction of opportunities complements other approaches that focus on the reduction of motives for terrorist acts, but argue that opportunity reduction has the potential for making swifter and more certain preventative gains. After introducing the principles of situational crime prevention, the authors describe the application of these principles to analyzing the opportunity structure for terrorism (i.e., targets, weapons, tools, and facilitating conditions), and changing the opportunity structure to reduce the likelihood of terrorist acts being committed.

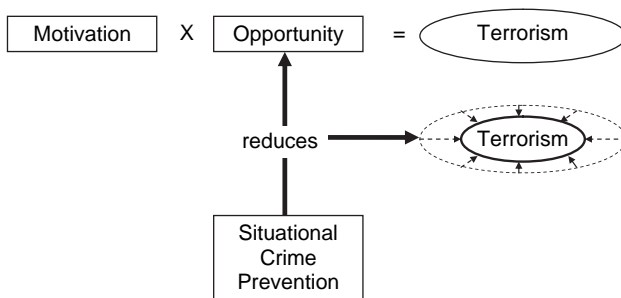


Figure 1.3 Situational crime prevention and reduction of opportunities for terrorism.

Psychological and motivational processes

The next four chapters in this volume shift the focus from legal, judicial, and criminological issues, to psychological and motivational processes in the terrorism–torture link. What are the psychological processes that influence the readiness of people to engage in terrorist acts on the one hand, or to support extreme counter-terrorism strategies, even if they involve killing and harming countless innocents, on the other?

In Chapter 6, Fathali Moghaddam uses the metaphor of a “staircase to terrorism” to examine from the terrorists’ point of view the role of contextual and dispositional factors in shaping the motivational readiness of individuals to become terrorists. Figure 1.4 shows how powerful contextual forces act incrementally at each floor of the staircase, with a large number of people on the ground floor taking small steps toward supporting terrorism, and a small number of individuals who have progressed to the top floor being ready to take big steps and launch extreme actions. Moghaddam argues that particular psychological processes on each floor progressively shift some individuals toward an increasingly narrow and radicalized worldview, where terrorism is the only viable behavioral option to address perceived injustice and disempowerment. He traces the origins of this progressive radicalization to a collective identity crisis in Islamic communities shaped by the friction between fundamentalist ideals and contemporary trends toward modernization, Westernization, and secularization. Dissatisfaction with identity and

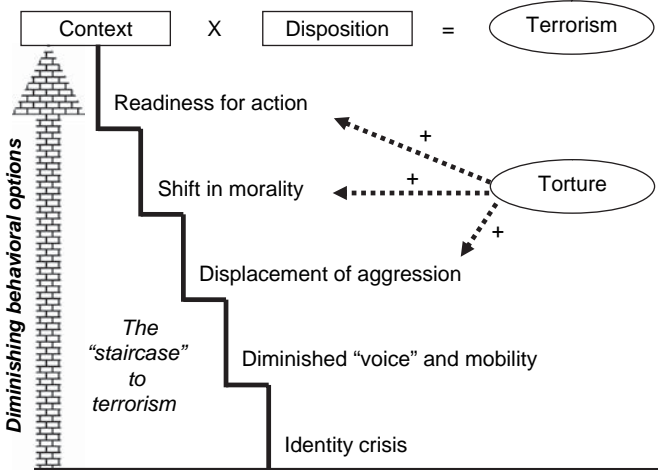


Figure 1.4 The role of torture in accelerating the climb up the “staircase to terrorism.”

group affiliation leads some to feel disenfranchised from decision making and social mobility. A psychological coping mechanism to deal with this diminished role within one's particular group is to direct blame and aggression onto outside groups (e.g., Western powers), which in turn can lead to disengagement from the morality shared by mainstream society, and an increasing enmeshment with the ideology of insular radical groups for whom terrorism is a legitimate tool of making their voice heard. According to Moghaddam's conceptual model, oppressive conditions, such as Western support for dictatorships in the Middle East and torture of individuals simply because of their affiliation with Islamic communities, accelerate the climb onto higher floors of the staircase. The implications of the staircase model are that the best long-term strategies for defeating terrorism need to be targeted at the ground floor. Moghaddam concludes that, unfortunately, most counter-terrorism activities to date have focused on individuals already on the highest floors of the staircase to terrorism.

In Chapter 7, Winnifred Louis draws on social psychological theories of decision making in conflict to explain the influence of valued norms and identities of groups one belongs to (“ingroups”) in shaping people's readiness to inflict harm on members of other groups (“outgroups”). Louis shows how normal social influence processes are instrumental in fostering terrorism. Beliefs about the utility of terror in righting wrongs committed against one's group in the perceived absence of viable alternative strategies, coupled with extreme hatred of an external aggressor, become socially learned and reinforced. From this perspective, terrorists' motives for violence are not personal, but are self-sacrificing and pro-social. The aim is to achieve long-term benefits for their communities. Louis argues that because beliefs about the utility of terrorism are socially learned and reinforced, they can potentially be unlearned, and the level of violence committed by individuals can be attenuated through the influence of non-terrorist constituents and leaders within the wider community that terrorists depend on for support. Conversely, indiscriminate broad retaliation for terrorist acts, and repression or torture of “suspects” from among the community's non-terrorist constituents, only serve to harden the beliefs in the utility and legitimacy of terrorism. Louis identifies stopping the spread of terrorist identity and norms as the key challenge in reducing terrorism risk. She concludes that for counter-terrorism to prevail, it is vital that terrorists be targeted and framed narrowly, and members of the terrorists' wider community be spared from reprisal, humiliation, torture, and collateral damage.

In Chapter 8, Tom Pyszczynski, Zachary Rothschild, Matt Motyl, and Abdolhossein Abdollahi use terror management theory (TMT)

to explain why the symbolic threat of humiliation and injustice is a major motivator for the development of terrorist groups, and results in the cycle of “righteous” destruction that characterizes terrorist and counter-terrorist violence. Expanding on the dynamics between ingroups and outgroups discussed by Moghaddam and Louis in the previous chapters, TMT posits that humans have a strong need to feel secure within a shared belief system of their respective cultural ingroup. This shared cultural worldview serves to protect the individual against the existential anxiety that stems from awareness of one’s own mortality. A challenge by alternative worldviews, such as the identity crisis experienced by those dwelling on the ground floor of Maghaddam’s staircase to terrorism, undermines one’s protective shield against existential anxiety. Strategies to reduce the anxiety associated with the threat posed by outgroup members typically involve derogating them or, in the extreme, attempting to annihilate them altogether. Experimental research on TMT has shown that when thoughts of death are salient, feelings of humiliation and injustice against one’s own group lead to increased preference for members of one’s own group, and increased hostile reactions toward outgroup members. Even individuals who are not the direct target of humiliation and injustice can be provoked to become more accepting of violent terrorist strategies by a strong empathic humiliation response with the plight of ingroup members who suffered torture and counter-terrorist violence. Terror management theory illuminates how perceived injustice and humiliation, whether symbolized in the degrading images of torture in Abu Ghraib or the humiliating images of the collapsing twin towers on 9/11, activate psychological processes that set in motion a perpetuating cycle of retaliatory violence. Fortunately, in the latter part of the chapter, Pyszczynski and his colleagues also offer a ray of hope. They present recent research that suggests that TMT offers mechanisms by which the impact of existential anxiety on fueling outgroup hostility can be attenuated or even reversed. While reminders of death or humiliation of members of one’s own group prompt hostilities toward outgroups, reminders of people’s shared compassionate values such as tolerance, love, acceptance, and their shared sense of humanity and the value of family, prompt an attenuation or reversal of the typical increase in hostility toward outgroup members evoked by mortality reminders.

In Chapter 9, Stephan Lewandowsky, Werner Stritzke, Klaus Oberauer, and Michael Morales turn to the interaction between media coverage and people’s information-processing capabilities in shaping attitudes and beliefs about the “War on Terror.” Lewandowsky and his colleagues report evidence on how basic psychological and cognitive

processes can make it difficult under certain conditions to disregard misinformation about the threat purportedly posed by weapons of mass destruction, even after the misinformation had been corrected or retracted in the media, and even if people acknowledge awareness of the retraction. The importance of understanding how people process and retain information from media reports about the threat of terrorism cannot be overstated. It is now well documented that the president of the United States, George W. Bush, and seven top officials of his administration, made more than 900 false statements in the two years following 9/11 about the threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s Iraq (Lewis and Reading-Smith, 2008). If one takes into account the estimated one million Iraqis killed since the start of the invasion in 2003 (Burnham *et al.*, 2006; Opinion Research Business, 2007, 2008), this amounts to over 1000 Iraqis killed per false statement. Lewandowsky and colleagues show that people are readily susceptible to the creation of false memories when information is repeatedly hinted at but never actually confirmed, and that people find it difficult to update their memories in the face of corrections or retractions. Their analyses suggest that skepticism toward politicians and the motives underlying the dissemination of information may buffer individuals against misinformation, whether released accidentally, or orchestrated in a campaign for political purposes to inflate the threat of terrorist attacks and thereby goad the public into supporting extreme counter-terrorist actions. It remains for future research to determine whether skepticism is sufficient to counter the known effects of fear and mortality salience, discussed by Pyszczynski and colleagues in the previous chapter, on increasing people’s support for counter-terrorist violence.

The role of the media

The media’s role in shaping the public’s perception of, and response to, terrorism and state-sponsored torture is examined in greater detail in the next four chapters of this volume.

In Chapter 10, John Tulloch, an expert in media studies, brings a unique perspective to his analysis of the role of iconic media images in mediating people’s experiences of the traumatic events surrounding contemporary terrorism and torture. His analytical vantage point is unique, because he not only brings his expertise in media analysis to the task, but also represents a voice from among the “non-combatant” victims of terrorist attacks; Tulloch was caught in the July 7, 2005 London train bombings, when Mohammad Sidique Khan exploded his suicide bomb three feet from where Tulloch was sitting in a carriage of

the Circle Line train at Edgware Road tube station. Tulloch provides a critical account of how different media outlets exploit the same iconic images of terror victims to support their particular political agendas. He also takes the reader on a thought-provoking journey of personal reflection on two contrasting media images of the terrorist who tried to kill him; one showing his assailant as a dedicated teacher “gently spoken, endlessly patient and hugely popular with children,” who was committed to helping disadvantaged youth in his community; the other showing the same man explaining in a videotaped statement (later broadcast by al-Jazeera) his rationale for why he was intent on killing Tulloch and the other passengers on that London underground train. Tulloch then draws a fascinating parallel between two types of media images of fear that were broadcast around the globe. One set of images portrayed the fear associated with the victims of the London train bombings; the other captured the fear experienced by torture victims held at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In the second half of the chapter, Tulloch contrasts different cartoon images and editorials used by different print media to promote opposite mediated experiences among their readers with respect to terror and torture events. Tulloch shows how cartoons and editorials were designed either as a systemic critique, to hold accountable those in government who championed war and torture as a way of dealing with terrorist atrocities, or as a rallying call to get behind the proponents of war and torture by deflecting public scrutiny away from the “monsters-in-chief” and onto a few “bad apples” at the bottom of the barrel.

In Chapter 11, Doris Graber, an eminent media scholar from the United States, and Gregory Holyk examine to what extent the news media are to blame for failing to arouse effective opposition to torture policies. To this end, Graber and Holyk conducted an analysis of news coverage of torture incidents in four countries that faced torture charges during the six-month period of the study (i.e., United States, Canada, Britain, and Israel). The authors show that news media often avoid the “torture” label and use euphemisms instead, such as “aggressive questioning” or “enhanced interrogation techniques.” Moreover, in the USA and Britain, there is a bias toward using these euphemisms when referring to torture committed by one’s own country, but labeling the same practices “torture” if committed by foreign countries. But even if torture is reported by the media, there is little evidence that this publicity is instrumental in reducing or ending torture. This may in part be due to a bias toward accepting official government denials over claims made by non-government sources that are harder to verify. Moreover, the journalistic mandate to cover both sides of the

story results in ambiguity for the readers who are presented with torture claims that are routinely denied by the accused government, or contextualized by arguments that excuse or justify the torture. The authors observe that this ambiguity in clearly identifying a villain in torture stories may diminish readers' inclination to condemn it or protest its use. There are also many pragmatic constraints (e.g., torture news is competing with many other newsworthy issues for coverage) on how news media can keep the issue of torture on the agenda of public debate and political action. The authors argue that, while news stories can alter the public policy landscape, their power to do so depends on the degree to which political leaders and interest groups simultaneously exert pressure. Taking into account the constraints under which news media do business, Graber and Holyk conclude their analysis by offering several recommendations that might make torture coverage during war-time a more effective tool in the fight to uphold international prohibitions on torture.

In Chapter 12, Rodney Tiffen, one of Australia's leading scholars of the media, complements the preceding chapter by focusing on the media coverage of the war itself, and on how the media respond to "our" atrocities committed in the "just cause" of fighting terrorism. Tiffen begins by drawing a historic parallel to the US public's ambivalent response to the infamous My Lai massacre, committed by American soldiers in the Vietnam War. He highlights the fusion of affective and cognitive dynamics that contribute to people's inclination to support war, even if that includes torture and atrocities committed by one's own side. These dynamics are governed by a few simple themes to help diffuse moral ambiguity; as Tiffen puts it: "we are right; our cause is just; our motives pure. The enemy is an inhuman, irrational aggressor. There is no choice; we must fight. We can win, and victory is worth the cost. Retreat is intolerable." Tiffen goes on to show how, when, and why news coverage tends to feed into this selective self-perception, thereby conforming to, rather than critically challenging, extreme government policies. Moreover, the enormous logistical difficulties and obstacles to journalistic access in reporting on war offer dominant sources control over managing the media, including great opportunities for orchestrating false information to vilify the enemy or cover up one's own atrocities. Tiffen also identifies what the conditions are that prompt more critical reporting by the media, but cautions that empathy with the victims of one's own atrocities introduces complexity and uncertainty, whereas news media seek simplicity and certainty. Tiffen argues that news media are a fallible source for learning of the true scale of civilian casualties and that much remains hidden from public awareness, especially

the misdeeds of troops against non-combatants. He concludes by highlighting the enormous obstacles facing journalists who often risk their lives to cover news in war-torn regions but comments that on those rare occasions when against considerable odds they succeed in exposing the truth obscured by the dominant moral imagery and government spin, the result can be politically explosive and help diffuse the terrorism–torture link.

Chapter 13 concludes the section on the role of the media in shaping people’s perceptions of terrorism and counter-terrorism. David Denemark is a political scientist who analyzes how voters’ utilization of mass media coverage of terrorism and national security issues influenced vote choice during the 2001 Australian federal election. This particular election offered a unique window of opportunity to study the link between media coverage, terrorist threat, and voting behavior, because it was called just three weeks after the 9/11 attacks, amidst national security sensibilities raised a month earlier by a high-profile asylum-seeker incident in international waters off Australia’s coastal borders. Drawing on the political science literature, Denemark explains that the media’s impact on voter decision making is constrained by predisposing factors such as voters’ political loyalties, interests, and awareness. Those with moderate levels of these predispositions are most affected by media cues. Denemark combines a content analysis of television news coverage from the five-week election campaign with data collected in the weeks after the election that focused on the factors figuring most prominently in the voters’ election-day decision making. He concludes that media-conveyed cues interacted with voters’ predisposition and the timing of their vote choice, such that overall they only affected a relatively small number of voters; but nonetheless, media cues about terrorism and national security played an essential role in winning crucial margins of swing votes for the incumbent government, which had aggressively worked to fuse the local national security issue of asylum seekers with the threat of terrorism symbolized by the still-fresh imagery of the 9/11 attacks.

Public reactions and political perspectives

Chapter 14 complements the preceding analysis of the effects of the 9/11 attacks on Australian citizens’ support for national security policies, by examining the political effects among the American public in the aftermath of 9/11. Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, and Erin Cassese use national survey data to explore whether feelings of anxiety undermined or enhanced support for the Bush administration’s

extreme foreign policy decisions. Their results indicate that the perceived national threat and perceived threat by Saddam Hussein were the most important factors in heightening support for overseas military actions and the approval of President Bush. However, to the extent that this threat was associated with heightened anxiety among respondents, there was less support for aggressive anti-terrorism measures, and greater disapproval of the government's performance. Anxiety was intensified by physical and social proximity to the 9/11 attacks and more pronounced in women. The authors conclude that a more differentiated analysis of fear and anxiety is required to disentangle the effects of general anxiety about war and terrorism and the effects of specific fears evoked by perceived threat of terrorist attacks.

At the beginning of this introductory chapter, we presented the reflections of a young soldier who was looking into Chomsky's mirror in an attempt to better understand how his own actions and those of his compatriots may have led their hapless civilian targets to sympathize with the terrorist cause. Similarly, in Chapter 15, Carmen Lawrence argues that looking in the mirror and reflecting on one's own impact on others, while simultaneously seeking to understand what motivates the "other," may be uncomfortable, but is essential for long-term conflict resolution. Lawrence draws on her two decades of experience as an elected representative in Australian state and federal parliaments, as well as on her training in academic psychology to reflect on the deep fears, perceived threats, and grievances that drive terrorist violence and counter-violence. She argues that to understand terrorism one must come to an understanding of how human beings arrive at a point where they can torture and kill one another without apparent regret. But Lawrence is also quick to point out that the very act of reflection is typically met with suspicion or outright suppression by the dominant political powers, who prefer to frame the conflict as a choice between "good" and "evil," where there are no shades of gray and one is either "with us or against us." This rigidity in avoiding contemplation that terrorist events are not simply "evil" but have knowable causes, Lawrence argues, is an opportunity lost. It silences those who are critical of actions taken or express empathy with the grievances and injustices that so often fuel the flames of fanatical violence and "righteous" counter-violence. Lawrence advocates careful and dispassionate analysis of the genesis and motivation of terrorist acts, which includes the courage temporarily to suspend assumptions about one's own group to gain insight into the worldview of those committing or inciting those acts.

An integrative framework for reducing terrorist risk

In the final chapter, crime researchers Joe Clare and Frank Morgan examine different models of risk-based criminal justice. Contrary to the popular assertion that we are living in a qualitatively different world in the post-9/11 era, Clare and Morgan show that prevalent anti-terrorism strategies represent largely an extension of existing trends toward applying actuarial justice rather than a radical new direction for the legal system. Actuarial justice involves an exclusionary style of risk management, which assumes that for some sections of the population traditional techniques of deterrence will not work. Such an approach defines terrorists as a dangerous “other” group that is “not like us and cannot become like us.” The authors identify flaws with this exclusionary style of justice, and – drawing on an analogy with public health – review several alternative models of risk-based justice that involve inclusionary risk management strategies to reduce terrorist risk at a population level. As an alternative to the actuarial approach to risk reduction, a range of jurisdictional and opportunity-based interventions are outlined that can effect a society-wide shift toward reduced terrorism risk. The chapter concludes by offering an interdisciplinary, integrative framework based on the range of academic perspectives presented within this volume, that integrates jurisdictional and opportunity-focused approaches. Based on this framework, Clare and Morgan argue that optimal outcomes for terrorist risk reduction are best achieved by (a) eschewing the idea that terrorism must by default be viewed as arising from outgroups for whom only exclusionary actuarial interventions will work; (b) considering that the overall degree of support for terrorism within society can be influenced through a range of psychological, sociological, and legal interventions; and (c) implementing situational strategies to reduce terrorist opportunity.

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2 Torture, terrorism, and the moral prohibition on killing non-combatants

Alex J. Bellamy

It is a curious fact that torture and terrorism tend to go hand in hand. When liberal states that would not normally use torture to extract information and confessions are confronted by terrorism, they are often tempted to use the very means that they would normally repudiate: examples include the UK in Northern Ireland, Spanish authorities in relation to the Basque separatist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Israel and its various terrorist foes, the French authorities in Algeria, and the USA and its allies in the so-called “War on Terror.” The reverse also seems true; namely, far from stemming the tide of terrorism, the use of torture as a counter-terrorism tool seems to fan the flames. British repression in Northern Ireland coincided with the expansion of the IRA and the increased lethality of its violence. Images of torture at Abu Ghraib in Iraq have helped al-Qaeda recruiters and encouraged the radicalization of Islamic communities in various parts of the world. It is no coincidence, for example, that one of the perpetrators of the failed 2007 bomb attacks on British airports was an Iraqi angered by what he perceived as the mistreatment of his people by the Western occupiers.

This chapter seeks to explore the question of why terrorism and torture appear to be linked. I begin by considering the strategic-imperative argument – the claim that torture is a sometimes unfortunate but necessary response to “ticking bomb” terrorists, a lesser-evil scenario where governments are forced to choose between the rights of the suspected terrorist and the right of those whose life would be preserved by extracting the necessary information. This argument is unconvincing, and cannot provide an adequate explanation of the apparent relationship between torture and terrorism. Instead, the remainder of the chapter puts forth an alternative explanation – that normally, acts of torture and terrorism are inhibited by the norm of non-combatant immunity – the idea that it is always wrong intentionally to harm non-combatants. Torture and terrorism are both morally distinctive and morally prohibited by the fact that both violate this norm. Indeed, where their commission

goes unpunished or is validated by a significant section of society, this has the effect of undermining the norm of non-combatant immunity, reducing the norm's ability to inhibit acts of torture and terrorism by making the killing and harming of non-combatants less morally problematic within a particular social context. The two types of violence are therefore often conterminous because the commission and validation of one type helps create a normative environment that makes it easier to justify the other type. If this is the case, the key to breaking the cycle lies in the reaffirmation of non-combatant immunity and arguments that insist upon its universal and absolute application.

Because discussion of torture and terrorism is nowadays so infused with political positioning, it is important at the outset to set out what this paper is *not* saying. I am not saying that torture *causes* terrorism, or vice versa. The causes of both are myriad, complex, and context specific. My argument is much more modest. It is simply that the commission and validation of one makes it easier to commit and validate the other, because it weakens the principal moral inhibitor of both – the norm of non-combatant immunity. This argument dovetails with Ronald V. Clarke's contribution to this volume, by suggesting that the normative prohibition on the killing of non-combatants serves as a form of "opportunity reduction," which can be eroded by the commission of either torture or terrorism.

The chapter proceeds in three parts. The first part considers a popular strategic argument for the correlation of torture and terrorism: the view that the former is a tragic but necessary response to the latter. Finding flaws with this account, the second part turns its attention to the norm of non-combatant immunity, and offers a moral defense of the norm and examines its salience. The third part sustains the argument that the primary moral characteristic of both torture and terrorism is that both violate non-combatant immunity by advocating the use of violence against non-combatants.

The strategic imperative?

Since September 11, 2001, popular discourse in the USA especially has become suffused with the idea that despite moral inhibitions about harming non-combatants, torturing terrorists is a necessary and legitimate means of extracting information vital for the protection of US citizens. Popular television programmes *24* and *Alias* frequently showed terror suspects being tortured by the "heroes." On at least one occasion on *Alias*, a CIA officer suffocates a terror suspect to death. In neither show are the perpetrators of torture brought to trial or condemned.

Once “off limits,” torture is now widely discussed and often considered a necessary response to terrorism in popular discourse (Press, 2003). By this view, the relationship between torture and terrorism is one where the latter makes the former tragically necessary.

Such ideas permeated political discourse in the USA. Commenting on the arrest of a senior al-Qaeda figure in late 2002, Senator Jay Rockefeller (Democrat, West Virginia), Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, told CNN that “I wouldn’t take anything off the table where he is concerned because this is a man who has killed hundreds and hundreds of Americans over the last ten years” (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 7). One anonymous defense official told the *Washington Post* “if you don’t violate someone’s human rights some of the time, you probably aren’t doing your job” (Staff writers, 2002). Another unnamed official told *Newsday* that in the case of one suspect rendered from Guantanamo to Egypt, “they promptly tore his fingernails out and he started telling things” (Press, 2003, p. 10). One circuit judge went as far as to insist that “if the stakes are high enough, torture is permissible. No one who doubts that this is the case should be in a position of responsibility” (Posner, 2002). Thus, the idea that torture is an unpleasant tool made tragically necessary and hence legitimate by terrorism is one that is widely held in both popular and political discourse in the USA.

Such arguments are hardly novel. The contemporary strategic case for torture draws directly from Bentham’s utilitarian defense and the findings of the “Landau Commission” (1987) in Israel. Moreover, even prior to the Algerian war, some writers in France had called for licensed torture as a response to terrorism (e.g., Lambert, 1945; Vidal-Naquet, 1963).

The most common defense of torture rests on act-utilitarianism. In short, the act-utilitarian case insists that torture is permissible when cost-benefit analysis reveals that more lives are likely to be saved by resorting to torture than by choosing not to do so (Haritos-Fatouros, 2003). To satisfy Bentham, a potential torturer must pass two tests. First, it must be clear that the *purpose* behind the mistreatment of prisoners is the acquisition of information likely to save civilians. As Bentham put it, “[f]or the purpose of rescuing from torture these hundred innocents, should any scruple be made of applying equal or superior torture, to extract the requisite information from the mouth of one criminal, who having it in his power to make known the place where at this time the enormity was practicing or about to be practiced, should refuse to do so?” (in Twining and Twining, 1973, p. 347).¹ Bentham clearly believed that in such cases the greater public good required that the prisoner be tortured. The second requirement is that the torturer be sure that the victim *has* the information needed to

save lives. No benefit is accrued by torturing those who do not have the requisite information. In short, for Bentham the torture of one guilty person for the purpose of saving more than one innocent person satisfies the cost–benefit ratio and is, therefore, justifiable.

The problem with Bentham's act-utilitarianism, even for those sympathetic to his case vis-à-vis torture, is the lack of guidelines for making these cost–benefit judgments. How many civilians need to be at risk to make torturing a suspect permissible? Simple cost–benefit analysis would put that figure at one or more, making torture permissible in a large number of cases. What level of proof is required that the victim holds the knowledge necessary to save lives? How does an authority employing the Benthamite system avoid the slippery slope that “once torture is permitted on grounds of necessity, nothing can stop it from being used on grounds of expediency”? (Rodley, 1987, p. 76). To overcome some of these problems, the prominent American lawyer Alan Dershowitz made a case legalizing torture with safeguards as a response to the threat of terrorism.

The role and nature of Dershowitz's safeguards derive almost entirely from the findings of Israel's Landau Commission (1987). The Landau Commission, named after its Chair, former Supreme Court President Moshe Landau, was created by the Israeli government in 1987 in response to mounting public concern about the treatment of prisoners by the Israeli security services caused by two cases in particular. In the so-called “No. 300 bus affair” Israeli authorities claimed that a group of terrorists who seized a bus were killed in the crossfire during its recapture by Israeli security forces. It was later reported that all the terrorists were alive when arrested and subsequently died in custody. In 1987, Izzat Nafsu appealed against his conviction for treason and espionage by arguing that his confession in the original trial had been coerced. The Supreme Court accepted his appeal and ordered his release. The Landau Commission was created in direct response to the Nafsu affair (Evans and Morgan, 1998).

The Landau Commission's findings were based on two assumptions. First, it accepted the argument that Israel confronted an ongoing emergency caused by Palestinian terrorism (Landau Commission, 1987). From this, the Commission concluded that the acquisition of information was vital to the defense of Israel and noted that such information was difficult to obtain. Second, the Commission accepted without further study the security services' claim that the use of aggressive measures was an effective means of extracting vital information. On several occasions it praised the security services, noting that it prevented “80–90 percent of terrorist” attacks, and observing that “the

overwhelming majority of those [suspected terrorists] tried were convicted on the basis of their confession alone.” The commission accepted the security services’ view that “effective interrogation of terrorist suspects is impossible without the use of means of pressure” (Landau Commission, 1987, paras. 2.16, 2.20, 2.28, 2.38, 4.6).

All this, the Commission found, created an intolerable dilemma for the security services. Charged with the task of protecting Israelis from terrorism and confronted with the fact that the only means of extracting the necessary information was legally prohibited, security personnel were forced into committing acts that they would later have to lie about. The Commission (1987, para. 4.3) presented three options for addressing this dilemma: first, retain the status quo and leave certain interrogation techniques “outside the realm of the law.” Second, claim to abide by the law but turn a blind eye to the use of torture – the hypocrite’s position (para. 4.4). The Commission rejected both these positions on the grounds that they were legally dishonest and did not resolve the moral dilemma confronting the security services. The third, and preferred, option it described as “the truthful road,” and involved creating legal paths for the legitimation of torture (para. 4.5). This entailed legalizing the methods already used by the security services, which were not publicized because it was argued that publication of torture methods would allow enemies to train in counter-measures, making the techniques ineffective (para. 4.5).²

The Landau Commission’s advice on the use of torture was predicated on the hypothetical “ticking bomb” terrorist. The scenario, oft-repeated, is as follows: a bomb has been planted that is likely to kill large numbers of non-combatants (in one series of the television show *24*, the bomb was nuclear). At the same time, the security services have apprehended a suspect whom they believe knows the whereabouts of the bomb but is refusing to talk. It is worth quoting the Commission (1987) at length on this point, as it is pivotal to both its, and Dershowitz’s, case:

The deciding factor is not the element of time, but the comparison between the gravity of the two evils – the evil of contravening the law [prohibiting torture] as opposed to the evil that will occur sooner or later ... To put it bluntly, the alternative is: are we to accept the offense of assault entailed in slapping a suspect’s face, or threatening him, in order to induce him to talk and reveal a cache of explosive materials meant for use in carrying out an act of mass terror against a civilian population, and thereby prevent the greater evil which is about to occur? The answer is self-evident. (para. 3.15)

Of course the answer is self-evident, because the assumptions underlying the hypothetical case prejudge the outcome. This will be

discussed further. When applying the “lesser evil” test, the Commission found that the salient fact was not the *actual* evil threatened, but the evil that the relevant actor reasonably *believes* is imminent (Landau Commission, 1987, para. 3.16). One final point we should notice in the above statement is the slippage between the background assumptions (a bomb has been planted and may go off at any time) and the Commission’s judgment (locating an arms cache is sufficient justification). In the first scenario, the tortured suspect has a measure of control over a direct threat to non-combatants that has not diminished owing to his incarceration. The extraction of information from this suspect is *necessary* to remove the threat. In the second scenario, the extraction of information about the location of weapons caches is *expedient* but not necessary to the prevention of a specific threat. The undermining of non-combatant immunity has already begun and the number of cases in which the norm might be violated enlarged.

What types of torture are permitted? As I noted earlier, the Commission did not specify which techniques might be used in its unclassified report. However, it outlined three important limits necessary to protect the rights of the citizen and the beneficent “image” of the state. First, a tentative gesture towards chivalry: torture must not cause grievous harm to the suspect’s honor or deprive him of human dignity. Second, torture must not be disproportionate: the seriousness of the measures should be weighed against the potential threat that the interrogator is attempting to prevent. Third, the means of torture should be carefully controlled and limited to techniques designed not to cause lasting harm (Landau Commission, 1987, para. 3.16). Nevertheless, even in this regulated environment we are talking about the infliction of serious harm to non-combatants.

The Israeli government did not formally act on the Commission’s recommendations. However, in the mid 1990s, a series of suicide bomb attacks that accompanied the collapse of the Rabin–Arafat peace process prompted attempts in the *Knesset* to rewrite Israel’s penal code to incorporate the Commission’s recommendations (Evans and Morgan, 1998). Moreover, Evans and Morgan argue that not only is there evidence that the measures endorsed by the Landau Commission (and others besides) were used by Israel’s security services, their use was officially sanctioned. It could be argued, therefore, that the Commission’s findings were informally put into practice by Israel.

The Landau Commission’s (1987) findings are important because they form the centerpiece – sometimes consciously (Dershowitz, 2002), sometimes not (Allhoff, 2003; Levinson, 2003) – of the strategic claim that torture is made necessary by terrorism. Alan Dershowitz puts

forward the most sustained defense. After noting the legal prohibition of torture, he begins his case by noting that “the tragic reality is that torture sometimes works, much though many people wish it did not” (Dershowitz, 2002, p. 137). To support his claim, Dershowitz points to the foiling of a 1995 plot to crash eleven commercial aircraft simultaneously over the Pacific and crash a Cessna filled with explosives into the CIA’s headquarters. According to Dershowitz, the Philippines police arrested and tortured a suspect (breaking most of his ribs in the process) for over sixty-seven days until he divulged the information necessary to foil the plot. It is precisely because torture sometimes works that states around the world continue to use it, he contends.

Despite his avowed intellectual debt to Bentham, Dershowitz is not an act-utilitarian. He insists that there are basic human rights and that the costs of breaching them are high. Nevertheless, political leaders have a responsibility to get “dirty hands” and pay the costs of rule-breaking in order to save civilian lives. To balance these two sets of obligations, Dershowitz follows Bentham and the Landau Commission in predicating his case for legalized torture on the hypothetical “ticking bomb terrorist.” In contrast to earlier writers, Dershowitz expands his argument to suggest that if torture can be justified in “ticking bomb” cases, why not in other cases where judicial authorities issue “torture warrants”? Similarly, Allhoff (2003) argues that the criterion should not be a ticking bomb but the prevention of future threats.

The case for torture warrants is based on the observation that in liberal societies like the USA there are three fundamental value sets at stake: (1) the safety and security of the nation’s citizens, (2) the preservation of individual human rights, and (3) democratic openness and accountability. Legitimate governments simply cannot breach the first set of values (1). The *Just War* tradition permits the use of violence – and hence the breach of human rights – against enemies in just wars. Thus, according to Dershowitz, only pacifists can complain about the violation of enemy combatants’ human rights (2). Torturing an enemy combatant to acquire information that will save lives is no different from killing him in battle to accomplish the same thing.³ According to the *Just War* tradition, combatants lose their right not to be attacked when they obtain their right to use force against enemy combatants (Walzer, 1977). Maintaining the hypocrisy of practicing torture but keeping it “off the books” by either denying its existence or placing it above the law, violates both values (2) and (3). The breach of value (3) is particularly problematic for Dershowitz because public justification and scrutiny are crucial to deciding whether or not particular acts should be committed. Moreover, by removing judicial oversight, all three of the

approaches outlined by the Landau Commission fail because criminals cannot be convicted if their means of interrogation cannot be disclosed and scrutinized in court.

Dershowitz therefore proposes a change in the law to permit judicial authorities to issue “torture warrants.” Being open about the use of torture would permit both judicial oversight and public discussion about the appropriate balance to be struck between the three sets of values. Under Dershowitz’s system, law enforcement agencies would need to apply to judicial authorities for torture warrants, and must demonstrate what they plan to do, when, and the necessity of torture. Judges would decide the merits of the case and rule accordingly. In all cases, complete records would be kept. The system would contain restrictions on who could be tortured (Dershowitz bases his claim on the ticking bomb case but insists that judges be free to determine each case on its merits and that satisfactory necessity arguments may also be leveled in non-ticking-bomb cases) and what methods could be used (Dershowitz rules out potentially lethal measures and measures that could cause permanent physical or psychological damage. He identifies two particular methods that cause excruciating pain without lasting damage: injecting air below the fingernails and drilling teeth without anesthetic). This system, Dershowitz argues, would permit law enforcement agencies to use measures to extract vital life-saving information from terrorist suspects, whilst guarding against potential abuse. Bringing torture into the open would make it more humane and afford greater protection to its victims.

Viewed this way, the use of torture is a tragically necessary response to terrorism that can be controlled and regulated. There are, however, some significant problems with this line of reasoning. Most importantly, the underlying strategic assumption that governments use torture to respond to terrorism because it is an effective measure to protect endangered civilians cannot be substantiated.

Dershowitz’s belief in the utility of torture comes from two sources: the Landau Commission’s findings, and a 1995 case in which torture was used ostensibly to foil a massive terrorist attack over the Pacific. The Landau Commission, however, did not itself investigate the utility of torture and simply accepted the Israeli security services’ insistence that torture was effective in certain circumstances (Evans and Morgan, 1998). On the Philippines case, Dershowitz (2002) cites a *Washington Post* report to support his case that the Philippines government tortured a suspected terrorist until he revealed details of a plot to blow up eleven aircraft simultaneously over the Pacific. What is in doubt is not that the Philippines tortured a suspect, or that they uncovered a plot,

but that the use of torture prevented the plot from being actualized. Other reports at the time suggest that it was the discovery of documents at the suspect's home following a fire there that tipped police off. Given that it took sixty-seven days of torture to extract the information it seems highly unlikely that torture would have prevented the plot had the threat been imminent (Murphy, 2002; Center for Cooperative Research, 2005).

Other writers point to alternative sources to support the claim that torture is a strategically effective response to terrorism. Stanford Levinson (2003), for instance, points to an Israeli Supreme Court verdict and a review article on the French experience in Algeria to support the general claim that torture works. This claim is equally questionable.⁴ Indeed, it was later disputed by General Massu, the commander of French forces in the "battle of Algiers" who in the 1970s defended the widespread use of torture. According to Massu, in 1992, torture served no "necessary or useful purpose" in combating terrorists in Algeria (MacMaster, 2002). Indeed, France ultimately lost the Algerian war. This has led others to argue that although the use of torture may have delivered some short-term tactical advantages, in the longer term it had at least two consequences that worsened France's predicament. First, the use of torture helped France lose the battle for hearts and minds. On the one hand, it contradicted the humanistic and civilizing mission used to justify French rule in Algeria, undermining the French claim to legitimacy there. On the other hand, it created a powerful reaction amongst Algerians and helped strengthen the nationalists, contributing significantly to France's ultimate defeat (Roy, 1972). Second, the widespread use of torture contributed to the general brutalization of Algerian society by encouraging White settlers to pursue their aims through force of arms, creating martyrs among the nationalists, and facilitating a normative context that enabled the nationalist rebels to employ similarly brutal techniques against their enemies (see Bollardi re 1972; Roy, 1972; also see the chapters by Saul and Louis, this volume).

There are other good reasons to doubt the claim that torture is an effective means of combating terrorism. Not least, there is no consensus about this even within the US security services. The view presented in Dershowitz's argument strongly implies a consensus amongst security agencies about the utility of torture. In fact, there were sharp disagreements amongst interrogators in the USA. One former FBI counter-terrorist interrogator was quoted as arguing that interrogating, for instance, a naked Muslim fundamentalist, was difficult because "he's going to be ashamed, and humiliated, and cold. He'll tell you anything you want to hear to get his clothes back. There's no value in

it” (Mayer, 2005, p. 3). The problems appear to be two-fold. On the one hand, it is important to distinguish between confessions and life-saving intelligence. Whilst torture is effective at extracting the former, there are doubts about its ability to do the latter. There are now numerous cases of terror suspects giving false confessions under torture. The former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, reported that the Uzbek authorities used torture (such as partial boiling) to extract information from suspected terrorists, which would then be passed on to the USA and UK. Murray insisted that “this material is useless. We are selling our souls for dross. Tortured dupes are forced to sign confessions showing what the Uzbek government wants the US and UK to believe – that they and we are fighting the same war on terror” (Gedye, 2004).⁵ In another case, three British suspects confessed under torture to having been trained at al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. British intelligence, however, produced conclusive evidence that the three were actually in Britain at the time that they were supposed to have been in Afghanistan (Rose, 2004). As is well documented in the literature on torture, life-saving intelligence is usually extracted in the first hours after a suspect is apprehended. Once a suspect’s incarceration becomes known to the terrorist organization, the organization tends to change its plans. The longer the suspect is held, the less vital any information he could offer becomes. After a few days, the suspect is unable to offer anything useful about ongoing operations: that is, he cannot provide militarily *necessary* information, only *expedient* information.⁶

My point in all of this is that the strategic argument alone cannot explain why torture and terrorism seem to go hand in hand. I have focused on only one set of arguments, that torture is not, in fact, a particularly useful tactic for dealing with terrorism. There are innumerable other problems and avenues. For instance, what of cases where torture precedes the use of terrorism, as in the case of Tsarist Russia or, arguably, Cold War Latin America? If it is not the hard realities of strategic necessity that explain the relationship between torture and terrorism, perhaps a better alternative is to investigate their moral quality. It is my contention that, morally speaking, torture and terrorism share something important in common – they both violate the important norm of non-combatant immunity.

Non-combatant immunity

According to Jonathan Symons (2007), legitimacy concerns affect human behavior through a variety of mechanisms along a continuum. At one end of the scale is individual propriety – actors act in certain

ways because of their internal beliefs about appropriate behavior. At the other end is social validity – actors behave in certain ways because of collective expectations about what is appropriate for actors with particular identities to do.⁷ It is my argument in this section that the norm of non-combatant immunity is so significant because it is situated in both individual propriety (through most major moral codes) and social validity (through collective legal agreements). In short, moral codes and collective agreements impose a complete ban on the direct intentional targeting of non-combatants. Under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the leaders of almost 100 states (not including the USA) would face criminal charges if they ordered the direct targeting of non-combatants, for whatever reason (see Bellamy and Hanson, 2002).

The idea that non-combatants should be immune from direct harm is one of the fundamental elements of the “war convention,” however conceived. Sun Tzu, the renowned Chinese strategist of the fifth century, insisted that armies should treat prisoners and non-combatants with respect (Sun Tzu, 1963). The ancient Hindu, Egyptian, and Hebrew civilizations all produced customs related to the humane treatment of prisoners and non-combatants in war-time (Christopher, 1994). In the Western tradition, Plato insisted that armies refrain from burning habitation and should only kill those who are directly foes, and not all the men, women, and children of the enemy state (Plato, 1998). Although Augustine was ambivalent about the treatment of non-combatants (Hartigan, 1966), virtually every other key member of the *Just War* tradition forbade the direct killing of non-combatants. Medieval canon law prohibited the use of force against certain classes of people who performed important peace-time roles and played no role in hostilities (clerics, farmers, merchants), while the chivalric tradition forbade violence against the weak (see Barber, 1974; Kaeuper, 1999; Keen, 1965; Russell, 1975).

The principle of non-combatant immunity is arguably the most clearly understood and widely accepted element of the contemporary laws of war. The idea is enshrined in all four of the Geneva Conventions concluded on August 12, 1949. The central concern of all four Conventions was the protection of the victims of war. Many of the specific articles were derived from proposals formulated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) between 1945 and 1948. Because of the large number of signatories, these Conventions are assumed to hold the status of customary international law – a point recognised by the UN Secretary-General in 1993. The Conventions were also embodied in the founding statutes of the criminal tribunals

for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, whose statute also confirmed that they formed part of customary law (see Bass, 2000). Crucially, common Article 3 of the Conventions, which clearly sets out the rule of non-combatant immunity, is a peremptory rule of war. It demands that “Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms, and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth, or wealth.” According to Colm McKeogh (2002), the ethical and legal principle of non-combatant immunity is important for at least seven reasons. First, non-combatants have committed no proven wrong unless they are convicted by properly convened tribunals, and therefore they may not have war waged upon them. Second, non-combatants are not participating in the fighting. Third, developed from the chivalric tradition of the Middle Ages, non-combatants are unable to defend themselves. Fourth, killing non-combatants is militarily unnecessary. Fifth, maintaining non-combatant immunity reduces the casualties of war, a particularly pertinent question in the contemporary era where many more non-combatants than combatants die in war. Sixth, sparing women and children – and we may add those that perform essential peace-time services, such as farmers – is important for species survival. Seventh, killing non-combatants is contrary to the “war convention,” however understood (McKeogh, 2002).

It is not important to labor this point. Suffice it to say that there is a generalized norm of non-combatant immunity that prohibits the deliberate harming of non-combatants and that this norm is embedded in both moral codes and shared agreements. The key issue now is whether by their very nature torture and terrorism violate this norm.

The twin ills of torture and terrorism

This section advances the claim that the principal moral character of both torture and terrorism is that they involve harming non-combatants and therefore violate the principle of non-combatant immunity.

Torture

Why is torture wrong? Torture is expressly prohibited in an extensive range of human rights conventions and is widely considered a “crime against humanity” (see Setunga and Cheeseman, 2001). Almost all of the world’s states are party to one or more conventions forbidding

torture (Rodley, 1987). Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) declares that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” As we noted earlier, Common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions insists that all those not taking an active role in hostilities be treated humanely (see Pictet, 1960). The article goes on specifically to prohibit “violence to life and person, in particular, murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture” and “outrages upon personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment of any kind.” Both torture and cruel and inhumane treatment were expressly forbidden in the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted in 1984 (it came into force in 1987) and to which the USA is a signatory. Torture is also prohibited by regional human rights treaties such as the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987, entered into force 1989), the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1969), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), and the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture (1985). Torture is also prohibited in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, entered into force in 1976), the Genocide Convention (1948), the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery (1956), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973).

The legal prohibition of torture is widely understood as a peremptory rule, as derogation is considered impermissible. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) insists that no derogation from the prohibition on torture is possible even in times of “public emergency which threatens the life of the nation” (Article 4). Both the European and American Conventions on Human Rights prohibit derogation even in times of war and public emergency, and even when those emergencies threaten the survival of the state (Common Article 15). The idea that the ban on torture is a peremptory rule is also commonly accepted amongst legal practitioners.⁸ Thus, as the Red Cross insisted in its commentary on the 1949 Convention: “no possible loophole is left; there can be no excuse, no attenuating circumstances” in which torture may be permitted (Pictet, 1960, p. 39). Finally, in the General Assembly debates that preceded its Declaration against Torture in 1975, no state defended the use of torture – though interestingly, as Sweden pointed out, no state denied its existence either (Rodley, 1987).

The key legal question in relation to torture is therefore not so much whether it is legal – there is an overwhelming consensus that it is not – but whether specific acts that stop short of causing life-threatening pain, such as sensory deprivation and placing people in so-called “stress positions,” are properly defined as torture. This is important for our purposes, because if they are not properly called torture, it suggests that some coercive measures might be used against prisoners without violating and potentially undermining non-combatant immunity. The UN Convention (1984) mentioned above defines torture as:

Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. (Article 1)

In order to justify its use of forceful interrogation techniques in the War on Terror, the US Defense Department has adopted two legal strategies to get around the prohibition on torture. The first has been to argue that the President’s authority to manage military operations is uninhibited by international law or that individual interrogators who use torture may not be violating the prohibition because theirs is an act of national self-defense.⁹ The second strategy has been to offer a very narrow interpretation about what counts as torture. A US Defense Department memorandum leaked to the media argued that the administration of drugs to detainees would only violate the prohibition of torture if its administration was calculated to produce “an extreme effect” (Lewis, 2004, p. 2). Similarly, a US Justice Department memorandum written by the Assistant Attorney-General, Jay Bybee, insisted that to count as torture, a prisoner’s treatment must inflict more than just moderate or fleeting pain. According to Bybee, “torture must be equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death” (Lewis, 2004, p. 2).

The USA is not the first Western state to insist that its interrogation techniques fall short of torture. Before the UN Convention came into force, both France and the UK made similar claims. In both cases, however, judicial authorities either rejected the claim or found that the use of measures deemed “short of torture” was also prohibited because these measures were “degrading and inhumane.” In the

1950s, France believed that it confronted an entirely new form of warfare in Algeria. The French police and army believed that traditional war fighting methods could not prevail against such an enemy and that unconventional methods such as torture were required (Paret, 1964). Although it was first used only in exceptional cases, the French tortured Algerians on an increasingly regular basis until it became a normal part of interrogation (see below). In 1955, the government responded to public outcries in France about the use of torture and commissioned Roger Wullaume to conduct an investigation. Much like Dershowitz today, the Wullaume report called for the “veil of hypocrisy” to be lifted and for “safe and controlled” interrogation techniques to be authorized (in Vidal-Naquet, 1963, pp. 50–51). Permissible methods could include the use of electric shocks and the so-called “water technique” – holding the victim’s head under water until he or she nearly drowns. According to Wullaume, such techniques were “not quite torture.” He found that “the water and electricity methods, provided they are carefully used, are said to produce a shock which is more psychological than physical and therefore do not constitute excessive cruelty” (Vidal-Naquet, 1963, pp. 50–51). In 2002, however, one of the key perpetrators and advocates of torture in Algeria, Paul Aussaresses, was found guilty of being an “apologist for war crimes.” Whilst his punishment was minor (a mere €7500 fine), the judgment was crucial because the Court in effect rejected Wullaume’s argument and found that the interrogation techniques used by the French in Algeria constituted “war crimes” (MacMaster, 2004).

In 1971 the Compton Committee was established to investigate claims that British authorities in Northern Ireland had tortured and abused suspected IRA terrorists (Compton Committee, 1971). The committee investigated allegations relating to forty prisoners who were subjected to one or more of five methods of treatment: (1) heads covered with a black hood except when interrogated alone; (2) continual monotonous noise; (3) sleep deprivation; (4) diet of bread and water; and (5) forced stress-positions (O’Boyle, 1977). Much like the Wullaume report, the Compton Committee concluded that although the five techniques constituted “ill-treatment,” they did not equate to “physical brutality” because the interrogators did not take pleasure from inflicting pain, and ill-treatment was only used for the purpose of extracting information (see Brownlie, 1972; Conroy, 2000). Because of widespread disappointment with these findings, a second enquiry was established. The ensuing “Parker report” went even further than Compton, and defended the five techniques on the grounds that they were not excessive, IRA terrorism created a public emergency, and the techniques

produced valuable intelligence that saved innocent lives (see Lowry, 1972; O'Boyle, 1977). The Republic of Ireland then took up the case in the European Commission on Human Rights. The Commission explored three illustrative cases and found that although, individually, each of the techniques did not constitute torture or degrading treatment, taken together they amounted to "a modern system of torture falling into the same category as those systems which had been applied in previous times as a means of obtaining information and confessions" (O'Boyle, 1977, p. 902). The European Court of Human Rights overturned the decision on technical grounds. Nevertheless, in 1979 the UK forbade use of the techniques (Evans and Morgan, 1998).

In both the French and British cases, the claim that certain techniques were permissible because they did not constitute torture was rejected either on the grounds that they *were* torture, or that regardless of whether or not they were, they *did* constitute "cruel and degrading" treatment, which was also forbidden. The point here is that the contemporary claim that certain acts designed to cause physical and/or mental pain for the purpose of extracting information do not constitute torture – and therefore do not undermine the norm of non-combatant immunity – has been articulated before and been found wanting (for more on the manipulative use of legal arguments, see Saul's contribution to this volume).

Not only is torture considered legally wrong, there is also a broad consensus (though not unanimity) that it is morally wrong, primarily because it involves non-combatants. As David Sussman (2005) put it, since the Enlightenment at least, "[t]here has been a broad and confident consensus that torture is uniquely 'barbaric' and 'inhuman': the most profound violation possible of the dignity of a human being. In philosophical and political discussions, torture is commonly offered as one of the few unproblematic examples of a type of act that is morally impermissible without exception or qualification" (p. 2). But what is it about torture, as opposed to simply killing someone in war, that makes it so wrong? Typically, four types of argument are leveled, which all revolve around the prohibition of committing harms against non-combatants. Sussman himself argues that torture is uniquely wrong because its ultimate goal is to force its victim into colluding against himself. The victim thus simultaneously experiences powerlessness yet is forced to be "actively complicit in his own violation" (Sussman 2005, p. 4). This is wrong, Sussman argues, because it not only violates its victim's agency and autonomy but actively perverts it.

The second type of moral argument against torture is the direct claim that it involves the use of violence against defenseless people and

therefore violates the principle of non-combatant immunity (Shue, 1978). In principle, as Henry Shue argues, torture could be justified in precisely the same way as other forms of political violence. Commonly this involves one of two approaches. The first, popular among secular theorists, is the individual self-defense analogy: an individual is entitled to defend herself from unjust attack, even to the point of killing her assailant, so long as the killing is necessary and proportionate. Extrapolated upwards, political communities – which are amalgams of individuals – logically enjoy a collective right of self-defense.¹⁰ Second, one of the basic ideas of the *Just War* tradition is that killing is justified for the common good so long as it is conducted with right intentions. That is, the killer must kill out of love of the enemy and a desire to preserve the peace, not out of feelings of hatred or envy. According to Shue, these types of argument could be used to justify torture in cases where the victim holds information that could save civilian lives. There is, however, one critical difference between torture and killing in the two circumstances identified above: unlike a soldier on a battlefield, the victim of torture does not pose a threat to the torturer. In other words, once someone is captured they cease being a combatant and become a non-combatant and therefore inviolable (Shue, 1978). Of course, there is the issue of the “ticking bomb” terrorist. In those cases where a bomb has been planted and the interrogator believes that the terrorist knows its location but is refusing to divulge that information, the terrorist cannot be properly considered a non-combatant (Shue, 1978). This is a dangerous idea, however, because it could logically be expanded to cover soldiers taken captive during an ongoing operation. As the soldier would undoubtedly have knowledge about the ongoing operation that could save lives, he could plausibly be labeled a combatant for the duration of the operation and tortured.

The third type of moral argument is deontological. This position holds that torture is wrong because it violates fundamental principles of humanity. For some, torture is an affront to the most basic of human rights that derive from a person’s very humanity. As Joel Feinberg (1973) put it, “there is ... no objection in principle to the idea of human rights that are absolute in the sense of being categorically exceptionless. The most plausible candidates, like the right not to be tortured, will be passive negative rights, that is, rights not to be done to by others in certain ways” (p. 88).

The fourth moral argument against torture is a rule-utilitarian argument that emphasizes the role of reciprocity and importance of moral consistency. Rule-utilitarians argue that the greatest good is achieved by observing a rule prohibiting torture. There are at least two good

reasons to suppose this. First, the historical record demonstrates that torture is used for pernicious reasons far more often than not. It is most frequently used to silence government opponents. The prohibition of torture is therefore central for the preservation of democracy and liberal government. Second, the principle of reciprocity means that we all benefit from a rule prohibiting others from potentially torturing us at some time in the future. If an enemy can be tortured to provide life-saving information, then surely we must admit that our own soldiers, if captured, could also be tortured in order to save the lives of our enemies. Rule-utilitarians argue that the greatest good is achieved by maintaining the general prohibition on torture (see Saul, this volume).¹¹

There is therefore a clear consensus between law and morality that torture and other forms of cruel and degrading treatment against prisoners are wrong primarily because they involve the deliberate harming of non-combatants. Although loopholes may be found in individual treaties, customs or philosophical arguments, taken together these arguments constitute a powerful case about the moral nature of torture. That this is so is also reflected in the fact that very few political actors are willing publicly to defend the use of torture. Unfortunately, torture is a moral anomaly in that whilst few if any are prepared to defend it publicly, many states either use it as a matter of course in their criminal investigations or are prepared to use it in emergencies. This creates the moral paradox whereby, on the one hand, the USA and some of its allies are evidently engaged in the systematic and widespread use of torture, but on the other hand the US administration is unwilling publicly to defend itself and has even gone on record condemning the use of torture in states like Syria and Egypt that it has, nevertheless, “rendered” terror suspects to. In popular discourse torture is often depicted in the USA as a legitimate tool in the War on Terror, prompting calls from some writers to replace the hypocrisy described above with a transparent system of legalized torture. Just as significantly, however, the gap between morality and behavior means that the norm of non-combatant immunity is less strong in practice than the moral and legal consensus that surrounds it implies. It is this weakness that is exploited by terrorists, who use violence against non-combatants to further their political causes.

Terrorism

Although the term terrorism is frequently used, there is little agreement about its definition or moral distinctiveness. Even the mood of consensus that swept international society after September 11 did not

produce agreement about what terrorism was. Jeremy Greenstock, chair of the UN Security Council's committee on terrorism, conceded that "it might be easier to define terrorist acts than terrorism generally" (Abi-Hashem, 2004, p. 71). As pure description, the cliché that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter is apt. In the late 1980s, the Reagan administration insisted that the Nicaraguan Contras were freedom fighters combating Communism. Gerald Kaufman, the British Labour Party's Foreign Affairs spokesman, disagreed. Pointing to the Contras' many atrocities against non-combatants, Kaufman labeled them terrorists (Jenkins, 2003). The cliché does not get us very far toward a moral understanding of terrorism but is a useful starting point for it reminds us that "terrorism" is not a purely descriptive term. As Martha Crenshaw (2003) put it, "when people choose to call the actions of others 'terrorist' or to label others as 'terrorists,' this choice often has a prescriptive policy relevance as well as a moral connotation" (p. 11).

Our starting point for a moral definition of terrorism should be the everyday usage of the word. In common usage today, "terrorism" is a label one attaches to particular acts of political violence to delegitimize them. The question then is what is it that makes terrorism immoral? Most definitions of terrorism point to one or more of four characteristics:

- (1) Terrorism is politically motivated violence (Anderson and Sloan, 1995).
- (2) It is conducted by non-state actors (Tilly, 2002).
- (3) It intentionally targets non-combatants (Weiss, 2002).
- (4) It achieves its aims by creating fear within societies (Goodin, 2006).

Not all of these characteristics are morally reprehensible and not all acts or campaigns commonly labeled "terrorist" reflect all these elements. To build a moral definition of terrorism, we need to ascertain which of these characteristics are unjust and why.

The idea that terrorism is *politically motivated* violence distinguishes it from criminal violence and violence caused by mental illness. In the 1960s and 1970s, the latter two types of violence were often considered core categories of terrorism. But there are at least two problems with this view. First, psychological studies suggest that most convicted terrorists are not mentally ill (Silke, 2003; Louis, this volume). Second, neither lone mentally ill terrorists nor groups that use terrorism for criminal purposes raise serious moral dilemmas. They are either simply mentally ill or criminal: they make no claims on our understanding of the legitimacy of violence. Therefore, most contemporary writers

associate terrorism with political violence. However, identifying terrorism as politically motivated violence does not help us explain why it is so morally problematic, because there are many different forms of political violence.

The second element of many definitions of terrorism, especially favored among governments, is that it is conducted by *non-state actors*. The 1937 Convention on Terrorism defined terrorism as violence against the state. Some US government agencies continue to regard terrorists as non-state actors and this view is widespread in the literature (e.g., Whittaker, 2002). This attitude is based on the widespread presumption that the sovereign state is the only authority capable of authorizing legitimate political violence. Indeed, this presumption was embedded in the laws of war, which did not, until 1977, grant rights to “irregular” combatants. The claim that terrorism is something waged by non-state actors therefore appears to render it a priori morally problematic.

However, there are at least two possible ways of justifying the use of force by non-state actors. First, many actors have recognized a right for citizens or subjects to rebel against oppressive governments and the liberal idea that sovereignty is bestowed not by God but by the will of the people has found its way into positive international law. If that is the case, a people must have the right to use political violence in order to overthrow an oppressive government (Mill, 1867). In the twentieth century, these ideas prompted positive international law to take an ambiguous position on the question of whether peoples had a legal right to revolt against oppressive rulers. Second, it is widely recognized that the use of force by non-state actors may be justified in cases where the sovereign state has either dissolved (as in Somalia and Yugoslavia in the 1990s) or has been unjustly overrun by a foreign power (war-time France). It is not therefore the fact that terrorists can be defined as non-state actors that provides the basis for a moral definition, for there are many cases of non-state actors using force legitimately.

It is the third element of most definitions of terrorism that renders it unjust: the intentional targeting of non-combatants. Any act of war that intends to kill non-combatants or that uses non-combatants as a means to an end is immoral. There are a number of compelling moral, prudential, and legal arguments to support an absolutist position on the principle of non-combatant immunity, which I outlined in the previous section. In short, we believe terrorism to be wrong because it entails deliberately killing those who ought not to be killed (Coady, 2002).

The final element common to many definitions of terrorism is its ambition to spread fear. The aim is to create a general context of societal

fear that will coerce those in authority to accede to the terrorists' demands. It is the spread of fear, Elshtain (2003) argues, that makes terrorism particularly dangerous because "none of the goods human beings cherish – including politics itself – can flourish absent a measure of civic peace and security" (p. 264). Likewise, Robert Goodin (2006) insists that the use of violence to create fear for political purposes is terrorism's distinctive feature. There are two principal reasons why this makes terrorism immoral. First, it breaches the Kantian injunction that humans should not be used as means. Second, it threatens the welfare of civil society as a whole and therefore indirectly breaches the discrimination principle.

However, it would be perverse to suggest that pursuing policy change through the *threat* of violence was less justifiable than actually using violence. States often employ "coercive diplomacy," using the threat of force to persuade others to change their course of action. The consequences that Elshtain (2003) mentions above may also be foreseen consequences of justifiable wars. Furthermore, it is not at all clear that all terrorist organizations use violence to create generalized fear as Goodin (2006) suggests. Some target specific individuals whilst some others pursue more genocidal agendas. The spread of fear is pernicious only to the extent that it is a consequence of an unjust war or the intentional targeting of non-combatants.

There are, of course, those who would argue that even terrorism defined this way could be justified, and terrorist organizations themselves do so. My point here is that one can only proffer moral justifications of terrorism by negating the norm of non-combatant immunity, thereby contributing to a normative environment that makes it easier for the terrorists' opponents to justify the use of torture.

Conclusion

The main thesis of this chapter is that torture and terrorism feed off one another because each violates the norm of non-combatant immunity. Where such violations are validated within a particular social context, the ability of non-combatant immunity to inhibit norm-violating behavior is diminished. This creates a normative environment that is less hostile to the commission of both torture and terrorism. Obviously, this chapter offers only the first tentative steps in this direction by developing the argument that the morally significant component of both torture and terrorism is their proclivity to harm individuals who, according to moral codes and positive law, ought not to be harmed. If this is the case, it stands to reason that the validation of one within

any given context facilitates justification of the other. To return to the question posed at the outset, the argument offered here provides a normative explanation as to why torture and terrorism are so often conterminous. If this line of argument is plausible, then two further lines of analysis and investigation are required. First, we need detailed empirical studies of cases where terrorism and torture are conterminous in order to understand whether the two are related in practice. We also need to explore cases where there is one but not the other. Second, if more detailed empirical enquiry suggests that there is merit in the argument leveled here, it will become necessary to explore the significance and impact of this finding. I have defended the case for an absolutist understanding of non-combatant immunity elsewhere and am currently exploring the global effort to enforce the norm and protect endangered civilians, but much more work will be needed to identify how torture and terrorism collude in enabling mass harm to non-combatants, and the structures and policies needed to prevent them from doing so (Bellamy, 2006; 2008).

NOTES

- 1 My discussion of Bentham draws primarily from Twining and Twining (1973).
- 2 The methods were published in the classified second part of the Commission's report (Evans and Morgan, 1998).
- 3 According to Allhoff (2003), individuals give up certain moral and legal rights when they are complicit with terrorists.
- 4 The claim that certain "techniques" were effective was put forward most forcefully by one of the French Commanders in Algeria, Jacques Massu (1972).
- 5 In the same report, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office tacitly admitted that it made use of intelligence received under torture in Uzbekistan. A spokesman said: "the UK abides by its international law contract. But you have to bear in mind the need for intelligence on terrorism to counter overt threats ... it would be impossible to ignore this information."
- 6 Both the Nazis and the French in Algeria found this to be the case (see Lifton, 1986; Peters, 1996).
- 7 Thanks to Jonathan Symons for this insight.
- 8 According to Cedric Thornberry (cited in British Institute of Human Rights, 1975), "the use of torture against prisoners is absolutely illegal and ... cannot, under international law standards, be justified" (p. 65). Michael O'Boyle (1977) described torture as a specific example of a preemptory norm of general international law.
- 9 An internal justice department memorandum signed by Assistant Attorney-General Jay Bybee insisted that arguments of "necessity and self-defence could provide justifications that would eliminate any criminal liability" (Anon., 2004).

- 10 One of the best recent treatments of this position is offered by David Rodin (2003), who ultimately rejects the upwards extrapolation and therefore concludes that political communities do not have an automatic right of self-defense.
- 11 For an expression of the rule-utilitarian argument against torture, see Allhoff (2003). Allhoff himself rejects this argument on the grounds that rules require exceptions but in this case an exception would undermine the entire rule-utilitarian project.

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3 The equivalent logic of torture and terrorism: the legal regulation of moral monstrosity

Ben Saul

A startling equivalence marks the logic employed by those who would defend democratic life and governments from terrorism by resorting to torture, and those who justify terrorism itself as a defense against excessive governmental power. Torture by the counter-terrorist state is sometimes seen as a necessary and convenient way of combating the threat of terrorism, as if the great evil of terrorism cancels out the lesser evil of torture. After September 11, 2001, arguments in favor of official torture penetrated deep into parts of the legal bureaucracy, political establishment, and academic circles in the United States, just as torture had sometimes been favorably viewed in earlier counter-terrorist campaigns, such as in French Algeria, Northern Ireland, and the Israeli-occupied territories. Similarly, some terrorist groups and their supporters justify their violence by appealing to various rhetorical, ideological, and moral claims about the necessity of terrorism in struggles of various kinds against oppression, authoritarianism, occupation, or other forms of domination or hegemony.

The equivalent logic of terrorists and torturers is manifest in three key techniques of argumentation: first, a paradoxical appeal to the language of human rights to justify torture and terrorism; secondly, arguments about asymmetry of power necessitating resort to terrorism or torture; and thirdly, a series of strategies invoked to justify the use of the exceptional means (of torture or terrorism) to achieve just causes. The latter strategies take at least three forms: first, explicit arguments in favor of torture and terrorism that seek to overturn existing legal prohibitions; secondly, interpretive legal arguments that certain types of conduct do not qualify as torture or terrorism under existing legal norms, and are not therefore prohibited; and thirdly, arguments about the legal defense of necessity, pursuant to which violations of the law against torture or terrorism are treated as morally explicable or excusable in the circumstances, and thus do not attract the full application of criminal penalties.

This chapter discusses these arguments in light of the regulatory approaches of international law to torture and terrorism, and to serious violence more generally. The regulation of violence is hardly new to international law, and claims for exceptional measures (such as torture or terrorism) to fight exceptional threats have always been made and contested within the boundaries established by law. The chapter reflects on whether the inherited boundaries, drawn up and tested over many generations of international conflict, are sufficient to confront contemporary challenges. It argues that while the absolute prohibition on torture remains appropriate, the regulation of some terrorist violence is underdeveloped, and some justifications for “terrorism” will retain their critical purchase so long as the law does not respond properly to legitimate claims to the use of political violence in exceptional circumstances.

Justifying violence: the just cause of defending human rights

It has been frequently suggested that terrorism is permissible as a last resort against serious and sustained human rights violations or systematic political oppression. Indeed, the first attempt by the United Nations General Assembly to address modern terrorism during the Cold War (in response to Palestinian violence) indicated considerable sympathy for the cause of terrorists, with the General Assembly initiating a study in 1972 of the “the underlying causes of those forms of terrorism and acts of violence which lie in misery, frustration, grievance and despair and which cause some people to sacrifice human lives, including their own, to effect radical changes” (United Nations, 1972). The ensuing General Assembly resolution reaffirmed “the inalienable right to self-determination and independence of all peoples under colonial and racist regimes and other forms of alien domination and upholds the legitimacy of their struggle, in particular the struggle of national liberation movements in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the organs of the United Nations ...” (para. 3). Further resolutions in the 1970s and 1980s urged states and UN organs progressively to eliminate the causes underlying international terrorism, particularly colonialism, racism, mass and flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, alien occupation or domination, and foreign occupation. Some resolutions until 1991 also stated that nothing in those resolutions

could in any way prejudice the right to self-determination, freedom and independence, as derived from the Charter of the United Nations, of peoples forcibly deprived of that right ... particularly peoples under colonial and racist

regimes and foreign occupation or other forms of colonial domination, nor, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and in conformity with the above-mentioned [1970] Declaration, the right of these peoples to struggle [legitimately] to this end and to seek and receive support. (United Nations, 1987, para. 14; 1989, para. 17; 1991, para. 15)

Disagreement over the legitimacy of violence undertaken in the service of efforts to realize self-determination or achieve national liberation have been at the heart of international debates about responding to terrorism since the 1930s onwards. Such disagreement has paralyzed annual efforts to draft a comprehensive United Nations anti-terrorism treaty between 2000 and 2009, despite the acute political pressure directed against terrorism generated by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

There is no internationally recognized right to rebellion as such under international human rights law, although the preamble to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) recognizes its inevitability in certain circumstances by noting that “it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.” States that drafted international human rights law were naturally reluctant to recognize a right of political rebellion that might radically destabilize their own authority, and indeed article 2(7) of the 1945 United Nations Charter guaranteed international non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states, which left them free to repress violent domestic political insurgencies.

Even so, a variety of terrorist organizations have characterized their violence as campaigns for national liberation from foreign domination or freedom from oppression, whether the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, the Basque separatist group ETA in Spain, or Algerian militants in French Algeria. Even urban guerrilla terrorists such as the RAF or Baader Meinhoff Gang in West Germany in the late 1960s and 1970s saw themselves as struggling against a modern, authoritarian, imperialist, capitalist state. Osama bin Laden, the most notorious contemporary terrorist, similarly frames his mission in terms of freedom from perceived oppression, whether by the Israeli occupation of Palestine, corrupt Arab governments, or United States foreign policy around the world (Fisk, 2005; O’Boyle, 2002; *Observer*, 2002).

Human rights have equally been invoked by those who support the practice of torture by the counter-terrorist state. The hypothetical threat of the “ticking bomb” scenario has attracted much interest

and lively debate for many years now. Argument in favor of torturing those who have planted a “ticking bomb” (see Bellamy, this volume) to extract information about its whereabouts, detonation time, and prospects of defusing it, are generally predicated on an assumption that torturing one person to save many is a worthy trade-off, and indeed one that, overall, secures far more human rights than it infringes. Thus public safety/security and human rights are seen not as diametrically opposed values, but complementary; human rights can only be ensured if human life is first protected, and the express human right to liberty and security might be thought to import an element of security against those who would seek to endanger it.

Justifying violence and the means: asymmetrical struggles

Arguments for tactical terrorism sometimes rely on a fundamental objection to the asymmetry of power between states and non-state actors. Terrorism is considered the only effective weapon (Alexander, 1996; Lambert, 1990) available to the weak and disempowered, who cannot hope to win by regular methods against modern, well-resourced, militarized states (Card, 2003; Guillaume, 2004; Ignatieff, 2002; Pfanner, 2005). There is intuitive appeal to this view, which assumes that power disparity is unfair and that the law should redistribute power. There is also a policy argument that terrorism minimizes violence, where liberation forces tactically choose not to escalate a dispute into an armed conflict, and instead employ low-intensity terrorist methods. It is, however, rarely possible to predict the level of violence that is likely to ensue in any conflict (e.g., Young, 2004)¹ and the use of terrorist methods is particularly likely to inflame rather than subdue governmental oppression, resulting in a cycle of escalation and retaliation.

Yet, it is difficult to see why the fact of unequal resources triggers an *entitlement* to use irregular methods, to even up the odds, although asymmetry certainly helps to explain why some unlawfully resort to fighting dirty. Nothing in international humanitarian law presupposes equality of power between adversaries. Indeed, conflict is intimately founded on achieving superiority of power, and to refashion humanitarian law in order to equalize power differences is unrealistic. There would no longer be any incentive for states – normally in a dominant position in relation to non-state actors – to comply with humanitarian law, and any exceptions accorded to liberation movements would be reciprocally resorted to by states. In addition, in conflicts between states, any concessions accorded to the weaker state would undermine any incentive

for the stronger state to comply with its more onerous rules of combat, and thus unravel compliance on all sides of the conflict.

Further, equalizing power might perversely prolong conflict and make it more destructive, since evenly matched forces may fight for longer. Focusing on asymmetry of power also conceals the extent to which tactics and strategy (such as lawful guerrilla warfare) can challenge superior power, and indeed humanitarian law already builds in some concessions for guerrilla fighters, who are accorded more relaxed legal conditions for lawfully participating in conflicts under 1977 Protocol I (without, however, going so far as to authorize terrorism against civilians and irreparably unraveling the foundations of humanitarian law). Allowing new methods of violence would also widen the sphere of violence, without sufficient justification.

Arguments for torture equally invoke asymmetry, although power relationships are inverted – terrorists are thought to hold all of the cards, since by nature modern democratic societies are considered to be exquisitely vulnerable to attack. Modern democracies are said to be so open and free that they present many easy or “soft” targets for terrorists to attack – unless greater restrictions on freedom are accepted by democracies (in which case, terrorists are thought to win). In this context, there is a tendency amongst risk-averse politicians and populations in modern democracies to seek to guarantee public safety at whatever the cost to those who attack society – and to the values that have historically underpinned those societies.

In such a climate, it becomes easy to turn terrorists’ arguments about asymmetry of power on their head and to assert that the terrorist tactics – the risk of exposure to indiscriminate death at any moment – must be met by measures of a proportionate intensity, including torture where necessary. Since the policy and practice of torture would be authorized and supervised by democratic institutions, it can be presented as an acceptable lesser evil that is ultimately precipitated by them (the terrorists), not us (the democrats). Often lost in this analysis is the grave risk – indeed the probability – that innocents will also be tortured, although this too can be explained away as a seemingly acceptable risk of collateral harm.

Exceptional means to achieve a just cause

To the extent that terrorism or torture is purportedly practiced to achieve the just cause of human rights, in the context of asymmetrical power relations necessitating its use, a series of strategies of legal argumentation is often deployed to counter claims that international law prohibits both torture and terrorism. The first strategy

is manipulatively and instrumentally to interpret existing prohibitions so as to fit one's chosen methods of torture or terrorism comfortably within the contours of permissible conduct; the second is to rely on a *post facto* defense of necessity, which, unlike the first strategy, does not prospectively authorize terrorism or torture but may nonetheless excuse conduct recognized as illegal and go some way toward mitigating the punitive or remedial responses to it; and the third strategy is the most blunt – directly to challenge rules against torture and terrorism as archaic, ill-conceived, and ripe for reform.²

Manipulative interpretation of existing laws

A common strategy in seeking to justify torture or terrorism is to engage in a species of instrumentalist reasoning that sees law merely as a means to an end, such that legal rules and principles are applied backwards in order to support the desired policy objective rather than in order to determine what objective the law requires. In the context of the infamous “torture memos” within various departments of the United States government (see Greenberg and Dratel, 2005), Brian Tamanaha warns of lawyers who “manipulate and stretch law and legal processes to their very outer limits, no matter how far away from or contrary to its underlying spirit” (Tamanaha, 2006, p. 146).

The torture memos, for instance, selectively relied on an obscure insurance law provision in order to confine the scope of the legal prohibition on torture to acts involving organ failure or death – even though the definition of torture is intended to apply to a much wider range of coercive conduct causing severe pain or suffering. According to this manner of reasoning, what should be legally regarded as torture becomes no longer so characterized, thus evading the application (and criminal penalties) of the legal regime established to prevent aggressive or coercive interrogations. The result of such reasoning is that legal rules become “nothing but tools lawyers utilize on behalf of whichever side they represent” (Tamanaha, 2006, p. 146) – in this case, the counter-terrorist imperatives of the executive – and taking advantage of ambiguities, technicalities, and loopholes. Such an approach to lawyering detracts from the binding quality of law, and its certainty, stability, and equality; indeed the instrumental view of law as a means to an end undermines the ideal of the rule of law (Tamanaha, 2006).

Likewise, instrumentalist lawyering has afflicted the reasoning of those who support terrorism. In situations of armed conflict, for instance, a fundamental rule of combat is that fighters must at all times distinguish between combatants and non-combatants (those not

taking a direct part in hostilities; see Bellamy, this volume). In this context, some have attempted to justify terrorism by reinterpreting who is a protected civilian and who can be militarily attacked. Thus, on one view, some non-combatants are not “innocent” and are therefore legitimate targets of violence (Ignatieff, 2002): police officers or government officials who enforce and implement the policies of an oppressive government; and even Israeli settlers in the Palestinian-occupied territories, *Pieds-noirs* in Algeria, or white South Africans during apartheid. These cases involve unlawful occupations or gravely unlawful acts under international law; foreign settlers are seen as instruments or beneficiaries of the state’s unlawfulness. As Fanon (1963) writes: “The appearance of the settler has meant ... the death of the aboriginal society, cultural lethargy, and the petrification of individuals. For the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler” (p. 93). The argument for “non-innocence” (or “half-innocence”; Honderich, 2003a) seems most persuasive for voluntary settlers with knowledge of the unlawfulness. Children of settlers might also be excluded, since they may have no choice but to follow their parents, and their minority status may preclude informed choice.

Here it should be observed that the law sometimes prohibits violence but accepts it as morally excusable: “when the victim is Hitler-like in character, we are likely to praise the assassin’s work” (Walzer, 2000, p. 199). Assassinations of oppressive politicians, which avoid innocent casualties, are morally distinguishable from random murders of innocents (Walzer, 2000): “who would say that he commits a crime who assassinates a tyrant?” (Cicero, 1979, p. 16). Courts have even recognized assassinations as proportionate political acts exempt from an extradition request to face criminal charges in another jurisdiction where a crime was committed.³ While settlers are not oppressive politicians (Walzer, 2000), they might be perceived as voluntary, knowing agents of oppression, displacing and impoverishing local populations. On this view the protection of civilians in general does not disappear if the targeting of such a limited class is accepted, just as the targeting of oppressive officials does not endanger ordinary citizens (Walzer, 2000).

Yet the argument for killing “non-innocent” civilians is still unacceptable. The killing of combatants in armed conflict is justified because soldiers are militarily dangerous to an adversary (Walzer, 2000). Violence against combatants aims to disable them so they can no longer keep fighting (Lauterpacht, 1955). Civilian munitions workers are lawful targets for the related reason that they are incidental casualties of lawful attacks on military targets (i.e., munitions factories; see also Walzer, 2000; pp. 145–146). In contrast, neither police officers,⁴ government

civil servants or politicians, nor settlers are militarily harmful (although some may be if they engage in hostilities and hence lose their civilian immunity under the existing law).⁵

The argument for targeting settlers rests on a different argument about their moral or legal culpability (Honderich, 2003a), not their military threat (Rodin, 2002). But allowing settlers to be killed for moral, political, or legal wrongdoing is little more than vigilante justice. Punishment is a judicial function, requiring procedural fairness, and not easily given over to summary justice.⁶ Extra-judicially evaluating immunity, or guilt, by standards of morality, or suspected illegality, renders civilian protection highly subjective.

Even in ideal cases of “just assassination” such as Hitler (Walzer, 2000), assassins are entitled to moral respect, but can still be prosecuted. This is because combatants are objectively harmful, but “the unjust or oppressive character of the official’s activities is a matter of political judgment” (Walzer, 2000, p. 200).⁷ International humanitarian law provides objective criteria of combatancy that identify harmful people in conflicts. While there are likewise human rights standards by which to measure the conduct of officials or settlers, such judgments entail a margin of appreciation far exceeding that involved in factually identifying a combatant.

Even more tenuous than the argument for killing settlers is al-Qaeda’s view that Americans, by being Americans, are responsible for the acts of the USA, or for sustaining its power. As Osama bin Laden said of attacks on US civilians:

You may then dispute that all the above does not justify aggression against civilians, for crimes they did not commit ... This argument contradicts your continuous repetition that America is the land of freedom ... Therefore, the American people are the ones who choose their government by way of their own free will; a choice which stems from their agreement to its policies ... The American people have the ability and choice to refuse the policies of their Government and even to change it if they want. (*Observer*, 2002)

Similarly, one of the organizers of the July 7, 2005 London bombings, Mohammed Sidique Khan, stated: “This is how our ethical stances are dictated. Your democratically elected governments perpetrate atrocities against my people and your support of them makes you responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters” (Dodd and Norton-Taylor, 2005, p. 8). The idea of non-innocence stretches to different lengths, as one writer notes: “what of the private citizens who carry the flag in trade, athletics or non-governmental organizational activities? Or, for that matter, what of

every private citizen who, merely by not resisting, may be presumed to condone his government's acts?" (Mushkat, 1980, p. 454).

The views of al-Qaeda reflect a crude doctrine of collective responsibility and punishment, where (democratic) state action is mechanically imputed to all of its citizens. Such a view not only disavows the autonomy of individuals, but it is also politically punitive; it threatens a whole people, regardless of the individual harmfulness of its members (Walzer, 2000).⁸ Likewise, the targeting of United Nations or humanitarian personnel, for supposed complicity in nourishing the US occupation of Iraq (MacAskill, 2004; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2004), embodies a worldview that ultimately exposes every individual to terrorist harm – whether on account of their occupation, political beliefs, religious affiliation, nationality, or otherwise.

Another extreme challenge to humanitarian law comes from those like the Palestinian Sheik Ahmed Yassin, who stated: "The Jews attack and kill our civilians – we will kill theirs" (McGeough, 2002). Similar claims have been made by Chechen groups (Steele, 2004), and by al-Qaeda: "The time has come for vengeance against the Zionist crusader government of Britain in response to the massacres Britain committed in Iraq and Afghanistan" (Tran and MacLeod, 2005). Arguments for retributive killings draw no moral distinction between intended and unintended killings of non-combatants. Incidental civilian casualties from proportionate military operations are a tolerated cost of war, but deliberately killing non-combatants is unlawful (see Bellamy, this volume).

Arguments for retributive killings are, however, nourished by the overwhelming preponderance of civilian casualties relative to military casualties in modern conflicts, including in recent conflicts in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine.⁹ High-altitude air warfare minimizes military losses amongst the armed forces of technologically superior states, but may inflict high incidental civilian casualties (Primoratz, 2004). The high rate of civilian casualties may suggest that judgments about military necessity have become overly protective of military forces (which are prepared to assume too few risks) and under-protective of non-combatants (who are too readily accepted as "collateral damage"). If this lack of proportionality is a cause of high civilian casualties, then it may encourage terrorists to claim that their targeting of civilians is not so morally different from states that kill civilians too casually.

An intermediate, compromise position: claims of necessity

An intermediate legal strategy for justifying torture and terrorism has been to conceptualize those acts within the framework of the defense

of necessity. Depending on the legal system in question, the defense of necessity either justifies (and therefore exonerates) or excuses (and thus mitigates the applicable penalty) the wrongful conduct in question, on the basis that the law should take account of exceptional circumstances or extreme cases where its strict application would not be appropriate. The Israeli Supreme Court, for instance, remarked in 1999 that the criminal law defense of necessity may be available to a law enforcement officer in response to a criminal charge of torture, in a situation where the torture was performed in order to safeguard the public against the imminent likely detonation of a “ticking bomb.” In such a case, it is thought that the law should recognize the political and moral pressure on law enforcement officials who find themselves in such a position, and who torture not to punish or discriminate but to avoid the greater evil of indiscriminate, mass public casualties. Such an approach has found some sympathy among legal scholars.¹⁰

A similar species of argument has been invoked to excuse terrorism. For instance, Honderich (2003a) defends Palestinian suicide bombing against Israel as a moral right – “terrorism for humanity” – as the only effective means for freeing Palestinians from Israeli domination (Honderich, 2003b; Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Canetti-Nisim, 2003, p. 146). A right of self-determination is meaningless without a remedy, and terrorism is thought justifiable where it has a decent probability of achieving its ends at a cost that makes it worth it (Honderich, 2003a). Honderich relies on analogies with the deliberate killing of innocents by Western states in the naval blockade of Germany in World War I, and by terror and atomic bombing in World War II. Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers, which international law permits to be treated as terrorism under domestic law (where the state in question has not adopted 1977 Protocol I, which internationalizes self-determination conflicts), are plainly of a different moral order than Palestinian attacks on Israeli non-combatants.

On the other hand, the “necessity” argument for Palestinian suicide bombing of Israeli civilians fails for at least five reasons. First, Palestinians do not face a “grave and imminent peril” of the kind envisaged as necessity by international law. The weight of opinion holds that Palestinians suffer from an oppressive military occupation, unlawful settlements, economic privations, and serious rights violations. A denial of self-determination is the denial of a peremptory norm. But Palestinians are not experiencing genocide, extermination, or a threat to their survival as grave as that anticipated by the law of necessity. Foreign occupation is an insufficient threat, and is, moreover, dealt with by the primary rules of humanitarian law, although the absence

of reciprocity as a constraint in situations of occupation may encourage more radical, exceptional responses to breaches of humanitarian law by the occupier.

Second, permitting the deliberate targeting of Israeli civilians would impair a countervailing essential interest of both Israel and the international community as a whole – the right to life of innocent civilians. Deliberately killing Israelis is a means disproportionate to the peril it seeks to alleviate. Third, killing civilians may be too remote from the political end sought, since terrorist acts have steeled Israel's will and have probably increased, not reduced, Israeli domination of Palestinian lives (Weinberg *et al.*, 2003; Wilkinson, 1977).¹¹ Owing to the political, security, and religious motives underpinning Israel's persistent claim to Palestine, Israel responds to terrorism with excessive and escalating violence of its own. This is a difficult question of political judgment; Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 might be seen as a tangible gain from decades of Palestinian terrorism. Contrarily, Israel's construction of a "security" barrier in the West Bank, its continued expansion of unlawful settlements there, and its retreat from promises made in the Oslo Accords indicate that terrorism has not far advanced the Palestinian cause.

Fourth, unlike states, which monopolize national political decision making, it is not clear that terrorists express the will of the Palestinian people. Fragmentation and factionalism make it difficult to identify clear lines of Palestinian political authority. Some terrorist attacks are launched by secret militant groups outside political or civilian control. Other attacks derive from extreme quasi-religious justifications of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, rather than from the political goal of self-determination. Furthermore, it is not obvious that alternatives to suicide bombing – including the faltering but not extinct peace process – have been exhausted. Suicide bombing to improve one's bargaining position may be strategic, but it is not of necessity.

Finally, analogies with naval blockade, or terror and atomic bombing, are anachronistic. Starving an enemy population, as in World War I, or indiscriminately area bombing or atomic bombing civilians, as in World War II, are no longer acceptable means of warfare. Because such means are forbidden by the primary rules of humanitarian law, necessity is not available as a circumstance precluding the wrongfulness of such acts. Such analogies are also flawed because, at the time, terror and atomic bombing were justified more by arguments about targeting legitimate military objectives, and/or reprisals, than by arguments of necessity.

Even if necessity-based arguments for terror and atomic bombing are considered, such arguments fail. Such methods were used later in

the war – after the “supreme emergency” had passed – not to ensure Nazi or Japanese defeat, or even to prevent genocide – but merely to improve speed and price (in Allied lives saved) of victory (Glover, 1999; Taylor, 2004; Walzer, 2000).¹² It is also difficult to appreciate how killing German civilians, to undermine morale, was related to the end of a Nazi defeat, since it may have contrarily steeled the German will to resist (although exterminating a population inevitably defeats it; Garrett, 2004; Glover 1999).¹³

At the same time, unless divine or natural law is accepted, an absolute prohibition on killing innocents is difficult to defend, since it embodies a poor sense of proportion if refusing to kill some innocents leads to the killing of many more (Glover, 1999).¹⁴ Despite the danger of “moral monstrosities threatened by unbounded consequentialism” (Horder, 1998, p. 156), it is “paradoxical to justify fighting a bloody war by saying Hitler must be defeated, and then to accept absolute restrictions which may mean the war is followed by Hitler’s victory” (Glover, 1999, p. 85).

It is clear that states have often vacillated between the desirability of absolute moral prohibitions on certain types of violence and the necessity of exceptions, often justified by consequentialist reasoning. Yet, if terror bombing was not justified by necessity in the extreme case of Nazi aggression, the justification for Palestinian suicide bombing is even less convincing, given the lesser seriousness of the Israeli threat. Prudentially, if necessity is thought to excuse terrorism, then it might equally excuse other sorts of severe harm, such as torture or the use of chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons.

Direct challenges to existing laws

The third legal strategy in seeking to justify torture or terrorism is also the crudest one – directly challenging the existing legal constraints on torture and terrorism, without attempting to squeeze the violent conduct in question within the parameters of the existing rules (whether by instrumentalist reasoning or *post facto* reliance on the defense of necessity). Thus, the American lawyer Dershowitz has called for the prospective authorization of torture in the ticking bomb scenario through a system of judicially issued “torture warrants” (Dershowitz, 2002; Levinson, 2004; Saul, 2004). Similarly, two Australian law academics called to widen the authorization of torture to cases where even one life might be saved, where necessary torturing non-suspects who might have information, and using other techniques beyond Dershowitz’s limited toolbox (of needles under the fingernails and the administration of so-called “truth drugs”) to include methods that even result in the

“annihilation” of the suspect (Bagaric and Clarke, 2005). This debate has been comprehensively analyzed elsewhere (Levinson, 2004), and the purpose here is to identify the strategies of legal reasoning rather than to engage at length with those substantive arguments, although it is worth highlighting some of the difficulties with those arguments.

In times of crisis, some people instinctively clamor for more legal powers, perhaps believing that society has never before faced a similar emergency. For those who think we live in an age of terrorism, it is intuitively appealing to believe that torturing one person to save many is the right thing to do. Whether one tortures to save one life or a thousand lives, the argument for torture is indefensible because of insurmountable legal, moral, and practical problems. Discussion of torture should not be taboo, but arguments for it must withstand scrutiny.

First, it is impossible for interrogators to know with any certainty that a suspect has information about a threat. This means a person may be tortured based on speculation and untested evidence, and it is inevitable innocent people will be tortured. It also means the torture of an innocent person might only stop when the person is dead. If interrogators are wrongly convinced a person has information, they will apply increasingly savage torture methods in the hope of extracting the information.

Second, permitting torture would encourage its abuse, since the legal and moral stigma attaching to torture is removed. Even if torture saves lives in rare cases, the escalation and abuse of torture in the majority of other cases would cause greater suffering than it prevents. Dershowitz (2002), and Bagaric and Clarke (2005) counter that torture happens already and regulation is better than prohibition. That is like arguing that, because murder and terrorism happen, they too should be decriminalized. Further, if torture happens despite prohibition, why would interrogators obey the limits imposed by any regulatory scheme? They would still torture if they thought it was in the interest of public safety. It is preferable to hold the line at prohibition, but better to implement it through training police and military forces, and closer judicial supervision of interrogations. Bagaric and Clarke also draw a misleading analogy with self-defense, claiming it too can be uncertain and open to abuse. Yet self-defense can only be exercised if the attacker is an imminent threat. A suspect in custody is no longer an imminent threat, so the justification for self-defense disappears.

Third, torturing anyone who may have information casts collective suspicion on whole groups of people, such as the family, friends, and colleagues of a suspect. Similarly, if torturing terrorists aims to protect public safety, then it is hard to see why other kinds of threats should not be combated by torture. Why not torture those planning genocide, war

crimes, crimes against humanity, murder, or rape? Again, there is no obvious limit to torture once the door to it is opened.

Finally, torture does not work. Torture produces misinformation rather than information, since victims of torture will confess to anything to make it stop. This could jeopardize rather than protect public safety, as investigators waste precious time chasing false leads. Arguments against torture are not based on alarmism, moral absolutism, or rhetoric. The consequences of forcibly violating the body and the mind are profound and signal an unnecessary return to the blunt techniques of medieval justice. Torture irreparably damages human dignity, devalues human life, and corrupts the institutions and officials of democratic societies.

Conversely, when it comes to arguments that “terrorism” should be explicitly permitted in some circumstances, the legal situation is more complex. Unlike “torture,” which has been legally defined and prohibited under international law, the difficulty with “terrorism” is that the international community has never agreed on what constitutes the phenomenon. The result is that there are widely divergent concepts of terrorism in different national legal orders, some of which define the concept so as to criminalize and punish legitimate, non-violent political resistance to oppressive governmental authority. While there is widespread international agreement that the instrumental political killing of civilians is at the heart of the concept of terrorism, many governments reserve the right also to define as terrorists those who use violence domestically in armed conflicts against the government – even if those rebel groups or opposition forces only target the military personnel of the state.

On the one hand, international law must reject arguments that the instrumental political killing of civilians is ever justified, and there is widespread support for this position internationally. Here there has been an unhelpful lack of clarity in debates about the desirability of an exception from the definition of terrorism for self-determination or national liberation movements, since states supporting such an exception (including the many members of the Organisation of The Islamic Conference) have not unambiguously condemned violence against civilians, and have sometimes given the impression that the just cause of self-determination justifies any means, implicitly including suicide bombing or other forms of targeting civilians. One extreme argument is that terrorism in pursuit of such just causes might be thought completely exempt from any form of international legal regulation (Cassese, 2006, p. 933) – not just special laws against terrorism, but existing rules under international humanitarian law, human rights law, and international and transnational criminal law.

In contrast, since many proposed international definitions of terrorism are broader than simple political violence against civilians, it is important to clarify the scope of application of any international prohibition on terrorism. In particular, international law should not become complicit in domestic political oppression by requiring the international community to cooperate with that repressive state in the criminal prosecution and repression of domestic rebels who are fighting legitimately (that is, by only targeting military personnel and installations in an internal armed conflict) against that oppression. Further, where liberation movements are fighting against states that have not signed 1977 Protocol I – and who do not therefore recognize the legal right of liberation forces to combatant and prisoner-of-war status – international law should not extend its criminal scope to punish those movements, who would otherwise be considered to be fighting lawfully under Protocol I. Otherwise international law would be establishing radically different legal regimes governing identically situated self-determination movements, even though self-determination is regarded as the paramount human right of peoples freely to determine their political status.

Conclusion

This chapter has exposed the equivalent logic often employed in support of both terrorism and torture. The starting point is frequently an assertion that terrorism and torture are justified in pursuit of the protection of human rights against serious oppression or other serious risk to life or liberty, coupled with claims and counter-claims that asymmetries in the balance of power demand fighting dirty. These premises are often built upon by a series of legal strategies for domesticating, normalizing, and justifying the extreme violence of terrorism or torture: first, instrumentalist lawyering to fit the conduct within the boundaries of existing legal constraints; secondly, relying on the defense of necessity to excuse the conduct as a necessary lesser evil; and third, direct challenges to the existing legal rules (or lack of rules, as in the case of terrorism where at least some of the arguments in favor of “terrorism” are valid insofar as some proposed definitions of terrorism are overly broad). All are part of an undercurrent of exceptionalism that sees just causes as authorizing exceptional means; and part of a paradox that sees terrorists and torturers battling each other with the same argumentative techniques.

NOTES

- 1 As Yasser Arafat said: “Nobody knows how the mechanism of war develops” (in Fisk, 2005, p. 553).
- 2 Bellamy (this volume) also considers arguments about the relationship between torture and terrorism, and proposes that reaffirming and universally applying the principle of non-combatant immunity is the key to reducing the violence of torture or terrorism.
- 3 See, for example, *Watin v. Ministère Public Fédéral*, Swiss Federal Tribunal (1964), 72 ILR 614, 617: an attempt on the life of French President de Gaulle by a French national would be proportionate “[w]here the person aimed at practically embodies the political system of the State so that it might be thought that his disappearance will entail a change in that system.”
- 4 For example, French gendarmes in Algeria, who were attacked by an Algerian political group, were considered “unarmed,” “peaceful,” “civilian” and “non-belligerent” persons (see *Zaouche Tahar, Abdi Arezkli and Ouakli Rabah*, Court of Appeal of Brussels, June 7, 1960 [1960] 75 J Trib 467, affirmed by the Cour de Cassation, July 22, 1960, Pasicrisie I, 1263, and in a subsequent advisory opinion by the Court of Appeal of Brussels, November 10, 1960, Doss 26.463 E and 26.464 E).
- 5 In practice, distinguishing civilian settlers from militarized settlers may be difficult, as in the Palestinian-occupied territories, where settlers frequently carry military weapons for self-protection (see, e.g., *Military Prosecutor v. Jab’r et al.*, Ramallah/4041/81, [1987] 6 SJMC 259).
- 6 Consider the many extra-judicial executions of suspected informers by Palestinian militants (e.g., Goldenberg, 2002).
- 7 One might wonder, however, whether a foot soldier is objectively more threatening than, for instance, the head of Stalin’s secret police.
- 8 One US lawyer, Nathan Lewin, has similarly supported collective punishment by calling for the execution of the families of suicide bombers (Fisk, 2005).
- 9 In the Iraq war from March, 2003 to March, 2005, non-combatant deaths are credibly estimated at 25 000, with 42 500 wounded (Oxford Research Group, 2005). Another study found that direct or indirect Iraqi civilian deaths could be as high as 100 000 (Roberts *et al.*, 2004). These figures compare with 2 252 US military deaths, 204 deaths of US allied forces, 300 deaths of Coalition contractors, 80 dead journalists, and at least 4 000 Iraqi (Coalition) police and military deaths (iCasualties.org, 2006). In the second *intifadah* in Palestine, from 2000 to 2002, 1 450 Palestinians were killed compared with 525 Israelis (Fisk, 2005).
- 10 For a discussion of the division of opinion on the availability of the defense of necessity for torture, see Gaeta (2004).
- 11 Though noting the strategic successes of suicide bombing by Hamas and Islamic Jihad (which has had a psychological effect on Israelis and Palestinians; narrowed the ratio of Israeli–Palestinian fatalities in the conflict since 2001; and helped to disrupt peace negotiations between the rival Fatah-led Palestinian Authority and Israel, contributing to the defeat of the Peres government).

- 12 Walzer distinguishes area bombing earlier in the war as justified by necessity, when it was the only offensive weapon available to Britain to avert the evil of a Nazi victory. By early 1945, Japan's economy was close to collapse and the USA knew that Japan had approached Stalin to sue for peace.
- 13 Further, in a secret-police state, political authority does not depend so much on civilian support; Hitler fought on regardless of German morale, until the Soviets reached Berlin.
- 14 After September 11, 2001, the US President ordered hijacked aircraft to be shot down (Burkeman, 2004).

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4 War versus criminal justice in response to terrorism: the losing logic of torture

Clark McCauley

Osama bin Laden and other terrorists are still in hiding. Our message to them is clear: “No matter how long it takes, we will find you, and we’re going to bring you to justice.” ... We can have confidence in the outcome of the war on terror because our nation is determined.

President George W. Bush (2006)

In his speech to the Reserve Officers Association, President Bush joined two ways of thinking about the response to terrorism. Most commonly the President refers to the War on Terror (nine references), but he also promised justice: the terrorists will be brought to justice (one reference).

I review here the ways in which these two responses to terrorism are in conflict, and suggest the advantages of greater emphasis on criminal justice against a threat that is expected to continue indefinitely. Since 9/11, success against terrorism has come from police work embedded in a rights-oriented criminal justice system; failure has come from attempts to use military force that is not subordinated to a political framing of the problem. Torture is part of this failure.

The competing implications of war and justice for responding to terrorism

Inter-group violence, including war, is often launched in response to perceived injustice and violation perpetrated by the enemy (McCauley, 2006). It might seem, therefore, that war and justice are complementary or at least consistent responses to terrorist attacks. On the contrary, I argue that the practical implications of war and criminal justice are in many ways inconsistent (see McCauley, 2007, for a more expansive version of this discussion).

Beginnings and endings

War and criminal justice begin differently. War begins in a declaration by one state that it is at war with another, whereas criminal justice begins with a violation of the criminal code. War and criminal justice also have different endings: wars end with winning or losing marked by some kind of treaty and exchange of prisoners, but criminal justice is always a work in progress.

al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States began with the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. This attack was treated as a violation of the criminal code; suspects were located, charged, tried, convicted, sentenced, and imprisoned. After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President Bush declared war on al-Qaeda and on terrorists everywhere. From these different beginnings flow many other differences.

Individual vs. group targets

War and criminal justice differ in the nature of their targets. A violation of the criminal code is specific: an individual or individuals commit or cause a particular crime to be committed at a particular place at a particular time. The target of war is an enemy group, usually a group too large to be enumerated individually.

Declaring war on terrorism has the unfortunate consequence of magnifying the perceived size and importance of the enemy. al-Qaeda was once an organization numbering in the thousands, still minuscule in relation to a declaration of war from a superpower. Today what remains of al-Qaeda is on the run and reduced from organizing to inspiring terrorism. Since 9/11, terrorist attacks and attempted attacks in Madrid, London, Dortmund, Toronto, and New York City have been the work of small, self-organizing groups.

Nevertheless, a group enemy is required in order to maintain the rhetoric of war. As the enemy looks less like a corporation and more like a franchise, even naming the enemy has presented increasing difficulties (McCants, 2006). The enemy cannot be Muslims; most Muslims do not support killing civilians. The enemy cannot be Salafi Muslims; those who aim to recreate the seventh-century lifestyle of the Prophet's companions are as likely to withdraw from the world as try and change it. Nor can the enemy be Wahhabi Muslims, many of whom support the Saudi monarchy and oppose terrorism. Some refer to the enemy as *Islamists*, but this locution comes unfortunately close to making Islam the enemy. Muslims who attack the USA and other Western

nations call themselves *jihadis*, but Western analysts are often loath to use a term that has positive connotations in the Muslim world, not least because it can refer to interior struggle as well as armed struggle.

In contrast to the rhetoric of war that requires an enemy group, the rhetoric of justice can focus on particular individuals who have committed violent acts. Even when it is a criminal group or gang that is the focus of investigation, prosecution targets individual not group actions.

Stereotypical vs. atypical perpetrators

Linked to the difference in targets, war and criminal justice differ in their potential for stereotyping the group from which the terrorists come. Criminals are seen as aberrant and atypical; soldiers are seen as normal and representative of the group they come from.

The rhetoric of war is historically associated with foreign enemies, and foreign enemies who are different in appearance and ethnicity are particularly easy prospects for negative stereotyping. The potential for this kind of hostility is evident in surveys of US soldiers during World War II that asked “What would you like to see happen to the Japanese after the war?” Forty to sixty percent of soldiers in different samples favored the option “Wipe out whole Japanese nation” (Chirot and McCauley, 2006, p. 216). Treating terrorists as criminals helps to avoid this kind of categorical hostility. Although most members of the crime families involved in Cosa Nostra are of Italian origins, few Americans are thereby led to feel fear and hostility toward Italians.

Avoiding broad negative stereotyping can be particularly important for securing the cooperation of moderate Muslims against terrorists. As described in later sections, this is a crucial part of successful counter-terrorism operations.

Top priority vs. competing priorities

A declaration of war asserts that the survival of a nation is at stake. For the duration of the war, every other public goal or public good must be sacrificed or put on hold until the war is won. In contrast, the criminal justice system – police, judicial, and penal – is an everyday part of government. The criminal justice system must compete with other priorities – pensions and anti-poverty programs, roads and bridges, health and education. Despite the competition, support is forthcoming every year for the police, attorneys, judges, prisons, and parole boards.

Especially in a democracy, where citizen fatigue or hopelessness can affect policy, a state of war is difficult to maintain. The Vietnam War, from 1964 to 1973, is the longest ever fought by the USA; efforts to recruit national priority with the rhetoric of war have generally not been effective for more than a few years. This was the fate of the War on Poverty and the War on Drugs, except to the extent that the War on Drugs has been recruited into the War on Terrorism. This joining of wars will be discussed later; here it is only necessary to note that no one is predicting that the threat of terrorism against the USA will end anytime soon. But if counter-terrorism operations succeed in preventing another terrorist success as big as 9/11, the war on terrorism will lose its priority. In contrast, the criminal justice response to terrorism can continue indefinitely, as it must continue against every form of criminal violence.

Military vs. criminal-justice values

Closely related to the difference in priorities is a difference in values. When survival is at stake, only victory matters. This single standard of value permeates military culture: the mission comes first. The criminal justice system, in contrast, offers an institutionalized balancing of the rights of the accused and the society's right to security.

Putting victory first means that other values must be sacrificed. The war on terrorism has been associated with the deaths of civilians that we call collateral damage, increased reach of government into the privacy of citizens, and decreased civil rights for those suspected of terrorism. These are not independent policy choices but the unavoidable consequences of putting victory first.

Prohibitions against mistreatment and torture of prisoners are among the public values of civilized nations that can seem too expensive to maintain when survival is at stake (Saul, this volume; Bellamy, this volume). A kind of schizophrenia is likely. Some argue explicitly that law and moral judgment must give way to survival. Law professors offer learned arguments about how much torture should be legalized. Others argue that law and moral judgment against torture should be maintained, but space must be left for a few scapegoats who will take on themselves the burden of doing ugly things to save others. Jack Bauer, the torturing but tortured hero of *24* is the model of this kind of anti-hero (Mayer, 2007).

The criminal justice system offers a very different kind of contest. The war between prosecution and defense is carried out before a judge and jury. Prosecutors, defense counsel, and the judge share the same legal training, with its emphasis on balancing the prerogatives of prosecution and defense. Victory cannot be the only value for either side;

rules are enforced by the judge and reinforced by legal career paths in which the same lawyer may at different times appear in court as prosecutor, defense attorney, and judge. The criminal justice system practices balancing values, the military practices to win.

Judicial mistakes vs. jujitsu politics

Mistakes in the criminal justice system are limited in two ways. As noted above, the targets of the criminal justice system are individuals. When mistakes are made in accusation or even in verdict, the mistake and the cost of the mistake is limited to the individual accused. A further limitation is that the criminal justice system seldom executes even the most extreme offenders, and when it does execute someone it is only after a considerable delay in which correction of error is possible.

In contrast, the group-targeted response of a war on terrorism leads to mistakes at the group level, or at least mistakes perceived by those who suffer them as injustice at the group level. Collateral damage to civilians is likely to occur to families, neighborhoods, and villages who feel collective injustice. Profiling an ethnic or religious group leads to the whole group feeling mistreated. Imprisoning and deporting Arab and Muslim illegal immigrants in a way that does not happen to Hispanic immigrants produces a sense of group stigma and group injustice.

Group-targeted errors are precisely what terrorists hope for in response to their attacks (McCauley, 2007). In *Knights under the Banner of the Prophet*, Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's right hand, put al-Qaeda's hopes explicitly. If the shrapnel of war reach American bodies, he opined, the USA will have to come out from behind its puppet regimes in Arab countries to attack Arabs directly. And then, he promised, we will have jihad.

This is jujitsu politics, using the enemy's strength against it. Attack the enemy so as to elicit a response that will strike many more than the attackers; the victims and all who sympathize with the victims will be mobilized behind the attackers. In al-Qaeda's case, the strategy meant eliciting a US response that would do what bin Laden and al-Zawahiri had failed to do at home in Saudi Arabia and Egypt: mobilize Muslims for jihad against Americans.

This strategy works because it taps into one of the strongest mechanisms in group dynamics: shared outgroup threat produces ingroup cohesion (Lewis, this volume; Moghaddam, this volume). With increased ingroup cohesion comes the "authoritarian triad" of increased authority for ingroup leaders, idealization of ingroup values, and increased sanctions for ingroup deviates (Duckitt and Fisher, 2003). The US response

to the attacks of 9/11 – patriotism, increased support for the President, increased rhetoric of freedom and democracy, and hostility toward Arabs and Muslims in the USA – provides a thumbnail summary of the research literature on this point (LeVine and Campbell, 1972; McCauley, 2006).

Jujitsu politics failed in Afghanistan, where the US forces routed the Taliban with only a few thousand civilian casualties – an awful total for the victims but surgical precision in comparison with the Afghan experience of the Russian army. Firm statistics are difficult to come by, but Kaplan (1990) suggests a million Afghans died in the Soviet–Afghan War, with perhaps five million Afghan refugees in neighboring countries and two million displaced internally.

But jujitsu politics is succeeding now in Iraq, where US forces are increasingly seen as an occupying army to secure Iraqi oil. Whether jujitsu politics will undermine counter-terrorism efforts in the USA remains to be seen, as security forces focus special surveillance on US Muslims. More certain is the advantage of the criminal justice system as a response to terrorism that is less likely to mobilize Muslims against the West.

Summary brief for criminal justice

War is a convulsive effort for survival. It has a clear beginning and a clear end, gives top priority to the war effort, makes victory the measure of all values, and mobilizes sacrifice from citizens and support for government. These virtues begin to fade if the threat continues over many years. Other priorities are reasserted, the threat begins to look less deadly. For responding to a chronic terrorist threat, the everyday virtues of the criminal justice system become more apparent: focus on individual rather than group enemies, institutionalized balancing of group security and individual rights, and avoidance of negative stereotyping, profiling, and collateral damage that can make the threat bigger than it is. The capacity for long-term response to terrorism emerges from the fact that the criminal justice system is part of business as usual.

If war and criminal justice have, as described, many competing implications, then both cannot be pursued equally at the same time. Striking the right balance requires consideration of lessons learned since 9/11.

War versus criminal justice: lessons since 9/11

A look at the numbers

One way to look at the relative importance of war and criminal justice in the US response to terrorism is to compare the US budget for national defense with the budget for homeland security. Following Williams

(2006), national defense spending includes not only the Defense Department but nuclear activities of the Department of Energy and other military-related programs. Before September 11, 2001, national defense spending was \$318 billion; for 2006 the estimate is \$560 billion, including about \$100 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Homeland security spending includes law enforcement (especially the FBI); border and aviation security; protection of critical infrastructure (e.g., nuclear plants); and support for public health, police, and fire response to terrorist attacks and other disasters. Homeland security spending was \$17 billion in 2001 and \$55 billion in 2006 (all figures from Williams, 2006).

Thus, national defense spending has increased by about \$240 billion while homeland security spending increased by about \$35 billion. As Friedman (2005) notes, states and corporations also spend on homeland security. On top of federal funds, the fifty states together spend \$1–2 billion a year. Private corporations spend perhaps as much as \$10 billion a year for increased security. Even if we add these totals to the federal spending, spending on homeland security since 9/11 has increased by about \$45 billion while military spending has increased by \$240 billion. These figures indicate that, since 9/11, the USA has spent five additional dollars for the military for every additional dollar for homeland security.

What does effective counter-terrorism look like in an occupied territory?

Schultz and Godson (2006) have recently sought out and summarized the lessons learned from British and Israeli counter-terrorism programs. Modern UK experience began with anti-colonial terrorism and insurrection after World War II (Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus); many of the lessons learned had to be re-learned in Northern Ireland. The Israeli experience began in Gaza and the West Bank when these territories were occupied after the 1967 war. Godson and Schultz interviewed former intelligence and security officers in the UK and in Israel, and, more unusually, interviewed former terrorists as well. From these interviews comes a converging story of expert opinion about what works in counter-terrorism.

The first step was to divide the targeted territory – neighborhood, sector, even individual street – into grids. The next step was to assign to each grid an intelligence unit with responsibility for collecting basic, infrastructure, and target intelligence and turning it into operational assessments that could be used to weaken and undermine all armed groups active in that locale. (Shultz and Godson, 2006, p. 3)

Basic intelligence is the big picture of daily life in the area. Interpersonal relations are important: who knows whom, who is related to whom, who is feuding with whom. Material structure is important: buildings; businesses; sources of food, water, and health care; means of transportation; and traffic flow at different times of day. Especially important are the nature and membership of organizations in the area, including political, religious, civic, business, and neighborhood associations. Knowledge of daily life is important as a baseline against which to see change: new people, new money, new organizations that might be related to terrorist activity or might be employed in support of terrorist activity. The British anti-terrorism effort in Malaya famously profited by controlling sales of rice and canned goods so that these supplies could not be used to support insurgent forces in the bush (Joes, 2006).

Basic intelligence is labor-intensive. One Israeli intelligence officer suggested that as many as 40% of collection capabilities are devoted to this level. Operatives responsible for this level develop networks of local people to whom they talk regularly. These local sources are not covert agents and usually not even paid. They are acquaintances or even friends of the collector. Thus, “an operative functions somewhat like the policeman on the beat – constantly talking to, interacting with, and keeping tabs on the people in his neighborhood and, most of all, keeping his eyes open for slight changes or new developments in the neighborhood” (Schultz and Godson, 2006, p. 3).

Infrastructure intelligence is the picture of the human and physical resources of terrorist groups. Group leaders are identified, including their family, neighborhood, educational, and political background. The structure of group organization is uncovered, including communication channels, linkages with other groups or states, and any indications of conflict or division among group members. The resources of the group are mapped: weapons caches, safe houses, technical skills such as counterfeiting or bomb-making. The ideology of the group is determined; public statements, no matter their truthfulness, are important for understanding the appeal of the terrorists to the pyramid of sympathizers and supporters on which the terrorists depend for cover and resources, especially new recruits.

Infrastructure is uncovered mainly by recruited agents, who may be paid or blackmailed for their cooperation. The case officer who runs an agent is often a “hybrid” of policing and intelligence work, combining both law enforcement skills and clandestine tradecraft. Both basic and infrastructure intelligence require an intimate knowledge of the language and culture of the target area.

Target intelligence aims at developing opportunities for action against terrorists. The most obvious success of target intelligence is to pinpoint the habits and movements of terrorist leaders or to uncover plans for terrorist attacks. This kind of intelligence produces dead or captured terrorists. But other kinds of success may be easier and equally important in the long term. Cleavages and competitions within the terrorist group can be encouraged, for instance by planting false information about the actions or ambitions of one faction to threaten another faction (Schultz and Dew, 2006). Support from the pyramid of sympathizers can be undermined by publicizing terrorist mistakes, especially mistakes that kill members of the same group the terrorists claim to be representing.

Particularly important is the integration of different sources of intelligence. Within its area, the intelligence unit must join the three levels – basic, infrastructure, and targeting intelligence – with military and police operations in the area. What soldiers find or police interrogations learn must be put together with the knowledge of the intelligence unit. This needs to happen in real time, such that the intelligence unit can provide questions and interpretations during interrogation of a just-captured suspect. Across areas, different intelligence units must join what they know about their areas, and regional intelligence units must integrate across many area-specific intelligence units.

In sum, expert opinion describes successful counter-terrorism in an occupied territory as street-by-street and village-by-village knowledge of local communities, terrorist organization, and terrorist movements. Schultz and Godson (2006) do not distinguish between short-term success and long-term success, and the experts' prescriptions will be reconsidered later in this discussion.

What does unsuccessful counter-terrorism look like in an occupied territory?

The kind of anti-terrorism intelligence just described is not easy to organize, and obvious difficulties have handicapped US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq (Hoffman, 2006). In both cases, the required depth of knowledge of language and culture is not easy to find in a military organized and trained to defeat heavy enemy forces on defined battlefields. In both cases, Americans cannot easily take even the first step toward street-by-street and village-by-village intelligence. Under uniforms and flak jackets, under helmets and goggles, with weak language skills and little knowledge of the local culture, American soldiers are ill-prepared to develop local contacts and an everyday picture of the local area.

Despite these handicaps, American forces in Iraq have sometimes succeeded in developing local intelligence, such as, for instance, that leading to the capture of Saddam Hussein and the killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. On-the-job training for developing local intelligence is difficult and risky, and it is a credit to US forces that they have learned as much as they have (Hoffman, 2006). But US military units do not stay long in one area. They are moved to new areas of Iraq or Afghanistan as new violence breaks out. They are rotated back to the USA for rest, refitting, and replacements. When a unit leaves an area, their hard-won lessons move with them, the experience of the local area that represents the basic level of intelligence is lost, the personal contacts with sources and agents in the area are weakened or lost. The US military is not prepared for indefinite occupations, but the kind of counter-terrorism that works is dependent on long-term investments in local experience.

Insurgents in Afghanistan and the Iraq are aware that US forces must depend on local translators and the local police and military for local intelligence. Insurgents target these “collaborators.” News reports tend to emphasize attacks on important individuals. For instance, a provincial governor in Afghanistan was assassinated on September 10, 2006, and a suicide bomber killed five policemen and two children at the governor’s funeral. In Iraq, the brother-in-law of the new presiding judge of Saddam Hussein’s genocide trial was killed on September 29, 2006. But the toll on Iraqi police and national guard forces is perhaps a more serious indication of the importance insurgents attach to discouraging collaboration. Between March, 2003 and February 2008, US forces in Iraq lost 3973 killed by insurgent attacks, but Iraqi police and military lost 7945 (O’Hanlon and Campbell, 2008).

Another indication of the importance of collaborators is an unusual offer of amnesty from the new leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, the successor of Musab al-Zarqawi. In an audiotape released on September 28, 2006 (Rising, 2006), al-Masri offered amnesty to Iraqis who had cooperated with their country’s “occupiers,” calling on them to “return to your religion and nation” during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began for the Sunni two days after the tape was posted. “We will not attack you as long as you declare your true repentance in front of your tribe and relatives,” he said. “The amnesty ends by the end of this holy month.” Willingness to offer amnesty suggests that al-Qaeda in Iraq is concerned about the number of Sunni who are making some compromise with Coalition forces.

The difficulties noted in organizing effective counter-terrorism in an occupied territory are multiplied when the terrorists use suicide terrorism. When every passing civilian is a potential mortal threat, the result

is fear and anger. Fear leads to mistakes that kill innocent locals, as soldiers resolve doubtful situations in favor of their own safety. Anger leads to more mistakes, as soldiers who cannot see the enemy that has killed their friends take out their frustration on civilians they can reach. Particularly when there are obvious differences in appearance between soldiers and locals, fear of suicide bombers produces ethnic hostility in which all of “them” are bad.

The prolonged threat of suicide bombers produces a state of mind in which even basic-level intelligence is impossible. No one is going to walk around chatting up the locals when any one of them could be death. Interviews with US soldiers in Iraq give an idea of this state of mind (Partlow, 2006).

“Honestly, it just feels like we’re driving around waiting to get blown up ... You lose a couple of friends and it gets hard.”

“There is no enemy; it’s a faceless enemy. He’s out there but he’s hiding.”

“At this point, it seems like war on drugs in America ... It’s like this never-ending battle, like, we find one IED [improvised explosive device], if we do find it before it hits us, so what? You know it’s just like if the cops make a big bust, next week the next higher-up puts more back out there.”

In sum, *unsuccessful counter-terrorism* in an occupied territory takes the form of military patrols and search-and-destroy missions without local knowledge or community contacts.

What does counter-terrorism look like in democratic countries?

The Madrid bombings on March 11, 2004, are generally seen as a major intelligence failure. Ten bombs planted in four different commuter trains went off during rush hour, killing 191 and injuring hundreds. Less well known is an element of success following the Madrid bombings: the bombers had plans for additional bombings and did indeed plant a bomb that was found before it could derail the high-speed train linking Madrid and Seville. But the crucial break in the case was a bomb that did not go off on March 11 (Alonso and Reinares, 2006). The bag containing the bomb led to Jamal Zougam, who had purchased the phone cards used in the attack. The phone cards led to the terrorists, holed up in an apartment on the outskirts of Madrid. When surrounded, the terrorists blew themselves up. This was April 3, 2006. A search of the wreckage turned up detailed plans for more attacks that were to begin the next day, April 4; the investigators had been barely in time.

The London-based plot to destroy civilian aircraft on their way to the USA offers a similar picture of successful police work. Twenty-five

suspects were arrested in the UK on August 10, 2006; seven were later released. Another seven suspects were arrested in Pakistan. The plot involved use of liquid or gel explosives that could pass through airport security. It was reported by CNN (2006) that an undercover British agent had infiltrated the group, but whether or not this report is correct there is no doubt that the police had been watching the plot for months. In his “Six lessons from the London Airline bombing plot,” Tirnan (2006) notes that “First, what stopped this plot was law enforcement ... Old-fashioned surveillance, development of human sources, putting pieces together, and cooperation with foreign police and intelligence services.”

In Canada, seventeen terrorist suspects were arrested in the Toronto area on June 2, 2006. They are accused of planning ammonium nitrate truck bombs to attack targets that included the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Headquarters in Toronto and the Parliamentary Buildings’ Peace Tower. The arrests were carried out by an inter-agency task force, the Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET), which coordinated the activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), and other police forces. The arrests involved 400 police from several different jurisdictions in southern Ontario near Toronto.

The case began with the CSIS monitoring of internet websites in 2004, with the RCMP entering the case when a criminal investigation began in 2005. On July 13, 2006, the *Toronto Star* reported that a member of Toronto’s Islamic community had infiltrated the alleged terrorist cell while on the police payroll; the informant was later revealed as Mubin Shaikh, a Canadian-born Muslim of Indian heritage. Another police agent was involved in receiving the ammonium nitrate (which was replaced with a harmless substitute before delivery). Like the previous cases then, this plot had been under surveillance for many months before being rolled up with the help of electronic surveillance and paid agents.

In the USA, Shahawar Matin Siraj and James Elshafay were arrested on the eve of the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York, carrying crude diagrams of the subway station in Herald Square. Elshafay immediately agreed to cooperate with the government but Siraj went to trial. The issue at trial was the extent to which Siraj was incited by a government informant – that is, the extent to which he was a victim of entrapment. Successful contradiction of the entrapment defense required the testimony of both a paid informant and an undercover police officer.

The case began, not with any connection to al-Qaeda, but with the anti-American ranting by Siraj in an Islamic bookstore; many such

conversations were recorded by the informant, a US citizen born in Egypt. The undercover officer, born in Bangladesh, described being recruited out of the police academy in 2003 and given orders to become a “walking camera” among Muslims. He recalled a conversation on the second anniversary of the 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center in which Siraj complimented Osama bin Laden’s talents and hoped that bin Laden was planning something big for the USA.

In short, successful counter-terrorism operations in Madrid, London, Toronto, and the USA are successful police work. Substantial resources have been devoted to trolling through Islamic websites and Islamic communities; undercover agents have been recruited and undercover officers assigned. These operations depend on the same local knowledge that has already been described for successful counter-terrorism in occupied territories. The parallel to street-by-street and village-by-village intelligence is website-by-website, bookstore-by-bookstore, and mosque-by-mosque intelligence in the major cities of Western democracies. Intelligence operations in both occupied territories and Western democracies are long-term and culture-focused, in contrast to military operations that are intended to be short-term and focused on conventional opposing forces.

What does successful counter-terrorism look like in a Western democracy? Website-by-website, bookstore-and-mosque-by-bookstore-and-mosque knowledge of Islamic communities, individuals, and grievances. This picture will be familiar to anyone who watches police-procedural dramas on television, except that, at least until recently, the typical plot line had to do with the War on Drugs rather than the War on Terror. Also related to this picture are the issues of situational crime prevention raised by Clarke and Newman (this volume). Indeed, the relation between terrorism and crime deserves further attention.

How are criminal gangs and terrorist groups alike?

Kaplan (2005) has argued that the similarity between criminals and terrorists is strong and growing. Terrorists, like other criminals, need money, weapons, safe houses, false papers, and secure communications. These are not easy to come by without state sponsorship, and state sponsorship of al-Qaeda terrorism was lost when the Taliban were driven from power in Afghanistan.

Since 9/11 the USA has put pressure on banking networks and Islamic charities to reduce the flow of funds to al-Qaeda and other jihadist terrorists, and has driven bin Laden and the remaining al-Qaeda leaders into hiding. In the absence of state and organizational support, jihadist

attacks now come from small, self-organizing groups such as those that planted bombs in Madrid and London, and planned bombs in Toronto and New York City. The result is that the small terrorist groups inspired by al-Qaeda must depend on their own fundraising.

The terrorist gang behind the [2004] train bombings in Madrid ... financed itself almost entirely with money earned from trafficking in hashish and ecstasy [trading \$50 000 worth of hashish for explosives]. al-Qaeda's affiliate in Southeast Asia, Jemaah Islamiyah, engages in bank robbery and credit card fraud; its 2002 Bali bombings were financed, in part, through jewelry store robberies that netted over 5 pounds of gold. In years past, many terrorist groups would have steered away from criminal activity, worried that such tactics might tarnish their image. But for hard-pressed jihadists, committing crimes against nonbelievers is increasingly seen as acceptable. As Abu Bakar Bashir, Jemaah Islamiyah's reputed spiritual head, reportedly said: "You can take their blood; then why not take their property?" (Kaplan, 2005).

Drug trafficking is particularly lucrative, and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA, 2005) has estimated that nearly eighteen of the forty-odd Foreign Terrorist Organizations (designated for their special threat to US interests) are involved in drug dealing (Committee on International Relations, US House of Representatives, 2005). Although al-Qaeda has kept clear of the drug trade, other jihadist groups, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, have found the money irresistible.

An example of jihadist rationale for dealing in drugs is offered by Baz Mohammad, who was extradited from Afghanistan in 2005 to stand trial for conspiring to import \$25 million worth of heroin into the USA. Baz reportedly said that selling heroin in the United States is a form of jihad because it took the Americans' money at the same time that the heroin they were paying for was killing them (DEA, 2005).

As Bjornehed (2004) notes, there are limits to the parallel between terrorist groups and criminal gangs. Of the three elements of establishing a criminal prosecution – means, motive, and opportunity – it appears that the means of violent crime are very similar for criminal gangs and terrorist groups, but that motive and opportunity are importantly different.

It is possible to see a motivational dimension of criminality that runs from purely economic goals to purely political goals. Terrorists have political goals, criminal gangs want money. A particular group can be placed on this dimension according to what it says and what it does. A purely criminal gang seldom issues a political statement after one of its operations; a purely terrorist group is very likely to take credit and link the operation to some political goal. A purely criminal gang goes where the money is; a purely terrorist group attacks the sources and symbols

of enemy power. Thus differences in motive can be observed in and around the commission of the crime.

Similarly there are differences in opportunity (see Clarke & Newman, this volume, for an in-depth focus on using situational crime prevention to reduce the opportunity for terrorist acts). Opportunity for criminals is an easy mark, a target that promises big returns for small risk. Such targets include drugs, gambling, prostitution, and fraud – so-called victimless crimes in which the political support of patrons is likely to reduce the fervor for criminal prosecution. But opportunity for terrorists is a difficult target, a big score that makes evident that all the power of the state cannot provide protection. Such targets include prominent political figures, prominent business people, and prominent members of the criminal justice system charged with fighting terrorism – judges, police, intelligence officials.

Consider the following targets of the Tamil Tigers:

1. the May 1991 assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at a campaign rally in India;
2. the May 1993 assassination of Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa;
3. the July 1999 assassination of a Sri Lankan member of parliament, Neelan Thiruchelvam, an ethnic Tamil involved in a government-sponsored peace initiative;
4. a pair of December 1999 suicide bombings in Colombo that wounded Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga;
5. the June 2000 assassination of Sri Lankan Industry Minister C.V. Goonaratnel;
6. the August 2005 assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar.

These were not easy targets with big money attached to success. By this measure we know that the Tigers are more a terrorist than a criminal group.

Consider the 1978 abduction and killing of Aldo Moro, five-time prime minister of Italy, by the Red Brigades. His five security guards were killed in the abduction. There was no financial profit, rather, according to Red Brigade leader Mario Moretti, a sense of desperation and doom (Katz, 1980).

Consider the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11. Financial profit is an implausible explanation for sacrificing one's life; suicide terrorism implies more terrorism than criminality. In general, difficult and unprofitable targets, especially targets reached only by suicide attacks, are an indicator that a group is more terrorist than criminal.

The distinction between terrorists and other criminals in terms of motivation and opportunity is important because failure to recognize this distinction leads to an attempt to create a unified front against terrorism and drugs – a war on narco-terrorism – that misses opportunities against both terrorism and drug trafficking (Bjornehed, 2004).

Against drug trafficking, the war on terrorism does not easily extend to developing alternative sources of income for poor farmers – even in Afghanistan, where the War on Terror and the War on Drugs come together most obviously. Indeed reduction of supply is likely to increase the price for drugs, as happened in Afghanistan in 2000 after the Taliban discouraged growing poppies, and higher prices can mean higher profits for the remaining drug producers and more support for terrorists. Similarly the war on terrorism offers little support for the reduction in demand for drugs in Western countries.

An additional concern is that the war on terrorism may take more than it gives to the War on Drugs (Bjornehed, 2004). A hundred DEA agents were assigned as marshals on airplanes after 9/11, and another forty were assigned to work with the FBI on drug-related terrorism cases. Seventy-five percent of Coast Guard forces working on drug interdiction were re-assigned to anti-terrorist patrols after 9/11. It seems likely that these and other shifts in resources from drugs to terrorism are related to reports of increased drug trafficking in the Caribbean after 9/11.

Against terrorism, the War on Drugs fails to recognize or respond to the political grievances that are the support base for terrorists. Politics is the key to understanding what criminal justice can do against terrorism, and this point will be emphasized at the conclusion of this chapter.

*What does the Pentagon think is needed to succeed
against terrorists?*

In his *US News & World Report* “Bad Guys Blog”, Kaplan (2006) highlights a new recruiting initiative from the Pentagon.

Imagine The Untouchables joining up with Delta Force. That’s what seems to be happening out on the cutting edge of US counterinsurgency strategy: The Pentagon is asking organized crime investigators for help in battling the stubborn insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Turns out that the networks of insurgents, terrorists, and criminals faced by US soldiers bear more resemblance to organized crime and narcotraffickers than to the military’s traditional adversaries.

Recruiting is being handled by Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), a division of the giant defense contractor L-3 Communications. MPRI was founded in 1988 by retired military

officers; its current president, Carl Vuono, was chief of staff for the US Army from 1987–1993. Job openings on the MPRI website (<https://app.mpri.com/IIF/jobs/jobsummary.html>) include # 2378, *Embedded Law Enforcement Professional*.

Requirements: “Must possess a minimum of 10 years experience in Criminal Investigations. Must be a US citizen in possession of a current US Tourist Passport, and able to communicate in fluent English. Must be capable and experienced in the collection of evidence to assist determination of criminal identity, networks, gangs and activities. Ability to examine records and files to find identifying data about suspects is required. Ability to analyze event statistics to determine patterns and methods of criminal enterprise is required. Ability to develop and maintain case files involving criminal events is required. Must be in good health and fitness to be able to deploy globally, to include non-permissive environments. Must possess an unblemished law enforcement background. Documented investigation experience in Organized Crime, gangs, and complex drug investigations is desired.”

Job description: “Assist select US Army and Marine brigade, regimental and division headquarters in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) [Afghanistan] to investigate, analyze and understand the nature of the threat of networked criminal activities in the area of operations. Assist select unit staffs in the compilation and analysis of information about organized criminal groups, and advise in the investigative direction, attack and neutralization of complex criminal enterprises.”

In short, the US military seeks to integrate the policing skills that it currently lacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. It remains to be seen whether expertise in dealing with US criminal organizations can be translated into useful intelligence in a very different culture, but it is noteworthy that those responsible for prosecuting the war on terrorism are ready to see the enemy as a criminal gang.

Terrorism as Politics: War, Justice, and Torture

The discussion thus far may be summarized as follows. In response to terrorism, war and criminal justice have importantly different implications. The US has emphasized war over justice, but successful counter-terrorism emphasizes police work over war. Successes against terrorists in Western countries are the result of police work. Success against terrorists in occupied territories takes the form of policing rather than war, especially insofar as policing avoids the jujitsu politics in which terrorists profit from an over-response to terrorism. Unsuccessful counter-terrorism looks more like war than policing, especially insofar as war produces the collateral damage that jujitsu politics depends on. The Pentagon believes that success in Iraq and Afghanistan requires

importing police skills into the military. Police skills will be valuable because terrorist groups resemble criminal gangs, especially drug trafficking gangs; similarities include cellular organization and the basic requirements of a violent underground such as weapons, money, safe houses, false papers, and secure communications. These similarities are reinforced by the fact that many terrorist groups solve their money problem by trafficking drugs.

Many of these ideas are embodied in a new US Army and Marine Corps manual for counterinsurgency operations. Here are five of the nine “paradoxes” described in the manual (Department of the Army, 2006, pp. 1–26 – 1–28).

7. *Tactical success guarantees nothing.* Military actions by themselves cannot achieve success.
8. *Sometimes, the more you protect your force, the less secure you may be.* If military forces stay locked up in compounds, they lose touch with the people, appear to be running scared and cede the initiative to insurgents.
9. *Sometimes, the more force is used, the less effective it is.* Using substantial force increases the risk of collateral damage and mistakes, and increases the opportunity for insurgent propaganda.
10. *Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction.* Often an insurgent carries out a terrorist act or guerilla raid with the primary purpose of causing a reaction that can then be exploited.
11. *The more successful counterinsurgency is the less force that can be used and the more risk that must be accepted.* As the level of insurgent violence drops, the military must be used less, with stricter rules of engagement, and the police force used more.

It might seem then that military restraint and police expertise can together provide successful counter-terrorism. But criminal justice is more than just avoiding damage and encouraging police skills. Effective criminal justice requires a legal code and a judicial system that is perceived as fair by the accused and their community. Effective criminal justice requires penalties and a penal system perceived as fair. In short, criminal justice requires trust – a relation of trust between community and the criminal justice system that includes not only the police but laws, judges, penal system – indeed the whole of local government.

In an op-ed in the *New York Times*, Max Boot (2007) has taken this argument to its logical if uncomfortable conclusion. He applauds forcing State Department Foreign Service Officers to serve in Iraq. He calls for an enlarged Agency for International Development to provide more government reconstruction experts. He suggests a federal police

force that can be deployed overseas, and legislation that would permit drafting civilian police officers to train Afghans and Iraqis. “Along with these police officers, we need a deployable corps of lawyers, judges, and prison guards who could set up functioning legal and penal systems abroad.”

Boot’s (2007) goal seems to be something very close to the ideal of community policing.

Effective community policing has a positive impact on reducing neighborhood crime, helping to reduce fear of crime and enhancing the quality of life in the community. It accomplishes these things by combining the efforts and resources of the police, local government and community members. . . . Establishing and maintaining mutual trust is the central goal of community partnership. Trust will give the police greater access to valuable information that can lead to the prevention of and solution of crimes. It will also engender support for police activities and provide a basis for a productive working relationship with the community that will find solutions to local problems (Community Policing Consortium, 2006).

Building the political infrastructure and trust required for community policing should be easier by far in the US than in Afghanistan or Iraq, but the Community Policing Consortium – a partnership of five of the leading police organizations in the US – are clear that this is an ideal far from realization in many places in the US. Indeed policing of minority groups in the US may at some times and in some places look like the policing of occupied territories described by Schultz and Godson (2006). Heavy surveillance and undercover agents trolling through Muslim communities may succeed in the short term but fail in the longer term that involves politics and culture.

A new generation of American Muslims – living in the shadow of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks – is becoming more religious. They are more likely to take comfort in their own communities, and less likely to embrace the nation’s fabled melting pot of shared values and common culture. . . . The men and women I spoke to – all mosque-goers, most born in the United States to immigrants – include students, activists, imams and everyday working Muslims. Almost without exception, they recall feeling under siege after Sept. 11, with FBI agents raiding their mosques and homes, neighbors eyeing them suspiciously and television programs portraying Muslims as the new enemies of the West (Abdo, 2006).

If Abdo’s impressions are correct, then the policing style that succeeds in occupied territories may not succeed in the US. Abdo’s impressions can remind us that, after all, the methods described as successful counter-terrorism operations by the UK and Israeli officials were

not in the long term successful. The U.K. does not any longer control Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, or Northern Ireland. Israel has pulled out of Gaza and is walling itself off from Palestinian areas of the West Bank.

Effective policing has to be effective politics. This lesson can be summarized in the following syllogism. War is politics by other means; terrorism is the warfare of the weak; therefore terrorism is politics.

Terrorism is killing civilians for political goals. State terrorism killed about 140 million civilians in the twentieth century, whereas non-state terrorism killed about half a million (Rummel, 1994). As these totals suggest, the distinction between civilian and soldier has been eroding, at least since the French Revolution invented the nation-in-arms and the levee en masse (McCauley, 2005). In parallel, the moral superiority of the state in relation to non-state challengers has been eroding.

The terrorism at issue in this chapter has been non-state terrorism, “terrorism from below.” The goals of non-state terrorists are broader than generally recognized (McCauley, 2007). Many definitions of terrorism focus on goals of frightening or coercing a target audience, usually a state’s citizens or policy makers. But terrorist attacks often have other and more immediate goals. Terrorists may compete with other groups for support among those who sympathize with the cause the terrorists claim to represent (“outbidding”; Bloom, 2005). Terrorists may aim to elicit a state response that will strike and mobilize previously passive sympathizers with the terrorist cause (jujitsu politics). Terrorists may mount an attack in order to resolve ingroup dissension and bring together competing factions in common action.

Similarly, the state’s goals in responding to terrorism are not just to suppress or eliminate terrorists. State responses may be aimed as well at domestic political goals that may include controlling risk perception as well as controlling risk. As for the US after 9/11, state responses may include diplomatic efforts to bring other countries into cooperation against terrorism. Similarly the US State Department has a program of “public diplomacy” aimed at moving the world’s billion Muslims from support for jihadi terrorism.

Terrorism and state response to terrorism form a dynamic system of action and reaction that extends over time, in which bystander groups and countries make a difference in the long-term outcome. This many-player iterated game is none other than politics, a continuing competition in which there are no final victories.

It is within this understanding of terrorism and response to terrorism that torture is most obviously counterproductive. Torture is violence

and humiliation that does not kill. Victims of torture go home to their families, their friends, and their communities. Sometimes they appear in videos, on web sites, or on television. Whether guilty or innocent of whatever was elicited under torture, their experience undermines trust in police and security forces, undermines trust in the rule of law, undermines any hope of justice from the system that uses torture. Torture is the strongest kind of community grievance against state power. If community policing is the ideal form of counter-terrorism, torturing suspected terrorists is the strongest expression of the logic of war: to win at any cost. The experience that led to the new manual for counter-insurgency operations suggests that this is a losing logic.

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5 Reducing the opportunities for terrorism: applying the principles of situational crime prevention

Ronald V. Clarke and Graeme R. Newman

Societies threatened by terrorism pursue many different strategies to protect themselves from attack. These include: “taking out” terrorists, sometimes through conventional warfare; strengthening laws and legal action to bring terrorists to justice; winning the “hearts and minds” of foreign and local communities that might otherwise support terrorism; persuading certain regimes to abandon their support for terrorists; and strengthening the confidence of home populations, including detailed plans for minimizing harm when attacks are made.

These strategies have been widely discussed in the academic literature, but in this chapter we discuss an approach that has received less attention – that of reducing the opportunities for terrorism. By this we mean protecting the most vulnerable targets from attack, controlling the tools and weapons used by terrorists, and altering specific aspects of other social and physical systems – what we call facilitating conditions – to make it harder for terrorists to operate. This approach is an application of situational crime prevention, the science of reducing opportunities for crime (Clarke, 1980). This means that we treat terrorism as simply another form of crime – crime with a political motive (Clarke and Newman, 2006). Situational prevention has no difficulty handling the many different motives that drive crime. For example, sexual abuse is a very differently motivated offense from, say, homicide or burglary or robbery, but examples of the successful application of situational prevention exist for all these and many other crimes (e.g., see Clarke, 2005). Indeed, examples already exist of the effective use of situational prevention against terrorism, including: (1) the “ring of steel” that virtually eliminated IRA bombings in Belfast city center, (2) the US embassy protections introduced in the 1980s that dramatically reduced embassy takeovers, and (3) the passenger and baggage screening introduced in 1973 that greatly reduced airliner hijackings (Clarke and Newman, 2006).

We describe situational prevention in more detail below and defend it from the “displacement” criticism – i.e., that it is impossible to reduce all

the opportunities for crime, but unless this is done, criminals will always be able to find weak points to attack. We then describe how situational prevention can be applied to terrorism. Before doing this, however, we must clarify the argument of this chapter in two important respects. First, we are not arguing that reducing opportunities for terrorism has been completely neglected – in fact, many public and private entities are now taking stock of their vulnerabilities to terrorist attack and are introducing security measures to reduce them. This activity encompasses a vast range of ports, transport systems, chemical plants, reservoirs, bridges and tunnels, schools, hospitals, malls, and many other facilities. However, there has been little published analysis to date of the assumptions underlying this strengthened security and of the contribution that situational prevention can make to it. Second, we are not arguing that reducing opportunities should replace other approaches to terrorism prevention, which we critique only in passing. We wish to argue only that reducing opportunities for terrorism requires the same policy attention from government that other preventive approaches receive.

Situational crime prevention

Often criticized as atheoretical and simplistic, situational prevention in fact rests upon a solid body of environmental criminology theories – routine activity theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979), crime pattern theory (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993), and the rational choice perspective (Cornish and Clarke, 1986). Unlike most other criminological theories that seek to explain the psychological, social, and biological roots of criminality (a disposition), environmental criminology theories seek to explain the occurrence of crime (a behavior). A fundamental premise of environmental criminology is that crime is the product of the interaction between a criminal disposition and an opportunity for crime. The implication is that opportunity is an important cause of crime, even of such deeply motivated crimes as homicide. This view is supported by the much greater risk of being murdered in the United States than in the United Kingdom. The difference has narrowed somewhat in recent years, but in the 1980s the risk of being murdered in the USA was about ten times greater than in the UK (Clarke and Mayhew, 1988). This is not because the USA is a more criminal country; in fact, rates of burglary and car theft are lower in the USA than in the UK (Langhan and Farrington, 1998). Rather, the high murder rate in the USA is due to the widespread ownership of guns, especially handguns, in that country. In other words, the availability of a gun is an important situational cause of homicide.

From this starting point, which acknowledges the causal role of opportunity, situational prevention claims that reducing opportunities will reduce crime and, indeed, that more certain and swifter preventive gains are to be had by focusing on the reduction of opportunities than on the reduction of dispositions. To ensure success, however, a situational prevention project must adhere to the following seven principles:

- (1) Situational prevention must be focused on a highly specific form of crime, such as juvenile joyriding, rather than on some broader category of crime such as “car thefts.” This is because the situational determinants of any specific category of crime are quite distinct: different even from those crimes that seem similar. For example, varying crimes within a broad category may be committed for different motives, by different offenders with quite different resources and skills.
- (2) Situational prevention should be based on a detailed understanding of *how* the crime is committed, not so much on *why* it is committed. This is because the motives for most crimes are both readily apparent and are difficult to change, while a detailed understanding of modus operandi yields many suggestions about ways to block opportunities for the crime.
- (3) Situational prevention should treat the offender as a rational decision maker, trying to achieve a particular benefit while at the same time minimizing risk and effort. An understanding of the offender’s decisions can be achieved in two main ways: (a) through detailed analysis of data about recorded offenses, and (b) by interviewing offenders about their methods.
- (4) Situational prevention should analyze all stages of a crime, from preparation, through to commission, escape, and aftermath. Examining each stage in detail increases the yield of preventive options.
- (5) Situational prevention should consider a wide range of different preventive options since success is more readily achieved by a package of opportunity-reducing initiatives than by a single measure. To assist the process of identifying possible solutions, situational prevention researchers have classified the very many different ways that exist to reduce crime opportunities. The latest classification (Cornish and Clarke, 2003) has twenty-five opportunity-reducing techniques grouped under five main headings: (a) increase the effort, (b) increase the risks, (c) reduce the rewards, (d) reduce provocations, and (e) remove excuses (see [Table 5.1](#)).
- (6) Situational prevention should evaluate the impact of the implemented measures paying particular attention to any possible displacement.

Table 5.1. *Twenty-five techniques of situational prevention.*

Increase the effort	Increase the risks	Reduce the rewards	Reduce provocations	Remove excuses
1. <i>Target-harden</i> Steering-column locks and ignition immobilizers; anti-robbery screens; tamper-proof packaging.	6. <i>Extend guardianship</i> Go out in group at night; leave signs of occupancy; carry cell-phone.	11. <i>Conceal targets</i> Off-street parking; gender-neutral phone directories; unmarked armored trucks.	16. <i>Reduce frustrations and stress</i> Efficient lines; polite service; expanded seating; soothing music/muted lights.	21. <i>Set rules</i> Rental agreements; harassment codes; hotel registration.
2. <i>Control access to facilities</i> Entry phones; electronic card access; baggage-screening.	7. <i>Assist natural surveillance</i> Improved street lighting; defensible space design; support whistleblowers.	12. <i>Remove targets</i> Removable car radio; women's shelters; pre-paid cards for pay-phones.	17. <i>Avoid disputes</i> Separate seating for rival soccer fans; reduce crowding in bars; fixed cab fares.	22. <i>Post instructions</i> "No parking"; "Private property"; "Extinguish camp fires."
3. <i>Screen exits</i> Ticket needed for exit; export documents; electronic merchandise tags.	8. <i>Reduce anonymity</i> Taxi driver IDs; "How's my driving?" decals; school uniforms.	13. <i>Identify property</i> Property marking; vehicle licensing and parts marking; cattle branding.	18. <i>Reduce temptation and arousal</i> Controls on violent pornography; enforce good behavior on soccer field; prohibit racial slurs	23. <i>Alert conscience</i> Roadside speed display boards; signatures for customs declarations; "Shoplifting is stealing."
4. <i>Deflect offenders</i> Street closures; separate bathrooms for women; disperse pubs.	9. <i>Use place managers</i> CCTV for double-deck buses; two clerks for convenience stores; reward vigilance.	14. <i>Disrupt markets</i> Monitor pawn shops; controls on classified ads; license street vendors.	19. <i>Neutralize peer pressure</i> "Idiots drink and drive"; "It's OK to say no"; disperse troublemakers at school.	24. <i>Assist compliance</i> Easy library checkout; public lavatories; litter receptacles.
5. <i>Control tools/weapons</i> "Smart" guns; restrict spray-paint sales to juveniles; toughened beer glasses.	10. <i>Strengthen formal surveillance</i> Red-light cameras; burglar alarms; security guards.	15. <i>Deny benefits</i> Ink merchandise tags; graffiti cleaning; disabling stolen cell-phones.	20. <i>Discourage imitation</i> Rapid repair of vandalism; V-chips in TVs; censor details of modus operandi.	25. <i>Control drugs and alcohol</i> Breathalyzers in bars; server intervention programs; alcohol-free events.

Sources: Clarke and Eck (2003); Cornish and Clarke (2003).

For example, crimes may be committed at a different place or time, or the modus operandi may change in some other way so that the offenders can continue to commit their crimes. In fact, empirical research has not provided much support for the displacement hypothesis. The most recent meta-analysis of evaluations, undertaken by Hesseling (1994) for the Dutch government, reported that there was no evidence for any displacement in twenty-two of the fifty-five studies examined. In the remaining thirty-three studies there was some evidence consistent with displacement, but in all studies more crime was prevented than displaced. This is entirely consistent with the strong role of opportunity in crime of all kinds.

- (7) Situational prevention should examine two other possible results of situational measures – the diffusion of benefits and offender adaptation. The first concept refers to the fact that the preventive value of measures sometimes “diffuses” beyond the targets of intervention. For example, the use of CCTV in discreet locations may bring about a wider, more general reduction in crime. This is because offenders are frequently uncertain about the scope and the reach of new prevention measures. The second concept, adaptation, refers to the long-term adjustment that takes place in the offender population to the introduction of preventive measures. These may work for a while without substantial displacement by the offenders whose actions resulted in their introduction. But over time, sometimes years later, other offenders discover new vulnerabilities that they can exploit.

With this background, we now turn to the application of situational prevention to terrorism. We discuss this under two headings: (1) analyzing the opportunity structure for terrorism, and (2) changing the opportunity structure to reduce the likelihood of terrorism being committed. We begin by explaining what we mean by the opportunity structure for terrorism.

The opportunity structure for terrorism

The term *opportunity structure for terrorism* refers to the arrangements of everyday life that create the opportunities that terrorists exploit. We diagram the concept in [Figure 5.1](#), which is premised on the fundamental tenet of environmental criminology, that human action is the outcome of an interaction between motivation and opportunity.

The purpose of [Figure 5.1](#) is to show how the four pillars of terrorist opportunity exploited by terrorists (targets, weapons, tools, and facilitating conditions, boxes 8 to 11) derive from broader features of society

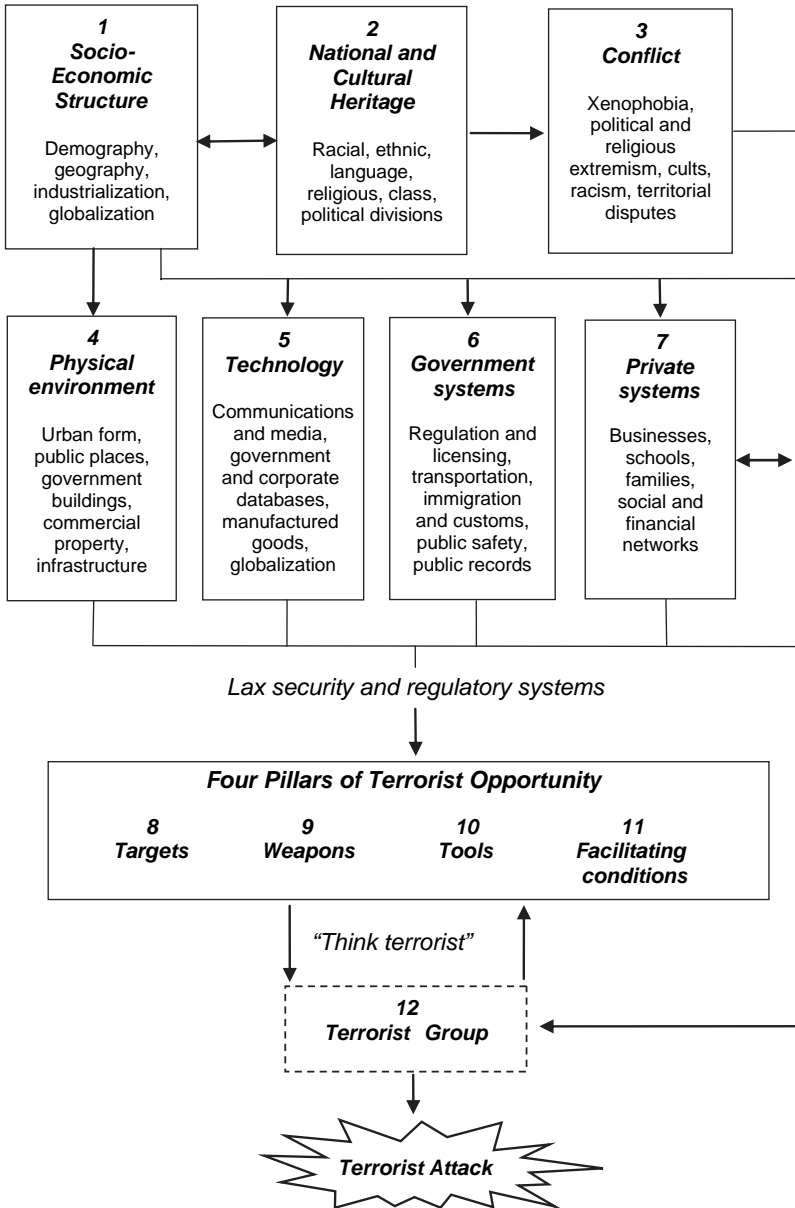


Figure 5.1 The opportunity structure for terrorism.

and how these broader features of society also produce the motivations for terrorism. Thus, the specific forms of the four pillars of opportunity depend upon the physical environment, the technology, the government systems, and the private systems in a particular society (boxes 4 to 7). In turn, these result from the socio-economic structure of the society (box 1), which also interacts with cultural heritage (box 2) and the sources of conflict – historical, ethnic, religious, political, economic, and ideological – that breed hatred and extremism, the motivation to attack (box 3). Depending on the historical period, these various factors create the framework within which terrorist groups operate. For example, in the current age, globalization serves to increase nationalism and at the same time directs hatred against foreign countries. Moreover, communications and transportation systems increase the ability to establish international networks. Hatred against occupying forces, resentment, and extremist ideologies feed the justifications for terrorism, and help develop the social infrastructure that supports terrorist groups (box 12).

Analyzing the opportunity structure

Three principles drawn from the general experience of situational prevention should govern the analysis of the opportunity structure for terrorism. These are as follows:

- (1) Terrorism comes in many different forms – aircraft hijackings, suicide bombings, truck bombings, assassinations, hostage takings, etc. Each of these differs in important ways from every other form of terrorism, including: the specific motives and objectives of the terrorists, the size and organization of the group, the complexity of the operation and the amount of preparation required, the choice of target weapons and tools, the facilitating conditions that are exploited, and so forth. This means that each form of terrorism must be separately analyzed if effective interventions are to be identified. Thus, it would serve little purpose to understand the details of the baggage- and passenger-screening used to prevent aircraft hijackings if the intention is to prevent truck bombings of police stations or government buildings. Indeed, even closely similar forms of terrorism, say suicide bombings in Israel and those on the London Underground, depend on opportunity structures that differ in key respects. Unlike the situation in Israel, the suicide attacks on the London Underground have not become routine and might not do so because the conditions for routine terrorism in London do not

exist. There are no “occupied” adjacent ethnic/nationalist territories, there is little support for terrorism in immigrant communities, and there is no clear evidence of a sustained supply line of effective explosives or willing suicides for terrorist attacks.

- (2) When analyzing terrorism it is important not to demonize terrorists. Callous and cruel as they may be, terrorists should not be dismissed simply as “animals” or “inhuman fanatics.” This is to put them beyond the pale of ordinary human understanding, with the result that defeating them will be more difficult. More effective is to see them as they really are: mostly ordinary individuals, who for political and religious reasons have decided that it is legitimate to destroy their enemies. This is not much different from soldiers at war – and terrorists regard themselves as being engaged in war. Regarding them as ordinary human beings, rationally pursuing their objectives (however twisted) makes it easier to analyze their actions. In doing this, it is essential to see the task of perpetrating an attack from their perspective; that is, one must put oneself in their shoes and attempt to mimic their decision making. In a broader crime context, Ekblom (1995) has labeled this process “think thief.” To “think terrorist” is even more important, because the data that assist the planning of crime prevention projects are usually not available for terrorism: there may be too few instances of the specific form of terrorism for statistical analysis, and interviewing a sample of the terrorists involved is often impossible.
- (3) The hatreds and ambitions that motivate particular terrorist groups are generally well understood (at least when the group has been operating for any length of time), often because they issue lengthy communiqués explaining and justifying their actions. Since there is usually small prospect of changing their motives, “thinking terrorist” does not mean seeking to understand *why* terrorists act as they do. Rather, research should be focused on understanding *how* they select the kinds of terrorist acts they choose to commit, and *how* they go about planning and executing them. A detailed understanding of such matters usually brings a wealth of preventive insights. Acquiring this understanding involves a step-by-step analysis of each stage of the act, from conception, through the various stages of its planning and execution, to escape and the subsequent management of the related publicity.

When analyzing the opportunity structure for terrorism, particular attention should be paid to the targets, tools, weapons, and facilitating conditions that are exploited by the terrorists. We offer some pointers for analysis for each of these four pillars of terrorist opportunity below.

Targets

It might appear that thieves have an unlimited choice of objects to steal, but in reality they focus their attention on a small section of CRAVED – Concealable, Removable, Available, Valuable, Enjoyable, and Disposable – products (Clarke, 1999), which are stolen at much higher rates than other products. In the same way, the seemingly unlimited targets for terrorist attack (subway systems, buses, trains, airliners, power plants, reservoirs, embassies, public buildings, prominent individuals, etc.) do not all offer the same opportunities or rewards. Terrorists must choose carefully among the various distinguishing characteristics of targets so as to maximize the impact of their attack. This is particularly true for single attacks mounted by overseas terrorists, or by domestic terrorists with limited resources. Thus, the choice of the Pentagon and the World Trade Center by the 9/11 attackers ensured that they delivered a huge shock to the American population at large and an enormous propaganda victory among their supporters. In our book *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (Clarke and Newman, 2006) we offered the acronym EVIL DONE as a starting point for the analysis of factors weighed by foreign terrorists in choosing a building or structure to attack (see Table 5.2). This was the result of our efforts to “think terrorist” and it would have to be repeated for the many different forms of terrorism that exist.

Weapons

Despite widespread fear of attack by weapons of mass destruction (biological, chemical, or nuclear), terrorists have made very little use of such weapons. The reasons are not entirely clear, but these weapons are difficult to obtain or manufacture, they require specialist knowledge, and are hazardous and unpredictable in their use. In fact, most terrorists have relied almost exclusively on guns or explosives, which come in many different varieties, not all of which are equally appropriate for every task or target. Hijacking an airliner requires small and easily concealed weapons. Assassinating a politician might require a rifle with telescopic sights. Blowing up a building might require a truck packed with explosives, and so forth. In general, however, the weapons that terrorists use must satisfy some basic requirements, which may be different from the requirements of the military or police. In *Outsmarting the Terrorists* (Clarke and Newman, 2006) we offer the acronym MURDEROUS as a starting point for analyzing terrorists’ choice of weapons (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.2. *Terrorists' choice of targets: the components of EVIL DONE.*

<i>Exposed</i>	A target might stick out on a city sky line – for example, the twin towers of the World Trade Center – or it might stand out in some way: the only multi-storey building in a small town (perhaps a federal government building), or a large shopping complex, or a nuclear power plant surrounded by suburbs.
<i>Vital</i>	Water supply, electricity, food supply chains, transportation systems are all vital to any town, small or large, and may be chosen by terrorists.
<i>Iconic</i>	Targets that have high symbolic value may attract terrorists. The Statue of Liberty, for example, is a true icon of the United States. In contrast, Timothy McVeigh chose to bomb the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995, because it stood for the federal government, which he abhorred.
<i>Legitimate</i>	It is important to terrorists how an attack will be viewed by their sympathizers or would-be sympathizers. If the attack is viewed as illegitimate, such as, for example, the killing of Lord Mountbatten in 1979 by the IRA, the terrorist group may lose considerable public support. Hamas in Palestine has conducted frequent public opinion polls to find out whether or not their targets were seen as legitimate by their supporters.
<i>Destructible</i>	For a terrorist attack to succeed, it must destroy its target. A target that is “indestructible” may therefore not be chosen. The twin towers were considered as such, until al-Qaeda devised a way to destroy them in its second attack.
<i>Occupied</i>	With few exceptions, terrorists seek to kill as many people as possible, because it is this that frightens their enemies most.
<i>Near</i>	Getting to the target is one of the major challenges for terrorists. They prefer to attack targets that are close to their home base of operations because the logistics are easier.
<i>Easy</i>	How easy is it to access the target? For McVeigh, it was too easy: he was able to park the truck bomb just eight feet from the federal building. How easy was it for al-Qaeda to attack the World Trade Center? For the first attack in 1993, it was relatively easy since there was poor parking security in the parking garage. But for the second attack on 9/11, it was truly difficult, involving the training of pilots to fly commercial airliners into the towers.

Tools

Without the tools of everyday life it is much harder for terrorists to reach a target or use their weapons. For many of the commonest attacks, such as car or truck bombings, drive-by shootings, and targeted assassinations, terrorists are likely to need most of the following: cell-phones or other means of communication; cars or trucks to transport themselves

Table 5.3. *The MURDEROUS attributes of terrorist weapons.*

<i>Multi-purpose</i>	A high-powered rifle has a specific use, while explosives have a much wider application, but they cannot be reused, so their supply must be replenished. However, bullets must also be replaced, and there are ways to achieve the destructive effects of explosives, by using such weapons as rocket-propelled grenades.
<i>Undetectable</i>	Because of the security procedures in places like airports, the weapons often have to be concealable or undetectable. This helps explain the popularity of Semtex among terrorists, which is small, lightweight, and largely undetectable. It serves as an ideal weapon for suicide bombers, who must penetrate layers of security to reach their targets.
<i>Removable</i>	The weapons of terrorism must be portable, which means that they must be relatively light and reasonably small so they can be carried by one or two people, or at least lifted onto the back of a pick-up truck.
<i>Destructive</i>	Guns may be a more efficient way to kill targeted individuals, but the weapon of choice of many terrorist groups is an explosive device that wreaks as much damage as possible. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have killed many soldiers and civilians in Iraq.
<i>Enjoyable</i>	Terrorists are clearly attracted to their weapons, seeming to get much excitement and pleasure out of their use. In fact, it is not just terrorists who enjoy weapons. Many ordinary people do too.
<i>Reliable</i>	If terrorists have used a weapon, or one like it, many times before, they are likely to favor that weapon over another. This means that unconventional weapons, of unknown reliability, will be shunned unless the mission cannot be accomplished in any other way.
<i>Obtainable</i>	How easy is it to get the weapon? Can it be bought or stolen easily? Or can it even be manufactured in-house? The world is awash with small arms and, because there are so many of them, there are plenty of places from which to steal them – probably the most common way in which terrorists obtain their weapons.
<i>Uncomplicated</i>	Even seemingly simple weapons such as handguns require practice and training to use properly. A weapon that demands considerable skill, such as a free-flight armor-piercing missile, will rarely be used. In fact, when these have been used by terrorist groups, they have often proved unsuccessful because of incorrect use.
<i>Safe</i>	The use of bombs as weapons is inherently more dangerous than the use of other weapons. It is claimed that during the period from 1969 to 1993 one third of the Provisional Irish Republican Army members were blown up by explosives that detonated prematurely.

and weapons; cash or (false) credit cards; false documents (e.g., drivers licenses, passports or visas, vehicle registration documents, etc.); and, finally, maps, plans, addresses, photographs, and other information about the target. These objects are so necessary to everyday life that it can be difficult to see how to control their use by terrorists, but there are three general approaches to tightening up controls on tools: (1) we can modify them so as to make them more difficult to convert to terrorist use, (2) we can tighten up their supply or reduce their accessibility to terrorists, and (3) we can track their distribution so we know who has acquired them. Many examples exist of industry and business modifying products to protect, not the public, but themselves, from fraudsters, video pirates, hackers, vandals, counterfeiters, and thieves (Clarke and Newman, 2005). Similarly, governments are continually improving banknotes, passports, and other documents to prevent counterfeiting. In fact, many of these measures serve the dual benefit of preventing both crime and terrorism. Improvements made to credit card authentication and delivery (Hardie and Hobbs, 2005; Levi, 2008) and to cell-phone subscriber authentication (Clarke *et al.*, 2001) substantially reduced fraud, but would also have made life more difficult for terrorists seeking to use these objects illegally.

Despite the generality of tools needed by terrorists, some attacks do, of course, require more specific tools (e.g., a belt to carry the suicide bomber's explosives) and it will always be important to understand what these tools might be and how they might be controlled. For example, airline passengers were forbidden to bring liquids on board when it was realized that terrorists could make bombs from liquid ingredients.

Facilitating conditions

Specific societal conditions enhance the opportunity for terrorism, such as the enormous availability of small arms, porous borders between countries, the proliferation of nuclear technology and materials, and banking practices that help money-laundering (see Table 5.4). Once again, facilitating conditions vary with the nature of the terrorist act but, generally speaking, they can be grouped into five categories – those that make crime Easy, Safe, Excusable, Enticing, and Rewarding – or ESEER. With regard to the list of fourteen facilitating conditions for money-laundering in Table 5.4, it could be said that the first four make it safer, 5 to 8 make it more excusable, and 9 to 13 make it easier. Number 14 in the list (access to free-trade zones) makes money-laundering easier and more rewarding (and perhaps therefore more enticing as well) because it permits avoidance of taxes on the laundered amounts.

Table 5.4. *Facilitating conditions for money laundering.*

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|------|--|
| (1) | A criminal justice system that has failed to criminalize money-laundering or failed to enforce any money-laundering offenses. |
| (2) | Law enforcement that has limited asset seizure or confiscation capabilities and/or limited narcotics and money-laundering enforcement capabilities. |
| (3) | Bank regulatory agencies that are understaffed, underskilled, and underpaid, and have limited audit authority over foreign-owned or -controlled banks. |
| (4) | A government and civil service that is prone to, or ripe for, official corruption. |
| (5) | Rigid bank secrecy laws. |
| (6) | Few identification requirements to conduct financial transactions and the ability to use anonymous, nominee, or numbered accounts. |
| (7) | No mandatory disclosure of the beneficial owner of an account or of the beneficiary of a transaction, and no mandatory reporting of suspicious transactions. |
| (8) | Lack of effective monitoring of currency movements and no recording requirements for large cash or near-cash transactions. |
| (9) | Use of bearer monetary instruments. |
| (10) | The ability to use American dollars in the local economy and a significant trade in gems, particularly diamonds. |
| (11) | Well-established non-bank financial systems. |
| (12) | Ease of incorporation, including the use of shell corporations, shareholder nominees, and/or bearer shares. |
| (13) | A domestic banking system that allows foreign banks to control, own, or freely use domestic banks. |
| (14) | Access to free-trade zones such as the Colón Free Zone in Panama. |
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Source: US State Department.

Analyzing facilitating conditions in this way suggests numerous possibilities for preventive action. Even if they cannot all be altered, it is still important to lay them out as fully as possible because this will permit a more realistic assessment of the likely displacement effects of interventions that can be made.

Changing the opportunity structure for terrorism

It should be clear from the above discussion that analysis of the opportunity structure should reveal many points where preventive action could reduce the scope for attacks. Indeed, one of the lessons of situational prevention is that there are always many ways to reduce the opportunities for any specific form of crime – and thus terrorism. [Table 5.5](#) gives examples of possible ways to reduce opportunities

Table 5.5. *Situational interventions to reduce opportunities for terrorism.*

<i>Increase the effort for terrorists</i>	Barriers, walls, improved ID authentication, and extensive ID requirements for opening bank accounts in immigrant communities all increase the difficulties for terrorists. Tightened procedures for issuing documents such as drivers licenses, health cards, and birth/death certificates increase the effort needed to obtain a false ID.
<i>Increase the risks for terrorists</i>	New tracking technologies to increase the risk for the terrorists are becoming cheaper and more effective every year. The miniaturization and mass production of remote frequency ID (RFID) chips coupled with geographic information system (GIS) technology now makes it possible to track most objects with considerable accuracy, from products and parcels, to pets, cattle, and humans. Smart cards, national ID cards, and other means of ID verification and authentication are just a few of the possibilities.
<i>Reduce the rewards for terrorists</i>	Bomb-proofing of buildings and designing public places to minimize injury from bombs reduces the rewards from terrorism. Highlighting incidents where terrorists either kill each other because of internal disagreements, or accidentally kill themselves, for example, in bomb preparation, may help demythologize the terrorist group, making it look less attractive to potential recruits and supporters.
<i>Reduce the provocations for terrorists</i>	“Taking out” individual terrorists or torturing them to extract information can provoke a violent reaction from terrorists, and these actions should be avoided wherever possible. Nothing can be done about the greatest provocation of all to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda – the very existence of the United States. However, the USA (whether government or corporate) is subject to many more attacks abroad than it is at home, simply because its facilities are much more exposed in foreign countries. Consequently, efforts should be made to make overseas facilities and personnel blend more into the local surroundings.
<i>Remove the excuses for terrorism</i>	Using violence in response to terrorist attacks also offers terrorists an excuse for using violence as their central method of achieving success: “If the enemy does it, why can’t we?” There is also the very strong enticement for the terrorists to provoke the enemy, when it is a government, into overreacting to their terrorist acts, resulting in deprivations of freedoms for ordinary people. This feeds the terrorists’ underlying justification that the government’s dependence on violence is far greater than their own.

for terrorism by (1) increasing the effort, (2) increasing the risks, (3) reducing the rewards, (4) reducing provocations, and (5) removing the excuses.

The experience of situational prevention tells us that there will never be just one way to prevent a specific form of terrorism. In selecting the measures to implement, each one should be assessed, not just for its likely effectiveness, but for its wider costs and benefits. In all cases, the assessment must go beyond financial considerations and must include a variety of social and ethical costs, such as intrusiveness, inconvenience, unfairness, discrimination, etc. Each measure must also be assessed in terms of whether it might increase feelings of public safety or whether it might provoke retaliatory attacks by the terrorists. Even if the assessment is informal, as it usually must be, this stage should never be skipped. Because there are always many different ways to reduce opportunities, there is no necessity to adopt a particular solution if it is found unacceptable in certain respects.

Evaluation

Any situational prevention project should include an evaluation of the measures that are introduced, including an examination of any displacement effects. This will be particularly important in regard to terrorism because it is widely believed that terrorists are especially determined and will always find a way to commit their acts. In fact, this is not borne out by the best-documented example of the situational prevention of terrorism, which concerns the security measures taken to reduce hijacking in 1973. [Table 5.6](#) shows the dramatic effect of these measures. In the five years (1968–1972) *before* the introduction of the measures there were 135 hijackings of US airliners, whereas in the five years *after* the measures were introduced (1973–1977) there were twenty-eight hijackings of US airliners, constituting a reduction of nearly 80%. Of the 135 airliners hijacked in the five years before the implementation of the situational measures ninety-two were destined to reach Cuba; in the five years after the measures only three of the twenty-eight hijackings were destined for Cuba.

[Table 5.6](#) also shows that, despite the huge growth in air travel, the number of hijackings has been greatly reduced worldwide since the early 1970s. Furthermore, the table shows that hijackings were not displaced to other countries that were slower to introduce security than the USA; and that there was no substantial displacement to bombings of airliners.¹ Although it is true that the 9/11 hijackers found ways around the security that had been put into place, this is not an example

Table 5.6. *Airliner hijackings and sabotage bombings (attempts and completed), 1961–2005.*

Period	Number of years	Mean hijackings per year		Mean sabotage bombings per year, worldwide
		US	Foreign	
1961–1967	7	1.6	3.0	1.0
1968	1	20.0	15.0	1.0
1969–1970	2	30.5	58.0	4.5
1971–1972	2	27.0	33.0	4.5
1973–1985	13	9.4	22.7	2.2
1986–1989	4	2.8	9.0	2.0
1990–2000	11	0.3	18.5	0.3
2001–2003	3	1.3	5.7	0.0
1961–2003	43	6.7	17.9	1.6

Source: Clarke and Newman (2006)

of displacement (which is a term reserved for the changes in behavior of offenders whose actions gave rise to the preventive measures), but instead represents a longer-term *adaptation* by the population of offenders to a permanently changed opportunity structure.

A program of situational prevention

We began by arguing that governments needed to pay more attention to reducing opportunities for terrorist attacks, and in this chapter we have outlined a methodology for reducing opportunities, deriving from the principles of situational prevention. Any government seeking to embark on a program of situational prevention would have to find a way to apply this methodology routinely, which translates into a complex set of policy requirements that we discuss in conclusion. They are as follows:

- (1) *The need to prevent attacks both at home and overseas.* Any country is generally more vulnerable to attacks near the terrorists' bases of operation than at home. Providing protection overseas to businesses, embassies, and the military presents a different set of problems, involving a different group of agencies, than protecting from terrorist attacks at home. Governments will have to establish specific capacities and separate budgets to provide this protection.
- (2) *The need to prioritize targets for protection.* Because it is impossible to protect every target, governments must make hard choices in deciding where to put preventive resources. Political considerations will influence these choices, but as far as possible they should be

based on risks of attack. It has been repeatedly demonstrated by situational prevention researchers that the risk of crime is not distributed evenly throughout society; rather, it is heavily concentrated on particular places, targets, and victims (Clarke and Eck, 2005). We would argue that the same phenomenon holds for terrorism: a few targets attract most of the attacks and a few tools and weapons are disproportionately useful to terrorists. (The World Trade Center attracted two deadly attacks.) Indeed, this principle governs our attempts to identify the targets, tools, and weapons requiring most attention.

- (3) *The need to “cascade” responsibility for protection to lower governmental levels.* The groups and agencies at these “lower” levels include county and municipal authorities, as well as local police agencies (Clarke and Newman, 2006), who should all be encouraged to think about vulnerabilities in their particular spheres of responsibility. They should analyze the principal vulnerabilities within their immediate jurisdictions and develop a plan for reducing them. For example, a municipality must ensure that the local schools, reservoirs, malls, and entertainment venues have developed contingency plans. In this way, responsibility *cascades* down from central government to involve every government level below. These plans, at all levels of government, will need to be periodically reviewed on a schedule determined by government budgetary disbursements.
- (4) *The need to work within predetermined budgets.* While relative risks of attack should determine preventive priorities, it is an open question what precise *level* of risk would demand preventive action. In fact, this question cannot be answered in the abstract, except perhaps for very low or high risks of imminent attack. For other levels of risk, it is impossible to know where to draw the line. The only realistic option we can see is for each responsible public and private entity to work within a predetermined budget that would include government subsidies.
- (5) *The need to partner with business.* Businesses and corporate entities own so much of the country’s vital infrastructure (reservoirs, chemical plants, transport systems, ports, airliners, communications, etc.) that they are almost always collateral victims of terrorist attacks, if not in many cases the prime targets.² Such attacks have the potential for major loss of life as well as for considerable disruption to the economy and everyday life, but they can also be devastating for the companies concerned. This means that businesses and corporations have a dual role in protection: if they protect themselves from attack, the rest of us reap the benefits. In theory,

nobody understands the vulnerabilities of their property (and the costs and the difficulties of protection) better than businesses do themselves, but they need to be supported by government in making the necessary improvements and changes. This may involve subsidies or tax concessions, but they might also be encouraged to take measures themselves, which have “dual benefits” in terms of preventing crime as well as terrorism. Examples would include: (a) improved physical security, which can keep out both terrorists and criminals from business facilities; (b) product marking and tracking, which can increase the risks to the burglar and the thief, as well as making terrorists’ tools and weapons of terrorism more traceable; and (c) tightened bank regulations, which can make the financing of terrorism more difficult, as well as interfere with the financial transactions of organized crime.

- (6) *The need for in-house situational prevention expertise.* Governments could not meet these requirements without developing their own in-house expertise in reducing vulnerabilities to terrorism. This expertise would also be needed for commissioning the research needed to inform the program of situational prevention, including (a) studies of terrorist decision making and choice of targets; (b) evaluations of situational interventions, including cost effectiveness; (c) studies of implementation failures, displacement, and adaptation; and (d) detailed problem solving studies of the scope for controlling specific tools and weapons. Beyond commissioning the work, governments would have to find ways to make data available in a timely manner for research. Given the possessiveness and secrecy often surrounding these data, this will be a major undertaking in itself.

Conclusions

The principles of situational crime prevention can be translated readily into a methodology for reducing opportunities for terrorism; indeed, examples already exist of the successful application of this approach in controlling terrorism. Despite this, it could prove difficult to include a program of opportunity reduction among the panoply of strategies routinely employed in countering the terrorist threat. (See Clare and Morgan, this volume, for a discussion of the relationship between situational prevention of terrorism and other strategies for risk reduction presented in this book.) This will require governments to form partnerships with business, industry, and academia and, in turn, this will

require them to develop a capacity to build these partnerships and to promote an agenda of situational prevention. This involves the daunting prospect of a large investment of resources and years of patient work. However, terrorism will not disappear (though it may wax or wane over time) and it might be encouraged by easy opportunities for attack. Society cannot afford to take this risk and must invest more resources in reducing opportunities for terrorism.

NOTES

- 1 Some researchers have claimed that there was displacement to other forms of terrorism in other parts of the world – Enders and Sandler (1993, 2000, 2006); Enders *et al.* (1990); Cauley and Im (1988); Chauncey (1975); Dugan *et al.* (2005) – but see Clarke and Newman (2006) for a critique of these studies.
- 2 The privatization of infrastructure, while at its peak in the United States, is spreading throughout many countries of the world, and in many instances government and the private sector share ownership of communications, transportation, and other essential services. This was highlighted in March, 2006, with the revelation that the majority of US ports were owned or operated by foreign companies (Kaplan, 2006).

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6 From the terrorists' point of view: toward a better understanding of the staircase to terrorism

Fathali M. Moghaddam

Terrorism is “politically motivated violence, perpetrated by individuals, groups, or state-sponsored agents, intended to instill fear and helplessness in a population in order to influence decision-making and to change behavior” (Moghaddam, 2005a, p. 161). Particularly since the 1990s, there has been a sharp rise in Islamic terrorism (Bloom, 2005; Oliver and Steinberg, 2005; McDermott, 2005; Pape, 2005), coupled with a radicalization of Islamic communities around the world (Pew Research Center, 2006). Of course, non-Islamic societies also continue to serve as a source of terrorism (Coogan, 2002; Linenthal, 2001), but since the tragedy of 9/11, the devastating mismanagement of Iraq after the US-led invasion in 2003, and the disastrous foreign policy of the Bush administration in the Near and Middle East, terrorism emanating from Islamic communities has become a greater international challenge.

Complex historical, economic, cultural, social, and psychological factors are associated with the increase in Islamic terrorism (Bongar *et al.*, 2006; Moghaddam, 2006a). Enormous resources have been invested by the United States and other countries to better understand these factors, and a vast amount and variety of information is being gathered to develop more effective tactics and weapons in the seemingly endless “War on Terror.” Indeed, despite claims of a “lack of information about terrorism,” we are increasingly in danger of being swamped by a tsunami of data about terrorism around the world, but without adequate conceptual models that allow us effectively to interpret this data. Most importantly, there is a lack of attention on how to interpret events and information *From the Terrorists' Point of View*.

Why “from the terrorists' point of view?” Why should we invest resources in understanding the point of view of people who try to harm and kill civilians, and attempt to instill terror in entire populations? The answer is that we must adopt this approach because it represents the most effective strategy toward defeating terrorism. Both theory and practice show it is imperative that we come to understand better

the *process* of becoming a terrorist from the viewpoint of the terrorist. Through a focus on process, the sub-specialty of terrorism research is also able to feed back into mainstream research. Toward filling this gap in conceptual tools, I have put forward a model based on a staircase metaphor (Moghaddam, 2005a; 2005b).

The staircase to terrorism

Imagine a building with a staircase, where everyone begins on the ground floor. There are about 1.3 billion Muslims on the ground floor, and the vast majority of them remain there and never move to higher floors. However, a very small minority does move on to higher floors, and as it does, its actions and thoughts on each floor are characterized by particular psychological processes. On the ground floor, the dominant psychological processes are identity (questions such as “What kind of person am I?” and “What kind of group do I belong to?” continue as the major theme all the way up the staircase to terrorism), as well as perceptions of fairness (“Am I and my group being treated fairly?”) and the subjective interpretation of material conditions. Some individuals become so dissatisfied with their situation on the ground floor, because they suffer from an inadequate sense of identity, or feel that they are being treated unfairly, or perceive their material conditions to be too impoverished, or a combination of all three, that they climb up to the first floor.

Individuals who reach the first floor are seeking avenues for individual social mobility, and for opportunities to have a “voice” in decision making, to feel their needs and views are being “counted” and attended to. Psychological research strongly suggests that irrespective of the actual rewards that a person receives (distributive justice), the participation of the person in the decision making process (i.e., procedural justice) leading to a particular distribution, will also influence perceived justice (Tyler and Huo, 2002). Also, when individual mobility is possible, the socio-political system is seen as more fair (Moghaddam, 2008). However, some individuals on the first floor do not find individual mobility possibilities and come to feel that they have no voice in decision making that influences their lives and the larger society they live in. Some of these individuals move up to the second floor.

The main psychological process characterizing thought and action on the second floor is displacement of aggression. The pivotal role of displacement in inter-group relations was first formulated by Freud and others in the psychodynamic tradition, and has been elaborated by experimentally-oriented researchers in the twenty-first century

(see Moghaddam, 2008, Chapter 3). Individuals on the second floor seek to explain and lay blame for the inadequacies they experience in their identities and the injustices they feel, as well as the material condition they and their group find themselves in. The leadership in Islamic communities has been effective at directing blame and aggression onto outgroup targets, particularly Israel and Western powers. As a result of this displacement, the despotic and corrupt leadership that rules most Islamic societies is less often a focus of attention.

Some individuals move from the second to the third floor, where there takes place a shift in moral thinking. This involves a disengagement from a morality shared by mainstream society, according to which terrorism is a heinous crime, and engagement with a morality that supports terrorism, and views terrorist acts as justified when they are “the only means to achieve a just cause.” Individuals at this stage do not see themselves as terrorists and have no direct contact with terrorist groups, but at the same time their moral compass has shifted and is more in line with the members of terrorist networks.

Individuals who move up to the fourth floor have already come to see terrorism as legitimate, and to have identified certain targets as the “causes” of their personal and collective frustrations, inadequacies, and disappointments. During their stay on the fourth floor, these individuals experience a solidification of categorical thinking, dividing the world into “us versus them,” “good versus evil” (a thinking paralleled by the rhetoric of some Western leaders). This greater rigidity in how the social world is divided up is associated with a more entrenched view of terrorist networks and terrorist leadership as legitimate. The individual is not only putting into practice a morality supportive of terrorism, but is now ready to take action on the basis of this morality.

A few individuals take the steps up to the fifth floor and carry out terrorist acts, or join terrorist networks to support others to carry out terrorist acts. Individuals who reach the fifth floor take on specialized roles. Through a review of the literature on terrorist activities, I identified nine such roles (see Moghaddam, 2006a, Chapter 8): (1) source of inspiration (serves as an inspirational leader for terrorist movements), (2) strategist (engages in macro-level planning and management), (3) fundraiser (gathers resources to support terrorist operations), (4) networker (serves to connect terrorist cells and individuals in different national and sometimes international locations), (5) expert (contributes expertise to terrorist operations, typically in electronic communications and explosives), (6) cell manager (manages the day-to-day operations of a terrorist cell, including discipline, recruitment, and communications with other cells), (7) local agitator and guide (helps

in recruiting and agitating among local populations), (8) cell member (serves in operations carried out by a cell, contributes resources to the cell), and (9) fodder (carries out high-risk actions, particularly suicide terrorist attacks).

By the time individuals reach the fifth floor, their behavioral options have diminished considerably. Indeed, the behavioral options individuals have available decrease consistently as they move up the staircase to terrorism, from the greatest range of options on the ground floor to the smallest range of options on the fifth floor. After individuals are recruited and become members of terrorist networks, there is very little possibility of them exiting from such networks (for reasons of security, particularly) and there are enormous pressures to continue to obey the leadership and conform to local norms (this issue is further discussed below under the topic of “degrees of freedom”).

The staircase metaphor suggests that the best strategies for defeating terrorism are long-term and focused on the ground floor, to prevent individuals from starting the climb up the staircase. Unfortunately, almost all of the counter-terrorism activities sponsored by major governments have been short-term and focused on individuals already on the highest floors of the staircase to terrorism. Of course, short-term counter-terrorism measures focused on individuals and their networks are both necessary and appropriate. These measures are typically maximized in reaction to terrorism attacks in the West (as I write this chapter, such measures have been taken in response to attempted car bombings in London and a car-bomb attack at Glasgow airport in the first week of July, 2007). Medium-term counter-terrorism measures involve a focus on terrorist groups (rather than just individuals), and their networks of support around the world. Long-term counter-terrorism measures are by far the most important, because they deal with the source of the problem: the larger context that creates terrorism, and this is the ground floor of the staircase to terrorism. This larger context includes Islamic communities around the world, many of them in the process of further radicalization. Next, I examine in more detail the role of contextual and dispositional factors in terrorism.

Variability in the relative importance of contextual and dispositional factors

A historic debate in psychology and related disciplines concerns the relative importance of dispositional and contextual factors (Moghaddam, 1998; 2005c). The major schools of psychology have in large part defined themselves through the positions they have taken

on the dispositional-versus-contextual debate. For example, behaviorists have famously given primacy to contextual factors, the shaping of behavior, and even the engineering of entire societies through schedules of reinforcement (as in Skinner's 1948 fictional society, *Walden Two*; Skinner, 1976). On the other hand, traditional cognitive psychologists have provided causal accounts of behavior based on "mental mechanisms," as well as their assumed neural correlates (e.g., Gazzaniga *et al.*, 2002). Similarly, personality psychologists of the psychometric persuasion have focused on traits as the explanatory key to behavior (see Moghaddam, 2005c, Chapter 13).

Received wisdom associated with the different schools of thought tells us that the relative contributions of contextual and dispositional factors are stable across time and across situations. This becomes particularly clear when we consider research on specific topics central to psychology, such as research on intelligence. The historic debate continues between those who argue that intelligence is largely determined by dispositional factors and others who argue for the primacy of contextual factors (see Chapter 7 in Moghaddam, 2005c), with each side assuming that the relative influence of dispositional and contextual factors is stable. Moreover, propositions about the specific age at which intelligence becomes "set" have led to practical policies, such as the 11+ examination in some parts of the UK, which assumes that intelligence is primarily inherited and becomes stable at eleven years of age.

Thus, underlying the traditional debate concerning the relative contributions of dispositional and contextual factors to intelligence is a more subtle and often implicit assumption that the relative contributions of dispositional and contextual factors are stable across situations and over time. The metaphor of the staircase to terrorism strongly challenges the assumption that dispositional and contextual factors have stable contributions. The role of dispositional factors will change in important ways as individuals move up the staircase, to higher and higher floors where the range of possible behaviors diminishes (this point is further elaborated in the discussion below).

Indeed, an important contribution of terrorism research to the wider scholarly debate is to clarify and illustrate the flexible and fluid contributions of dispositional and contextual factors to behavior. My contention is that terrorism can be shaped 100% by situational factors, but it can also be shaped 100% by dispositional factors. Moreover, the relative contribution of dispositional and contextual factors can change from situation to situation. The relative importance of various factors is determined by complex historical, cultural, and economic conditions.

The present condition of life in Islamic communities around the world mean that contextual factors are by far the most important in shaping terrorism.

Degrees of freedom

In order to understand better why in the case of Islamic terrorism context is *at present* all-powerful and dispositional factors play a limited role, we can employ the concept of degrees of freedom (Moghaddam, 2005c, Chapter 1). Consider a continuum (Figure 6.1), with low degrees of freedom at one end and high degrees of freedom at the opposite end.

Low Degree of Freedom ————— High Degree of Freedom

Figure 6.1 Continuum showing a range of degrees of freedom from low to high.

Imagine you are invited to an informal party with long-time friends. The atmosphere at the party is casual and, although there are some limits on what you can talk about and do, you generally have a lot of freedom: this is a situation with a high degree of freedom. Although there are still norms and rules to guide your behavior in this situation, they leave you with a lot of room to maneuver. Now imagine you are in a formal ceremony, such as a wedding when two people are exchanging vows, or at a religious ceremony with well established procedures (such as a Catholic mass). In such a formal social context, the range of possibilities for what you can do is very limited: this is a situation with a low degree of freedom.

In many contemporary Islamic societies, as far as the factors influencing terrorism are concerned, there are low degrees of freedom and behavior is strongly regulated by contextual conditions. The influence of the context is so powerful, even on the ground floor of the staircase, that numerous people are being pushed along in the same direction, up the staircase toward adopting a morality supportive of terrorism and even toward materially aiding terrorist networks, but still with a smaller number reaching the higher floors of this staircase. Because of the power of context in shaping this behavior, when counter-terrorism forces identify and eliminate an individual on the final floors of the staircase to terrorism, he (and it usually is a male) is quickly replaced by others.

In order to better understand the world from the terrorists' point of view, we must avoid making the fundamental attribution error

(Moghaddam, 1998) by exaggerating the role of the (assumed) dispositional characteristics of terrorists. Second, we must not assume that the role of dispositional and contextual factors remains stable. The relative influence of contextual and dispositional factors is in a continual state of flux. In Islamic communities, it is possible that in the future, a shift will take place leading to a decrease in the influence of context and an increase in the influence of dispositional characteristics.

In the current conditions of Islamic communities, dispositional factors can help explain why some individuals move up the staircase, and others do not. However, the influence of the context is such that the numbers of individuals motivated to climb up is sufficiently high and anyone “taken out” in any way would quickly be replaced by others.

The “rotten barrel” rather than “a few bad apples”

The radicalization of Islamic societies and the rise of Islamic terrorism is not, then, the result of “a few bad apples.” Rather, it is associated with foundational shifts in societal rules and norms. It is the rotten barrel rather than “a few bad apples” that has resulted in Islamic terrorism. Among the factors that make the context of contemporary Islamic societies so powerful in shaping terrorism are the following:

- (1) *Global economy–local identity.* Globalization involves movement from smaller to larger economic units, such as when smaller businesses become merged with larger businesses (e.g., Microsoft buying up smaller computer software companies). This global movement in the business sector is mirrored by attempts to merge states into larger economic unions, the most important example being the twenty-seven-member European Union (EU). The economic movement toward the global is contradicted by a psychological identification with the local: “We can propose a general rule that all things being equal, individuals more easily identify with, and form allegiance to, smaller rather than larger groups” (Moghaddam, 2008, pp. 12–13). Thus, there is a contradictory pull, with economic forces pulling toward the global, while psychological factors push toward the local.

This contradiction between the global economy and the local identity is particularly acute in the context of Islamic societies. Globalization is associated with Westernization and secularization. There seems to be no room in the globalization movement for traditional Islamic identity, with its associated traditional gender roles and strong restrictions on women. Electronic communications, satellite television and radio, and many other sources are

presenting Islamic youth with images of an alternative lifestyle, one that is particularly attractive from the perspective of women and men seeking a more liberated, egalitarian relationship. However, this “imported” lifestyle is perceived as a threat by the mainstream in Islamic societies.

The focal point for this perceived threat are *carriers*, means by which cultural values and traditions are passed on from generation to generation (Moghaddam, 2002). An example of a carrier in the context of the United States is “Old Glory,” the American national flag. Of course, the American flag is “only a piece of cloth,” but from another perspective this “piece of cloth” symbolizes fundamentally important American values and traditions – ones that some Americans are willing to die for. Similarly, the “Islamic veil” is “just a piece of cloth,” but one that is central to the identities of traditional Muslims, an identity they are fighting to defend in the face of new threats emerging with the development of the global village.

- (2) *Collective identity threat.* Islamic fundamentalists are experiencing a collective identity threat in the face of modernization, Westernization, and secularization. Like all life forms, human groups brought into *sudden contact* with outgroup competitors face the possibility of *catastrophic evolution*, “... a swift, sharp and often fatal decline” in their number (Moghaddam, 2006c, p. 421). This experience has influenced all practicing Muslims, but fundamentalists most dramatically (the topic of catastrophic evolution is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter). From the viewpoint of fundamentalists, globalization is leading to greater pressures to force Muslim communities to abandon their traditional ways, including traditional gender roles and the associated cultural carriers, such as the Islamic veil, and take on a Western way of life with “egalitarian” gender roles. Absorption into this Western-oriented “global village” would amount to the extinction of Islamic communities, as far as Islamic fundamentalists are concerned.
- (3) *Western support for dictatorships.* Despite the rhetorical support for democracy in the Near and Middle East by successive United States administrations – most notoriously the administration of George W. Bush – in practice the United States has continued to prop up corrupt dictatorships in major Islamic societies of that region, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Kuwait. The principle guiding this foreign policy continues to be “they are corrupt dictators, but they are our corrupt dictators and must be supported.” A major problem with this “policy” is that it creates a far greater sense of

collective insecurity and injustice on the lower floors of the staircase to terrorism. The masses on the ground floor view the United States as supporting the corruption and despotism that pervades their societies.

United States' support for dictatorships in the Near and Middle East has alienated even the better educated middle-class young people who find the "American dream" very appealing and should make natural allies for the United States. The strong magnetic pull of American films, music, and popular culture generally is undeniable among young people in the Near and Middle East. These young people should make natural allies for the United States but, instead, many of them have turned into enemies, with extremely negative views of American foreign policy, and are moving toward more support for anti-American movements.

- (4) *The Iraq war*. If there were no other factors creating conditions to motivate some Muslim individuals up the staircase to terrorism, at least up as far as the third floor where a morality supportive of terrorism is adopted, the devastating mismanagement of the Iraq war by itself could have been enough. As I have argued elsewhere, "Iraq ... is proving to be a fertile training ground, even more potent than Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, for a new breed of international terrorists, who in the second decade of the twenty-first century will fan out and spread terrorist networks and techniques in numerous Near and Middle Eastern countries, as well as in Western Europe and the rest of the world" (Moghaddam, 2006a, p. xi). The post-war quagmire in Iraq has produced hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths and millions of Iraqi refugees, as well as Abu Ghraib prison and other blights on American reputation.

These are just some of the important factors shaping the context of the first floor on the staircase to terrorism. Of course, this is not to say that the power of contextual factors could not decline in the future. The relative power of dispositional and contextual factors can change over time and in different economic, political, social, and historical circumstances. For example, the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq; the resolution of the Palestine–Israeli conflict; the coming to power of more democratic governments in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, are all factors that could alter the larger context and create other conditions on the ground floor of the staircase to terrorism.

The influence of context in terrorist behavior is incremental. At the bottom of the staircase, context influences very large numbers of people

to take small steps. These individuals are not at this stage moving up the staircase already committed to carrying out terrorist acts, but they are disgruntled and looking forward to improving their life conditions. On the highest floors of the staircase, a small number of individuals who have climbed up to these levels are influenced to take big steps and launch into high-risk actions. Terrorist acts that take place at the top of the staircase attract most attention, but the start of the process is on the ground floor where there are rising expectations and relative deprivation among hundreds of millions of people.

This disgruntlement is reflected in the alarmingly high level of radicalization among many Islamic communities around the world (Pew Research Center, 2006). For example, millions of Muslims report that violence against civilian targets is sometimes justified in order to defend Islam. The level of support for this position varies, from 15% and 16% among British and French Muslims respectively, to 28% and 29% among Muslims in Egypt and in Jordan respectively. Between 44% and 56% of Muslims in Britain, France, and Germany; and between 53% and 65% of Muslims in Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan, *deny* that Arabs carried out the 9/11 attacks. These radicalized attitudes influence the cultural context of the Near and Middle East, making it more difficult for moderate voices to express themselves or be heard.

No doubt these radicalization trends are to some degree a reaction to the tragic mismanagement of the Iraq war, images of torture by American forces (see Zimbardo, 2007), and some other aspects of United States foreign policy in the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, I argue that these factors are not sufficient to fully explain Islamic radicalization and terrorism, and that an additional process has also to be considered: the deep and pervasive identity crisis being experienced by Islamic communities in many parts of the world, a topic I elaborate on in the next section.

The crisis of identity in Islamic communities

A second area in which terrorism research can in important ways contribute to broader scholarship is that of identity. Of course, identity has gained far greater research attention since the 1970s (Moghaddam, 2008, Chapter 5), but terrorism research has a unique contribution to make to our understanding of collective identity processes. I begin by presenting a functional view of identity, and then consider identity in relation to terrorism more specifically.

Evolution of identity

Until the early 1970s, the topic of identity, and particularly collective identity, received scant attention from psychologists. This was in part because of the early dominance of behaviorism, with its focus on stimulus-response associations and rejection of subjective experiences, such as those associated with perceived identity. The neglect of collective identity was also in part because of the reductionism of traditional psychology, influenced predominantly by US psychology (Moghaddam, 1987). The lack of attention to collective processes and inter-group relations on the part of traditional psychology meant a neglect of collective identity. With the decline of behaviorism and the emergence of modern European social psychology, which specifically attempted to be non-reductionist and to attend to collective processes and inter-group relations, identity gained far greater research attention. Indeed, the most influential theory to emerge from Europe, social identity theory, has been squarely focused on identity (Moghaddam, 2008).

The experimental research associated with social identity theory has now been supplemented by field surveys and narrative research (e.g., De Fina, 2003; Weinreich and Saunderson, 2003). But although the importance of a need for a positive and distinctive identity has been highlighted, and aspects of collective identity have been explored, more attention needs to be given to the function of identity. It is particularly important to examine its function in the context of broad, long-term processes, because such an examination helps us to better understand the changes underway in the personal and collective identities of Muslims around the world.

I have argued that identity evolved as central to human social life in order to serve behavior regulation and group cohesion functions (Moghaddam, 2008). A concern among group members with “the kind of person I am” is associated with conformity and obedience: being a “good person” on the team, someone whom others evaluate positively and believe is of value. This would be important even in early hunter-gatherer societies, in which resources were scarce, there was little or no accumulated surplus, and the contribution of every group member was counted on to maximize the chances of collective survival. Individual group members learned that they had to be accepted and valued by others in the group, because rejection from the group would mean death, and they taught the young those skills needed to become accepted as a valued group member.

A concern with “the kind of group I am a member of” served similar group cohesion functions. Being in a dysfunctional group meant

decreased probability of survival, whereas being a member of a cohesive, effective group meant a higher probability of survival. In this early evolutionary context, then, group identity was more closely connected with basic survival.

Thus, the universal “need” for a positive and distinct identity developed through cultural evolution as part of a repertoire of behaviors that enhance human survival. The particular ways in which this “need” is manifested depend upon culture, and the local normative system that guides assessments of the correctness of behavior. Such normative systems can vary enormously, and can lead the same individuals to behave very differently across contexts. Consider, for example, two *total institutions*, so called because to a very high degree they limit and structure the behavior of their members: a hospital, and a prison, such as Abu Ghraib. The normative system of a hospital guides nurses and other employees to help and heal the “residents”; the normative system of Abu Ghraib guided employees such as Pte. Lynndie England to torture and brutalize ‘residents.’ The weight of research evidence suggests that the same individual employee, such as Lynndie England, could have been a “caring nurse” in the context of a hospital, but proved to be a “torturer” in the context of Abu Ghraib. In the context of both total institutions, the tendency of individuals is to seek to achieve a positive and distinct identity according to the dominant normative system. Similarly, the normative system of the “ingroup” (radicalized Muslims in the UK) led some members of the medical profession to act as terrorists in the July, 2007 attacks in London and Glasgow.

Certain normative systems, such as those integral to religion, are often taught from the earliest age and can become a rigid part of identity. I do not refer here to “religiosity” as an independent trait, somehow separate from the rest of identity. Rather, I mean religion as essential and central to the kind of person individuals see themselves to be, regulating what they think and do. Religions are examples of belief systems that can lead believers to stay rigidly with their ingroup beliefs, and to shun outgroups (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). This ethnocentrism serves a defensive function; after all, if my religion teaches me that the world was created in a single day by a creator blowing frigid air, and your religion teaches you that the world was created in forty days by a creator mixing milk and honey, then one of us is receiving the wrong “divine” instructions – presumably, we cannot both be destined for heaven.

Such differences in instructions might never lead to inter-group difficulties if our two groups live in different parts of the world and never meet, but the chances of friction and even conflict are increased if our two groups suddenly come into contact with one another, without a

gradual build-up in interactions to allow each group to prepare better in dealing with the new outgroup.

Catastrophic evolution and identity threat

Dramatic changes in human transportation and communications systems over the last 500 years, and particularly since World War II, have brought about sudden contact between different life forms (plants, animals, and human groups) that previously had little or no contact. These include the native peoples of the Americas, Africa, and other lands, who were suddenly brought into contact with Western Europeans through the “discovery” of their lands (by Christopher Columbus and other explorers). Sudden contact is associated with a dramatic decline in diversity of life forms; for the native peoples of the Americas and Africa, it resulted in enormous death tolls and slavery. Conditions that give rise to *catastrophic evolution* – a swift, sharp, and often fatal decline in the numbers of a particular life form – are now common to diversity trends in both the cultural and biological spheres (Moghaddam, 2006c).

All life forms have a limited level of *preadaptiveness* in a given environment, where there exist given competitor “outgroups.” High preadaptiveness means that a life form has a high probability of thriving in a new environment, whereas low preadaptiveness means a life form is declining in numbers or facing extinction. Life forms also vary with respect to *post-contact adaptation speed*: life forms with low post-contact adaptation speed in a given environment and in contact with particular outgroups are less likely to survive.

When a life form with low preadaptiveness and low post-contact adaptation speed interacts with outgroup competitors, the result is a sudden and sharp decline in numbers, sometimes resulting in extinction. The “green movement” has highlighted many examples of this trend among animals and plants (e.g., Baskin, 2002), as well as among the many unfortunate native peoples in North and South America, Australia, and other regions, who provide numerous such examples among human groups (Moghaddam, 2006c). For example, sudden contact brought about a sharp decline and possible extinction of the Tasmanian aboriginal population (Ryan, 1981).

It could be argued that globalization has resulted in a kind of “immunization” against the worst consequences of sudden contact between life forms, and ended the possibility of catastrophic evolution. From this perspective, the movement of people, goods, and services around the world, together with the global reach of mass communications, means that just about all groups have some level of contact and build up

“defenses” against outgroups. For example, different language groups now have contact with one another because people speaking different languages are moving around the world (as tourists, temporary workers, refugees, immigrants, and so on).

But we see that in practice globalization has not resulted in immunization against possible extinction as a result of outgroup competition. For example, the number of living languages has declined from about 15 000 to 6000 since the landing of Columbus in North America. Many of the currently living languages have only a small number of speakers and will be extinct by the end of the twenty-first century (Crystal, 2000). The heritage language of about a third of all humankind is now one of only four languages (Mandarin Chinese, English, Hindustani, and Spanish). Several languages become extinct each month (Dalby, 2003). This pattern of language extinction is most obvious in historically immigrant-receiving societies, where immigrants typically abandon their heritage languages by the third generation.

It is not surprising, then, that human groups view contact with outgroups, particularly more powerful ones, as risky and potentially deadly. But this evolutionary perspective needs to be supplemented with a more detailed look at the specific historical situation of Islamic societies and the identity threat they experience.

Perceived identity threat in Islamic societies

Islamic societies are experiencing a deep and pervasive identity crisis (Moghaddam, 2006c), associated with the rise of Western powers and the relative stagnation of the Islamic world. Identity threat is a theme that continues all the way up the staircase to terrorism, starting with an acute concern with collective identity on the ground floor. Despite a glorious past, which included major contributions to the science and technology of the day, the Islamic world has experienced relatively little progress since the eighteenth century. While Western societies underwent rapid and sweeping changes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, resulting in vastly improved social, political, and economic conditions, and far greater military power on the world stage, there was relatively far less improvement in Islamic societies and a decrease in the military power of Muslims in the global context.

The discovery of oil and the increased importance of oil in the global economy could have given Muslims in the Near and Middle East a platform from which to launch an Islamic renaissance. However, for a variety of complex historical, political, economic, and cultural reasons, including the influence of foreign powers, what flowered in the Islamic

world were destructive dictatorships rather than a renaissance leading to open societies. My focus in this discussion is on the choice that arose for Islamic societies between two collective identities, both of which have proved to be sterile.

On the one hand, Islamic societies have been encouraged to abandon their heritage cultures and to emulate the West. This trend was set when the Ottoman Empire collapsed during World War I (1914–1918), and a secular nationalist movement led by Kemal Atatürk moved Turkey toward Westernization. A reformed legal system, the separation of church and state, voting rights for women, the adoption of the Latin alphabet and the Gregorian calendar, the adoption of Western clothing – these were some of the transformations Turkey underwent before the start of World War II (1939). Atatürk’s benevolent dictatorship was followed by successive governments closely monitored and influenced by the Turkish army. In other Islamic societies of the Near and Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, and Pakistan, the “copy the West” theme has been more subtle, but directed by regimes that are more explicitly dictatorial.

The more complex case is that of Saudi Arabia, established in 1932 after the Saudi family gained control of Islam’s holiest city, Mecca, and through British and others influences established the kingdom in their family name. On the surface, the Saudi regime does not encourage its citizens to emulate the West. The particular form of Islam propagated by the Saudi regime, Wahhabism, is extremely regressive, ethnocentric, and against Western influence. However, a more subtle message underlies the entire enterprise, a message not lost in the conspiratorial context of regional culture: the Saudi regime owes its existence and continuation to support from the West, and the United States in particular. For example, when Saddam Hussein’s Iraqi army invaded Kuwait in August, 1990 and threatened Saudi Arabia, it was US-led forces that repelled the threat in the first “Gulf War” (January 17 to March 1, 1991). The idea of Western superiority was underlined by these events.

The dependence of Saudi rule on American support is a major focus of criticism on the part of Islamic fundamentalists. Despite the austere Islamic “front” presented by the Saudi regime, it is depicted by al-Qaeda supporters as an instrument of US interests and policy in the Middle East (of course, left-wing critics in both Western and non-Western societies make the same point). The adoption of the United States as “guardian” by the Saudi regime should be considered in the larger context of the dominance of Western culture at the global level. Younger generations, in Islamic societies particularly, feel the pressure to emulate Western lifestyles. A psychological consequence has been that many such youth

experience the *good copy problem*, when a minority group trying to copy an “ideal” established by the majority continues to feel inferior because, no matter how hard minority group members try and how talented they are, they can never become the genuine model, being only “good copies” of the ideal (Moghaddam, 2006a; 2006b).

On the other hand, radicals (e.g., “salafists,” meaning “purists”) are presenting Islamic societies with the alternative of returning to their original roots and rediscovering “pure” Islam. Their message is “Why become a second-rate copy of the West, when you can become better than the West by returning to your own roots, by being an authentic Muslim, and reclaiming your true identities?” This is exactly the message that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989) used to persuade Iranians to join him in the 1978–1979 revolution against the last Shah of Iran. This fundamentalist “return to the roots” message has proven powerful and persuasive, in large part because it promises Muslims an identity that is both positive and distinct, in line with social identity theory (Moghaddam, 2008, Chapter 5).

Why is there not an alternative third path between the two radical paths of “copy the West” and “return to pure Islam”? Why is there not a middle ground, one that could be occupied by moderate and secular Muslims? The absence of this alternative third path is explained in large part by the continued support given by Western powers, and the United States in particular, to corrupt dictatorships in the Near and Middle East. Again and again, Western support for dictatorships has cut the ground from under the more moderate movements and thwarted pro-democracy changes (see the discussion on “Conditions on the ground floor,” Moghaddam, 2006a, p. 49). With Western backing, local dictators have crushed secular pro-democracy opposition movements, but have not been able to control what goes on in mosques and religious centers – even the harshest dictators in the region dare not attempt to close mosques. Consequently, the political opposition to dictatorships in the Near and Middle East has either been driven abroad, or is in jail in the home country, or is taking shelter in mosques and religious centers. The vacuum created is being filled by religious fundamentalists who also find shelter in mosques and religious centers, and by “let’s copy the West” enthusiasts who are often protected by government authorities representing Western interests.

Concluding comment

The above discussion suggests that terrorism research can, in important ways, contribute ideas to enlighten mainstream psychology. A first idea

that emerges from the above discussion is that the relative contributions and roles of contextual and dispositional factors can vary considerably across time and across situations. There is no stable “genetic” and no stable “environmental” contribution to intelligence, to personality, and so on, although we can (wrongly) conclude there is by computing “averages” of contributions and assuming that such averages reflect a stable, continuous trend. Of course, this assumption is invalid, because for the same individual in situation “A” the role of environmental factors in intelligence can be highly important, whereas in situation “B” this role can be of little importance. On the staircase to terrorism, the power of the context increases, and degrees of freedom decrease, as individuals move up the staircase.

A second example of how terrorism research can enlighten mainstream research concerns the nature of identity and the relationship between collective identity threat and terrorism. I have argued that collective identity has a vital functional role in human evolution: groups that have more constructive collective identities have greater survival opportunities. Radicalization and terrorism are extreme (and dysfunctional) reactions to an identity crisis being experienced by Islamic communities. The best solution to this crisis is to be found through opportunities for Islamic communities to develop their own authentic identities. Such opportunities are not currently available in the Near and Middle East contexts.

Finally, in my explorations of the nature of terrorism in this chapter and elsewhere (e.g., Moghaddam, 2006a), I have given primary importance to identity and proposed that Muslims are experiencing a serious threat to their identities. This claim is made with reference to all Muslims, including those living in Western Europe. Many Muslims living in Western Europe identify with events in the Near and Middle East, and are directly influenced by what goes on in Iraq, Palestine, and other sensitive parts of that region. Identity threat is likely to be associated with further radicalization and support for extremist movements among Muslims in Western Europe, particularly if they continue to experience high levels of fraternal (i.e., collective) relative deprivation and discrimination in their adopted countries.

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7 If they're not crazy, then what? The implications of social psychological approaches to terrorism for conflict management

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The present chapter reviews existing research concerning the motivations that terrorists have for their attacks and the political and psychological consequences of terror. It analyzes the use of terrorism in terms of current social psychological theories of decision making in conflict. The implications of social psychological models of tactical choices for Western and American attempts to reduce the likelihood of further attacks are delineated, and the prospects for increasing harmony versus escalation in the next few years are reviewed. The take-home message from this chapter is that attempts to deter terrorists from engaging in terrorist actions must adopt a broad focus on: (1) beliefs about the effectiveness of terror in relation to *alternatives* to terror, and (2) the psychological identities with which these beliefs are associated.

An initial caveat: some terrorists are mentally unbalanced/socially dysfunctional

Some approaches focus on reducing terrorism by promoting the healing of individual terrorists' dysfunction, for example promoting coping strategies to reduce the existential fear of death (see Pyszczynski *et al.*, this volume). There is little doubt that some terrorists *are* mentally unbalanced and/or socially out of place. For example, among the left-wing German and Italian terrorists of the 1980s, as identified upon capture or infiltration of the network, Post (2005) identified a high prevalence of family and personal dysfunction: early parental loss, family conflict, high-school truancy, juvenile crime, and other evidence of early difficulties and maladjustment. A similar family and personal history of difficulty is described in the case of Zaky Mallah (a would-be Australian jihadist) by McSherry (2005). In this sense, dysfunction in the immediate personal family context can contribute to individuals' marginalization, increasing the likelihood of violent anti-social behavior

and the attractiveness of groups who purportedly aim to destroy the powerful and corrupt.

Similarly, the appeal of extreme terror groups may be increased by the collective trauma experienced by a population, particularly where its cultural identity is disrupted so that the traditional paths to adulthood, love, occupational success, and establishing a family are no longer successful (e.g., Taylor and Louis, 2004; Moghaddam, 2005, 2006). As noted by Loza (2007) and others, many Arab countries have large demographic bulges with young people who are more educated than their parents (owing to state-sponsored or foreign-sponsored education) but still facing unemployment and poverty. In these countries, an ideological education about the grievances shared by the worldwide community of Muslims and inflicted by the West and its pawns may yield more recruits for virtuous freedom-fighter groups than if a functioning alternative political and social system offered a means to personal and collective security and happiness. However, studies show that many Islamist terrorists are high-achieving, educated, middle-class youth (see, for example, Post, 2005). Their backgrounds more often demonstrate relative affluence and success than desperation and poverty, and exposure to, rather than isolation from, Western education and training. Fervent attachment to idealistic political goals may be reinforced by social isolation and the stress of migration, for those terrorists living abroad from their home country when recruited. However, despite the existence of pathological motivations for terror (e.g., Covington *et al.*, 2002), and despite the intuition that anyone who is willing to attack innocents must be socially or psychologically disturbed, terrorists rarely show evidence of mental illness (Crenshaw, 1981; McCauley and Segal, 1987).

Terrorists are “normal people”

Research has shown that for terrorist networks to be made up of people with histories of dysfunction, as in the case of the European terrorists of the 1970s and 1980s, this is likely to occur only when family and community do not support the terrorist cause (e.g., Post, 2005). These instances are comparatively rare historically; for example, they are generally not relevant to present-day Islamist terror. Instead, the research consensus is that most terrorists are psychologically normal (e.g., Loza, 2007; Post, 2005; Sageman, 2005), and that normal social influence processes, such as collective identity, norms, and group leadership can be reliably identified as processes in fostering terrorism (Hoffer, 1951; Horgan, 2005; McCauley and Segal, 1987; Post, 2005; Taylor and Louis, 2004). Where terrorist groups are large and their

political or religious goals are supported by the community, stable and functional youths or adults have been shown to aspire to join terrorist groups, join without other signs of social or personal maladjustment, be rewarded for it socially, and report finding the struggle meaningful and fulfilling. Even within the German and Italian terrorist groups' history, their political demise corresponded with the decline of communism as a viable political ideology (Post, 2005), while German and Italian family dysfunction has not been eliminated.

In short, it can be argued that a clinical approach to terrorist motivation will apply principally to individuals acting alone or without the support of their families and communities. This approach is valuable in its own right, since alienated individuals and groups can certainly be dangerous. However, those concerned with the spread of terrorism in the twenty-first century – where terrorist groups may number in the hundreds, participants in the tens of thousands, and supporters in the millions – may usefully turn to non-clinical approaches to this form of political violence.

A case study

One detailed case study of the recruiting process for terrorist groups is given by Sarangi and Alison (2005). These authors report interview data from terrorists in India, motivated by a blend of ethnic/caste national-separatism. Their sample included both imprisoned terrorists and others who had 'retired' to their communities taking advantage of Indian government policies to facilitate exit from terrorist groups. Sarangi and Alison (2005) describe a diversity of motives, with some reported early family trauma and resistance to their joining contrasting with other terrorists whose families encouraged them to join. However, interviewees universally described a personal experience with corruption and disempowerment on the basis of region, ethnicity, and caste: each had witnessed, in this sense, the failure of democratic institutions of governance. Beliefs about the utility of terror in righting wrongs and creating a better world were transmitted through family members, in some cases. In addition, recruits learned about the virtue of terror explicitly, for example through traveling theatre groups conducting dramas of injustice defeated and oppression overthrown, as well as "teach-ins" in which terrorist groups would visit the village and expound their views.

The military/terrorist groups were in fact seen by recruits to be respected agents of positive social change. On the individual level, the dynamic that emerges most clearly in the recruiting process described

by Sarangi and Alison (2005) is the idealization of the terrorists by recruits. Recruits often described themselves and their families as simple and vulnerable. The decision to join was attributed by recruits to the heroism of other terrorists and leaders, who were described as understanding, compassionate, brave, committed, standing up for the weak, and fighting against oppression. The use of terrorist tactics was justified on the basis of expediency: democracy and politicians locally were seen as corrupt and changing nothing, whereas terrorist violence was the only way to stop injustice. Immediate change might be unlikely in the short term, as many acknowledged, but the struggle was framed as one lasting across generations, so that any failure or inefficacy could be rationalized away.

The interviewees generally felt that it was satisfying to participate in the struggle, in the consciousness – for some hope and for some certainty – of long-term victory. As the authors note, many respondents may have been motivated to downplay their agency to appease prison authorities. It is all the more striking that in the interviews extremely positive views of the group and its goals are presented, despite the presumed motivation by many to conciliate authorities.

Summarizing their impressions and recommendations from the data, Sarangi and Alison (2005) argue that the terrorists provide a narrative that transforms simple, poor, oppressed individuals to a heroic powerful cadre with a mission of producing an exploitation-free society. They comment that moral arguments will not work as deterrents, because terrorists perceive their violence as essential to future generations, and view targets as exploitative and arguments about the importance of non-violent resistance as aimed at preventing social change. In the terrorists' eyes, the absence of personal motives for violence is evidence that the group is essentially self-sacrificing and pro-social. Sarangi and Alison comment that economic development per se will not work as a solution because it takes too long, and might reinforce rather than undermine the terrorist narrative as long as factors that promote inequalities are not addressed. In this case state neglect and failure to deal with injustice and poverty are seen as the key triggers of terrorism. The authors' recommended solution is political and institutional change to alter the inefficacy of education and democratic politics as means of bettering locals' lives.

Beliefs about terror are social constructions

The data provided by Sarangi and Alison (2005) provide one vivid example of “normal” terrorists' recruiting decisions, and support the

argument of the present chapter that the beliefs that *alternatives to terror don't work* and *terrorism can achieve social change* are the key targets for research analysis and counter-terrorist intervention. Post (2005) and others who have studied terrorists' psychology have noted, importantly, that terrorist groups differ in their goals and motivations, and that the degree to which terrorist violence is motivated by strategic thinking varies widely. Some individual terrorists and groups, as noted above, may be fueled by blind rage and insane destructiveness. Drawing on interviews with incarcerated terrorists, Post notes that an extreme hatred of an external enemy may be instilled in childhood and encouraged by leaders who seek to externalize responsibility for their society's oppression and disadvantage. However, recruits also learn explicitly that through terrorism individuals achieve social and material rewards for themselves and their families, and help to achieve the political goals which will benefit their families and communities in the long term. Numerous commentators have documented that beliefs about the legitimacy and effectiveness of terrorism are explicitly taught in school and mosques (e.g., Loza, 2007). As the result of this socialization, Post concludes that terrorism is the functional expression of a cultural identity. In short, terrorists may be seen as motivated by the search for perceived benefits, not just for themselves, but for their families and communities. Normal social psychological processes of collective identification; increasing public commitment; rewards and reinforcement; and social influence by religious leaders, friends, and family motivate self-sacrifice, collective action, and violence, as they do for recruits to the armies and security forces of the West. Given similar "follower psychology," the choice of terrorist versus non-terrorist tactics is seen to be a function of leadership and collective rules for behavior, or norms.

Similarly, Sageman (2005) has asserted that recruits to terrorist groups cannot be distinguished from recruits to non-terrorist activist and advocacy networks for the same cause. This finding is disturbing in suggesting that "normal" people can be led to mass murder. Yet for many decades now, both research (for one review, see Zimbardo, 2007) and real-world events (from World War I to the Holocaust; from the Cultural Revolution to the Killing Fields) have made this conclusion depressingly evident. If terrorists and non-terrorists cannot be distinguished on the basis of social alienation or psychopathology, then what factors distinguish the individuals and groups who embrace this behavior? The social psychology of decision making has quite a lot to say about choices among behavioral alternatives, and I argue that it provides an important and useful guide to understanding and perhaps altering the prevalence of the behavior.

What is striking from the targets' perspective is that in the case of strategically-motivated terrorists, (1) the perception of the utility of terror is seen to be socially learned and therefore possibly open to unlearning, and (2) the values and strategic thinking of the wider community, and specifically of non-terrorist political leaders for the same cause, have often successfully constrained or partially attenuated the level of violence. The pages below explore the processes underlying these phenomena.

A theoretical framework: from costs and benefits to identities and norms

The history of the social psychology of decision making in conflict, arguably, is of a shift from the study of consequences for individuals to the study of rules for groups. In the olden days, researchers used to argue that people made decisions by calculating the likelihood and value of tangible rewards or costs to the individual decision maker, so that an individual would be likely to join a terrorist group if s/he thought s/he would get more individual rewards than punishments (e.g., Olson, 1968). But then people noticed that (among other faults) this model over-predicted selfish behavior and under-predicted cooperation (e.g., Bazerman *et al.*, 1998). Moreover, the model had difficulty in accounting for "differentiation" strategies, when people give up an overall advantage to themselves in order to get a relative advantage over someone else. For example, in one study, it was found that some people would prefer to choose an option that gave their group twelve points and the other group seven points, compared to an option that gave both groups seventeen points (Tajfel, 1972). Also difficult for the model were situations where groups of people seemed to be motivated to harm others without any obvious benefit to themselves, and sometimes even at personal or collective expense (e.g., McLean Parks, 1997).

One theoretical framework that sought to address the failures of these rational decision-making models was social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; see also Reynolds *et al.*, 2004; Turner *et al.*, 1989). These researchers pointed out that everyone possesses not only identities as individuals (the psychological sense of "I") but also identities as groups or collectivities (the psychological sense of "we"). In different contexts we think about ourselves differently, without any particular stress or discontinuity: as an academic in the classroom, a friend in the pub, or a parent at home. As people identify themselves as group members ("we women," "we Americans," "we Muslims," and so on) they can become motivated to see that group as distinct from and better than other

groups, just as individuals are motivated to see themselves as better than other individuals. An evolutionary perspective (e.g., Cosmides and Tooby, 1994) argues that social motives are innate to our psychology as pack animals; humans are descended from social monkeys, not solitary animals like lizards, and thus are the biological and cultural products of tens of thousands of years of cooperative group living and intergroup competition. Regardless of whether biological instinct or cultural learning is the key driver, however, the end result is that when our social identities are active and we are thinking of ourselves as group members, we may easily cooperate within the group; easily be motivated to seek advantage over competitors, to bolster a social identity's status as superior and distinct; and easily cooperate with allies, part of a larger "we" identity, a "superordinate group." Thus the behaviors that are so baffling from a narrowly individualistic rational choice model – self-sacrifice, cooperation, and differentiation – can be explained when one realizes that individuals frequently make decisions as group members ("we"), not only as individuals ("I"). Individuals' needs to feel good about themselves translate, at the group level, to wanting to feel good about their group. Accordingly, people will defend status advantages, and try to reduce status disadvantages.

Moreover, social identity research has shown that as people identify with a group, they become motivated to enact its social rules for behavior, or norms. This conformity does not need to be through conscious choice – it can occur through an unconscious process called self-stereotyping, because the norms associated with an identity define the appropriate behavior in every situation (Terry and Hogg, 1996). As we switch from academic at work to friend at the pub to parent at home, we may change our behavior from pontificating to listening and drinking to cleaning and disciplining without any conscious decision, "Now I will change from x to y ," but rather because each situation makes a different identity salient with an associated set of learned behaviours, and we naturally follow along.

In this chapter, I want to note that some forms of political behavior, even voting for a particular party or attending a rally or joining a militant group, may follow from individuals' social identities without ever being subjectively experienced as a decision by the actor ("All the folks in my neighbourhood/church/ethnic group voted Democrat/went on the march/signed up for the army when war was declared," etc.). So too, some forms of political behavior may be viewed as unthinkable because of individuals' group identities, without ever having been consciously deliberated and ruled out as an acceptable political behavior by these individuals. An activist passionately committed to social change

who does not assassinate the Prime Minister or President may not have *chosen* not to do so; the activist's behavior (failure to assassinate) may be because the action never comes to mind; it is not among the options that are seen as appropriate according to the norms of the activist's groups. In this way, group norms and group identities may unconsciously limit or enable a repertoire of political action associated with the pursuit of positive social change, so that in functioning societies discontent ranges from grumbling to voting to demonstrating to rioting or thereabouts – but terrorism is not on the cards (Louis and Taylor, 2002; Louis *et al.*, 2004, 2005; see also, e.g., Tilly, 1978).

However, when the historical contexts of past or present group conflict have put an option like terrorism on the cards, what does that mean for individuals' decisions? My own work on "agentic normative influence" has focused on this research question. The model proposes, and studies have confirmed empirically, that where conscious decision making about options is occurring, group norms shape which costs and benefits people pay attention to, how likely the consequences are seen to be, and how much they are seen to be worth (Louis and Taylor, 2002, 2005; Louis *et al.*, 2004, 2005). To begin with, when people identify with a group in conflict, they link the costs and benefits for themselves to the group level of analysis, so that a self-sacrificing action may be seen as psychologically beneficial because it benefits the group, even though the action leads to harmful consequences on an individual level (Louis *et al.*, 2004). Beliefs about the benefit or cost to the group of actions such as voting and abstention from voting are learned in turn from group norms (Louis *et al.*, 2005). It is difficult to change other people's behavior by changing contingencies of rewards and punishment, as many have shown (e.g., Reicher and Levine, 1994). Unless the norm is internalized, surveillance and control over rewards and punishments are of limited efficacy, because people may change their behavior only when they are being monitored, while their covert/unmonitored behavior is unchanged or even reinforced. But it is also difficult to change behavior via rewards and punishments because – as both parents of teenagers and members of political groups in conflict can attest – beliefs about the *likelihood* and *value* of the consequences of actions are not derived from a shared objective reality but from a contested, subjective one. What will be the outcome of a tantrum in a family conflict, or a democratic protest in a political conflict – the elicitation of concessions and change, or the angry reinforcement of the status quo? What will be the outcome of a terrorist attack in a political conflict compared to a democratic protest – more attention and social change, or more marginalization and rejection?

The perception of the likelihood of an outcome given an action – for example, the likelihood of group political success, given an act of terror, relative to an act of democratic protest – is typically learned through social influence. And this social influence does not flow from any source to every target: just as we learn the rules for advancing in our career from our colleagues and bosses, and the rules for playing sports from our coaches and team-mates, we typically learn about advancing in political conflict from our groups and our leaders. Moreover, we learn that other groups' rules for their contexts are irrelevant or even misleading for our own group. You cannot become a successful academic by killing your opponents, even though that's how soldiers win wars. Similarly, you cannot win a political conflict in a democracy by killing people – or can you? It's the people in the conflict with you, the “we” in the scenario, who set the rules for collective behavior to answer yes or no. And which “we” (our church, our nation, our political allies, our ethnic group) depends on how you identify in the context of the conflict.

I argue then that that if there are multiple possible pathways to group success, as there always are in conflict, individuals will choose the path that delivers the highest probability of valued outcomes and the lowest probability of harmful costs – but the degree of perceived benefit or harm, and the probability of the outcomes, are the products of group norms and group identities. Decision makers will focus on costs and benefits to the group, not to the self, and they will reflect probability and value judgments that make sense to their group given its history; what another group thinks is irrelevant or even inflammatory.

The original social identity models proposed that ingroup norms (groups that we belong to are called “ingroups” in this jargon, and groups that we don't belong to are called “outgroups”) are driven by features of the inter-group structure, and influence behavior exclusively as a function of individuals' identification with their ingroup. A consequence of this theoretical position is that outgroups' expectations for behavior are seen as startlingly powerless, so that the targets of terrorism are directed to focus attempts to change almost exclusively through shared identities or by aiming to influence authorities recognized by the terrorists, such as religious leaders. Later work, including my own, takes a more dynamic and relational approach, in which decision making can be directly influenced by the expectations and behaviors of outsiders. However, a relational approach stresses that there are several reasons to expect that a hostile and violent approach to terrorists, while psychologically attractive (see below) is politically counter-productive unless it is extremely narrowly targeted.

The cycle of violence: terrorist and non-terrorists' decisions

From the point of view of the terrorists, attempts to crush terror with violence can be expected to reinforce or escalate the terrorists' aggression. First, anticipated hostility has been repeatedly linked to preemptive anger and escalation (see below; e.g., Turner *et al.*, 1989). Second, if people are placed in a situation where there is no forward path to achieve the security and goals of a valued ingroup in the short term, they can become invested in harming the outgroup (Louis *et al.*, 2004; Reed and Aquino, 2003). This investment may be motivated by the aim to increase the aversiveness of the status quo in order to motivate the outgroup to improve the ingroup's outcomes, but also simply by revenge (see also Moghaddam, this volume).

A much more important effect, however, is the potential for the targets' violent attacks against terrorists to spread support for terror among the terrorists' constituents, and to increase the attractiveness of terror as an option for non-terrorist political opponents, unless the "war on terror" is extremely narrowly targeted (Louis and Taylor, 2002). First, broad retaliation could promote the perception of common fate with the terrorists among previously unaligned constituents of the terrorists, and disidentification with targeted nations or authorities. The heart of identification is the perception of similarity, which has many contributing factors. However, the perception of similarity and associated identification can also sometimes rest on something as simple as a rhetoric of "we" and "they."

According to an identity politics perspective, social conflict should be managed by maintaining and reinforcing identities whose norms are desirable and defining them as inclusively as possible, while simultaneously rejecting/differentiating identities whose norms support undesirable behavior, and defining these as narrowly as possible. In functioning societies, for example, criminals are treated differently from innocent people and innocent people do not identify with criminals. This psychological differentiation decreases the likelihood that criminal behavior is considered as a possibility by innocents; if they did consider the behavior, they would evaluate the likelihood and value of the crime's rewards and punishments from a mainstream perspective in which we have explicitly and implicitly learned "crime doesn't pay." Accordingly, there is minimal imitation or copying of criminals by innocents.

So too in functioning societies, terrorists would be treated very differently from non-terrorist political opponents, let alone non-politically active members of the terrorists' constituencies. A rhetorical "You're either with us, or you're with the terrorists" denies the opportunity for

non-terrorist political opponents to dissociate themselves from the terrorist groups. If collective punishment or “collateral damage” occurs jointly to terrorists, non-terrorist political opponents, and worst of all terrorists’ constituents, it will increase the likelihood that moderates and unaligned constituents will change to identify with the terrorists, as terrorists are perceived as increasingly similar, and target nations and authorities seem increasingly different and hostile. If people identify with the terrorists, they will then consider terrorists’ repertoire of action as new potential choices, and terrorists’ beliefs about the value and likelihood of particular choices as new information relevant to decisions. Because of this identification and the new norms that are associated with the identity, the behavior itself is more likely to spread.

Referring specifically to the spread versus dissipation of terrorism and support for terrorism, it has been argued that the IRA campaigns helped to achieve Irish independence because they provoked repression that pushed the broad community into alignment with the terrorists (Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens, 2006). Similarly, the terrorist tactics of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa were arguably legitimated and spread rather than constrained by the repression of the apartheid regime. Some go so far as to insist that widespread terrorism is always instigated by state terror, which both motivates and legitimizes protesters’ violence, pointing to the autobiographies of terrorists who often cite instances of violent repression as the trigger for their joining (e.g., Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens, 2006, p. 791). Similarly, McSherry (2005) suggests that initial encounters with the police under new Australian anti-terrorism laws radicalized a disaffected youth as a function of the perceived political motivation for and unjust harshness of his treatment. The situation, however, is complicated by the fact that long-past state violence can be cited as justification for present-day terror, as Callaway and Harrelson-Stephens (2006) also note.

For my purposes, rather than arguing that it is inevitably the fault of a repressive state if there is terror, I would only like to make the point that repression of non-terrorist opponents and non-political constituents is a trigger both of terrorism and of increased popular support for terrorism. Combating terrorism needs to be seen not only in terms of attacking the terrorists to get them to stop their terror, but also in terms of what target states are doing to recognize the behavior of non-terrorist political opponents and non-active constituents of the terrorists. From an identity politics perspective, an effective strategy and rhetoric of counter-terrorism differentiates these groups and rewards

the behavior of the latter two relative to the former. An ineffective strategy lumps them in together and punishes all for the behavior of a minority. An effective strategy and rhetoric of counter-terrorism invites non-terrorist political opponents and non-active constituents of the terrorists to see themselves as represented by and similar to the target authorities (“We are working together against them – the terrorists – defined on the basis of their tactics”). An ineffective strategy presents the authorities as in opposition to moderates and constituents (“We the authorities are working against them – the terrorists – defined on the basis of their goals” [which are shared by non-terrorist political opponents], or worse yet “defined on the basis of their religion, their grievances, their nationality” [which all constituents and non-terrorist opponents share]).

The identity politics perspective has been supported in my research concerning choices among democratic political behaviors (Louis *et al.*, 2003, 2004, 2005). However, I have data that speak of preparedness to use violence relative to democratic protest. In one suggestive study, examining the views of protestors at an anti-globalization rally, myself and colleagues observed that new protestors were motivated to attend future rallies as a function of the belief that the rallies would influence government leaders, whereas protestors who were members of established organizations were more motivated by the distal goal of building a long-term oppositional movement (Hornsey *et al.*, 2006). In that data set, we also measured endorsement of the legitimacy of initiating violence in protest (further details are available from the author on request). Only 7% of protestors perceived that it was permissible to initiate violence; most rejected the tactic entirely. However, this minority was distinguished by perceptions that *the democratic protest rally would be ineffective in influencing government leaders* jointly with the belief that *it is illegitimate to attend a protest solely to express one’s values*. I interpret the latter belief such that the pro-violence protestors thought that people have a duty to engage in action that creates concrete social change rather than taking a moral stand. If so, these data support the argument that strong instrumental motives to achieve change, in combination with the perceived failure of non-violent alternatives, can motivate support for political violence even in countries such as Australia.

The take-home message of this research is that terrorist violence needs to be justified to individuals and communities in order to prevail, with common justifications being state violence, the anticipated suffering of the ingroup if nothing is done, and the lack of political leverage of non-violent tactics. Without the perception of the inefficacy

of alternatives and of the prospects for terror-induced positive change in the long term, the attractiveness of terrorist tactics would be greatly reduced or eliminated. Such perceptions of efficacy and inefficacy should not be seen as the product of objective contingencies of action and outcome, but in terms of socially influenced beliefs shaped by the group norms relevant to particular social identities. Accordingly, a particular focus of counter-terrorism from an identity politics perspective is to focus on the use of rhetoric and political punishments and rewards so that people perceive *clear distinctions* between terrorists and non-terrorist advocates for the same cause, and between terrorists and non-active terrorist constituents, rather than to concern oneself solely with terrorists and solely with stopping their use of terror. I return to this point below.

Research on the psychological and political consequences of terrorism

Although beliefs about the efficacy of terror are inevitably contested, there is also a research literature that may be considered. For the set of historical political conflicts in which terror has been used or not used, what were the outcomes for conflict protagonists? Do the documented effects of terrorism on the psychological and political levels support the utility of terror?

It would be helpful, from the target's perspective, if there were a clear answer in the negative. However, if there were such clarity in the historical context then norms would presumably not be emerging to favor terror across dozens of nations and conflict contexts. The answer, as usual when it comes to questions of population-wide processes and outcomes, is "yes and no."

Psychological outcomes

For individual members of the targeted groups, numerous studies have shown that terrorist attacks evoke acute and chronic distress (e.g., Lerner *et al.*, 2003; Skitka *et al.*, 2004; Slone and Shoshani, 2006). On a clinical level, exposure to terrorism has been found to increase rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; e.g., Fraley *et al.*, 2006) and adolescent interpersonal violence (e.g., Even-Chen and Itzhaky, 2007). According to one study, interventions can weaken the negative effects of exposure to terror, but on the other hand participants' exposure to an intervention increased anxiety in the "control" condition, in which individuals received the intervention and were not exposed to terror

coverage (Slone and Shoshani, 2006). This research draws attention to a vicious circle (from the targets' perspective) whereby preparing for terror may itself increase anxiety, in the absence of actual attacks.

However, other research is more optimistic in qualifying the likely psychological influence of terrorist events. For example, a study of 70 000 employees found that despite anger and sadness about the 9/11 attack, the event had no consistent or significant impact on individuals' satisfaction or commitment at work (Ryan *et al.*, 2003). In this sense, individuals are able to experience natural negative responses to acute stress without any failure of coping or generalization of the distress to other life areas. Similarly, research shows that individuals generally cope with terror through effective pro-social strategies, such as reaching out to and affirming their family and community ties (e.g., Goodwin *et al.*, 2005; Huddy *et al.*, 2002; Schuster *et al.*, 2001). Positive emotions and heightened self-efficacy under exposure to terrorist events are promoted by common social bonds, such as religiosity (e.g., Fischer *et al.*, 2006) and secure interpersonal relationships (Fraley *et al.*, 2006). And on a behavioral level, in the study in which exposure to terrorism was linked to adolescent violence (Even-Chen & Itzhaky, 2007) it was the case that adolescents in high-risk areas showed *lower* levels of violence than those in low-risk areas. This pattern is attributed by the authors to the positive coping strategies that high-risk groups had evolved, and the resources they attracted from authorities (e.g., mental health professionals deployed after every attack).

Reviewing the impact of the long-standing IRA terror campaign on society, Silke (2003) concluded the impact was "surprisingly limited" (p. 200). Without meaning any disrespect to the victims of terror, whose suffering is intense and in some sense unquantifiable, terrorism in this light could be argued as a threat attracting far more resources and attention than is justified by the limited harm it inflicts on target societies (see also Lewandowsky and Stritzke, this volume).

Political outcomes

On a political level, claimed successes from terrorism are few, but include, for example, Hezbollah campaigns provoking the withdrawal of French and American troops from Lebanon following the 1983 bombings of the American embassy, and the withdrawal of Israeli troops in 2000 from south Lebanon (e.g., Goldberg, 2002). From a broader historical perspective, the success of religious guerrilla warfare as an anti-Communist strategy, as well as the training and arms

provided to Islamic groups against the Russians by the Americans, have been identified by many as the proximal cause for the increasing levels of terror by Islamist groups from the 1990s onward (e.g., Loza, 2007). Even further back, the success of liberation movements from the 1940s to the 1990s, which used terror as part of an arsenal of tactics to gain self-determination (e.g., in Israel or in South Africa), may underpin beliefs in the legitimacy and effectiveness of terror for many modern groups.

In recent times, it has been well documented in the research literature that terrorism can produce a generalized increase in conservatism and xenophobia. Following the Madrid attack, an increase was noted in anti-Arab prejudice, anti-Semitism, authoritarianism, and attachment to traditional conservative values, while attachment to liberal values was found to have decreased (Echebarria-Echabe and Fernández-Guede, 2006). American research also shows an increase in Whites' prejudice against Arabs as a group, as well as against Black Americans, both six weeks after the 9/11 attack and persisting one year later (Persson and Musher-Eizenman, 2005). Research concerning Israeli teens' attitudes following a terrorist attack (Bar-Tal and Labin, 2001) found increased hostility to Palestinians (some of whom had carried out the attack) but also to Arabs in general. Huddy *et al.* (2002) documented reduced support for civil liberties for over a year following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing as well as the 2001 New York attacks, though there was some evidence of a recovery over time. Similarly, in a national sample of Americans after 9/11 (Skitka *et al.*, 2004), the anger evoked by 9/11 was associated with moral outrage and the derogation of "outgroups" to which participants did not belong; outrage and outgroup derogation were then linked to decreased political tolerance four months later. In the same study, the fear evoked by 9/11 in Americans also led to decreased political tolerance four months afterwards via two other psychological processes, ingroup enhancement (favorable evaluations of groups to which participants belonged) and perceptions of personal threat. Similarly, Todd *et al.* (2005) report that fear of terrorism was associated with pro-war attitudes in British and Australian samples during the first phase of fighting in Iraq. In this sense, the research suggests that terror attacks contribute to a spiral of mutual bigotry and violence.

Why might such a consistent pattern of xenophobia and conservatism be evoked? At least two theoretical models in current social psychological work can provide explanations. In his work on '*Right-Wing Authoritarianism*', Altemeyer (e.g., Altemeyer, 1996) has argued that social threat always evokes authoritarianism (the psychological

imperative to rally to the leader, defend traditional mores, and punish those whom leaders identify as deviants or threats). Accordingly, threat is proposed to fuel conservatism and xenophobia via increased authoritarianism, and some empirical research supports this threat–authoritarianism link (Doty *et al.*, 1991). A similar perspective is provided by System Justification Theory (e.g., Jost *et al.*, 2004) which argues that people exposed to instability and injustice (e.g., the unexpected deaths of innocents at the hands of terrorists) have a psychological need to reaffirm their society’s justice and stability. This ideological affirmation of the status quo serves to reduce anxiety, but also results in greater negativity toward socially disadvantaged groups who must be blamed for their misfortune, as well as enemies abroad who must be rejected and attacked, rather than understood or engaged. Both authoritarianism and system justification motives could be viewed in terms of innate evolutionary drives, or as social explanations based on culturally learned coping skills. For example, societies may explicitly teach children and adults to rally to the leader when attacked, or to view the world as just, so that the suffering of innocents occurs as the result of their unworthiness or the malevolence of external enemies.

Some have argued that societal threats, including terrorism, produce an affirmation of respondents’ pre-existing values so that the political effect is one of polarization rather than a shift to the right (e.g., Greenberg and Jonas, 2003). Terror Management Theory has provided the most widely researched theoretical model of the processes underpinning polarization effects (see Pyszczynski and colleagues, this volume, for a review). For example, Johns *et al.* (2005) reported that Americans recalling negative instances of anti-Arab prejudice they had witnessed showed more shame and more motivation to distance themselves from the perpetrators when they identified more strongly as Americans. In this sense, highly identified group members are shown not just to be more reactive to threats to the group, but also more willing to repudiate reactions that violate group standards for behavior (see also Abrams *et al.*, 2000). Yum and Schenk-Hamlin (2005) catalogued the coping strategies self-reported by college students, and found most were altruistic and pro-social (39%; e.g., comforting, blood donation). With respect to racial bigotry, the authors found four times as many participants reported they were motivated by 9/11 to advocate against prejudice (6%) as reported increased expression of racial bigotry (1.5%). Similarly, in the study described above, which found a link between terrorism and Israeli teens’ anti-Arab prejudice, there was no association between exposure to terror and hostile attitudes to

Jordanians (Israel had peaceful relations with Jordan). In this sense, research demonstrates both generalized and contained prejudice: both the likelihood of bigotry, and the mobilization against that bigotry by members of the targeted groups committed to upholding values of tolerance.

In line with this approach, in the national sample observed by Skitka *et al.* (2004), which found that political tolerance decreased after 9/11, it was also observed that for some respondents, fear was associated with an *increase* in political tolerance four months later, which was mediated by value-affirmation (along with an increase in pro-social behaviors such as donating blood). In other words, fear after 9/11 led some participants to recommit to their existing values, and these folks were more likely to report increased tolerance, which is consistent with the polarization hypothesis. However, the magnitude of the shift to the right and towards xenophobic violence has been found to be larger than the activation and mobilization of the left and the forces of tolerance. For example, as noted above, in Skitka *et al.*'s (2004) national sample of Americans, fear was also associated with a *decrease* in political tolerance mediated by reported perceived personal threat and ingroup enhancement, and the overall relationship between fear and tolerance was negative. In general the research consensus seems to support the prevalence of increased prejudice, intolerance, and conservatism, as noted above (see e.g., Echebarria-Echabe and Fernández-Guede, 2006).

A second line of work suggests that terrorism elicits conservative authoritarianism not because of cognitive dissonance in response to threats to beliefs about a just world, but rather because liberal democracies are more vulnerable to terrorist attack, for a variety of reasons (Eyerman, 1998; Pape, 2003, 2005; cf. Wade and Reiter, 2007). Berrebi and Klor (2006) present data from Israel for the period 1990–2003 that show that opinion-poll support for right-wing parties increased after high incidences of terrorism, and that high incidences of terrorism were more likely when left-wing parties were in office. The authors argue that when right-wing parties are in power, a portion of terrorists who are sensitive to strategy do not engage in terrorism because the perceived likelihood of policy change is lower. In this case the strategic terrorists exert themselves to induce calm to change voters' perceptions that the terrorists are all extremists and promote a shift to left-wing governments. In contrast, it is argued that when left-wing governments are in power, both strategic terrorists and extremist terrorists maximize their violence in the short term, in the hope of ending the occupation and creating a long-term peace

in the terrorists' interest. The opposite logic is applied by Bueno de Mesquita and Dickinson (2005), whose "signaling model" argues that terrorist groups try to provoke harsh government reprisals against the terrorists' constituents so as to mobilize popular support for their group (taking care to avoid blame for the reprisals, however). The efficacy of this signaling model in some cases, such as Ireland and South Africa, has already been noted. Presumably if the likelihood of reprisals is judged higher under a right-wing government, that belief would be associated with increased support for terror tactics during the right-wing parties' tenure.

Without accepting any particular causal model it seems clear that terrorism frequently has political consequences, and these often are expressed through right-wing empowerment and violent conservatism. However, it is important to stress that any attempt to argue for an inevitable link between terrorism and support for particular political parties would overlook the critical moderating effect of the historical context. For example, it seems likely that a second 9/11 at the time of writing (late 2007) would politically discredit US President Bush and the violent conservative response to terror, whereas the first terror attack arguably empowered him. Moreover, regardless of the empirical prevalence of violent intolerance over peaceful tolerance in the short term, it is clear that factors exist that promote resilience and rebalancing at the political as well as the personal level. It is one goal of this chapter to explore those processes, as I have noted.

Finally, few empirical studies have addressed attitudinal or behavioral support for terrorism as the dependent measures related to terror, despite the opinion of numerous counter-terrorism experts that reducing popular support is the most important tactic in eliminating terrorists (e.g., Crenshaw, 2000; Post, 2005). As discussed above, in many historical contexts it can be argued that lack of community support for terror constrained and eventually lowered the level of violence, for example in Ireland. In the only empirical study to date I have discovered, Tessler and Robbins (2007) report data from Jordan and Algeria such that controlling for other variables, citizens' support for terrorism was not related to religious orientation, views of Western culture, personal economic circumstances, or even support for political Islam. Young people were more supportive of terrorism than older respondents – a worrying trend, assuredly – and the proximal predictors of support were negative judgments about their own country's corrupt political structure and about US foreign policy. The authors interpret these findings as showing that neither poverty, nor religion, nor even political aims motivate terrorism: rather, people support terrorism

when they perceive that internal and international politics are corrupt and responsible for injustice and inequality. In this sense, it is tactical normative beliefs that are the key driver, consistent with the present analysis.

Implications of an agentic normative influence approach for conflict management

If the research on reactions to terrorism can be summarized, it is to suggest that terrorism predicts psychological distress, xenophobia, conservatism, and violence, which in modern contexts have fueled injustices and political repression, not just against terrorists, but against their political constituents. These injustices, in turn, fuel support for the terrorist cause.

Research shows that terrorism also triggers positive coping strategies that promote resilience at the individual level, and that at the political level terrorism motivates political advocacy against prejudice and to counter the swing to the right, as well as information-seeking about the context. In this sense, terrorism is shown to have some degree of political effectiveness. Over the long term, it may first motivate a period of reactionary zeal that legitimizes the terror and causes it to spread, and subsequently motivate the election of a progressive government that is more informed about the terror group's underlying concerns and more likely to address them. However, by understanding the dynamic whereby terrorism leads to injustice and injustice to terrorism, we can hope to undo the spiral of harm.

To consider counter-terrorism strategies from the point of view of an agentic normative influence model is to view terrorism as a functional choice within the sphere of decision-making researchers of group conflict behavior, and to focus squarely on one's psychological position as an outsider with respect to the targeted group. We can then ask how attempts to reduce "Islamist" terrorism can be expected to influence not only terrorists' tactical choices, but also the behavior, emotions, and thoughts of non-terrorist Muslims, anti-American Westerners, and other parties. The theme of this approach will be to focus – as I argued above – on identities and norms as the key levers of persuasion versus resistance.

To begin with, studies document that subtle self-categorization effects can have important consequences for both emotion and action in response to terror. For example, Dumont *et al.* (2003) found that when European participants were required to answer whether they identified as "Westerners" in a questionnaire (i.e., sharing America's

vulnerability to attack), they subsequently reported more fear and more information-seeking and sharing/helping intentions responding to 9/11 compared to when the European participants answered whether they identified as “Europeans” first (i.e., potentially not at the same risk for terror compared to Americans). This study suggests that psychologically distancing oneself from terror victims is a possible buffer against fear, though with possible detrimental consequences for preparedness. For the purposes of this analysis, however, the study also demonstrates how vital the question of contested identification is to the struggle for political support.

I have argued above that social psychological research shows how vital it is that terrorists be targeted and framed narrowly, and that members of the terrorist constituencies be explicitly and consistently spared from reprisal or “collateral damage.” In the absence of dictatorial powers of surveillance, reward, and punishment, strategies of coercive reward and punishment are broadly ineffective, and thus containing the spread of terrorist tactics depends largely on identity politics. If terrorists’ constituents are treated like terrorists, they will be led to identify with them, and adopt their norms. From this perspective, it would be better not to kill any terrorists than to kill non-terrorists wrongly, and create a Hydra’s-head army of recruits.

The position of ingroup authorities – non-terrorist religious and political authorities – is also identified as critical, in an agentic influence approach. Many commentators have drawn attention to the importance of Western support for anti-democratic political authorities, in their suppression of political and religious rights, as a key condition in present-day Islamist terrorism (e.g., Moghaddam, 2005, 2006; see also Moghaddam, this volume). If such authorities are corrupt pawns of the decadent West, and cannot be relied on to resolve injustices, prevent human rights abuses, or speak out for the interests of their constituents, the terrorists gain in legitimacy. In the study by Yum and Schenk-Hamlin (2005), in which participants were more likely to say they were motivated by 9/11 to counter-bigotry advocacy than advocating prejudice, the authors argue that the behavior was shaped directly by a call for tolerance by community leaders, which made tolerance salient to participants as a group-linked value to defend. On the other hand, simplistic ideologies externalizing blame to external sources such as Jews and the West may be advocated by corrupt religious leaders, suborned by politicians to displace the anger that would otherwise lead to internal civil war and revolution (e.g., Loza, 2007). More broadly, independent of the possible role of corruption, it may be expected that internally unpopular leaders use the threat of,

and defiance towards, external enemies to shore up their support (an effective strategy, according to threat–authoritarianism studies, e.g., Doty *et al.*, 1991).

After many years of Western-supported secular oppressive regimes, who presided over the destruction of traditional culture and an enormous increase in social inequality in the Middle East, it seems likely that the elected governments of new democratic systems will universally be anti-Western religious idealists. One may hope that time and experience, plus judiciously timed large gifts of aid, would temper the anti-Western ideology. To this social psychologist, however, it seems likely that the overthrow of the despotic authorities is inevitable and that the price to be paid for a late, rather than an early, transition will be more frustration and more justified wrath directed from the oppressed to the oppressor's allies. The ideal position for controlling terrorism is one in which the non-terrorist alternative leaders are more prototypical of the ingroup than the terrorists are: more representative of constituents' values and interests, distinct from outgroups, and thus more psychologically attractive. Importantly, from the point of view of the target, these alternative leaders can be defined both through positive means (concessions elicited) and negative means (strategic self-definition asserting differences in order to bolster the alternatives' legitimacy).

Aside from the highest authorities, the position and treatment of non-terrorist political advocacy groups and social organizations are also critical. Terrorists are criminals *de jure*, and therefore, despite their political side, they exhibit criminal behaviors and benefit from criminal links as they seek to hide their activities, raise and transfer funds, and react to police (e.g., Dishman, 2005; Sageman, 2005). Ideologies that legitimize these practices for the purposes of the higher cause then frequently arise and are disseminated (e.g., Loza, 2007). However, the criminal connection also increases the likelihood that terrorist groups will recruit criminals as well as political partisans, and these criminals' motives for particular acts can be narrowly self-interested (McSherry, 2005).

As well as having criminal connections, terrorists become linked to social and political interest groups, in their home region and in emigrant diasporas, which often publicize, and fundraise and lobby for the terrorists' cause (Asal *et al.*, 2007). Ly (2007) argues that social activities can be seen as a form of advertising that increases support and potential recruits, and attracts funds from a more diverse (larger) group of supporters, a portion of which can then be siphoned off to fund attacks. But in addition, Ly cites Che Guevara's 1960 assertion that guerrillas should help local populations not only in exchange for

food, shelter, recruits, and other support, but because the guerrilla is meant to represent the aspirations of the locals. Charitable social activities thus increase legitimacy perceptions for the terrorist, much as welfare and aid activities do for the state. In Ly's model, terrorists are assumed to be motivated for the public good as well as by the desire to increase support for the cause. This seems to match the dynamic described by Sarangi and Alison (2005), Post (2005), and others.

How authorities respond to terrorists' public good activities is generally to require political and social partners to divest themselves of links to the terrorists, on pain of being tarred as terrorist organizations themselves. This context is unstable however, because it leaves terrorists' constituents with nowhere to direct their support and financial contributions except to criminalized organizations. If the criminalization of terrorist links does not successfully delegitimize the political and social groups – and in the absence of support for recognized ingroup authorities, the campaign may indeed fail – then it may have the dangerous effect of psychologically and socially legitimizing the terrorist and criminal networks. Not only might such rebound cause political groups to adopt terrorist tactics, but it may foster hybrids such as the Triads and the Mafia, which combine criminal terror with charitable and pseudo-legal business activities, and the occasional gesture of political advocacy.

Moreover, as noted above, if terrorists (or portions of the groups) are seeking leverage one can perhaps change behavior through denial of leverage or the provision of alternative access points for leverage. Drawing attention to a local problem through an event in a foreign country forces the world to take notice, increasing pressure on the local governments, and promotes the formation of sympathetic groups in the new locale. This tactic of transnational advocacy networks has been called the boomerang effect (Ranstorp, 1994) and works well for both peaceful and terrorist protesters (Asal *et al.*, 2007). Luring terrorist groups to consider the feasibility and utility of peaceful transnational political activism is more likely to be effective to the extent that terrorists are not psychologically and politically alienated from their non-violent counterparts. Moreover, with more aggressive counterterrorism networks in place, cross-cutting links to political and social groups are also seen as access points for surveillance, motivating terrorist groups to become more cellular and reducing the likelihood of complex coordinated attacks according to researchers (e.g., Enders and Su, 2007).

On the political level, to the extent that the political and social wings of terrorist groups attract resources and personnel, they can become

rivals and competitors whose experiences, values, and successes may supersede their origins as subordinate feeder entities. It seems extremely common as a historical phenomenon – and from the targets' perspective, to be encouraged – that the initial successes of militants provoke concessions to moderates, who subsequently assume all credit and power, and marginalize the instigators of change, piously deploring their predecessor's violence. The eclipsing of terrorist groups by non-terrorist parties and organizations may be detected in the decline of the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) in Québec in the 1970s, or in recent changes in the tactics of the terrorist groups in Ireland. Indeed, it is essential to allow non-terrorist political opponents to emerge and to operate as credible actors in a political conflict, to whom political rewards may be directed. Concessions directed to puppet-opponents, seen by terrorists and constituents as under the thumb of target nations, might instrumentally reinforce the terrorists' behavior, whereas concessions to credible non-terrorist political rivals may undermine support for terrorists.

A possible cost of allowing non-terrorist political opponents to flourish is that terrorist groups' need to differentiate themselves from more moderate groups to justify their continuing existence (and their leaders' power) would lead to polarization and extremism, rather than moderation and mitigated violence, in the context of competition for political success (Post, 2005; see also Stern, 2003). However, if fighting erupts between terrorist and non-terrorist political opponents of the targets, the likelihood that terrorism will be marginalized and that community support for terror will be eroded is enormously improved. The existence of a moderate political group advocating the terrorists' cause is thus, from a social psychological perspective, more likely to attenuate violence than to provoke it.

External links between terrorist groups across causes are also a potent vector for violence. As many commentators have noted (e.g., Asal *et al.*, 2007), formal training in violence often precedes the use of terror and facilitates it, so that many terrorists are ex-army personnel (or in the case of al-Qaeda, ex-Mujahideen). Independent of ideological indoctrination, it appears that for a minority of people who experience training in violence, the adrenaline rush and the connotations of power become personally fulfilling (Loza, 2007). Access to large pools of ex-soldiers, regardless of which army they originally fought for, is thus likely to increase the spread of terror, just as access to weapons does. Similarly, a broad-based "War on Terror" in which all terror groups are equally targeted increases the likelihood of mutual support, education, trade, and so on. As one early example, Callaway and

Harrelson-Stephens (2006) note that the IRA received funds from Qaddafi in Libya as a gesture of retaliation for British support of the USA against him. So too we may expect that a war on all terror by one target increases the likelihood that agents of terror as well as their enemies will combine.

Conclusions

In the early stages of this research, and in the absence of systematic testing and empirical data, it would be hubris to conclude that any social psychological model offers a solution in the fight against terror. Nevertheless, a model of identity politics and agentic normative influence draws attention to the importance of stopping the spread of terrorist identity and norms as the key challenge in counter-terrorism. As such, the analysis suggests a pessimistic prospect for terror in the 2010s. Terrorists should be defined narrowly, according to the model, but they have been defined broadly: hundreds of thousands of civilians have been killed or imprisoned across a host of different contexts (from Afghanistan to Iraq to Guantanamo), which casts doubt on the legitimacy of the categorization and thus has the potential to increase the wider populations' identification with terrorists. Alternatives to violence, both in achieving political change, and in achieving personal security and happiness, should be developed: the most visible project – the democratization of Iraq – apparently offers no hopeful model for change, because the democratic system is being violated by all sides in a welter of violence and inefficacy. Non-violent leaders of the terrorists' constituents should be more prototypical and successful: many are ineffectual and weak, or human-rights-abusing dictators who link their supporters, the targets of terror, with injustice and hypocrisy. Terrorist groups should be divided from each other rhetorically and (as much as possible) socially, and they should be engaged by non-terrorist partners: current policies recommend, in the main, the opposite tactic.

It will be interesting to see if a book on *Terrorism and Torture* in 2021 can identify a better prospect of change, or offer a clearer vision.

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8 The cycle of righteous destruction: a Terror Management Theory perspective on terrorist and counter-terrorist violence

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Although it has often been said that violence begets violence, policy decisions rarely seem to reflect this ancient wisdom. Today's turbulent world of terrorism and counter-terrorism is certainly no exception, with violence being the tool of choice for all sides, and seemingly little regard for human life. This chapter discusses the psychological processes that lead terrorist groups and nations fighting against such groups to support violent solutions to their problems that entail the killing of multitudes of innocent people. By considering the psychological, social, and political forces that operate on both terrorist and counter-terrorist movements, we hope to avoid the infinite regress of blame that usually characterizes such discussions. We begin with a difficult but pivotal question: how can a human being justify the premeditated murder of innocent men, women, and children?

Such wanton killing violates the most basic definitions of morality shared by virtually all social institutions, religious and secular alike. In light of the extreme violence perpetrated by terrorists and the thousands killed as collateral damage in counter-terrorist campaigns, many feel that the answer must lie in the demonic nature of the perpetrators, who are often dismissed as archetypes of evil. Accepting this answer helps justify the violent course of action often taken in attempts to stop terrorism. If such evil exists, is it not our duty to eradicate the evil-doers to prevent the devastation of future attacks? This same line of reasoning is also held by terrorists, who view themselves as righteous warriors, bound by a sacred duty to fight for their people and ideals against forces they perceive as evil. In this twisted mirror-image of victim and villain, where one's own group is seen as inherently good and the other's group as inherently evil, we can begin to understand how such violence is viewed as not only justified but a righteous and sacred duty.

To understand the chaotic interchange of “justified” violence begetting further “justified” violence, we will explore the vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence that creates feelings of humiliation and injustice on both sides of a conflict, which typically incites rather than quells hostility. According to Stern (2003), Richardson (2006) and many others, feelings of humiliation and injustice are major motivators for the development of terrorist groups, leading to support for violence against innocent people associated in one way or another with perceived oppressors. But it is not the concrete instances of humiliation and perceived injustice that lead to mass violence, but rather what these instances symbolize or are taken to mean regarding the other group’s lack of respect and disdain for oneself, one’s group, and one’s culture. As Stern (2003) and Richardson (2006) make clear, it is not humiliation or injustice to oneself that motivates extreme acts of violence but, rather, when one’s group or people is seen as the target of such actions, that normal moral junctures against violence will be discarded in order to fight for the well-being of one’s people. But violent action almost always provokes a counter assault ultimately spurring yet more violence *ad infinitum*. By understanding the importance of the symbolic threat suffered at the hands of “the other” we can better understand the interplay between terrorist violence and violent responses to terrorism and why one is rarely successful in stopping the other. We will use Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Greenberg *et al.*, 1986), an empirically based psychological theory about the psychological functions of culture and self-esteem, to explain why violence and the symbolic threat of humiliation and injustice result in a self-perpetuating cycle of violence that is rooted in attempts on both sides to restore a sense of personal and collective value stemming from faith in the supremacy of one’s worldview. From the perspective of TMT, terrorist violence, whether in the name of nationalism, ethnic purity, political ideology, or religious beliefs, is as much a symbolic act of defiance and defense as it is a concrete act of destruction. This knowledge can help us understand the failure of violent counter-terrorist policies and guide us in our search for solutions that promote peace rather than perpetuate violence.

Reciprocal violence

A long line of psychological research as well as anecdotal historical evidence suggests that violence often provokes counter-attacks (e.g., Button, 1973; International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement, 2005; Widom, 1989). The goals of such counter-assaults are primarily

to restore a sense of justice, punish the aggressor, and discourage further attacks (e.g., Berkowitz, 1988; Geen, 1990). Certainly most groups that commit violence believe that this type of instrumental reciprocity predicates their actions. For instance, in 2005 President Bush framed the war in Iraq as a justified reaction to the violent attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001: “We’re taking the fight to those who attacked us and to those who share their murderous vision for future attacks ... terrorists have made it clear that Iraq is the central front in their war against humanity” (Office of the Press Secretary, 2005). Likewise, Osama bin Laden described his rationale for the September 11 attacks as a reaction to the US-supported Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, when they sent “rockets raining down on our home without mercy” (2004). While the urge to restore justice and deter future attacks is evidently one motivating force behind violent assaults, it clearly does not tell the whole story. For instance, in the Bush example we see that the US-led invasion of 2003 cannot have possibly been a response to terrorist activity in Iraq because Iraq was not connected with the 9/11 attacks and only became a terrorist hotbed after the invasion (*New York Times*, 2006). This implies that the arguments for reciprocity and preventive motivation both fail as logical explanations. As for bin Laden’s justification, it is difficult to understand on a strictly rational level how murdering 3000 innocent civilians can be considered a way of preventing further attacks on one’s people. In fact, it is likely that the opposite is true.

Although research suggests that there are some situations in which aggressive retaliation can prevent future attacks (Walters, 2005), this appears to work only under very specific conditions. Either the force used in the attack must be so overwhelming that it completely decimates the target group’s ability to respond, or there is a shared sense that the action was completely justified and justice was restored (Felson, 1982). The fact that these conditions are virtually non-existent in the real world may help explain why violence rarely abates violence. The ongoing cycle of violence between Israel and the Palestinians is an example of extreme force’s inability to stop the spread of violence and its consistent success at provoking more violence. The question is, if counter-attacks carried out to forestall further violence continuously fail to achieve their desired result, why do violent retaliatory policies persist? Although groups and individuals may explicitly declare their support for violence against others as being rationally motivated to prevent further violence and restore justice, the continued use of such policies despite their continued failure implies the presence of other hidden factors that motivate terrorist and counter-terrorist violence alike.

Terror Management Theory

Terror Management Theory focuses on the unconscious roots of the need to believe that one's own cultural beliefs and values reflect reality as it truly is, and one's self and one's group are making a valued contribution to that reality. These motives direct behaviors across an extremely wide variety of situations. According to TMT, human beings, like all animals, are born with an inherent propensity toward survival. However, humans are unique in that they are aware of the inevitability of death, for both themselves and everyone else. This awareness of death creates the potential for paralyzing terror in every human being. Terror Management Theory posits that to alleviate this potential for anxiety, humankind adopts shared meaning systems, which enable a person to feel a sense of personal value (i.e., self-esteem) within a system of beliefs and values, referred to as a *cultural worldview*, that transcends the lives of its individual members. By believing in and living up to the standards of one's cultural worldview, a person acquires *self-esteem*, which provides a sense of symbolic immortality by leaving behind concrete evidence of his or her existence. Religious worldviews also offer the believer a literal route to immortality through beliefs in an eternal afterlife of some sort, such as heaven, reincarnation, nirvana, or the like. Because cultural worldviews play such an essential role in the lives of all people, individuals are strongly motivated to maintain worldview security at all times.

However, because cultural worldviews are socially constructed and there is no way of being absolutely certain that one's worldview is correct, people rely on social validation in order to manage their potential for anxiety. Social validation serves to enhance one's belief that one's worldview is indeed correct. External agreement with one's view of the world increases confidence that it is correct and ensures one's continued ability to control anxiety. This explains why people are drawn to others who support their beliefs about the world. The inevitable problem with this reliance on social consensus is that there will always be others who do not share or support one's worldview. The existence of alternative worldviews poses a threat to one's own sense of certainty – if one's worldview reflects reality the way it truly is, others should perceive the world in the same way – and this undermines one's protective shield against existential anxiety.

People use a variety of defensive strategies to defuse the threat of others who do not share their worldviews. One way to eliminate the threat posed by an alternative worldview is to convert the others to your own mode of thinking. This not only eliminates the worldview threat, but

also simultaneously boosts worldview faith through social validation. Evangelism and missionary work are examples of real-world attempts to defuse worldview threats and bolster the social consensus for one's own beliefs. Other defensive methods tend to be more vicious in nature. One of the most common methods of reducing the threat posed by outgroup members is simply to derogate them. By belittling outgroup members and viewing them as uncivilized, backwards, evil, inferior, or stupid, the threat posed by their alternative beliefs and values are diminished, with the side effect that one's sense of one's own value is increased relative to these disdained others (Greenberg *et al.*, 1997).

In severe cases, when an outgroup represents an extreme threat to one's own worldview, groups sometimes attempt to completely annihilate that outgroup. Sadly, human history is full of this type of extreme brutality. Most famously we remember the Nazi regime's attempt to purify the world by systematically killing every Jew, gypsy, and other "undesirable" human being, paving the way for a "more perfect" Aryan race. More recently, the world witnessed the Serbs attempt to eliminate ethnic Bosnians and Kosovars in the former Yugoslavia, the Hutu massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda, and, today, the genocidal violence in the Darfur region of Sudan. On the issue of terrorism we also see this type of all-encompassing destructive intension. The rhetoric and violent actions committed by terrorists and counter-terrorists alike suggest that both sides share the goal of annihilating the other. From a TMT perspective, the desire shared by terrorists and counter-terrorists to eliminate the other reflects the need to restore or maintain faith in a particular worldview and restore one's damaged sense of value within the framework of one's worldview.

Experimental research on TMT has tested the hypothesis that threats to one's worldview or elevated concerns about death increase efforts to maintain faith in one's worldview, which often entails derogating other worldviews and those who adhere to them. Over 350 studies conducted in diverse cultures in over sixteen countries have found convergent evidence for this and other basic TMT hypotheses. For instance, research has shown that when thoughts of death are salient, individuals display increased preference for members of their own group and those with similar beliefs and values. Likewise, studies have found that death reminders increase negative perceptions of, and aggression toward, outgroup members and those with dissimilar beliefs and values (McGregor *et al.*, 1998; Greenberg *et al.*, 1990). These types of hostile reactions reflecting an attempt to increase worldview faith in response to external threats are referred to as worldview defense. Research has also found that when an individual's self-esteem or worldview is attacked, anxiety

increases and death-related thoughts become more accessible; boosting an individual's self-esteem or validating his or her worldview, on the other hand, decreases anxiety and the accessibility of death-related thoughts (Harmon-Jones *et al.*, 1997; Schimel *et al.*, 2007). Mortality reminders also increase punitiveness toward those who break societal norms (Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1989), make individuals more hesitant to deface sacred symbols such as flags and crucifixes (Greenberg *et al.* 1995), and increase liking for charismatic leaders who spout rhetoric about the superiority of the ingroup (Cohen *et al.*, 2004). Taken together, this evidence supports TMT's claim that a diverse assortment of human behaviors are rooted in a need to defend and maintain worldview viability and the self-esteem one gets from living up to the standards of one's worldview.

Why do terrorists kill?

As Kruglanski and Fishman (2006) point out, it is understandable that when looking at the atrocities of terrorist attacks, many people conclude that perpetrators must be psychopathic, deranged, brain-washed, or otherwise mentally unbalanced. However, research shows that perpetrators of terrorism are often well-educated and fairly normal human beings (see Louis, this volume; Richardson, 2006; Stern, 2003). Another common attempt at explaining terrorist behaviors is to label them as forces of evil. If they are not crazy, they must surely be evil incarnate, inspired by the devil to destroy others, for no reason other than to bring pain and misery to the world! The benefit of this explanation is that it allows individuals to disengage socially internalized moral standards that normally inhibit the use of violence (Bandura, 1996; Bellamy, this volume). If terrorists are forces of evil, rather than human beings with grievances worth considering, it is much easier to support policies to eradicate them, as one would a pest or vermin, all the while feeling morally superior and virtuous. Ironically, terrorists often employ a similar strategy of dehumanizing their targets as cogs in an evil machine so as to maintain their own sense of righteousness while killing innocents (Hafez, 2006). However, if we look beyond the one-dimensional explanations used to justify violence by terrorists and counter-terrorists alike, we can develop a more complex explanation for terrorist and counter-terrorist violence that can assist our search for a solution that does not feed the cycle of violence.

A TMT perspective on terrorist violence starts with the proposition that inter-group conflicts occur when the anxiety-buffering structures of one group are threatened or damaged by encounters with

another group. Threats to one's cultural worldview, self-esteem, and close connections to others lead to hostility toward the sources of these threats, and when the threats are strong enough, they can lead to violence. Moghaddam (this volume) suggests that the rising power and influence of the Western world represents just such an assault on the protective identity of the Muslim worldview. Interviews with terrorists and large-scale surveys of the communities they represent point to the feeling of being humiliated and treated unjustly by a more powerful dominant group as the most commonly sighted reasons people give for joining or supporting terrorist organizations (Lifton, 2003; Louis, this volume; Richardson, 2006; Stern, 2003). Both of these threats fit well with a TMT analysis.

Humiliation and injustice

Lifton (2003) describes humiliation as one of the most painful and deep-seated of all human emotions. In numerous ethnographic interviews with members of a wide range of terrorist organizations representing diverse causes in multiple countries, Stern (2003) found that nearly all reported feeling alienated and humiliated. Humiliation can occur both in response to direct insults to one's own property, comfort, or well-being, or in response to insults that represent an attack on one's beliefs and sense of personal value. The distinction between concrete and symbolic humiliation can best be understood through a real-world example. One that is particularly relevant to the current conflict is the expulsion of the Palestinians after World War II to make room for the newly created Jewish state of Israel. In a real and concrete way the displacement of the Palestinians represented humiliation through the loss of land that they had for millennia considered home. On the other hand, this act of expulsion was symbolically humiliating because it suggested that the Palestinian people were seen by the Western nations as fundamentally inferior. From the Palestinian perspective, it seems unlikely that an act of such belittlement and disrespect would ever have been imagined, much less committed, against a fellow Western or Christian power.

This type of humiliation perpetrated by a powerful group against a much weaker group evokes feelings of injustice on the part of the humiliated group. Studies by Rubin and Peplau (1975) demonstrated that people have a powerful need to view the world as a just place where the good are rewarded and the bad punished. This type of thinking, referred to as the belief in a just world (Lerner and Simmons, 1966), is undermined when one witnesses misfortune or tragedy, and is especially

severe when people feel that they or their people are treated unfairly or manipulated by more powerful groups. When groups perceive themselves to be the victims of unjust treatment there is strong motivation to see justice restored. For example, torture, which represents a relaxation of basic moral prohibitions (Bellamy, this volume), also constitutes a direct form of humiliation that invokes feelings of injustice on the part of the victim, the victim's family, and the greater community. When the victims of such perceived injustices are militarily and politically weaker than the perpetrating group, which is often the case, the victims may take extreme measures, such as terrorist violence, to rectify the injustice. Humiliating scenes of torture such as those exposed in the images of Abu Ghraib are often cited as a motivating force behind both acts of terrorist violence and support for such violence in the larger community (see Louis this volume; Moghaddam, this volume; Stern, 2003).

From a TMT perspective symbolic aspects of humiliation represent a direct attack on an individual's or a group's sense of value and meaning. Therefore, humiliating an individual or a group of people is in some ways psychologically equivalent to conducting a violent assault on their protective cultural worldview, which in turn undermines their ability to fend off existential anxiety. Because the drive to maintain faith in the absolute validity of one's worldview is an extremely compelling motivation, a humiliated individual is driven to find a way to reassert a sense of faith and pride in his or her assaulted worldview in order to restore psychological equanimity. As demonstrated in empirical studies, attacks on one's worldview lead to increased death-related thoughts and result in increased efforts to assuage these elevated anxieties (e.g., Schimel *et al.*, 2007). This underlying need to assuage heightened anxieties is often channeled into attempts to rectify the injustices committed by those viewed as responsible for the humiliation.

Returning to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, we can now see how the humiliation bestowed on the Palestinians over an extended period of time could result in the desperate need to restore their damaged and belittled system of protective values. In line with this idea, Juergensmeyer (2000) suggests that terrorism is a way that deeply humiliated groups can struggle with a much more powerful adversary in order to regain some of their lost sense of value. But even if it is true that the Palestinians are motivated toward terrorist violence to restore a sense of value and rectify perceived injustice against them, how does one explain the terrorism committed by individuals who are not themselves directly and concretely affected by the actions of Israel and America?

To answer this question, it is important to realize that humiliation does not necessarily require a direct tangible insult to oneself, but can

also occur due to empathic responses to the plight of others with whom one identifies. Social identity theory (Tajfel and Billig, 1974) teaches us that self-esteem is based on perceptions of both one's value as an individual and the value of the groups to which one belongs. Because our identity is entangled with our connections to others, humiliation and injustice can be empathically experienced when an individual feels a shared sense of social or cultural identity with others who are humiliated or unjustly treated (Moghaddam, this volume). In this way, the disrespect experienced by a single individual is generalized by other ingroup members and perceived as an assault on the group as a whole. On top of this natural tendency to identify with the plight of one's ingroup, Castano *et al.* (2002) found that when thoughts of mortality are heightened, individuals report higher levels of perceived ingroup entitativity (the belief that the group is real and meaningful), show increased identification with the ingroup, and display increased ingroup bias. Consistent with this observation, social psychological research has shown that groups become more cohesive when they face common external threats (Rothgerber, 2000). Whereas terrorist groups certainly experience high levels of collective group consciousness along with feelings of deprivation and humiliation that allow members to sacrifice their lives for the good of the group (Juergensmeyer, 2000; Richardson, 2006), this sense of collective identity can also affect members of the community who are not members of terrorist organizations. A number of psychologists have noted that overzealous, broad retaliatory counter-terrorist tactics that result in widespread collateral damage can cause non-terrorist members of the community to empathize with terrorist groups (see Louis, this volume). As an outcome of this identification, communities can become more accepting of violent terrorist strategies in response to incidents of torture and counter-terrorist violence in their communities (Pyszczynski *et al.*, 2006; Moghaddam, this volume).

Even individuals who are far removed from the humiliation and injustice can be provoked by a strong empathic humiliation response. For instance, in justifying the July 7, 2005 London Underground and bus bombings, Mohammad Sidique Khan, a British citizen and one of the perpetrators of the attacks, proclaimed that, "democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against *my* people all over the world" and noted that his actions were "directly responsible for protecting and avenging *my Muslim brothers and sisters*." (BBC News, 2005; our italics. See Tulloch this volume for more indepth analysis). Although Khan was never a victim of the violence of which he speaks, he obviously shares a strong identification with those who were, as evidenced by his use of personal and collective pronouns. Khan's actions

speak to the dangers of smaller-scale terrorist cells, often referred to as “home-grown terrorists,” that can be moved to violence by their identification with instances of humiliation and perceived injustice suffered by others with whom they identify. This identification with the suffering of other members of their culture can lead to identification with larger global terrorist organizations that claim to be fighting on behalf of the oppressed (Musharbash, 2007).

Support for the view that humiliation is a strong factor promoting support for terrorist violence was found in a Gallup poll conducted across ten major Muslim countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey; VOA News Online, 2006). Although only 7% of those polled believed the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were justified, those who did believe that they were justified by what they perceived to be the Western world’s attempt to dominate the Islamic world both militarily and politically. This subset of the population also believed that the USA and the West harbored ill will and disrespect for the Middle East and the Islamic faith. Wessells’ (2006) interviews with Baghdad residents found that, despite their hatred for Saddam Hussein, many opposed the US-led invasion because it increased the West’s dominance in the region; a substantial number of the young men interviewed claimed to have joined the jihad in response to the invasion. Similar interviews with pro- and anti-Taliban Afghans conducted by Wessells found more evidence that support for radical Islam is associated with viewing the Western world as a dominating imperialistic force and a source of humiliation. Overwhelmingly, the Afghans saw the US war in Iraq as unjustified and responsible for increased funding and recruiting for terrorist groups.

Perceived injustice and humiliation of a different sort are also likely to be associated with support for strong retaliatory counter-terrorist violence. Although counter-terrorist violence is typically viewed as justified as a rational means to restore justice by punishing the terrorist perpetrators to prevent further attacks, the failure of violent counter-terrorist responses indicate that other, more nuanced motives probably are at work. From a TMT perspective one of the psychological impacts of terrorist violence, such as the September 11 attacks, was to impose a sense of collective humiliation on America. As Lifton (2003) points out, one of the traits of a superpower such as the United States is its feeling of invulnerability. The terrorist attacks on America revealed the shocking and humiliating truth expressed in a 2001 address by President Bush’s declaration, “We are not immune from attack” (Office of the Press Secretary, 2001). The humiliation that resulted from the 9/11 attack was especially devastating because it revealed that an apparently

great and powerful nation could be deeply wounded by nineteen men armed with box cutters. The fact that the targets of the attack included the iconic symbols of the financial and military establishment further solidified the symbolic implications, and the fact that these attacks were perpetrated as punishment for purported transgressions that most Americans could not understand (or even consider) cut straight to the central pillars of the American worldview. When in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Americans asked “Why do they hate us?” they were genuinely puzzled, making George Bush’s answer that “they hate us for our freedom” plausible and even compelling to most Americans.

From a TMT perspective, the symbolic humiliation of the 9/11 attacks was experienced by most Americans as an extremely demoralizing and utterly unjustifiable worldview threat that demanded a collective defensive effort to restore a sense of psychological security. Although the 3000 people killed in these attacks were a horrible tragedy, we suspect it was the threat to the American perception of itself as strong to the point of invulnerability and morally beyond reproach that made this event so devastating. This interpretation helps explain the overwhelming support Americans showed shortly after 9/11 for the use of extreme military violence in the war on terror, culminating in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The TMT analysis illuminates the psychological processes that set a cycle of violence in motion and perpetuates itself through constant assertions of injustice and humiliation, provoking reciprocal symbolic attacks aimed at restoring a sense of truth and value for both sides.

Alienation and identity confusion

Another factor that may play a role in the radicalization process in some but not all cases is alienation and identity confusion (see Moghaddam, this volume). This is likely to be more of an issue in diaspora communities in European and other Western nations, but it may also play some part in predominantly Muslim nations as well. In recent interviews with Muslim North African adolescent males in the Netherlands, Stern (personal communication, 2006) observed widespread feelings of being caught between two worlds, the traditional Islamic world of their homeland and the more affluent, liberal, and “modern” world of their current home. For example, many Moroccan youth reported that they didn’t feel that they fit in or were accepted in Dutch society, but that on visits to Morocco they were also treated as outsiders. Although many expressed interest in Western lifestyles and fashions, they simultaneously found many aspects of their new world immoral and decadent. Many felt that their parents’ generation was trying too hard to fit

in and assimilate into European lifestyles, and forsaking their traditions and values, while simultaneously feeling some attraction to the ways of the West.

Community support

Because cultural worldviews are sets of socially constructed ideas that require constant validation, terrorists rely on the community to support their ideals and label their work as just and righteous. Terrorist groups depend on the community for a steady supply of recruits, for funding, and for a variety of functions that support the actual violent actions, such as passing messages, maintaining safe houses, and helping cover up their activities. Terrorist acts are always proclaimed as part of a greater struggle conducted in solidarity and cooperation with the greater community. While terrorists by no means require a majority of support to justify their actions, they must at least be able to perceive some validation from the people they seek to represent. Terrorism cannot survive long-term without some perceived support from the people around it. For instance, the bloody Islamic terrorist campaign that swept through Algeria in the 1990s ultimately failed because the movement lost the support of the local community who rallied in mass protests after becoming devastated by the attacks (BBC Two, 2005).

On a larger scale, the incursion of Western forces into the Middle East has led many Muslims to believe that the Western world has launched an attack on Islam. Propaganda masters like Osama bin Laden have perpetuated this theme by declaring a global jihad, in “defense of the worldwide Islamic community” (Lifton, 2003, p. 75). This recategorization of the victims of this problem to the entire Muslim ingroup means that the humiliation directly experienced by some has been interpreted as an attack on all Muslims. When US forces invaded Afghanistan or Iraq, thereby inflicting humiliation on the peoples of those nations, it set the stage for radical leaders to construe these actions as oppressive attacks on Islamic culture and the ability of the residents of the region to manage their own problems, and attempts to increase American dominance in the region. This is a message that is likely to resonate with many, even those who felt oppressed by their current leaders and who desire positive relations with the West. In this case the counter-terrorist actions played into the hands of the terrorist leaders, providing a propaganda bonanza in which the USA seemed to confirm many people’s worst fears about Western intentions, leading to greater community support and sympathy for terrorist violence. This perceived solidarity of belief and purpose serves the vital function of enabling the terrorists

to transform what even they would probably consider a deplorable act into one of righteousness.

From the perspective of TMT, threats to one's worldview and self-esteem – either individual or collective – are capable of motivating violent retribution because they undermine the protection from deeply rooted existential anxiety that worldviews and self-esteem function to provide. Consistent with this reasoning, numerous studies have shown that threats to cultural worldviews and self-esteem lead to more extreme reactions when thoughts of death are on the fringes of consciousness. Studies have shown that insults to the worldviews of American, Canadian, Dutch, Japanese, Israeli, and many other cultures led to greater hostility toward the source of these insults when participants from these respective cultures were exposed to subtle reminders of their own mortality (for reviews, see Greenberg et al., 1997; Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg, 2003). These studies have been taken as evidence of the terror management function that cultural worldviews serve.

Terror Management Theory posits that because awareness of our inevitable mortality is a given for human beings, and we are reminded of this repeatedly throughout our days in a multitude of ways, such thoughts are never far from consciousness. However, in times of armed conflict, terrorism, and war, such reminders are likely to be more frequent than usual. This suggests that the need to cling to one's worldview and defend it against threats should be especially strong during such times. We turn now to research on the impact of such reminders on attitudes toward terrorism and violent counter-terrorist policies.

Terrorism, death reminders and support for terrorist and counter-terrorist violence

Research has shown that simply asking participants a few questions about the problem of death leads to an increase in the accessibility of death-related thoughts shortly afterwards (Greenberg *et al.*, 1994). Arndt *et al.* (1997) demonstrated that even subliminal presentation of the words “dead” or “death” for less than 50 milliseconds leads people to interpret ambiguous word stems in more death-related ways (e.g., the letters COFF__ become more likely to be interpreted as COFFIN than COFFEE). More recent studies have shown that news reports of terrorist events have similar effects, bringing death-related thoughts closer to consciousness. For example, Gillespie and Jessop (2007) found that reading newspaper accounts of either the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States, or the July 7, 2005 Underground and bus bombings in London, caused

participants to make more death-related responses on an ambiguous word-stem completion task. Landau *et al.* (2004) demonstrated that, with an American sample, reminders of 9/11 or the letters “WTC” presented outside conscious awareness produced comparable increases in death-thought accessibility. Together these studies show that terrorist violence can act as a mortality reminder. If this is true, then according to TMT death reminders and reminders of terrorism should both lead to increased support for worldview defense as measured by support for violence against threatening outgroups.

Empirical evidence supporting TMT’s assertion that existential fear encourages support for both terrorist and counter-terrorist violence has been found in a series of studies conducted in Iran, Israel, and the United States. In the first study, conducted in Iran, Pyszczynski *et al.* (2006) found that death reminders caused Iranian college students to show increased support for a student who advocated martyrdom missions against the United States. A parallel study conducted in the United States demonstrated that reminders of either death or the 9/11 terrorist attacks increased American conservatives’ support for using extreme military force in the War on Terror. This included increased support for using nuclear and chemical weapons, as well as a greater willingness to support the killing of thousands of innocent Middle Easterners to kill or capture Osama bin Laden. In Israel, Hirschberger and Ein-Dor (2006) found that among both college students and Gaza settlers, death reminders increased support for the aggressive treatment of Palestinians. This effect was especially strong among those who denied the possibility that Gaza would ever be returned to Palestinian rule. Overall, individuals from three of the currently most influential nations in the Middle East conflict were found to be susceptible to irrationally motivated support for violence. Despite the differing political, social, and cultural situations in these countries, this increased support for violent tactics in response to direct or indirect reminders of mortality clearly supports basic TMT propositions and illustrates the power of existential fear to inflame violent conflict around the world. Based on this evidence, the continuous onslaught of terrorist and counter-terrorist violence and military action in the Middle East must be considered as a psychological force that contributes to the propagation of increased extremism and encourages further violence.

The cycle of violence as symbolic attacks

From the perspective of TMT, we humans are highly dependent on symbols for providing protective meaning, purpose, and value in a

world that might otherwise be seen as chaotic and meaningless. When studying phenomenon with such concrete and damaging impact as violence and death, it is easy to remain fixated on the physical brutality of terrorist and counter-terrorist violence. Although the concrete physical destructiveness of such attacks is far from benign, TMT suggests that the more lasting and far-reaching impact comes from the symbolic threats such attacks bring. It is far easier to rebuild a wall that has been scorched by a bomb blast than it is to repair the damage done to our collective sense of meaning, value, and psychological equanimity.

Terror Management Theory interprets the violent interchange between terrorists and counter-terrorists as, at least in part, a series of symbolic attacks motivated by a profound need to ward off existential fears. One possible way that such a symbolic cycle of violence could begin is with the derogation of an outgroup, perpetrated in an effort to defuse the threat that their alternate worldview has on conviction in one's own worldview. Such derogation, which typically involves belittling the status, beliefs, and value (i.e., collective self-esteem; see Crocker and Luhtanen, 1990) of the targeted outgroup members, is experienced by the victim as humiliation and injustice, and, at a deeper level, undermines the protection from universal existential fears that the targets' worldview and self-esteem provide. By way of collective group consciousness and empathetic responses this feeling of humiliation can soon spread to other group identifiers. The now widespread sense of humiliation can then threaten the humiliated group's collective psychological equanimity. Insults and attacks are perceived as predicated on the other group's disdain and hatred for their culture, religion, and way of life; this is true for all parties to the current Middle Eastern conflict, powerless and powerful alike. When the humiliated group is militarily and politically weaker than the derogating group, as is often the case, the humiliated group, which is left with few viable avenues by which to challenge such belittlement, is driven to unconventional extreme lengths to rectify the perceived injustice.

Motivated by a sense of collective solidarity and self-righteousness some of these humiliated individuals may lash out at the perceived source of evil and oppression (see Moghaddam's staircase metaphor, this volume) in an act of terrorist violence that attempts to regain some of their lost equanimity. This act of violence, which reveals the vulnerability of the dominant group, and is made all the more psychologically damaging by its focus on killing innocents, becomes a source of retaliatory humiliation that strikes at the dominant group's own worldview

and collective self-esteem. In addition, the sudden and very public loss of life suffered in an attack summarily increases the prevalence of death-related thoughts, which make the threat to worldview and self-esteem all the more devastating. Not only is the protective shield damaged, but the fear from which the shield provides protection is thrust to the forefront. In an effort to bolster worldview defense and reduce mortality concerns, popular sentiment, driven by rising anxieties, is mounted behind support for the use of violent counterforce against the “evildoers.” This process of violence and counter-violence then continues in an ever-expanding, self-perpetuating cycle. All the while this violence perpetuates feelings of self-righteousness and justified hostility on both sides along with the growing belief, often fueled by the religious ideology of the culture, that the virtuous ingroup will prevail only when the malevolent outgroup is eliminated. Thus, the two groups become entwined in a shared apocalyptic vision where the elimination of the other will once and for all prove the righteousness of each group’s own worldview, thus pushing core fears into the background (Lifton, 2003).

A ray of hope

Although our grim depiction of this vicious cycle of violence is surely cause for worry, understanding the roots of the cycle of fear and violence is a necessary first step toward finding constructive solutions. Our analysis suggests that this will be no easy task, and recent history certainly supports this view. However, recent research applying TMT to these problems has begun to suggest ways that the impact of existential fear on support for violence and outgroup hostility can be attenuated or even reversed. Most of these studies rely on highlighting the commonalities we share both as individual human beings and as value-oriented group members.

Although desperately clinging to one’s own worldview and inflated sense of value is a very common, and in some sense perhaps the easiest, way for humans to cope with their vulnerability, TMT in no way implies that such behavior is inevitable or necessary. Rather, the theory posits that people will do whatever their worldview values the most – people fend off fear by striving to live up to the standards of value prescribed by their worldviews. Fortunately, most worldviews, whether secular or religious, hold a series of common, core compassionate values that both promote peaceful interaction and deter the use of violence and cruelty (see Bellamy, this volume). We suspect that these values probably originated as a means to curb the propensity toward outgroup

hostility that results from the human system's attempt at controlling fear. For instance, the values of tolerance, love, and acceptance can be seen across a wide spectrum of diverse cultures and belief systems. This is especially clear in the teachings of most major religions. Just as the Christian Bible commands "Be kind and compassionate to one another," (Ephesians 4:32), the Muslim Qur'an commands one to "Do good to others" (Imran 3:148), and the Hebrew Torah calls on the people to "beat their swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4). Secular institutions also reflect these compassionate values. For instance, international bodies such as the United Nations (UN) depict the shared humanitarian values of 192 nation states around the world. The UN's list of goals to be achieved by the year 2015 includes the desire to "Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty ... Reduce infant mortality ... Promote gender equality" and "Develop a global partnership" (Department of Public Information, United Nations, 2005). International agreement also extends to the collective disavowal of inhuman practices such as torture (see Bellamy, this volume).

It is odd that in the face of these shared compassionate values, religion and geopolitics are among the most used rallying points for violence and hatred. This paradoxical fact provides an insight into the confusing arena of worldviews. Because worldviews are composed of a myriad beliefs and values that often directly contradict one another (Crano and Prislin, 2006), situational and contextual cues have a large impact on which particular values will be most likely to influence behavior and attitudes (e.g., Ross and Nisbett, 1991; Zimbardo, 1969). A large body of research has shown that making certain worldview beliefs and values more salient through a technique known as priming (increasing the ease with which these thoughts come to mind by simply exposing people to or reminding them of these values) often results in decisional outcomes in line with those primed beliefs. According to TMT, although heightened existential concerns resulting from such priming can lead us to vigorously defend our worldviews, they also motivate us to want to live up to our worldview's standards of value that are salient in that context (for a review, see Pyszczynski *et al.*, 2004). In one of the first studies to address this issue directly, Greenberg *et al.* (1992) found that although mortality reminders led to more negative evaluations of a person who insulted one's worldview, affirming one's commitment to the value of tolerance completely eliminated this worldview defense effect. This study supported the hypothesis that making pro-social aspects of people's worldview salient and exposing them to a death reminder could attenuate the individual's normal inclination toward aggressive worldview defense.

Compassionate values

In an attempt to explore the possibility that compassionate religious teachings could be used to reverse support for violence, Rothschild *et al.* (2007) conducted a series of studies in which different religious and non-religious values were primed in concert with mortality reminders. In the first study, conducted on a predominantly Christian sample in the United States, it was hypothesized that if religious fundamentalists use their religious beliefs to manage existential anxiety, death reminders should motivate high fundamentalists to adhere to salient religious values. The experiment began with a measurement of religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 1992), followed by a reminder of death, or physical pain, as a control for generally aversive thoughts. Participants were then asked to rate their level of agreement and commitment with either compassionate biblical quotations (e.g., loving thy neighbor as thyself, forgiving others, and doing unto others as you would have them do unto you), neutral biblical quotations, or neutral non-biblical quotations from a variety of sources. Afterwards, participants filled out a survey measuring support for the use of extreme military force (e.g. nuclear and chemical weapons, pre-emptive strikes) to fight terrorists. The results indicated that although high fundamentalists were more supportive of using extreme force overall, high fundamentalists in the compassionate biblical values condition who were presented with a death reminder became significantly *less* supportive of military might in comparison with high fundamentalists in the neutral value conditions and those in the control group.

In a follow-up study, the neutral biblical values condition was replaced with a compassionate non-biblical condition in which secularized versions of the compassionate biblical quotations were used. As in the first study, high fundamentalists were found to be more supportive of military interventions overall, but showed a significant *decrease* in support for violence after a death reminder in the compassionate biblical condition. Because death had no effect on fundamentalists in either the neutral non-biblical or compassionate non-biblical conditions, we concluded that decreased support for violence was dependent on both the authoritative source (i.e., the Bible) and the compassionate content of the value prime. A final study conducted in Iran replicated these findings on a Shiite Muslim sample. Reminders of death *decreased* anti-Western attitudes (e.g., “The USA and its European allies’ presence in the Middle East is threatening to our Islamic being. We should fight against them,” “We cannot trust the USA and its European allies;

they are our enemies.”) among Iranians when they were primed with compassionate quotes from the Qur’an (e.g., “Do goodness to others because Allah loves those who do good”). However, this same reminder of death *increased* anti-Western attitudes when they were primed with secular versions of the same compassionate quotes. Together these studies indicate that elevated concerns about death can either increase violent and hostile attitudes or decrease such attitudes depending on which aspects of one’s worldview are salient.

Common humanity and the value of family

Beyond shared compassionate values, another strategy that has been explored as a means of decreasing hostility involves reminding people of their shared sense of humanity. If inter-group distinctions create platforms for hostility, particularly when existential threat is high, then reminding people that we are all human beings should blur group boundaries and thus reduce antagonistic attitudes. While the theme of common humanity has been echoed by many voices over the centuries, today in our age of science, geneticists have shown that we are indeed one big family. According to the Human Genome Project (2007) two unrelated humans share 99.9% of the same genetic material in the form of nucleotide base pairs.

With this in mind, Motyl *et al.* (2007) conducted two studies to show that reminding people of their common humanity could reverse or at the very least attenuate the usual increase in negative attitudes toward outgroup others engendered by mortality reminders. In the first study participants were reminded of either death or another aversive topic and then were asked to make judgments about a series of photographs that depicted either American families, families from diverse cultures, or groups of apparently unrelated people. Afterwards, implicit attitudes about Arabs were assessed through a version of the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which assesses attitudes by the ease or difficulty people have in associating positive and negative words with the attitude topic (see Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003 for a more thorough explanation of this method). While implicit anti-Arab prejudice increased after a death reminder in the American and neutral family conditions, anti-Arab prejudice actually *decreased* after death reminders in the diverse families condition. These findings were taken to indicate that viewing mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers of different ethnicities primed a sense of shared or common humanity that led to a reduction in prejudice after a mortality prime. A second study attempted to replicate these findings using an explicit measure

of prejudice. In this study common humanity was primed by having participants read a series of “favorite childhood memories” supposedly written either by fellow Americans or people from an assortment of countries. Participants then responded to these stories by writing about their own similar childhood experiences. Following the common humanity manipulation, participants were presented with the usual death and aversive control prime. After this manipulation participants’ explicit attitudes about immigrants and immigration policy were assessed (e.g., “Immigrants are stealing jobs away from hard-working Americans,” “American citizens should be allowed to use lethal force to keep illegal immigrants out of our country”). This study found that although participants in the death condition displayed more negative attitudes toward immigrants and supported more restrictive immigration policies, this effect was completely eliminated for those who read and responded to the childhood memories supposedly written by an ethnically diverse group of authors. Apparently, personally identifying one’s own childhood experiences with the experiences of a diverse group of others eliminates the increased outgroup hostility normally spurred by death reminders. Reminding people that we all share the same hopes, dreams, and basic human experiences seems to reduce hostility toward those who are different and, in some cases, re-channel responses to existential threat toward actually increasing outgroup acceptance. The fact that there are such parallel findings regarding how people cope with thoughts of death in so many different cultures, including the USA, Israel, and Iran might itself be taken as a reminder of the common humanity we all share.

The value of caring relationships

Weise *et al.* (2008) explored the hypothesis that attachment security experienced in caring and nurturing relationships is one factor that determines how fear of death influences politically and ideologically oriented behavior. For example, one study was conducted to see if reminding people of particular types of close relationships could affect reactions to death reminders. In this study participants went through a death reminder or a control manipulation and were then asked to visualize either an individual who represented a non-conditional warm and secure relationship, or a neutral acquaintance with whom the participant had some connection. While reminders of death tended to increase support for military might in the neutral visualization task, they led to significantly *decreased* support for military might among those who visualized a warm and secure relationship.

This study shows that reminding individuals of warm and caring relationships makes it more difficult to support the use of violence against others and that there is something about caring relationships that actually discourages the use of violence as a means of controlling one's own fear.

Summary and conclusion

The basic understanding that violence begets violence has existed since the earliest days of humankind. It is a lesson that we have been taught innumerable times and yet seem unable or unwilling to learn. Taken as a whole, the evidence presented here filtered through the lens of TMT takes a step toward an informed understanding of the symbolic forces behind the pattern of continual provocation that terrorist and counter-terrorist violence bring. Perhaps our hope of emerging from the present spiral of violence requires us to recognize that the policies of destruction and symbolic warfare rarely bring peace. We must begin by realizing that the underlying need for meaning and value drive the actions of both terrorists and counter-terrorists toward a self-perpetuating cycle of death and destruction. But continuation of this cycle is not inevitable. Our research suggests that building on the cultural and religious traditions of compassion, family, and shared humanity has the potential to slow and perhaps even reverse this cycle of violence. Of course, moving toward peace is an enormously difficult task, fraught with many obstacles. Our hope is that understanding the psychological dynamics that drive people to war is a useful first step in that direction.

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9 Misinformation and the “War on Terror”: when memory turns fiction into fact

Stephan Lewandowsky, Werner G. K. Stritzke, Klaus Oberauer, and Michael Morales

If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.

(Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* (1644))

“Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction”; “we know where they are.” These statements, made in 2002 and 2003 by the US Vice President, Dick Cheney, and the US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld,¹ respectively, turned out to have no basis in fact when the post-invasion search for weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq failed to turn up any tools of chemical or biological warfare, let alone the massive stockpiles that US officials insisted had been hidden by the Iraqi regime. Notwithstanding, polls conducted in the United States for up to a year after the invasion, by which time the absence of WMDs had become fully evident and made public, continued to reveal a persistent belief in their existence among 20% to 40% of respondents (Kull *et al.*, 2004; PIPA, 2004). Indeed, for several months after President Bush declared the war to have ended (May 1, 2003), some 20% of respondents additionally believed that Iraq had in fact *used* chemical or biological weapons on the battlefield during the immediately preceding conflict (Kull *et al.*, 2004).²

Lest one think that these figures merely represent some inertia of opinion, with those erroneous beliefs inexorably fading over time, polls conducted in March, 2006, revealed that nearly a quarter of Americans continued to believe that Iraq possessed WMDs just before the invasion (PIPA, 2006). This finding was confirmed most recently in a study by the present authors (Stritzke *et al.*, 2009), which involved more than 300 American undergraduates and found that belief in Iraqi WMDs has persisted well into 2007.

What, then, explains the widespread and long-lasting persistence of beliefs in demonstrably incorrect information? Given that the final

report of the Iraq Survey Group (2004) established the non-existence of WMDs in Iraq as the official position of the US Government, why does a significant segment of the American population continue to believe in their existence? And how could people possibly believe that chemical or biological weapons had been employed in a war when no reports to that effect existed at the time?

This chapter examines the range of psychological and cognitive processes that give rise to such persistent erroneous beliefs and opinions and that render them seemingly resistant to correction or elimination. Our discussion draws on the extensive database of laboratory research as well as on studies that specifically addressed people's processing of information related to the "War on Terror" and the invasion of Iraq that it spawned. We first show that people are, in general, highly susceptible to the creation of false memories; that is, people often accept as fact events that have never occurred but have merely been implied or hinted at. We next examine people's ability to deal with corrections or retractions of specific items of information, as in the case when jurors are admonished to disregard a specific piece of tainted evidence or in the case of a newspaper retracting a prior claim about a politician's visit to a strip club. We show that in those cases the initial information often – but not always – lingers, and that corrections or retractions remain ineffectual. A crucial variable that determines the efficacy of corrections turns out to be people's suspicion or skepticism: if people are suspicious of the motives underlying the original dissemination of information, they are able to discount misinformation when it is corrected;³ if they are not suspicious, the original misinformation persists. We then expand on the notion of suspicion and report the development of a measure of people's skepticism toward the veracity of (1) information provided by government officials, and (2) reports presented by the media. This measure is shown to predict how people interpret events surrounding the invasion of Iraq. Finally, we briefly survey the role of the media in the lead-up to the attack on Iraq and show how the media coverage generally failed to inspire the healthy skepticism that is needed for the public to process information more accurately.

The power of hints: the creation of false memories

The ease with which false memories can be reliably created tends to come as a surprise to most lay people (Mazzoni and Scoboria, 2007). Consider a list comprising words such as "door, glass, pane, shade, ledge, sill, house, open, curtain, frame, view, breeze, sash, screen,

shutter.” The reader is invited to present this list to an attentive group of participants; if people’s memory is tested after some distracting activity (e.g., continuation of a conversation), we would expect them to recall the word “window” as often as they might recall “shade” or “ledge.” Of course, “window” was never presented, although it was hinted at by the list members, all of which were strong associates of “window.” When this procedure is used in the laboratory (Deese, 1959; Roediger and McDermott, 1995), false recall levels of “window” often exceed 50%. There is nothing special about the word “window” either; the same effect can be obtained with any word (e.g., “needle”) whose associates are presented as a list (e.g., “haystack, pin, thread ...”). This false-memory effect has been replicated innumerable times and much is known about its properties. For example, false memories are often reported with great confidence (Read, 1996) and people are even willing to confabulate detailed attributes associated with their false recollections, for example a specific voice (Payne *et al.*, 1996; Mather *et al.*, 1997).

In a real-life analogue to laboratory techniques designed to create false memories, the early stages of the invasion of Iraq gave rise to countless reports of the possible discovery of WMDs, all of which turned out to be false. For example, the *Jerusalem Post* reported on March 23–24, 2003, that a chemical weapons factory had been found in Iraq; this claim was found to have no basis in fact a short time later and was eventually repudiated by official US sources (see Kellner, 2004, for further discussion). Similarly, the online edition of CNN (www.cnn.com) reported on April 12, 2003, under the headline “Suspected chemical warhead found in Kirkuk,” that “weapons experts were called Saturday to an occupied northern Iraqi air base in Kirkuk to determine if a warhead discovered there is laden with a chemical agent.” The following day, under the headline “Prelim nerve warhead test negative,” the earlier information was retracted by the statement “a second set of preliminary chemical tests conducted Saturday on a warhead discovered at an occupied northern Iraqi airbase in Kirkuk found no trace of chemical weaponry.”

A large number of such preliminary tests for the presence of chemical weapons in Iraq were “positive,” although all turned out to be false alarms upon further examination. It is important to note that the seemingly excessive sensitivity of preliminary tests is entirely appropriate, given the risks associated with a failure to detect actual chemical warfare agents. Nonetheless, the constant “hints” that WMDs had been discovered in Iraq may have been instrumental in creating the continued belief in their existence in a substantial proportion of the American public.

The persistence of such misconceptions is no trivial matter: in their wide-ranging survey, Kull *et al.* (2004) found that two-thirds of respondents who mistakenly believed that WMDs had been found in Iraq expressed support for the war, whereas only one-third of those who knew that WMDs had not materialized supported the war. Although the causal relationship between those two variables is unclear, the results underscore the close interplay between people's support for anti-terror strategies, such as pre-emptive war, on the one hand, and their beliefs pertinent to these strategies on the other. This close interplay highlights the importance of gathering a better understanding of the processes involved in shaping people's memories and beliefs.

Our account thus far points to several interesting questions: why were false memories confined to a segment of the population rather than affecting everybody? Can people who are susceptible to false memories be identified on the basis of some other measures? Did the public in other societies around the world share the perceptions of the American public? Finally, how might the incidence of such false memories be reduced?

The latter question is readily answered on the basis of laboratory data, which show that explicit warnings about people's susceptibility to memory illusions, administered either before (e.g., Gallo *et al.*, 1997; McDermott and Roediger, 1998) or after study (McCabe and Smith, 2002), reduce – but do not eliminate – the incidence of false memories. It follows that false memories are not an inevitable by-product of the processing of material that strongly implies – but does not state – a set of facts. Instead, at least in the laboratory, properly worded warnings can reduce if not eliminate false memories.

In accord with the laboratory findings, the prevalence of false memories for WMD discovery has been found to vary with people's choice of primary news outlet. In their in-depth analysis of American respondents, Kull *et al.* (2004) found that the incidence of false memories for WMDs spanned the range from 11%, for listeners of National Public Radio (NPR), to 33% for viewers of Fox News. When other misperceptions surrounding the invasion of Iraq – such as the alleged link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda – are also considered, the incidence of mistaken beliefs ranged from 23% (NPR) to 80% (Fox). Strikingly, the incidence of mistaken beliefs *increased* with the extent to which Fox viewers reported that they paid attention to the news. The reverse relationship, with mistaken beliefs *decreasing* as a function of greater attention, was observed for people who got their news primarily from the print media (and, to a lesser extent, for those who viewed CNN).

In light of this co-variation between the incidence of misconceptions and people’s choice of news outlet, it may come as little surprise that the incidence of false memories for WMDs has also been found to differ considerably between different countries. Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005) compared people’s belief in the existence of WMDs across samples in Australia, Germany, and the USA. The study was conducted during the closing stages of the invasion and found that 34% of US respondents believed that WMDs had by then been found in Iraq, compared to 17% in Australia and only 5% in Germany.⁴

We explore a possible reason for those differences in the *induction* of people’s mistaken beliefs later in this chapter; for now, it is important to note that although false memories are readily induced, both in the laboratory and in the real world, their occurrence is not inevitable and appears closely linked to factors such as type of media exposure and self-reported attention to media reports. We first turn to an exploration of the processes that govern the *persistence* of people’s mistaken beliefs.

“The jury will disregard ...”: discounting of misinformation

News reports, by their very nature, are piecemeal and require constant updating of the reader’s understanding of an evolving situation (Millis and Erdman, 1998; van Oostendorp and Bonebakker, 1999). This is particularly true in war-time, when headlines are dominated by a complex and rapidly changing set of events. We are most concerned with situations in which information is unexpectedly corrected after first being presented as factual, an event not uncommon during the invasion of Iraq. For example, Prime Minister Blair’s claim that Iraqis executed allied prisoners of war (POWs) after surrendering, which he accompanied by an accusation of war crimes (March 27, 2003), was substantially qualified by UK defense officials the next day and ultimately retracted, in part because of the outrage of relatives of the fallen soldiers (Lewis and Brookes, 2004). Similarly, reports during the first days of the invasion that an entire Iraqi division had surrendered to Coalition forces were later corrected by official sources. In all those cases, information initially presented as factual was subsequently retracted by a source of at least equal credibility (e.g., UK defense department vs. Tony Blair), implying that people should discount the original version of events and update their memory to reflect the correction. Are people able to discount misinformation in this manner? We consider two lines of laboratory evidence before returning to the invasion of Iraq.

There is considerable evidence that people often continue to rely on misinformation even if they demonstrably remember and understand a subsequent retraction (e.g., Johnson and Seifert, 1994, 1998; Seifert, 2002; Wilkes and Reynolds, 1999). For example, Johnson and Seifert (1994) found that when people read a story about a hypothetical jewelry theft, they continued to infer the guilt of a person initially presented as a suspect even though the same story later provided an alibi for that person. This persistent reliance on misinformation occurred despite the fact that virtually all participants correctly recalled the alibi (Johnson and Seifert, 1994). The same effect has been shown in other contexts, for example when people were presented with a story about a fictitious warehouse fire, which initially implied negligence as the possible cause of the fire (“oil paint and pressurized gas cylinders were found in a wiring cabinet”). Notwithstanding a subsequent correction (“the wiring cabinet was actually empty”), during final questioning people continued to rely on the misinformation, for example by citing oil paint in response to being queried about possible reasons why the fire might have been difficult to extinguish (Johnson and Seifert, 1994).

A striking aspect of those results is that it does not matter whether the correction immediately follows the misleading information, before people have had the chance to make much use of it, or whether it is withheld until later, by which time people are likely to have made additional inferences based on the misinformation (Johnson and Seifert, 1994; see also Wilkes and Reynolds, 1999). This result suggests that people continue to make erroneous inferences *after* the correction has been processed. In combination with the further fact that the vast majority of participants demonstrably remembered the correction (80% or more; Johnson and Seifert, 1994), the results imply that people simultaneously remembered two mutually opposing models of the world: one in which a wiring cabinet contained oil and paint, and another in which it did not. In support, using speeded responses to single target words, Johnson and Seifert (1998) found that two mutually exclusive inferences can both be simultaneously and equally active in people’s memory after a correction has been processed. Another relevant aspect of those studies is that the experimental context was sufficiently innocuous to preclude the operation of motivational or attitudinal factors; for example, it is difficult to conceive of pre-existing biases or political views that would compel people to cling to the notion of negligence as the cause of a fictional fire.

There are, however, well-defined circumstances in which people *do* discount misinformation. For example, if the earlier story about

a jewelry theft concludes with an alternative culprit being arrested, people no longer infer that the original suspect is guilty. Likewise, if the correction concerning the wiring cabinet in the warehouse fire is accompanied by a statement that implies arson (“gasoline-soaked rags were found”), people no longer rely on inferences of negligence when asking questions about the story (Johnson and Seifert, 1994). These results suggest that if people are provided with a *causal alternative* to the initial message, they abandon inferences based on the misinformation and replace them with the new information accompanying the retraction.

Continued reliance on discredited information is not confined to text processing: research on jury decision making has similarly shown that mock jurors continue to rely on inadmissible evidence, even when instructed to disregard it and even when they profess to ignore it (e.g., Fein *et al.*, 1997; Kassir and Sukel, 1997). Consider one of the experiments reported by Fein *et al.* (1997), in which participants read a transcript of a hypothetical criminal trial and then delivered a verdict. For the control condition, conviction rates were at 21%. This increased to 59% when hearsay evidence implicating the defendant was introduced without a challenge or instruction to disregard. In the crucial inadmissible condition, the same hearsay evidence was introduced but subsequently challenged and jurors were admonished to disregard the tainted evidence. Notwithstanding, conviction rates in that condition (40%) were nearly double those in the control condition, reflecting jurors’ continued reliance on the tainted evidence. This basic phenomenon is well-established in the literature and there is now virtually no doubt that people tend to rely on tainted evidence even when admonished to disregard it and even when they profess to ignore it (for a review, see Kassir and Studebaker, 1998).

Unlike the rather innocuous text-comprehension studies discussed earlier, research on jurors may tap into pre-existing attitudes and emotional dispositions (e.g., the belief that guilty defendants should not “get off” on a “technicality”). It is therefore of particular interest that jurors do disregard inadmissible evidence if they have been made suspicious of the motives underlying its introduction, for example if they are told that the tainted evidence represents a deliberate attempt by an ambitious prosecutor to manipulate the jury. When jurors are made suspicious in this manner, verdicts are unaffected by the to-be-disregarded information and conviction rates no longer differ from those in the control condition (e.g., Fein *et al.*, 1997).

Returning to issues surrounding the invasion of Iraq, Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005) investigated the effects of retraction and correction of

misinformation. Participants in their study were recruited from two Coalition countries (Australia and the USA) and one that opposed the invasion (Germany), and were asked several questions about specific events that were then being reported in the media. People were asked to provide truth ratings on a scale from 0 to 4 (“Is this statement true or false?”) and were also asked to indicate the extent of their memory for those events (“Have you heard or read this statement?”) using the same scale. People responded both to true events and to events that were initially presented as fact but subsequently retracted as false, such as Blair’s claim about the execution of POWs.⁵ Of greatest interest here are the latter items, called “FR” (for false/retracted) from here on, which were considered very differently by respondents in the three countries. For German and Australian respondents, the judged truth of FR items was a positive function of people’s memory ratings and a negative function of people’s belief that the item had been retracted.⁶ In other words, the more people remembered hearing a statement, the more likely they were to judge it as being true, but that effect of memory was counteracted by an effect of retraction, such that belief decreased with increasing certainty of retraction. Moreover, the standardized regression weights for retraction were roughly twice the magnitude of the weights for memory, suggesting that Australian and German respondents were particularly sensitive to knowledge of corrections.

For American respondents, the pattern was strikingly different, with the regression weight for retraction being indistinguishable from zero, and truth ratings being an exclusive function of memory for the initial misinformation. This differential pattern between countries persisted even once differences in media exposure were controlled, to the extent possible, by focusing on the subset of respondents in each sample who (1) were reasonably confident that they had heard of the initial misinformation (i.e., who provided memory ratings in excess of 2, the mid-point of the scale that separated affirmation from negation), and who (2) were confident of having heard of the retraction (ratings > 2). [Figure 9.1](#) shows the truth ratings for these demonstrably well-informed participants who were aware of an item’s retraction. The figure shows that whereas Australian and German respondents tended not to believe in statements they remembered as having been retracted (truth ratings < 2), American respondents tended to believe in those statements (truth ratings significantly > 2), notwithstanding their acknowledgement that the information had been retracted. The US respondents thus resemble the participants in the earlier text-processing studies, who likewise continued to use information despite remembering its retraction. Why,

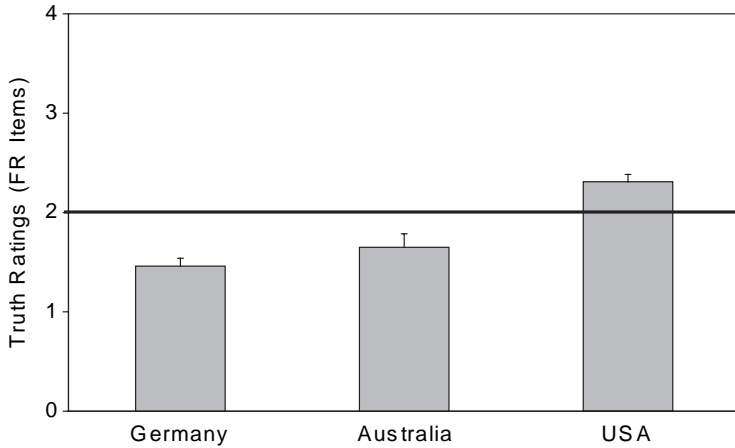


Figure 9.1 Mean ratings of perceived truth of false/retracted (FR) items for respondents who affirmed memory for the original items and who were certain of the items' retraction. Error bars indicate standard errors. The horizontal line indicates the boundary between affirmation and rejection of perceived truth of the items.

then, did the Australian and German respondents successfully discount statements that they knew had been corrected? Why were many of the American respondents unable to do so?

Given the earlier discussion concerning the roles of suspicion and causal alternatives as critical factors in people's ability to discount misinformation, one might be tempted to seek an explanation along those lines for the striking differences between samples shown in Figure 9.1. Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005) discovered that those differences could be explained by considering responses to another question, namely people's agreement with a number of potential reasons for the invasion of Iraq. Some of those possible reasons were officially sanctioned (e.g., destroy WMDs) whereas others reflected possible unofficial agendas (e.g., secure oil supplies; see Table 9.1). Respondents had to indicate to what degree they believed the possible reasons were the actual reasons for the war, using a scale from 0 to 4. All respondents agreed on some reasons (e.g., “regime change”), but they diverged on others, with the most extreme differences involving the proposition that Iraq was attacked to “destroy WMDs.” Whereas Americans nominated this reason as being most important, in line with official US policy at the time, Germans considered it to be of little importance and Australians fell in between those extremes.⁷

Table 9.1. Mean ratings of the importance of potential reasons for the Iraq war by respondents in studies conducted in 2003 and 2007.

Proposed reasons	2003			2007		
	Germany	Australia	USA	Germany	Australia	USA
(O) Destroy WMDs	1.96	2.38	3.14	1.92	2.16	2.64
(O) Regime change in Iraq	3.13	3.11	3.04	2.86	2.67	2.64
(O) Democratize Middle East	1.83	1.86	2.26	1.77	2.09	2.18
(O) Protection from terrorists	1.97	1.80	2.58	2.27	2.45	2.60
(I) Secure oil supplies	3.37	2.83	2.87	3.45	2.98	3.00
(I) Finish first Gulf War	2.27	2.13	2.10	2.13	1.94	1.84

(O) and (I) denote official and unofficial reasons, respectively.

Lewandowsky *et al.* explored the possibility that suspicion, reflected in *disbelief* of official policy, might modulate people's ability to discount misinformation irrespective of nationality. When a suspicion index (formed by reverse-coding people's agreement that the war was fought to "destroy WMDs") was entered into a multiple regression together with retraction ratings, those two variables jointly accounted for 31% of the variance in FR truth ratings across all samples simultaneously. Put another way, the striking differences in Figure 9.1 in the columns labeled "2003" reflected not so much nationality as suspicion of the motives underlying the invasion of Iraq – it just so happened that suspicion was more widespread in the German and Australian samples than among US respondents; when that variable was statistically controlled, national differences (represented by separate estimates of the effect of retraction) were reduced to explaining a modest 4% of additional variance (with standardized weights < 0 only for German and Australian samples, suggesting that only those samples were sensitive to knowledge of retraction without a role of suspicion). Lewandowsky *et al.* concluded that suspicion about the motives underlying the invasion was the principal modulating variable that determined people's ability to discount misinformation.

The data of Lewandowsky *et al.* also permit insight into the variables modulating the induction of false memories for the discovery of WMDs. In a further analysis of their data conducted by the present authors, the correlations between the above suspicion index and people's belief in WMD discovery were found to be highly significant and negative, with

rs $-.28$, $-.42$, and $-.23$ for Germany, Australia, and the USA, respectively; all $ps < .0001$. Thus, just like the persistence of misinformation, the induction of false memories was modulated by people’s suspicion about the motives for the invasion of Iraq.

One potential criticism that can be leveled at these conclusions is that instead of measuring “suspicion” about a specific set of claims, people’s disagreement with the official reasons for the invasion of Iraq might instead have reflected a general cynicism; that is, a tendency to disbelieve anything and everything irrespective of its source and actual validity. This possibility was ruled out by a further analysis of the Lewandowsky *et al.* data, conducted by the present authors but not reported in the initial paper, which revealed that truth ratings for “true” items (i.e., those not retracted or corrected at the time), were unaffected by suspicion, quite unlike the FR items. It thus appears that suspicion, in this case directed at the official reasons for an invasion, permits people to discount misinformation without also dismissing true information.

The results of Lewandowsky *et al.* are consonant with a large body of literature and underscore the importance of suspicion in discounting of misinformation. However, Lewandowsky *et al.*’s operational definition of suspicion was quite narrow and linked to an aspect of the issue under consideration. That is, both variables (viz. suspicion and retraction ratings) might have been measuring related components of a person’s cohesive belief system, which would render the relationship between the variables less surprising and less informative. Clearly, it would be preferable to replace the narrow operationalization of suspicion with a broader measure of what is best called *skepticism*; that is, a stable attitude or general personality characteristic that may facilitate the emergence of specific suspicions but that can be measured independently of the issue under consideration.

From suspicion to skepticism: differentiating between information and propaganda

The psychological literature contains remarkably few investigations of skepticism, and to our knowledge there is no published instrument to facilitate its measurement specifically as a disposition to doubt the substance of government communications or media statements. A dictionary definition of skepticism describes it as “doubt or incredulity as to the truth of some assertion or supposed fact,” as a “disposition to doubt or incredulity in general,” and as “mistrustfulness” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2000). The latter dimension (mistrust) highlights that people

may be skeptical of both the veracity of a communication and also the *motives* behind it (Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998), although others describe this dimension of skepticism as cynicism (Stanley *et al.*, 2005). We suggest that suspicion toward government officials may be distinct from skepticism about information in the media more generally; that is, people's beliefs about the agendas and intentions of political messengers may be independent of their suspicions about the literal truth of media reports.

To explore this possibility, we developed the Opinions about Media and Politicians Questionnaire (OMPQ; Stritzke *et al.*, 2009), with the dual aim of designing a scale that measures (1) skepticism toward the veracity of media reports in general, and (2) skepticism about the "true" motives and agendas underlying statements by politicians. To assess skepticism toward the media in general, we adapted items from a measure of consumer attitudes toward advertising claims, which was designed to assess the tendency to regard advertising claims as more or less truthful (Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998). In our version, items referred to the media instead of advertising; for example, people had to rate their agreement with the statement "we can depend on getting the truth in most media reports." To assess skepticism about the motives underlying the claims of politicians, we adapted items from a measure of employee attitudes toward management's motives for organizational change (Stanley *et al.*, 2005). Items referred to politicians instead of management, and people rated their agreement with statements such as "I believe that politicians have a 'hidden agenda' in promoting their policies."

Both sets of items were combined to create the OMPQ, which we validated on a large sample of over 700 respondents in Australia, Germany, and the USA (Stritzke *et al.*, 2009). As expected, an exploratory factor analysis on the Australian sample ($N = 228$) identified two factors, one targeting the media (SKEP_{med} from here on) and another one targeting politicians (SKEP_{pol}). Both factors were associated with good reliabilities (around .80). Subsequent confirmatory modeling yielded an excellent fit of the two-factor model in all three samples (comparative fit indexes ranged from .98 to 1.00; root mean square error of approximations ranged from .02 to .04), suggesting that the OMCQ was robust across respondents from different countries and also survived translation into another language (German).

Of greatest interest here is the external validity of the scale, established by relating scores on each of the two skepticism scales to people's perceptions of the presumed reasons for the invasion of Iraq. Participants were presented with the same six possible reasons for the invasion that

were used by Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005). Table 9.1 (p. 188) shows the average responses for the three samples in the columns labeled “2007” (the validation study was conducted during the first half of 2007). The similarity between these results and the responses obtained four years earlier by Lewandowsky *et al.* is noteworthy. As in 2003, endorsement of the official reason (WMDs) for the invasion of Iraq differed considerably between samples, although the overall difference was somewhat smaller in 2007. Likewise, agreement with a reason that has found little official endorsement,⁸ namely the quest for oil, was again stronger in Germany than in the other two locations and, as in 2003, was favored over all other reasons by German respondents. Overall, the pattern suggests that people’s beliefs about the reasons for the invasion of Iraq have remained remarkably stable across a four-year period and across cohorts.

We next examined the role of the two factors identified in our skepticism scale as potential predictors of the response pattern in Table 9.1. Each respondent’s average score on the OMPQ subscales $SKEP_{med}$ and $SKEP_{pol}$ were entered together as predictors in 18 separate regression analyses, each using agreement with one of the possible reasons for the invasion as a response variable (using separate analyses for each sample). Only 1 of 18 standardized regression weights for $SKEP_{med}$ was significant ($p < .05$), whereas 13 of 18 regression weights for $SKEP_{pol}$ were significant ($p < .001$ or $p < .01$ for all but one of the weights and $p < .05$ for the remaining one). This suggests that skepticism toward the media did not modulate people’s endorsement of the various possible reasons for the invasion. By contrast, skepticism toward politicians clearly was an important modulator, and we therefore analyzed the role of $SKEP_{pol}$ further.

We first classified the six reasons into those that were, at one point or another, officially endorsed by US government sources (indicated by an “O” in Table 9.1) and those that were not and hence remained unofficial (indicated by an “I”). We then averaged the standardized regression weights for $SKEP_{pol}$ within each set of reasons and for each sample separately. Those average weights are shown in Table 9.2. The results permit three clear conclusions: first, although there is some variation in absolute values between the three samples, the directionality of the weights is the same for German, Australian, and American respondents. Second, the directionality of weights corresponds exactly to expectation; they are positive for the unofficial reasons and negative for the official reasons. Thus, the more skeptical people were toward politicians, the more they endorsed the unofficial reasons for the invasion of Iraq, for example the belief that it aimed to secure oil supplies. At the same time,

Table 9.2. Mean standardized regression weights for $SKEP_{pol}$ predicting inofficial and official reasons for the Iraq war across samples from Germany, Australia, and the USA.

	Germany	Australia	USA
Inofficial reasons	.30	.31	.14
Official reasons	-.20	-.19	-.25

The values shown are standardized regression weights for $SKEP_{pol}$ averaged within each set of reasons and for each sample separately. Five of the six R^2 s for the inofficial reasons were significant at $p < .01$, and eight of the twelve R^2 s for the official reasons were significant at $p < .05$.

the more skeptical people were, the *less* they felt inclined to endorse officially nominated reasons, such as the destruction of WMDs. Third, for the US sample, the strength of the averaged standardized regression weights for the *inofficial* reasons ($\beta = .14$) was less than half that for the German and Australian samples ($\beta = .30$ and $\beta = .31$, respectively). Conversely, for the *official* reasons, the averaged weights were strongest in the US sample ($\beta = -.25$) compared to those in the German and Australian samples ($\beta = -.20$ and $\beta = -.19$, respectively). We conclude that the enduring differences between people in these three countries regarding the endorsement of the destruction of WMDs as a reason for the invasion of Iraq are modulated by differences in the extent to which people are skeptical of the motives of government officials.

Our discussion so far has converged on the pivotal role played by the twin concepts of general skepticism and specific suspicions. We have shown how skepticism and suspicion modulate information processing, and how they can provide a unifying explanation for seemingly diverse patterns of responding, such as the striking differences between samples shown in [Figure 9.1](#) (p. 187). However, thus far we have said little about the origins of skepticism. For example, although suspicion about the true reasons for the invasion of Iraq clearly differed between the samples tested by Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005), with Germans and Australians being more skeptical than American respondents, those differences have as yet remained unexplained.

At the outset, we noted the apparent close linkage between choice of media outlet and people's mistaken beliefs in the discovery of WMDs (Kull *et al.*, 2004). To explore the possible linkage between media coverage and skepticism further, we now turn to a brief comparison of media coverage in the lead-up to the attack on Iraq in Coalition countries (primarily the United States) and in Germany, countries that, according

to our preceding analysis, differed considerably in their skepticism towards US’ Iraq policies.

Skepticism and the media: mission unaccomplished

There is considerable evidence that the American media largely suspended critical analysis in the crucial months of 2002 and 2003 that led up to the attack on Iraq. At an anecdotal level, veteran CBS anchorman Dan Rather described the media environment thus: “... there was a time in South Africa that people would put flaming tyres around people’s necks if they dissented. And in some ways the fear is that you will be necklaced here, you will have a flaming tyre of lack of patriotism put around your neck” (*Guardian*, 2002, May 17). The effects of this climate were characterized by Leonard Doyle, the foreign editor of Britain’s *Independent*, by stating that “... like it or not, the media were co-conspirators in America’s rush into this illegal war. How badly we needed – before the war – solid reporting that explained how a kitchen cabinet of neoconservatives and their bellicose friends were cooking up a war that has brought so much bloodshed to Iraq and danger to the world” (*Columbia Journalism Review* staff, 2004).

At an empirical level, numerous investigations have pointed to the remarkable lack of skepticism in US media reports (e.g., Altheide and Grimes, 2005; Artz and Kamalipour, 2005; Kamalipour and Snow, 2004; Rampton and Stauber, 2003; Schecter, 2003; Tiffen, this volume). For example, a content analysis of editorials in leading US papers after Colin Powell’s now infamous speech to the United Nations (February 5, 2003) concluded that they “... failed to bring even an elementary *skepticism* to the Bush case for war” (Mooney, 2004; italics added). Instead, an analysis of nearly 2500 editorial cartoons published during the lead-up to the attack on Iraq revealed a fairly consistent tendency to dehumanize the “enemy,” in particular the person of Saddam Hussein (Hart and Hassencahl, 2005). An overwhelming 96.4% of all cartoons that contained Saddam Hussein or the Iraqi military were found to dehumanize the enemy in some way; for example by depicting Saddam as an animal, with rats, reptiles, or cockroaches being among the favored species.

Similarly, a study of network television news stories on Iraq over the two-week period that bracketed Powell’s UN appearance found that more than two-thirds of the 393 sources used were from the USA, with most of those (75%) being either current or retired officials. Only a single one of these nearly 200 officials – Senator Kennedy – expressed skepticism or opposition to the impending invasion, and even his

opposition was couched in vague terms. Overall, only 17% of all sources were skeptical of the invasion (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, 2003). The apparent lack of balance was sufficiently striking to cause none other than the BBC's Director-General, Greg Dyke, to level scathing criticisms against the American broadcast media. "Personally I was shocked while in the United States by how unquestioning the broadcast news media [were] during this war," Mr. Dyke said in a speech at a University of London conference.⁹

When assessing the lack of skepticism in American media coverage, an important issue is whether this critique only became possible in hindsight, after the post-invasion failure to find WMDs, or whether the information available in early 2003, if examined with greater skepticism, could have led to different conclusions about the Bush administration's claims regarding Iraq. On the basis of a particularly thorough analysis, Kaufmann (2004) argues for the latter scenario, concluding that "numerous internal experts, independent experts, some media outlets and opposition politicians, and responsible international agencies all pointed out before the war that the Bush administration's claims concerning the Iraqi threat were not based on credible evidence" (p. 30).

An analysis of coverage by the UK media, by contrast, gives rise to a more mixed pattern. On the one hand, an extensive pre-invasion content analysis of four representative newspapers (*Daily Telegraph*, *Guardian*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Mirror*) suggested a balance between positive and negative attitudes to US policies that were aligned with the papers' basic orientation as being "left-wing" or "right-wing" (Tumber and Palmer, 2004). On the other hand, a content analysis of Scotland's leading broadsheets concludes by stating that "... all four newspapers ... have failed in aspects of their watchdog role" (Robertson, 2004, p. 475), notwithstanding the fact that one of the papers under consideration, *The Herald*, had arguably taken a strong anti-war stance in January of 2003. Further details about the pre-war coverage in the UK can be found in the chapters in Miller (2004).

We know of only one study of Australian media coverage (Jakubowicz and Jacka, 2005). Similar to the analyses of the UK media, this study found a somewhat mixed pattern of coverage, with Murdoch-owned papers (including the country's only nationwide broadsheet) supporting the invasion, and other outlets being more cautious or even critical.

Finally, turning to the role of the German media, Pick (2004) conducted a comparative content analysis of German and American print media. She compared two tabloids (*Bild* and *USA Today*, respectively), two broadsheets (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *New York Times*), and

Table 9.3. Mean ratings and standard deviations of the importance of potential reasons for the Iraq war and corresponding media coverage of those reasons in Germany and the USA.

Proposed reason	War reasons		Media coverage	
	Germany	USA	Germany	USA
Destroy WMDs	1.96 (0.06)	3.14 (0.06)	37.00	37.00
Destroy WMDs (weighted)			24.40	27.38
Protection from al-Qaeda/terrorists	1.97 (0.06)	2.58 (0.07)	7.00	16.00
Protection from al-Qaeda/terrorists (weighted)			4.20	11.68
Secure oil supplies for Western nations	3.37 (0.05)	2.87 (0.07)	6.00	1.50
Bring democracy to the Middle East	1.83 (0.05)	2.26 (0.07)	2.00	5.00

Values in the left two columns represent means (SDs); values in the right two columns represent the percentage of articles concerned with a particular reason out of all reasons covered in the sources.

two weekly news magazines (*Der Spiegel* and *Time*) during the crucial months (January to March, 2003) leading up to the invasion. Of greatest interest here is the coverage concerning the reasons for the invasion. Coincidentally, Pick’s classification of possible reasons overlaps substantially with our own (sharing three of the official reasons: destroy WMDs, protection from terrorists, democratize the Middle East; and one of the unofficial reasons: secure oil supplies), thus permitting a comparison of media coverage and people’s judgments in the earlier study by Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005). The results are shown in Table 9.3. The first two columns of data show the responses of American and German participants in the study by Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005) for those reasons that overlap with Pick’s (2004) classification, and the last two columns show the corresponding indicators of media coverage in the two countries. Each entry in the latter two columns represents the percentage of articles concerned with a particular reason out of all articles addressing any of the possible reasons, averaged across the three sources (tabloid, broadsheet, and weekly magazine) within each country. For the two primary reasons, protection from terrorists and destruction of WMDs, the coverage is also reported weighted by whether or not an article expressed agreement with the reason (the weighted entries are the product of the raw proportions and the proportions of those articles endorsing the reason).

Several comments are in order about the pattern of media coverage and the relationship between media content and people’s beliefs.

First, the amount of space dedicated to the principal, officially sanctioned reason (elimination of WMDs) was virtually equal in Germany and the USA. Even when that coverage is weighted by agreement, the difference between the two countries remains small. Second, although Iraq's oil reserves find little mention in either country, the discussion in Germany (6% of the total) is more extensive than in the USA (1.5%). Conversely, democratization of the Middle East and the threat of terrorism were discussed considerably more often in the American than in the German press. Finally, there appears to be some relationship between differences in media coverage and differences in people's belief between the two countries. Specifically, for three of the four reasons, the difference between countries in media coverage corresponds to the difference in endorsement, including a reversal of the direction of the difference for the oil-related reason. The one exception to this pattern involves WMDs, for which there was little difference in media coverage but the greatest discrepancy in people's judgments.

We conclude that there are some differences in media coverage between the two countries, although they cannot explain all observed differences in people's beliefs about the reasons for the Iraq war. Future research must further examine the tripartite relationship between media coverage, people's skepticism, and the extent of their support for government policies, such as pre-emptive war, "special" interrogation techniques that used to be considered torture, and detention without much due process.

Conclusions and outlook

This chapter summarized what is known about people's processing of imprecise and rapidly changing information. We showed that people are readily susceptible to the creation of false memories when information is repeatedly hinted at but never actually confirmed; we showed that people often find it difficult to update their memories in the face of corrections or retractions; and we identified skepticism toward politicians as a key modulating variable, such that the more suspicious people are about the motives underlying the dissemination of information, the more likely they are to resist the formation of false memories and the more able they are to update their memory. Finally, we showed that the media coverage in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, at least in the United States, was largely uncritical and not conducive to arousing skepticism about the government's motives. In this concluding section we extrapolate from those empirical findings and provide an outlook for possible future developments. In particular,

we seek to assess the likelihood that the catastrophic consequences of the invasion of Iraq – in excess of 650 000 fatalities (Burnham *et al.*, 2006) and the destabilization of the Middle East – might be repeated in the future.

First, we ask whether the post-invasion disconfirmation of official claims about Iraqi WMDs has reduced people’s willingness to believe such claims in the future. In a poll administered in the USA in July, 2003, people were asked to indicate their likely attitude if “in the future ... the president presents evidence that a country has a secret program for building weapons of mass destructions” (PIPA, 2003). Roughly half (45%) of all respondents indicated that they would trust what the president says as much as before, whereas 50% would feel more wary than before. We know of no other data that illuminate the effects of the non-existence of WMDs on the credibility of leading politicians in Coalition countries, although the re-election of all leaders in the three principal members of the “Coalition of the Willing” – George Bush in the USA, Tony Blair in the UK, and John Howard in Australia – suggests that electoral penalties for the leaders’ mistaken claims have been slight. It therefore does not appear likely that a sequel to the attack on Iraq would be prevented by firm and unwavering public opposition.

Second, while our discussion so far has been limited to cognitive issues, there are other psychological variables that are known to be highly potent contributors to the formation of people’s attitudes; foremost among them, fear. The role of fear in politics is well known (see, e.g., Lawrence, 2006, and this volume) and there have been several recent analyses of the interplay between politics and people’s likely fear response. Mueller (2006) surveyed the policies and attitudes of American governments since the close of World War II and concluded that threat inflation, and the re-casting of antagonists as “devils du jour” – from Egypt’s Nasser in the 1950s through Panama’s Noriega in the 1980s – have been a common thread of US policy. In an exceptionally detailed analysis of the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, Kaufmann (2004) showed that threat inflation – that is, successful attempts to paint Iraq as a direct threat to Americans, was a critical component of the administration’s effort to “sell” their policies to the US public. Kaufmann considered the invasion of Iraq to represent a failure of the fabled marketplace of ideas – at least in part owing to the media’s failure to provide sufficient critical checks and balances – and concluded that “we should not be confident that similar failures will not be repeated in the future” (p. 8). Moreover, in a climate of threat inflation, the partial suspension of critical analysis and skepticism that was apparent within

the media is likely also to manifest itself in how people form and maintain beliefs about claims by their political leaders (such as the existence of WMDs). As perceptions of personal threat from an external group (e.g., terrorists) increase, favorable evaluations of the leadership in one's own group increases, along with a psychological need to reaffirm that one's own worldview is indeed correct (see Pyszczynski *et al.*, this volume; Louis, this volume). That is, the psychological processes associated with fear have a strong modulating influence on people's information processing and behavior in response to a perceived threat. This raises the possibility that the extent to which skepticism guarded people's evaluation of claims relating to WMDs varied as a function of perceived threat. Arguably, Americans may have felt under greater personal threat than the respondents in our samples from Australia and Germany. According to Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski *et al.*, this volume), fear trumps skepticism and leads to a strong motivation to maintain faith in one's existing worldview and the social forces (e.g., governments) that validate it.

Thus, increasing skepticism may be a necessary but not sufficient strategy to prevent misinformation about potential terrorist threats to fuel the iterative mutual escalation between terrorist and counter-terrorist violence. As suggested by Pyszczynski *et al.* (this volume), threat inflation needs to be countered by building on the cultural and religious traditions of compassion, family, and shared humanity. We conclude that the adverse effects of threat inflation may be best undermined by combining enhanced skepticism toward the motives of members of one's own group who disseminate information that derogates the "other" with greater courage to seek dialogue and shared humanity with the "other."

Finally, we draw on an analysis by Altheide and Grimes (2005), which suggests that the invasion of Iraq was just one of many past and future US-initiated conflicts. Altheide and Grimes suggest that dissent and re-evaluation of a conflict are a routine part of a larger propaganda cycle, such that initial euphoria in the media is eventually followed by self-critical re-examination and correction of earlier misreporting. Alas, in Altheide and Grimes' view, those critical re-evaluations are a routinized aspect of cyclical public discourse and thus do not prevent the next conflict. Although we do not doubt the cyclical nature of public discourse identified by Altheide and Grimes, it remains to be seen whether those cycles result from intentional propaganda, as those authors suggest, or are the by-product of some other process, for example the obvious fact that the prospects of an unsuccessful endeavor always appear better at the outset than at the end.

We conclude that the three factors we examined – the continued credibility of leaders, the history of threat inflation, and the possibility that even critical examinations of a current conflict form a routinized part of a larger cycle – provide little assurance that the invasion of Iraq was an isolated event that is unlikely to be followed soon by further military conflict. On the contrary, at the time of writing (September, 2007), statements and claims by US officials about Iran’s nuclear program and alleged “interference” in Iraq bear an eerie resemblance to pre-invasion claims about Iraq. Just as in 2003, much of the incriminating information is followed by retraction, correction, or qualification (e.g., Peterson, 2007). And just as in 2003, there appears to be little critical analysis in the mainstream media.

NOTES

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- 1 Sources: Speech by the Vice President to the VFW National Convention, 26 August 2002, (www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html); news transcript of Secretary Rumsfeld’s remarks on ABC’s “This Week with George Stephanopoulos,” (www.americanhethoric.com/speeches/dickcheney103rdvfw.htm)
- 2 This survey was administered prior to the use of white phosphorus by US forces in Fallujah in November, 2004 (e.g., Regan, 2005), which represents the only known (and debatable) instance of non-conventional weapons usage in the Iraq conflict.
- 3 In this chapter, we use the label “misinformation” to refer to any information that is corrected or retracted subsequent to its dissemination. The label must not be taken to imply any intentionality to “mis”-inform by releasing willfully false information.
- 4 The study by Lewandowsky *et al.* (2005) was a psychological experiment with respondents recruited from various university communities in the three countries. It therefore cannot be treated like other public opinion polls that rely on a more representative sampling strategy; nonetheless, the results of Lewandowsky *et al.* for the US sample are in striking accord with opinion polls conducted at the same time (e.g., Kull *et al.*, 2004).
- 5 Events were considered “true” when they had not been retracted at the time of data collection. In at least one case, involving the “rescue” of Private Jessica Lynch, the version considered true at the time later on turned out to be quite distorted (Kellner, 2004).
- 6 Labels for samples or respondents refer to the location in which participants were tested rather than to their nationality or ethnicity. We use national labels (e.g., “Australians”) merely as a convenient short-hand for “participants tested in ...”

- 7 In the lead-up to the invasion, US policy very explicitly focused only on the threat posed by WMDs. This official position broadened to include other reasons only after Iraq had been occupied without immediate discovery of WMDs.
- 8 A notable exception was the recent statement by the Australian Minister of Defence, Brendan Nelson, that his nation's troop deployment in Iraq was linked to securing oil supplies (ABC [Australia] News, 2007, July 5). More recently, the view that "the Iraq war is largely about oil" was also prominently endorsed by Alan Greenspan, the former chairman of the US Federal Reserve (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2007, September 16). These statements were made after data collection was complete.
- 9 Reported by ABC (Australia) on 25 April 2003 (www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200304/s839894.htm).

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10 Icons of fear: terrorism, torture, and the media

John Tulloch

Images of terrorism: negotiating with the media as victim and icon

In a 2006 special issue of the journal *Health, Risk and Society*, Iain Wilkinson (2006, p. 4) writes about the importance of focusing on both personal risk emotions and broader cultural representations in analyzing major traumatic events. Wilkinson's preference is for an emphasis on how suffering is culturally expressed in contrast to policy-led needs of "expert" discourse, and I want to extend this preference in the first half of my chapter to subjective negotiation with professional and political discourse through the mass media.

The special issue of the journal on "Suffering, health and risk," included a piece by Andy Alaszewski that caught my eye during my long period of recuperation after being caught in the July 7, 2005 terrorist attack by a suicide bomb exploded by Mohammad Sidique Khan three feet from my body. Here Alaszewski (2006) explores alternative methodologies for the examination of stroke survivors' diaries, and considers reflexively the power of medical and social science discourse to "airbrush ... from the record patients' feelings of fear and distress"(p. 56).

In contrast to expert discourse, he emphasizes stroke patients' anxious feelings, taking into account:

- the emotional consequences stemming from the frightening lack of warning of a catastrophic invasion of one's personal health;
- the anxiety about recurrence of the attack;
- the breakdown of everyday confidence and one's sense of ontological security;
- and then, in reaction to all this anxiety, the conscious, painstaking and minutely detailed planning of everyday activities which always used to be taken for granted and once were performed without conscious effort, such as crossing a road or even making a cup of tea.

I recognized all these changes only too well in my own personal and social biography in the months that followed the terrorist attack on London's transport system on July 7, 2005 – preparing myself psychologically each morning for the succession of lady helpers who lifted my legs into the bath and bathed me because I couldn't bend to wash my lower body; then, later, the huge effort standing, washing my own hair without getting water in my ears; or remembering to light the gas after I'd turned it on – and sometimes forgetting; crossing the road with awful vertigo and vomiting and deafness. But also, like Alaszewski's (2006) stroke victims, from quite early on in that process I was involved in a *mediated* negotiation of self-consciousness related to surveillance of the self by myself and others.

One of Alaszewski's key points about his people at risk, is that their writing of a diary; their taking photographs; or making film, audio, and video recordings to tell a story “may be an important mechanism by which individuals make sense of and manage adverse events, for example by constructing accounts in which they are the active rational agents not the passive victims of events” (p. 44). That was certainly my own personal strategy. As early as September, 2005, only two months after the bomb explosion, I knew I would be writing a book about my feelings after the events of 7/7, and my post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) psychologist was encouraging this, telling me that this would have the same PTSD function as the detailed diary he would otherwise have asked me to construct.

But there was also, of course, a significant difference between my case and Alaszewski's (2006) stroke patients, in that I had been involved in an event that was seen as catastrophic at social, national, and international, as well as at personal and family levels. And in that context the media were constructing their own “diaries” of my life, according to their own production routines and values of practice, with their “one month on,” “two months,” “three, six and twelve months on” time frames for revisiting my voice and my image. They routinely followed their “breaking news” and their “new angle” reasons to ring and email me almost every month, and sometimes dozens of times a day, for a renewed flurry of interviews and photographs: about the compensation issue in September, 2005, in a *News of the World* (2006) populist critique of the Blair government; the build-up to the St. Paul's memorial service in late October/early November; Blair's anti-terror legislation in late November, 2005, as promoted by Murdoch's *Sun* (2005); the government's refusal to hold an independent inquiry into 7/7 in December, 2005, attacked in the *Daily Mail* (2005); the *London Evening Standard's* (2005) critique of the government for avoiding

a 7/7 independent inquiry via its own cross-party inquiry in April, 2006; the *Daily Mail* returning to the attack the following April (*Daily Mail*, 2007), after the fertilizer terrorist group trial revealed colossal weaknesses in MI5 and Yorkshire police surveillance of Mohammad Sidique Khan; and so on and on over the next two years. Many of these newspaper flurries used what quickly became an iconic image of my damaged face to promote their particular political cause.

There was one other significant difference between my mediated diary of events and Alaszewski's (2006) stroke patients, in that I was not only on the receiving end of a terror attack but also an academic with some expertise in media analysis, and also a sociologist interested in risk. In due course, this itself created quite a lot of media interest – a “new media angle” in itself – especially after the *Sun* used my face in November, 2006, without asking me, in order to support government legislation that I opposed, and the *Guardian* (2005b) responded to this a day or two later. Sometimes it even caused some television humor too, as when *Have I Got News for You* (2005) picked up the story, and *Private Eye* editor Ian Hislop joked about the “poor old *Sun*” having the bad luck of using the image of a victim who was a professor of media studies.

As early as the last week in July, 2005, just two weeks after the terrorist attack, I had been discussing with my sons (who had flown over from Australia) which media interviews to accept according to the social and cultural context. So, when I did a BBC2 *Newsnight* (BBC2, 2005) interview in December, I was quite familiar with the subjectivities of *both* experiencing the victim's anxiety and uncertainty (viz. how physically and psychologically would I get through this interview, with its harsh TV lights?), *and* of negotiating each day a variety of media risk discourses and practices that I slowly began to recognize even as they engaged with my personal suffering and lack of confidence.

But by the time of the *Newsnight* (BBC2, 2005) interview in early December, the terrain had shifted for me in two ways. First, the notion of my being a media academic was now very much on the media's agenda after the *Sun–Guardian* confrontation. Second, by December I was just beginning to think “research” again, even if in the most rudimentary ways. Thus, one reason I chose to do the BBC interview (out of a very large number of British and overseas media requests that came flooding in after the *Sun–Guardian* conjuncture) was that Sky News also asked me to do an interview at the same time, again for their end-of-year programming. Both the BBC and Sky planned to take me “for the first time” to Euston Square station after a preliminary interview in my friend's flat, so there were going to be significant

similarities between two televised interviews recorded just a couple of days apart and to be screened as end-of-year surveys. But there was one crucial “variable” that was different, which attracted my attention as potentially interesting for a comparative case study. *Newsnight*’s producer specifically wanted me to talk about the “politics” surrounding the *Sun*’s front-page use of my image, and also suggested to me that they focus on my talking about images of my choice around 7/7, drawing on my competence as an academic. Sky News, part of the same Murdoch stable as the *Sun* of course, did not want me to talk about “all that political side.” So I agreed to do both interviews, to watch from the inside how what I said about how I felt and what I’d seen, from the moment of the explosion on, would be recorded and edited for TV transmission. That comparison forms part of one chapter in my book, *One Day in July: Experiencing 7/7* (Tulloch, 2006).

In dealing with BBC2’s (2005) *Newsnight*, I figured that the process Alaszewski (2006) talks about of his diarists constructing accounts “in which they are the active rational agents not the passive victims of events” (p. 44) could work for me at the level of both editing style and content. In my book (Tulloch, 2006), I’ve spoken at some length about my success in offering the *Newsnight* producer a tacit editing cue in interview, via my words about the explosion, that it was “all in images you see, just little images,” which realized my wish to focus the to-air edit of the interview on images of the terrorists and on Jean Charles de Menezes, the innocent Brazilian electrician killed by police in the panic after 7/7 and 21/7; and I’ve also contrasted this with my failure to get into the final edit my overt political message. Given the media’s emphasis on “breaking news,” my political ploy had been to draw on that week’s media coverage of Harold Pinter’s Nobel Prize-winning speech, and then to compare this with a recent article by the former conservative Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, in the *Melbourne Age* (Fraser, 2005), who made a number of the same critical points about the Iraq war as Pinter. My intended point was to draw attention via this BBC2 “End of year interviews” series to the very wide public intellectual opposition to the kind of politics behind the Iraq war both in England and Australia, and to signal my position as part of this broader movement, rather than to speak as an isolated, personalized victim. But despite some support from the *Newsnight* interviewer for my strongly asserted position during the interview, when I saw the program on air three days later on December 12, 2005, there was no sign whatsoever of my Pinter–Fraser focus.

My first response to the seven minutes of the nearly six hours of interview that made it into *Newsnight* (BBC2, 2005) was of disappointment

and a sense of political censorship here. But a couple of weeks later I ran the tape of the programme to my family in Australia, and they liked it. My son Rowan, for example, commented that he hadn't seen this kind of treatment of the 7/7 victims issue in Australia, and that if I had got in my Pinter–Fraser points I could be accused of being prepared and performative in my position – the very accusation I was making about Tony Blair in the part of the interview that did go to air. We talked over the *Newsnight* interview in some detail, and I learned from that discussion a lot more about the quality of professionalism in the *Newsnight* team.

What was it that made the item work for us? Our collective impression was that the *Newsnight* interview as it went to air combined a number of modes of address to its audiences that are often kept separate in mainstream media, especially in interviews with risk-event victims. The item opened with a politicizing urgency conveyed by the newspaper hoarding that the producer spotted outside Euston Square station when we went there to record. It was about the inquiry into the killing of Jean Charles de Menezes, with the hoarding saying “Tube Shooting. Police May Face Charges.”

The visual urgency of this opening sequence, conveyed by “flat” shots of Euston Square station obscured by heavy moving traffic and the hoarding continuously sliced across by the black, silhouetted legs of pedestrians, was immediately followed by a much slower shot in deeper space as Liz – the *Newsnight* interviewer – and I were followed without edits around the turn in the stairs down towards the Euston Square ticket office. Liz’s voice-over continued the 7/7 theme by saying I was returning to my Tube starting point on that day that I sat so close to Mohammad Sidique Khan. The sympathetic tone of her voice-over and the slowness of my pace down the stairs encouraged an “identifying with the victim” reading, and this was supported by the next shot, a close-up of my face recalling what I remembered of the explosion that day.

This is where my words about my recall about the explosion as a series of discrete images cued the producer’s signature for this entire *Newsnight* item, with an extended sequence of me sitting at the dining table with the images from 7/7 – including a more “academic” or “expert”-sounding commentary from me about the Davinia Turrell–Paul Dadge image – the other iconic image taken by freelance photographers outside Edgware Road station within an hour of the bombing, as a passer-by, Dadge, helped the injured Turrell out of the station, her face covered in a white medical mask. I spoke on *Newsnight* of the power of this photograph, as these two figures “burst out of frame, into the

camera,” and of the imagistic power of the mask, which conjured up unknown and imagined injuries beneath. I also said – as an academic analyst of media images – how, when it came to supporting Tony Blair’s anti-terror legislation, the *Sun* (2005) preferred the full, gory impasto of my color-saturated facial image on its front page. The mask in the other iconic image, of Turrell, had become an impediment to the actual horror and terror the *Sun* was mobilizing on behalf of Blair’s anti-terror legislation.

This shift from my identity as personalized victim to the more distanced academic was important because it then gave me more program authority to talk about the next image, the photograph of Tony Blair at Gleneagles, at the G7 summit, which had drawn thousands of police from London on July 7. I was, I said in close-up, in pain when I first saw that image. But the notion of a highly subjective emotionalism that “being in pain” might suggest vis-à-vis the fairness of my judgment of Blair was undercut by the “professional academic” signature of the earlier and later scenes of me talking about images.

Liz McKeen, both visually and audibly a sympathetic on-screen interviewer, fed me the *Sun–Guardian* story, which had been the focus of anchorman and media celebrity Jeremy Paxman’s introduction of the *Newsnight* item. Liz (and the producer, Shaminder Nahal) were giving me the opportunity to talk as an academic about the shift between different iconic images between July and November, 2005. Liz also made a point of asking me about my anger with political leaders rather than with the bombers themselves.

Throughout this *Newsnight* item, the screen was dominated by media images, and by the interviewer and interviewee in tight one- or two-shots. “Academic”-sounding comments about the bombers not being just “other” (with me pointing to the Mohammad Khan image as teacher’s aid listening to his colleagues and to his young pupils) were interwoven with my very personalized, shocked expressivity in close-up about “*how could they?*” do the terrible things of July 7.

My professional academic life was seen by the *Newsnight* team to depend on my personalized response to going back to traveling on Tube trains, and so, too, was it by Sky News. But the Sky News item was dominated by somewhat fatalistic and “lucky” “near miss” stories and a close-up of my face, without words, on the Circle Line train. On *Newsnight* my future was seen to be made harder by my recognition, with a hand gesture toward the lack of any further security at Euston Square station, that it could all happen again – a comment aimed more at the British government than at my own post-trauma psychological ability to get back on that train.

On *Newsnight*, the station shots of me with Liz acted as bookends to a layered personal/political/professional academic account, which in its finale took us back to the frenetic pace of a frightened, damaged London at Edgware Road on July 7. But now there was a strong, sympathetic voice-over blending all the layers of its voices during the news item into a new determination: that my political opposition to the Iraq war remained as strong as my battle to regain health and confidence.

My pre-determined “broad public front” focus on Pinter and Fraser was not in evidence at all in the to-air *Newsnight* item. Instead, the weaving of different layers of personal, professional, and political expressivity made this, my sons and I felt, more persuasive television, conveying the same story.

Summarizing my perception of this earlier subjective experience of the media in the first year after the attack, I would say it particularly focused on two faces of terrorism and fear that were especially salient for me: one was my own face photographed and used iconically in the media, bleeding my own blood but probably also displaying the blood of the man who detonated his bomb just a meter away from where I was sitting, Mohammad Sidique Khan; the other was Khan’s own facial images as I encountered them in the media. There were two images in particular of Khan that engaged my thoughts and emotions: and this is how I was writing about them in the draft manuscript for my book in September, 2005, two months before the *Sun* front-page use of my face, and the *Newsnight* interview:

A[n] ... image of you, which I have now before me, is one I found on the cover of the *Sun* newspaper on 14 July 2005. It is a photograph of you working in a classroom as a teacher’s assistant at Hillside Primary School, with a teacher on your right, and a pixillated image ... of one of your pupils, in the foreground. You are looking to your left out of frame, listening, contemplative, with a pencil clasped in your hand. Other teachers from the school, reported in the *Sun*, described you as “gently spoken, endlessly patient and hugely popular with children” ... Your role at the school, which served the children of the poorest families living in cheap, short-term rental properties in Leeds, was crucial. With more than a 50 per cent turnover of these children in two terms, your principal argued that they often either missed schoolwork or the work they had done in previous schools wasn’t followed up in your school. So you were appointed as one of two learning mentors to liaise with the pupils’ previous schools to find records and assess their maths and literacy when they arrived. Everybody said you were very good at that ... And the word is still strong in Beeston, as I write, of what you did in the community to help kids against A-grade drugs and prostitution.

The [other] image is from a website, and is part of the al-Jazeera video broadcast on September 1, 2005. Again you have a pencil or pen in your

hand. But now you are holding it in declamatory mode, thrusting downwards beneath your red chequered keffiyeh as you eyeball us, talking the talk of a soldier straight to camera: 'I'm going to keep this short and to the point because it's all been said before by far more eloquent people than me. And our words have no impact upon you, therefore I'm going to talk to you in a language that you understand. Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood.'

In my [first] image, you were listening. However, in this [second] image you are talking, in the Yorkshire accent that shocked many British people: "Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters." In one important way, your argument matches that of the former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser. He says that we should "no longer tolerate governments" that have fought the Iraq war, and you are telling the British people that they have the power, in a democracy, to get rid of their government. But ... Fraser argues that we must support the human rights of those we abhor and despise. You decided to destroy and maim those that you abhorred and despised as you looked across at me in the Circle Line carriage that day. (Tulloch, 2006, pp. 218–219).

So these were the media's imagistic emphases that I engaged with subjectively and publicly for at least a year after 7/7 – culminating in two three-minute news items that I did for ITN News marking the first anniversary of 7/7 in July, 2006, when I took the cameras to Beeston and Leeds to try to find out more about the context of Mohammad Sidique Khan.

But I want now to turn from these images to others that have been preoccupying my professional identity since then – images of other men who, like me, were in the wrong place at the wrong time, and like me caught in fear by cameras – in this case, at Abu Ghraib prison, Iraq. I want to share my first thoughts about these images – and the link between these thoughts and the first part of my chapter is more than that they are about images linking the "terrorism" and "torture" framework of this book. The link goes deeper: because whether they are the outcomes of my subjective identity immediately after 7/7 or of the professional research identity that I am slowly coming back to, these thoughts and emotions relate to a refusal both within victims of terrorist attacks and within media that represent the "War on Terror," to accept passively the hegemonic constructions of terrorism. So whereas in the first part of my chapter I've been focusing on my *negotiating* as victim, icon, and audience with these hegemonic media values, in this last section I want to make a few comments about resistances to the "War on Terror"'s hegemonic discourse *within* the

media itself, even within Murdoch's media empire, which, via that *Sun* front-page use of my image, has been a catalyst for much of what I have argued so far.

Images of torture: resistance to the “War on Terror”’s hegemonic discourse within the media

While an “ownership and control” analysis of the media might emphasize that every Murdoch media outlet internationally took a pro-war stance over Iraq, we should not thereby assume that Abu Ghraib was represented visually *in the same way* in Murdoch's British newspapers the *Sun* and *The Times*, let alone across his media stable internationally. It would be a mistake to reduce the media knowledge production about Abu Ghraib only to its economic base in Murdoch's newspaper empire, or to that of British media generally. For example, as I began to look at the Abu Ghraib coverage in the British press, it became clear to me that it is not only newspapers representing the political right wing like *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Sun*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Express* that differ subtly from each other, as likewise liberal-left newspapers like the *Guardian*, *Independent*, and *Daily Mirror* also differ from each other editorially and visually in relation to the Iraq war and Abu Ghraib. But also as media *hybridities* – i.e. as assemblages of differing narrative and imagistic forms and genres (such as editorials, feature articles with/without by-lines, letters, photographs, cartoons, etc.) – each newspaper could also differ *internally*, as well as subtly embellish its meanings, within its own pages.

Cartoons: Let's look first at an example of a newspaper on the liberal left of the British political spectrum, which uses its assemblage of editorial, by-lined article and cartoon to embellish, in a process between genres that French literary philosopher Roland Barthes would have called “expansion.” On May 9, 2004, the *Observer* printed on its editorial page a cartoon of a huge US soldier, legs astride, automatic rifle pointing aggressively down towards a small, bound, and naked Iraqi detainee. The armed soldier is saying “Sorry.” But the cowering, manacled prisoner has a black hood over his head. The cartoon is an overt representation of what Foucault (1981, p. 139) calls disciplinary power, with the individual, naked body as direct object of the soldier/prison guard's surveillance. In this representation, the caption “Sorry” would appear confusing – if it were not for the symbolic and contextual space the image occupies, via that iconic black hood, as well as its anchorage on the page by two accompanying articles. One is the *Observer* editorial, titled “Rumsfeld must quit over abuse: democracy

demands accountability” (*Observer*, 2004a). The *Observer*, which had always been against the Iraq war, argued in this editorial that the initial rationale of “weapons of mass destruction” underpinning pro-war government rhetoric had long been disproved, and now the Abu Ghraib crisis challenged the war’s central humanitarian rationale too. Rumsfeld, the editorial said:

should resign because in a war sold as a war of values, it is imperative that the coalition forces ensure their behaviour is exemplary ... In a democracy there is accountability for error, and the US needs to show that it will accompany its apologies with immediate action – and that the man responsible for it takes the rap. If democracy is a system worth establishing, Rumsfeld must go.

“Democratization” had been, of course, a major part of the hegemonic rhetoric of this Iraq “war of values,” and here the *Observer* tacitly makes the contrast between its grim and monstrous cartoon embodiment of a US soldier as naked power and the militaries’ legitimating discourse about democratic governance. So the cartoon, appealing to intuitive rationality attached to the already iconic symbol of abuse – the black hood – and to the words of the accompanying editorial, is calling for “Sorry” to be matched by “Accountability.”

In a second article, this one by-lined Mary Riddell directly beneath the cartoon, my act of reading again translated the soldier image via her title, “A new monster-in-chief” (Riddell, 2004). The *initial* media-created monster at Abu Ghraib, Riddell argued, was Lynndie England, whose “snapshots have provided the latest hate figure to help obscure the bigger picture.” Riddell was responding here to the “trailer-trash” personalization of England in many US and British newspapers. But, in emphasizing the “disgrace of the girl from the trailer park,” as the *Daily Mail* headline put it on May 7, 2004, and the media’s comparing of “lack of discipline and esprit de corps” of US Army reservists like England with the professionalism of its full-time soldiers, the “trailer-trash” torturer was condemned according to a foundational value of neo-liberalism, for lacking self-discipline in the face of risk. In contrast, Riddle’s *Observer* article lifts the guilt for the outrage away from this individual “bad apple,” Lynndie England, and embeds it systemically, via Rumsfeld, as himself the “new monster-in-chief”: “The defence secretary must have studied the Abu Ghraib pictures, including a plastic-wrapped corpse of a prisoner beaten to death and the shrouded figure of a man wired for electrocution, but [Rumsfeld] sounds sanguine. ‘I do not see that it is torture.’”

And so the monstrous soldier in the *Observer* (Riddell, 2004) cartoon could readily translate – for this reader at any rate – by way of the

individualized “trailer-trash” England, to the systemic “monster-in-chief” the Defense Secretary.

As Foucault (1981) argued, institutional discipline within the military and the prison “tries to rule the multiplicity of men to the extent that their multiplicity can and must be dissolved into individual bodies that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used, and if need be punished.” Foucault argued that disciplinary power over the individual human “body as a machine ... an anatomo-politics of the human body,” and biopower, controlling the “biopolitics of the population” (p. 139), are complementary powers, working together (via the construction of self-disciplined individual identities) and deploying control via the mechanisms of knowledge production and construction of subjectivities.

But, for me, this *Observer* assemblage of cartoon image, editorial, and by-lined article directly confronts and destabilizes both disciplinary power and biopower in its critique of the hegemonic political-symbolic constructs of “humane” war-imprisonment and “democratic” governance.

The *Observer* (2004b) then confirmed its systemic critique of “Western” governance rhetoric with a follow-up cartoon on May 16 imaging three Labour Party politicians looking at photos from Abu Ghraib. The first (male) politician says “Forced into humiliating acts of degradation on the end of a dog leash held by Texas trailer trash.” The second (male) politician asks “Iraqi detainees?” The third (female) Labour politician says “No, Tony Blair.” So the *Observer* cartoon now lifts the symbolized violence of “trailer-trash” nomination to the corridors of power themselves.

This cartoon is representative of many others in the *Observer* and the *Independent*, seeking to enroll the reader by way of an expansive performance that aligns different newspaper genres into a common hybrid project (challenging the “democratizing” and “civilizing” rhetoric of British and US militarism), and translating the negotiated networks of political, military, prison, and media institutions *without* downplaying relations of power and violence.

The Lyndie England dog-leash image, which was one of the three most published and iconic photographic images emerging from Abu Ghraib, could thus condition the media interpretation of wider, “big picture” events. The *Daily Mirror*’s May 7, 2004 cartoon translated Bush – cigarette in mouth and finger cocked, just as in the Lyndie England photographs, where she smiles as she points at naked prisoners’ genitals – into “trailer trash.” Yet this is also a tamed image of political and imperial power, as the cartoon President holds the leash around the naked Blair’s neck, while the British Prime Minister hides his own

genitals from Bush's gesture. The cartoon is itself visually embedded in a feature article, "Democracy's in the wars."

The *Daily Telegraph*, a newspaper that had been consistently pro-Iraq War, and one of the first to launch into a "bad apples" (i.e., non-systemic) interpretation of Abu Ghraib, also printed political cartoons ambiguating its conservative editorial line. On May 16, the *Sunday Telegraph* (2004) cartoon was positioned next to the newspaper's editorial announcing that any countenancing of a Coalition withdrawal from Iraq as a result of Abu Ghraib would be a "disaster ... for the war on terror ... and for global security generally." But in contrast to the editorial, the cartoon drew on two of the more striking of the Abu Ghraib photographs to criticize Blair: the Lynndie England dog-leash image, and the photo of a naked prisoner, cowering back into his cell bars in the face of an aggressive dog. The cartoon shows the Prime Minister, in formal but puppet-like declamatory mode, saying "Love me, love my dog." In this case the leash around his neck is attached to the paw of a very large dog, with the harsh face, and dripping hungry saliva, of Bush – a tamed image of the USA–UK "special relationship."

For my last cartoon example, I want to turn to the Abu Ghraib image I call "the crucifix man." As the Swedish risk theorists Ferreira, Boholm, and Lofstedt (2001) argue, the juxtaposed relationship between cultural imagery of order and disorder in newspapers is politically powerful and symbolically constructed – and the smiling trophyism of US soldiers with their prisoners in the Abu Ghraib photographs is certainly an unforgettably overt representation of disorder in the midst of one of the "War on Terror" hegemonic images of order, the US army. But if these images of grinning, pointing, victimizing US soldiers were powerful (looming huge, on the front pages of British newspapers), one other photographic image from Abu Ghraib was even more prevalent, and more often reproduced as the iconic image representing 'Abu Ghraib', on more front pages, and translated in more cartoons.

This image was the black-clothed and hooded photograph of a man, which dominated the front page of the *Daily Mail* on May 1, his arms in crucifixion pose, standing on a box, and visibly wired to an electric source. Without a US soldier in sight, this image combined metaphorically for me both civilization and barbarism, light and darkness, Christian spirituality and the basest material abuse. Each of these pairings is potentially a different, sometimes a contradictory, category of thought, translating the narratives of heroism and "just war" into their opposite.

On May 8, 2004 Murdoch's *Times* printed a cartoon on its editorial page that translated the British artist Francis Bacon's paintings from

their earlier, World War II context. Two of Bacon's works, titled *Painting* (1946) and *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944), which portray inhumanity in quasi-religious terms, were translated in the *Times* cartoon into an image of the crucifix man, over the title "Abu Ghraib." For Bacon, the merging of flayed carcass, crucified pose, and silently screaming alien creatures represented inhumanity between human and human, and human and animal. But in the US project, the crucifixion of Christ is redemptive, a basis for Christian civilization. The black crucifix man of the *Times* cartoon "Abu Ghraib" is thus an image that, as Ferreira *et al.* (2001) argue, crosses borders and mixes "incompatible categories in human thought ... rais[ing] issues of purposeful human agency (or issues of negligence)" (p. 291).

The *Independent* (2004b) cartoon on May 6 showed Rumsfeld watching the breaking story of that day, Bush "apologising" for Abu Ghraib on Arab television. Rumsfeld is sitting on a naked, bound, and hooded prisoner in front of his TV; and behind the TV, carrying its antenna, is the crucifix man on his box. Rumsfeld is telling him to move the antenna "up a bit," to see Bush's double simulation – as an image and as an apologist – more clearly.

The photograph of the hooded crucifix man appeared again and again in British newspapers during the first weeks of May, 2004. Metaphorically translated, he also appeared in many newspaper cartoons: as a hapless Blair wired to the US Congress building (*Sunday Telegraph*, 2004); as a torture victim wired to a CIA electric socket (*Guardian*, 2004a); as a transformed (and black-hooded) Statue of Liberty, holding a torch aloft (*Guardian*, 2004b); standing over writhing Baconesque monsters (*The Times*, 2004a); and atop the white Capitol dome, silhouetted black by a declining sun, and captioned "The haunting" (*The Times*, 2004b). So, whereas al-Qaeda terrorist planes had symbolically targeted the US fortresses of political, economic, and military power on 9/11, these cartoons did the same imagistically for the British public, pointing to the systemic association of the tortured (mostly innocent) Iraqi detainees with the new war's imperialism of Bush and Blair, with the CIA-"rendered" torture manuals and special flights, with the imagistic symbols of justice (the Statue of Liberty) and democracy (the US Congress), and with the "civilized" associations of Western high culture (Francis Bacon).

Like a terrorist, the hooded cartoon image of the crucifix man operated nomadically in British newspapers by, as risk-theorist Jost van Loon would say, "establishing equivalences between different singularities" (van Loon, 2002, p. 81) – of torture in Abu Ghraib with the CIA, with the brutal TV viewer Rumsfeld, with a degraded Statue of

Liberty and Capitol building, with Bacon's silently screaming images – a self-induced image-strike at the heart of US hegemonic representations of democracy and values, which translated the proud *logos* of US symbols (like the Statue of Liberty) into what van Loon calls the *nomos* of “infinite and continuous differentiation” (p. 159).

My argument here is that the hooded crucifix man image, in its cartoon versions, had the power to unsettle, make different, and “deteritorialize” the powerfully sedimented symbols of US justice (the Statue of Liberty) and democracy (the Congress building), by way of a range of translations, including those of high art. Indeed, two newspaper cartoons in the *Independent* (2004a) and the *Guardian* (2005) overtly drew on the high art of the Renaissance to destabilize its central historical values of civilization, enlightenment, and progress, by challenging its conventional myths of “origin.”

A *Guardian* cartoon (February 1, 2005) parodied Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*, the muscular, naked body of Adam now bound and even more inert, his head covered by the black hood of Abu Ghraib; and the omnipotent, life-giving Creator touching Adam into life with his finger, now being represented by Bush, surrounded by ruthless soldiers as his “angels.” This is Bush giving birth, omnipotently, to democracy – but a democracy, and a civilization, and a triumphant Western art form of “origins,” which were all denied their humanist territory by that one black hood, first seen worldwide on the crucifix man.

An *Independent* (2004a) cartoon, “The rebirth of Iraq,” translated and destabilized Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (another Renaissance “origin” painting). The naked Venus of the cartoon is hooded, and muscled like a man, the left hand covering the genitals, as in the painting. But now Venus' sinuous blonde hair that frames her body and creeps under her left hand has been replaced quite precisely by the electric cables of the crucifix man. The right hand (on the left breast) and the left hand are presented just as in the painting by Botticelli, who created his Venus to represent visual experience of human beauty as one of the pathways to knowledge of Divine love. But the *Independent*'s cartoon Venus stands on a box – like the hooded crucifix man – and not on a sea-shell. On her right is Blair holding a large sheet, apparently trying to hide the naked vision of such abuse (replacing the spring nymph in Botticelli's painting, who is bringing Venus a richly patterned, billowing cloak). At top-right is a plane firing rockets, beneath it a burning Baghdad reducing the humanist intention of both the original Botticelli painting and of “new wars” rhetoric to material inhumanity. It is now President Bush, not Botticelli's wind gods, on the left of frame. The wind gods blow Venus to earth amid a shower of roses. But in the *Independent* cartoon,

Bush and his planes *blow up* the reborn world. The hood, the wires, and the war-plane destabilize and deny the spiritual territory of Botticelli's Renaissance "birth," as Bush, about to touch together the ends of live cables, shouts "For the last time . . . how does it feel to be free of a brutal dictator?" "The rebirth of Iraq" thus signifies the move from one ruthless tyrant to two.

The United States' own assemblage of sometimes inconsistent military, geo-political, ideological, material-economic, and spiritual-fundamentalist values in the nation's rush to a crusading, economically imperialist war in Iraq is represented and unpicked by these cartoons, and the instrumentalist rationality of the "War on Terror" made to re-signify. But – and this is equally important – none of these media forms enabling "continuous differentiation" (van Loon 2002, p. 81); of the image of the hooded man exists outside the context of what van Loon calls "gatherings of people, merging in particular events," in this case the enormous gatherings of people around the world marching against the Iraq war. It was this *nomos* in *public spaces*, "writ[ing] itself in the formation of packs, who innovate but do not settle" (van Loon, 2002, p. 159), that generated many of the viewers of the hooded images from Abu Ghraib.

Afterword

This chapter has been written in two parts, and two voices, representing my subjective and professional-academic, my experiential and my mediated understandings of terrorism and torture – as a victim of the July 7, 2005 terror attack, and as an analyst of the media images of Abu Ghraib in April 2004. This approach has emphasized separately the matter of our different identities, which in everyday life, of course, mix and mingle in the everyday assemblage, as Wilkinson (2006) says, of personal risk emotions and broader cultural representations.

Indeed, from July 7, 2005, as I lay in St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London, I was experiencing more than a mingling of experienced and mediated memories of the actual underground explosion and its harsh aftermath. I was also having recurrent flashes of state terrorist acts at Fallujah and torture at Abu Ghraib that I had not experienced at all, *except* through the media.

It happened like this. I had never, in my life, been in so much pain as in that hospital bed at St. Mary's. And I have never felt more vulnerable and dependent on professional help. Even the regular blood pressure tests unnerved me, because the male nurse who administered them would go off with his other, extra-busy duties while that black

pressure band squeezed tighter and tighter on my arm. I was so helpless that I began to worry stupidly, “what if he forgets to come back, really soon?” That feeble fear cued instantly, every time it happened – and it happened several times a day – my newspaper memory that the medical staff at hospitals in Fallujah often *couldn't* come back, because, according to Melanie Klein and others, the hospitals were deliberately taken out first in the US attacks (hospitals are a sometimes inconvenient source of casualty figures). In contrast, at Abu Ghraib, after the beatings, body invasions, and humiliations of prisoners, people who were *not* medical personnel did come back, and beat and kicked them some more. And I had fearful fantasies of both kinds of image in that hospital bed, of the ones who didn't come back, and the ones who did.

It is difficult to convey the intensity of this feeling of empathy with people whom I knew suffered extraordinarily more than I had. It is difficult to explain the visceral fear and helplessness that that set of images brought to me in the days after 7/7. It was one major reason, I am sure, that I felt so angry when, still unable to read or to hear much, I first saw the photograph of Tony Blair at Gleneagles, head hung in apparent sorrow, in what I described in the *Newsnight* interview as a “performative act.” Blair's image condensed those other images: my own when the bomb went off and I lay among dead and bleeding people in the Circle Line carriage; and images of others, dead and bleeding in Iraq. This was the most powerful combination of personal risk emotions and broader cultural representations in the face of trauma that I have ever experienced. It was the beginning of my subjective negotiation with professional and political discourse through the mass media of traumas of terrorism and torture that face us all.

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11 What explains torture coverage during war-time? A search for realistic answers

Doris Graber and Gregory Holyk

The international community no longer condones torture. Pressure by various groups of people throughout the world has led to multiple legal prohibitions of the practice. For example, torture is forbidden by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the 1984 United Nations Convention against Torture (United Nations, 1984), and by multiple regional treaties (Nagan and Atkins, 2001). Many of these treaties have monitoring mechanisms. For example, the UN has a Committee against Torture, consisting of ten experts charged with monitoring states' compliance with anti-torture conventions. Likewise, the UN Commission on Human Rights has had a Special Rapporteur on Torture office since 1985. Individual countries also have their private and public monitoring bodies. For instance, Israel has a Public Committee against Torture that investigates torture allegations, and Amnesty International, a non-governmental privately funded organization, uses its worldwide membership to fight against human rights abuses wherever they may occur.

The persistence of torture

Despite these institutional constraints, torture continues essentially unabated, judging from Amnesty International's Annual Reports. That makes the use of torture a true paradox because it is simultaneously widely practiced and yet is a universal taboo. Torture is particularly common during war-time when governments attempt to extract strategically salient information from captured enemies. Torture is easier to justify when countries can claim that it is done for a noble cause – the protection of the country's citizens during war (see also Bellamy, this volume). Usually, the enemy has been demonized, pictured as bent on doing serious harm to innocent people. The impotence of formal bans on torture attests to the futility of anti-torture laws and treaties when governments lack the will to abide by them, and when they fail

to punish all violations, irrespective of the perpetrators' nationality and station in life.

Recent scholarly literature puts a substantial part of the blame for the persistence of torture on the news media's failure to arouse effective opposition to torture policies (e.g., Caliendo and Gibney, 2006; *Columbia Journalism Review* staff, 2004; Jackson, 2006; Umansky, 2006). The assumption in many of these studies is that if the news media told "the real story" of torture to the public, giving full details, citizens everywhere would be alarmed. Public opinion pressure would then force governments to put a stop to the practice. The research reported in this chapter is designed to check the accuracy of complaints about media coverage. Specifically, how have the news media covered torture issues? How fair and realistic are the criticisms leveled against them considering the constraints under which journalists practice their craft? How fair and realistic are the criticisms leveled against them, considering the political context in which torture charges are publicized? Based on these findings and analyses, we then develop our own recommendations for using media coverage of torture events as a weapon in the fight to abolish torture, even during times of war.

The facts about news coverage of the torture phenomenon

Analysis of the actual characteristics of media coverage and an understanding of the role of news media in politics are prerequisites for developing viable recommendations for using news stories as a tool to discourage torture in the future (see also Tiffen, this volume). Our first task therefore requires checking whether the critics' specific complaints about media coverage are accurate. Critics of media coverage of torture allege that news stories focusing on instances of torture have been spotty, shallow, and evasive, and have privileged the interpretations supplied by governments implicated in torture charges. Does news coverage, indeed, display these shortcomings or, as happens frequently, has the critics' outrage about the persistence of torture led them to make accusations that lack a solid factual basis? To assess whether the complaints about media coverage are justified wholly or partially, we first examined data-based research reports that critiqued news coverage of torture coverage. What were the major charges? Did the critics find fault with the frequency of torture stories or the framing and language of these messages? Did they factor current knowledge about the roles played by journalists into their critiques of media coverage? Did they consider the impact of the political forces that are crucial elements in the news-making process?

As a second step in our research we analyzed print news stories about torture issues, including some of the same news sources that the media critics had used. We conducted a Lexis Nexis Academic search for “torture,” “prisoner,” “rendition,” or “interrogation” in the full text of each spotted article for a six-month period from April 6, 2006 to October 6, 2006, in four newspapers representing diverse political orientations in four Western-style democracies. All of these countries faced torture charges during the period of analysis. The papers were the *New York Times* (United States), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Guardian* (Britain), and the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel).

The articles identified by the search were then checked for relevance. For example, articles including the word “prisoner” that had nothing to do with torture were eliminated. Only full articles in the news sections of the newspapers were included along with editorials and op-ed commentaries or features. We excluded letters to the editor, news in brief, obituaries, movie reviews, entertainment reports, and travel news. After paring, the active sample consists of 149 articles from the *New York Times*, 96 articles from the *Globe and Mail*, 112 articles from the *Guardian*, and 25 articles from the *Jerusalem Post*. That totals to 382 stories, which included the search terms as well as many other terms describing incidents of torture (see Appendix [p. 242] for details on coding procedure).

The six-month time period in 2006 was chosen because it encompassed several torture incidents involving the countries included in this study. In the United States, the main focus was on alleged abuses at the Guantanamo detention center and the Bush administration’s attempts to deal with the legal issues surrounding the interrogation of suspected terrorists. Mention of the torture incidents that had occurred earlier at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq also cropped up frequently. In Canada, the Canadian government released the report of a special government commission set up to investigate the role of Canadian and American officials in the deportation and subsequent torture in Syria of Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian charged with having links to terrorists. In Britain, British soldiers were accused of torturing and abusing Iraqis, while the British government was dealing with the issue of deporting suspected terrorists to countries prone to inflicting torture. For Israel, the time period covers multiple incursions into the Gaza strip, some targeting specific political enemies, and major hostilities in Lebanon aimed at Hezbollah forces whom Israel considered to be terrorists.

It is important to keep in mind that media coverage characteristics may vary substantially, depending on the constellation of happenings at a particular moment in history, the general political climate,

the amount and nature of breaking news, and even the identity of the reporters assigned to specific story beats. As with public opinion research, analysis of a specific time period – six months in 2006 in this case – captures only a snapshot of coverage patterns. It is the analyst’s task, then, to determine what aspects of the sampled coverage represent ordinary patterns and what aspects are likely to be unique. It is our guarded judgment that the news coverage patterns shown in our sample are representative. That judgment is based on extensive study of news coverage patterns under many different types of circumstances and during a variety of historical periods.

Common complaints about torture reports

Coverage is incomplete

One of the most common complaints about the news coverage of torture is that it is incomplete. Many torture complaints recorded by human rights organizations are absent from the news. Published complaints usually fail to tell the full story of these gruesome happenings (e.g., Caliendo and Gibney, 2006; Jackson, 2006). However, the charge that coverage is incomplete rests on the false assumption that news media report all important news. In reality, there are many reasons for omitting stories. They range from issues of scarcity of time and space, decisions about the relative importance of various stories, appraisals of what would please audiences and the disinclination to tackle stories that are difficult to cover and verify, or that are politically sensitive.

Gate-keeping – deciding what to cover and what to omit, and how prominently it should be displayed and how often it should be repeated – has always been a multi-faceted, subjective process. Editors are often reluctant to cover torture stories because they are difficult and expensive to confirm, because other stories are more attractive for readers and seem equally or more important, and because they do not want to annoy accused governments or give them an opportunity to make a counter-case that would quite likely be persuasive to their readers.

What are the facts about adequacy of news coverage of torture events that had been reported by various humanitarian organizations? [Table 11.1](#) shows that the *Guardian*, *Globe*, and *Times* featured a significant number of stories, judged by the attention usually given to important political events. The impact of the news articles was enhanced by numerous editorials about torture issues. The conservative *Jerusalem Post* put less emphasis on torture news. But it, too, devoted a surprisingly large number of editorials to the issue.

Table 11.1. *Number of torture stories, April–October, 2006.*

No. of stories	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Jerusalem Post</i>	<i>NY Times</i>
Editorials	22	27	11	41
Articles	90	69	14	108
Total	112	96	25	149

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States).

Did coverage touch on all or most of the available torture news, or did it ignore the majority of these charges? To establish a baseline for the number of torture incidents reported for the April-to-October 2006 time period for Britain, Canada, Israel, and the United States, we checked the annual report of Amnesty International, which, as a private organization, is least restrained in publishing sensitive accusations that governments will try to suppress or reframe (Amnesty International, 2007). Amnesty International's report did not contain specific counts of torture incidents; instead, it described an array of specific cases of alleged torture. Most of these cases were actually covered by the four newspapers that we analyzed, although papers varied in their choices of cases. That finding casts doubt on the charge that major newspapers ignore the vast majority of reported torture incidents. However, coverage may well be spottier during periods when the number of incidents that could be covered exceeds the paper's normal space allotments for news stories of this type.

Although our data do not show a lack of attention to torture incidents, could the charge of ignoring torture news spring from reporters' reluctance to cover torture incidents in their own country because such stories might seem unpatriotic to them or their readers? Newspapers, as commercial enterprises, might succumb to the temptation to restrict coverage of sharply unpatriotic items that could cause their readers discomfort. If the "patriotism factor" did, indeed, prevent reporters from writing damaging stories about their own country, periodic coverage shortages would be likely. To test for evidence that newspapers shielded their home country from torture accusations, we compared the numbers of stories covering home country situations with the number of stories involving other governments.

As Table 11.2 shows, the majority of articles and editorials in the selected papers in Britain, Canada, and Israel involved foreign governments – though in Canada this was a slim majority (53%). In the US paper, on the other hand, nearly all editorials and two-thirds of the news

Table 11.2. *Stories about torture abroad.*

% abroad	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Jerusalem Post</i>	<i>NY Times</i>
Editorials	68	52	55	7
Articles	80	54	64	35
All stories	74	53	60	28

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States). See Table 11.1 for total number of torture stories.

Table 11.3. *Use of euphemisms for torture.*

% euphemism	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Jerusalem Post</i>	<i>NY Times</i>
Domestic	63	15	21	58
Foreign	32	25	15	31

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States). Percentages are based on the combined count of references to torture and euphemisms. *N* for Britain = 126 domestic, 281 foreign; Canada = 165 domestic, 174 foreign; Israel = 19 domestic, 34 foreign; USA = 507 domestic, 150 foreign.

stories covered torture charges leveled against American officials. This outcome, rather than suggesting a lack of patriotism inhibitions, may well reflect the nature of the news during our test period – a plethora of accusations dealing with the United States and a dearth of charges against the other countries.

We therefore tested the presence or absence of the patriotism factor through a search for the substitution of euphemisms for the term “torture” in news stories. If the patriotism factor was at work, one would expect euphemisms to be far more plentiful in discussions of incidents of harsh treatment when they involved the reporter’s own country, rather than a foreign country. Our data provide mixed support for the prevalence of a patriotism factor (see Table 11.3). Euphemisms were predominant in stories covering domestic cases in the *Guardian* and the *New York Times* – though not hugely. They were relatively uncommon in the *Globe* and *Post*. With the exception of Canada’s *Globe and Mail*, euphemisms were less common in covering the actions of foreign governments. In sum, if the use of euphemisms provides evidence supporting the presence of a patriotism factor, one can argue that it was substantially in play in the USA and Britain, but hardly so in Israel or

Box 11. 1

abuse, beating, mistreatment, brutal treatment, harsh treatment, banned interrogation techniques, alternative interrogation procedures, degrading treatment, aggressive questioning, coercive interrogation, harsh interrogation, abusive interrogation procedures, enhanced interrogation techniques.

Canada. Box 11.1 presents a sample of euphemisms commonly used in news stories about domestic cases of torture.

News media avoid the “torture” label

A major reason for avoiding the torture label, aside from patriotic squeamishness, is the fact that there is no agreement about what actions constitute “torture.” Definitions have been vague, especially in international agreements, because even signatories to anti-torture treaties have been unable to decide what falls within or outside the boundaries of “torture.” The 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which has been ratified by most of the world’s nations, is a good example of the vague language typical of international agreements. It defines torture as:

any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions (United Nations, 1984, Article 1).

The definition raises the question of what constitutes “severe” physical or mental pain, what represents “discrimination of any kind,” and what governmental actions constitute “consent or acquiescence” by a public official. The Bush administration may honestly believe that it has not used torture because it has repeatedly defined the point on a continuum of assaults on prisoners where permissive harshness turns into abuse and where abuse becomes torture. Predictably, its definitions have been disputed at home and abroad as giving torturers far more leeway than permitted under international law (Mazzetti, 2007). Alberto Gonzalez, President Bush’s legal counsel, and subsequently Attorney

General, defended these more permissive rules on the grounds that the war against terror is a new type of war that requires a redefinition of the rules about questioning potential terrorists.

Aside from the difficulty of specifying which treatments of prisoners constitute physical or psychological “torture,” and which prisoners are legitimate fighters rather than illegal combatants, it is also unclear which actors in the chain of command meet the definition of “torturers.” For instance, did President George W. Bush become a torturer when his administration adopted its “extraordinary rendition” policy? Under that policy, detainees have been turned over to other governments for interrogation by whatever methods these governments choose – which often include torture. An example involves the USA shipping a Canadian terrorism suspect to Syria where he was brutally beaten until he confessed to the accusations made against him – falsely, as it turned out. Similarly, news media and various international agencies concerned with human rights violations have accused the American, British, and Canadian governments of complicity in torture for allowing the rendition of prisoners to countries where torture of prisoners is allegedly endemic – assuming that the parties share a definition of what constitutes “torture.”

The use of euphemisms amounts to more than a simple change in framing. It has serious legal implications. Torture is illegal in most countries under local laws as well as being illegal under international law. That is not true of coercive interrogation or aggressive questioning and other euphemistic variations of torture. Just as it makes a difference when an act of killing is labeled “murder” rather than manslaughter, so a charge of abuse becomes much more serious if it is called “torture.” That is why the news media are criticized for using euphemisms when they believe that a “torture” charge is more appropriate and is more likely to lead to serious investigations of the charges. Bennett *et al.* (2006) are among many media critics who have focused attention on the avoidance of the “torture” label, when they studied the frequency of torture frames and labels in the coverage of the events at the Abu Ghraib prison, where photographs left no doubt that prisoners had been tortured. They aptly called their article “None dare call it torture.”

Aside from using euphemisms, the explicit torture charge is often skirted by simply describing how the torture was executed. Using that approach, reporters for the *Guardian*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Jerusalem Post*, and the *New York Times* might report details such as “... forcing a detainee to be naked or perform sexual acts; using beatings and other forms of causing pain, including electric shocks; and placing hoods

Table 11.4. *Stories with detailed descriptions of torture (in percentages).*

% torture	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Jerusalem Post</i>	<i>NY Times</i>
Domestic	28	24	20	47
Foreign	23	25	27	22
Average	24	25	24	40

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States).

over prisoners' heads or tape on their eyes ... staging mock executions; withholding food, water, or medical care; or using dogs against detainees" (Zernike and Lewis, 2006) – without classifying such actions as "torture" or telling their readers that there is disagreement about whether or not these actions constitute torture. Roughly a quarter of all stories about torture in the *Guardian*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Jerusalem Post* contained detailed descriptions of torture events; the figure was 40% for the *New York Times* (see Table 11.4). The stories in the *Guardian* were especially graphic. When it comes to using such disturbing descriptions in reporting about either domestic or foreign events, media performance varies. Aside from the *New York Times*, other papers were more likely to give graphic accounts of the alleged sins of foreign governments, than of the infractions attributed to their own government.

The questionable quality of torture stories

Critics complain that when torture is covered, the stories are ambiguous because of the media's customary mandate to cover "both sides of the story" without challenging the correctness of either side. They can point to the fact that there is ample evidence in the extensive literature on consistency theory in political psychology that non-judgmental presentation of conflicting evidence cross-pressures readers and weakens the force of the arguments that have been presented (Mutz, 2002; Powell, 1976). That is why advocacy groups do their best to suppress the presentation of counter-arguments.

When only one side is presented, as happens sometimes with torture stories, it is usually the side of the accused government, while victims' complaints are ignored. Nonetheless, Table 11.5 shows that the charge that the victims' cases tend to be neglected is invalid. Nearly all stories present counter-evidence, irrespective of whether domestic or foreign countries are targets of torture allegations. The only deviations

Table 11.5. *Stories presenting counter-evidence.*

% counter-evidence	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Jerusalem Post</i>	<i>NY Times</i>
Domestic	80	95	100	66
Foreign	82	91	100	78

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States).

are *New York Times* stories about alleged US torture activities. But even there, the majority of stories did report counter-evidence. That makes the complaint about perplexing ambiguity valid. But it is a price that must be paid whenever guarding against partisanship is a priority.

Justifying war-time torture

The media's policy of airing opposing views allows governments to publicize powerful arguments to excuse or justify torture. These arguments may take the form of denials of the accusations, assertions that the incidents did not involve torture or that they were isolated happenings, and claims that abusive interrogation methods were essential to protect vital interests. Box 11.2 features an array of typical justifications. Most of them emphasize the fact that torture is an indispensable tool for acquiring vital information that is unavailable through other means. This imperative is usually underscored by reference to the need to use unusual methods under the threat of imminent terrorist actions. A time-bomb that is ticking will be discovered in the nick of time because the tortured villain will disclose where it is hidden.¹ One guilty person's life will then be traded for hundreds, even thousands, of innocent lives. Such claims have remained highly controversial,

Box 11.2

torture will provide information to stop terrorist attacks; alternative interrogation procedures have yielded intelligence that has thwarted al-Qaeda attacks; interrogations and detentions are essential for national security to protect innocent people from terrorist attacks; stressful conditions for soldiers naturally lead to excesses; dealing with a faceless and brutal enemy requires the ability to freely interrogate detainees; the war on terror requires new rules.

with neither side presenting solid evidence about the efficacy of torture to extract vital data from prisoners.

Table 11.6 shows the prevalence of denials in news stories that the event occurred at all or that it constitutes torture, the frequency of claims that the torture represented unauthorized actions by isolated miscreants, and the incidence of justifications of brutal questioning methods as essential and legitimate tools of war. When domestic issues were involved, stories in the *Globe* and *Guardian* were most likely to feature denials whereas the *Post* and *Times* were more likely to claim that the actions were justified. This is in line with public opinion polls in Israel and the United States, which show far greater acceptance of the need for torture of suspect foreigners than is true elsewhere (PIPA, 2006). However, when the stories involved torture abroad, the *New York Times* did not present justification arguments. It either denied the claims, or blamed torture on isolated individuals. Overall, it is clear that the papers that we studied still report justifications for as well as denials of torture claims against their own and foreign countries. They are least likely to acknowledge that torture has, indeed, occurred and can be blamed on specified actors. Failure to clearly identify a villain in torture stories is likely to dampen the concerns that readers may have or may develop about the prevalence of torture.

Table 11.6. *Denials and justifications (in percentages of stories that assign blame).*

% blame stories	Domestic				Foreign			
	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>
Denied	47	46	–	28	45	50	25	50
Justified	20	31	100	53	40	30	50	–
Isolated	33	23	–	20	15	20	25	50

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States). *N* for *Guardian* = 15 domestic, 20 foreign; *Globe* = 13 domestic, 20 foreign; *Jerusalem Post* = 1 domestic, 4 foreign; *New York Times* = 55 domestic, 14 foreign.

The likelihood that torture stories will arouse the audiences' anger is diminished even further because much of the audience for torture stories is already likely to hold beliefs and attitudes about these issues that make it easy to condone torture (see also Denmark, this volume). Many citizens acknowledge that their governments – viewed as the collectivity

of citizens – have the right and duty to take extraordinary measures, including assorted forms of violence, to protect the citizenry. In their view, governmental powers invoked to protect the national interest, as defined by the government, range from imposing monetary penalties, to depriving people of freedom by imprisoning them, or even putting them to death.

Governments may also require citizens to provide information that they do not wish to disclose, with sanctions attached for refusal to provide the information. They enjoy subpoena powers to extract information and they may engage in eavesdropping through wiretaps. The notion that the state may use violence against its citizens is thus deeply embedded in people's beliefs, even in the United States where there are constitutional protections against self-incrimination designed, in part, to prevent confessions from being extracted under torture. All of these governmental powers are deemed enhanced during periods of war when some of the traditional curbs on government power over citizens are suspended. If governments may treat ordinary citizens violently to protect important national interests, why should dangerous suspects, particularly non-citizens, be exempt?

Coverage delays and sparsity

Yet another complaint aired by critics of media coverage is the slow response to reports about torture and the lack of follow-up stories after events have been reported. Timeliness and repetition are important in arousing and maintaining audience interest (Bennett *et al.*, 2007; Graber, 2007b). *New York Times* coverage of the Abu Ghraib story is a good example. Amnesty International aired the story about torture at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq at a press conference in May, 2003. The *New York Times* ran an 832-word report about Amnesty's charges on page 11 of its front section (*Columbia Journalism Review* staff, 2004). The story headline was ambivalent, suggesting that torture might or might not have taken place. It read "Iraqi detainees claim abuse by British and US troops." Thereafter, the story lay essentially dormant for nearly a year, with only an occasional, brief account about unsubstantiated torture charges. When major newspapers, like the pace-setting *New York Times*, were not treating these torture claims as big stories, other media were also likely to ignore them.

After pictures about the atrocities at Abu Ghraib emerged, making the story more suitable for audio-visual media and more arousing for audiences, *60 Minutes II* was the first major network program to air them in late April, 2004 (CBS News, 2004). As is common, the CBS

network had initially withheld these pictures at the request of the military. The military worried that broadcasting them might interfere with several ongoing problem situations in Iraq, including major fighting in Fallujah, a Shiite uprising in Najaf, and the fate of two US civilian hostages. A sprinkling of coverage followed the *60 Minutes II* disclosures in the USA, most notably several lengthy articles in the *New Yorker*. But most stories carried ambiguous headlines, which left the accuracy of the torture charge in doubt.

The chances that torture stories would have a profound impact were further diminished by failure to feature them prominently. The *New York Times* story about the pictures appeared on page fifteen, the *Washington Post* discussed them on page twenty-four. The papers did not publish the actual photos even though they had copies because the photos were deemed too gruesome and likely to offend many readers. If they turned out to be inaccurate, they could make the paper subject to costly lawsuits. Nor were the stories frequently repeated or covered over an extended period of time. For instance, NBC and CBS showed selected photos on the day following the *60 Minutes* broadcast. But they appeared on only one day. Without congressional action, follow-up, or other strong and official voices coming forward, the story never grew “legs.” By contrast, the story of the trial of Lynndie England for torturing Abu Ghraib prisoners appeared multiple times. The reason: it was easy to obtain and verify. Besides, it was laced with sex and violence and sensational pictures of a young female soldier leading a naked Iraqi man by a dog leash. Without a doubt, if the material makes a “good story,” easily gathered and told, with little risk of adverse consequences for the news medium, its chances for publication are good. Absent any of these elements: its chances for publication are dim.

While the US media soft-pedaled the Abu Ghraib story, foreign media, especially in the Arab world, went wild over it, demonstrating that coverage of such stories can cause serious damage for governments accused of instigating or tolerating torture. The foreign media did not hesitate to show the most ghastly pictures over and over again (Ricchiardi, 2004). In response to the subsequent uproar, the Bush administration publicly disavowed the use of torture and swore that it had never condoned it – all based on its own narrow definition of “torture.” It also insisted that the Abu Ghraib happenings were never authorized. Rather, the perpetrators were a few “bad apples” who would be properly punished for their evil deeds.

Based on our review of torture news stories, the response of the Bush administration appears to be typical when governments face damning accusations of torture (Rejali, 2007). The outcome is usually a

Table 11.7. *The extent of government culpability (in percentages of story frames).*

Blame frames	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>
Systematic	32	22	38	39
Complicit	18	35	8	7
Isolated	7	6	3	12
No guilt	43	36	50	42

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States). *N* for frames for *Guardian* = 115; for *Globe* = 110; for *Jerusalem Post* = 26; for *New York Times* = 156.

stalemate – the accusers are unconvinced by the denials of blame. They may engage in acts of retaliation, which means that more people suffer torture. In turn, the putative offenders may devise new ways to hide acts of torture. But generally very little happens to reduce the number of torture events. The contention made by anti-torture activists, that publicity sharply reduces or even ends torture, receives very little support in the practice of nations.

How systematic is torture?

The media have also been faulted for rarely depicting torture as systematic and widespread and as authorized by a particular government to extract information. Obviously, that charge receives little support from the findings displayed in Table 11.7. When news stories assign guilt, the preponderance of articles state that torture was systematic, condoned or ordered by government, or that governments were complicit. The table also shows that many news stories shy away from assigning guilt. The media's reluctance is easy to explain. Most journalists feel obligated to report only what they can verify. Government denials make it difficult to make a strong undisputed claim that systematic torture has occurred. Moreover, the charges of systematic torture are often made without solid evidence and the sources who make them frequently stand to benefit personally or politically from alleging torture.

Various human rights organizations are the most prolific sources of torture claims. These include Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Human Rights Watch and the UN Council on Torture. Unfortunately, the credibility of human rights non-governmental organizations is suspect because these organizations often fail to verify adequately many of the complaints brought to them. In part, this is because verification is difficult. For example,

Table 11.8. *The distribution of blame: domestic vs. foreign governments (in percentages of story frames).*

Blame frames	Domestic				Foreign			
	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>
Systematic	10	10	10	25	40	33	56	76
Complicit	59	62	–	8	5	12	12	7
Isolated	17	6	–	10	3	7	6	17
No guilt	14	23	90	56	52	48	25	–

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States). *N* for *Guardian* = 29 domestic, 86 foreign; *Globe* = 52 domestic, 58 foreign; *Jerusalem Post* = 10 domestic, 16 foreign; *New York Times* = 111 domestic, 45 foreign.

the *New York Times* accepted Ali Shallal Qaissi's claim that he was the man whose picture – a man standing on a box with attached wires at Abu Ghraib – had horrified people. To substantiate the claim, the *New York Times* had checked reports by human rights organizations and by lawyers for detainees. All vouched for Qaissi's identity. Later it became clear that Qaissi's claim was false. The *New York Times* then was accused of shoddy journalism.

Would the issue of the assignment of blame be more nuanced if we looked at foreign and domestic situations separately? Table 11.8 shows the familiar patterns of journalists being more charitable when their own government is accused of criminal behavior. Aside from a substantial number of stories in the *Guardian* and the *Globe and Mail*, which raised the issue of complicity in torture by the British and Canadian governments, the domestic records of the countries in question were fairly unblemished. By contrast, substantial numbers of torture stories about foreign events suggested that torture might be systematic, encouraged or condoned by the foreign government.

Indexing torture stories to official versions

Another reason why torture coverage is often called inadequate is the common practice of using the government's version of events as the main standard against which other framings compete. Bennett *et al.* (2006) made a very strong case in their analysis of Abu Ghraib coverage that reports were indexed mostly to the government's framing, thereby making it the gold standard. To verify these claims based on a wider data base, we note the sources on which reporters based their stories.

Table 11.9. *Use of government sources. (in percentages of all sources)*

Story sources	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>
Home government	25	30	21	52
Foreign government	28	15	4	14
Non-government	47	55	75	34

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States). *N* for sources for *Guardian* = 417; for *Globe* = 293; for *Jerusalem Post* = 68; for *New York Times* = 796.

Table 11.10. *Use of government sources: domestic vs. foreign incidents (percentage).*

Story sources	Domestic				Foreign			
	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>	<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Globe</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Times</i>
Home government	20	47	34	68	50	15	10	22
Foreign government	34	1	3	1	5	28	5	39
Non-government	47	52	62	31	45	58	85	38

Papers included were the *Guardian* (Britain), the *Globe and Mail* (Canada), the *Jerusalem Post* (Israel), and the *New York Times* (United States). *N* for *Guardian* = 80 domestic, 337 foreign; *Globe* = 133 domestic, 160 foreign; *Jerusalem Post* = 29 domestic, 39 foreign; *New York Times* = 513 domestic, 283 foreign.

Table 11.9 shows that the picture is mixed. Heavy reliance on the home government's framing holds true only for the *New York Times*. It does not hold true for the other papers. The *New York Times* is also an exception when it comes to reliance on non-governmental sources. Though the other papers relied most heavily on non-governmental sources for their stories, the *New York Times* did so only for one-third of its stories.

The picture changes a bit when one compares sources for domestic incidents with sources for foreign incidents (see Table 11.10). As before, reliance on non-governmental sources is heavy for both domestic and foreign incidents, except for the *New York Times*. But the heavy reliance on domestic sources by the *New York Times* holds true only for

stories accusing the USA, and not for stories accusing foreign governments. The situation is reversed for the *Guardian*, which used British sources for stories accusing foreign governments, but did not use them heavily in stories accusing Britain. The only firm conclusion that one can draw from such variations is that coverage patterns tend to be fuzzy because they result from the interactions of multiple, complex factors.

Why is indexing to government sources so much more common in the *New York Times* than in the other newspapers? The answer is that US media have traditionally privileged information released by the government as “official.” That means that the government has been deemed more well-informed and accurate than other sources. As noted, verification of happenings, particularly those that people would like to hide, and those that occur in distant locations, is extremely difficult. No wonder, then, that the government’s version tends to be accepted, given its better access to such locations compared to most other reputable sources. In the Abu Ghraib situation “the photos may have driven the story, but the White House Communication staff ultimately wrote the captions” (Bennett *et al.*, 2006, p. 482).

Dearth of investigative journalism in torture situations

The press has also been charged with lack of diligence in digging out the facts behind reports of torture. For example, in an article entitled “Failures of imagination,” Eric Umansky (2006) chides journalists for failure to file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) appeals to unearth information about torture that the American government might be reluctant to disclose. Umansky’s complaint is based on the assumption that official records containing the desired information exist and could be tapped. It also assumes that editors place news about torture among the select group of events that warrant the high expenses that are usually required for investigative journalism.

There are, indeed, many unpublished records about torture issues. For example, when the ACLU requested FOIA records, it received thousands of reports about torture investigations. The reports consisted mostly of stories about torture policy in general and comments by administration officials about what the policy was or ought to be. There were also many articles about the treatment of detainees, discussing the failure to bring detainees to trial, the denial of *habeas corpus* appeals, and the question of what constituted “torture” during the interrogation process. Most reports were full of unverified claims and counter-claims

with a preponderance of the information provided by government officials who were defending the position of the current administration. In short, the information was not very helpful for assessing the merits of torture claims and for forestalling future torture situations, or for discovering responsible public officials and pressuring them to change their policies.

The power of the news media to change public policies

Can news stories alter the public policy landscape? The answer is a qualified yes (see also Lewandowsky, Stritzke, Oberauer and Morales, this volume). There are numerous instances when news stories have highlighted issues, thereby arousing the general public, or specific public figures, and propelling these issues onto the policy agenda (Graber, 2007a, Part V: “Guiding public policies”). For example, the news media have given prominent coverage to pleas by the UN Committee against Torture, and the UN Human Rights Committee’s urging of the USA, Britain, Israel, and other countries to abandon specific actions deemed to be torture under international agreements. Regrettably, torture has not abated in the wake of such publicity. The accused governments have failed to respond or have claimed that torture did not take place, that it was an isolated, unauthorized event, or that the circumstances surrounding the charge justified the action that was taken.

Policy changes are unlikely unless the power of news stories is enhanced by pressures brought by powerful leaders or interest groups and unless the time is propitious for policy changes (Livingston and Eachus, 1995). Torture policy does not satisfy these criteria. Few mighty leaders or powerful interest groups have championed the cause of abandoning war-time torture to secure vital information.

This is true despite the fact that most people throughout the world condemn torture (see [Table 11.11](#)). A BBC global poll conducted in the summer of 2006 asked people whether they approved of torture if it was designed to gather vital information from terrorists (PIPA, 2006). The questions were introduced as follows: “Most countries have agreed to rules that prohibit torturing prisoners. Which position is closer to yours?” Roughly three-quarters of the Canadian and British respondents opposed torture, as did roughly half of the US and Israeli respondents. However, in times of crisis, and when the country has experienced terrorist attacks, people become far more willing to condone torture to prevent future terrorist attacks (see also Bellamy, this volume).¹

Table 11.11. *Is torture for a good cause acceptable? (In percentages based on total sample for each country.)*

	Allow torture	Maintain torture rules	Neither/depends	Don't know/no answer
Canada	22	74	3	1
Britain	24	72	2	2
Israel	43	48	1	8
USA	36	58	4	3

Full response options: (1) terrorists pose such an extreme threat that governments should be allowed to use some degree of torture if it may gain information that saves innocent lives; (2) clear rules against torture should be maintained because any use of torture is immoral and will weaken international human rights standards against torture; (3) neither/depends; (4) don't know/no answer. Sample size: Britain $N = 1004$; Canada $N = 1007$; Israel $N = 1008$; USA $N = 1002$.

Even if much of the public opposes torture, it is unlikely that government leaders will abandon the practice if they deem torture essential to protect the safety of the nation. For most political leaders, the good of the collective takes precedence over the welfare of the individuals who need to be sacrificed to attain it. Political leaders then whitewash their sense of guilt about violations of humanitarian laws by claiming that their actions did not constitute 'torture' (Lukes, 2005).

Conclusions

The findings in perspective

Table 11.12 presents a condensed score card that puts torture coverage into perspective. The table indicates how valid and how realistic the complaints about media coverage are and the potential harm that news policies can bring to the anti-torture cause. The "Complaint" column presents major criticisms of media performance by scholars eager to reduce the occurrence of torture. The next three columns indicate whether content analysis shows that these criticisms are true, partly true, or false. The fifth column, labeled "Not valid," indicates that the criticism is unrealistic because current practices reflect the technical and political constraints of the situations with which journalists must inevitably cope. The next column, called "Harmful results," indicates whether the criticism points to practices that are likely to harm the anti-torture cause. A question mark indicates a mixture of advantages and disadvantages. The last column refers to the fact that comparisons

Table 11.12. *A score card: criticisms vs. reality.*

Complaint	True	Partly true	False	Not valid	Harmful results	Benefits home state
Incomplete coverage		x		x	?	x
Avoid “torture” label		x		x	x	x
Base story on government’s version	x				x	x
Ignore counter-arguments			x			
Avoid “systematic action” label			x	x		
Rely on “official” sources			x		?	
No investigative journalism	x			?	x	?

of coverage of events implicating one’s own country with events that implicate other countries show that reporters, for the most part, put their own country’s behavior in a more favorable light. They are far less eager to protect the reputations of other countries.

Table 11.12 shows that three of the seven criticisms expressed in scholarly articles are invalid when the content analysis covers larger data bases than those reported in most of the extant literature. This finding highlights the difficulty of generalizing from content-analyses which, inevitably, are limited to scrutinizing only a small slice of available content. The scores in the “Not valid” column reflect the fact that scholars are prone to set widely prized ideal standards that are unachievable in today’s world, where multiple clashing interests must be accommodated. Unfortunately, setting unachievable goals often blocks identification and implementation of more achievable targets. The last two columns of Table 11.12 indicate that most of the criticisms address issues that are apt to diminish ongoing efforts to win support for the anti-torture forces. For instance, concerns about torture would be likely to rise if more stories used that unvarnished term rather than a weaker substitute, and if reporters were more forthright in condemning the misdeeds of their own country, even at the risk of tarring its reputation.

The torture coverage phenomenon illustrates the typical dilemmas that journalists face because they must accommodate a variety of conflicting objectives. As most media are privately owned, profit-seeking business enterprises, they face a number of clashing goals. First, there is the desire to inform the public about important public issues and to act as a watchdog that checks the quality of government performance.

At the same time, however, news stories must be attractive to heterogeneous news consumers in the age groups for which advertisers are willing to pay high fees to news media companies and their investors. That means that news stories must be as simple and entertaining as possible. To yield high profits, they also must be inexpensive to produce, which discourages costly investigative reporting and encourages the use of cheap, boiler plate news from the police blotter or the gossip columns. When all these conflicting goals are considered, covering torture events becomes problematic for journalists and their editors. It does not help that there is no widely accepted clear definition of what constitutes torture and no clear dividing line between harsh treatments that are legal and those that are illegal.

What can be done, realistically?

Given the constraints under which the news media currently labor, one is forced to agree with Thomas Patterson's judgment that the press is not a sound political tool for achieving good governance. In *Out of Order* (Patterson, 1993), he argued that the media are woefully inadequate at informing citizens about their political world. They omit crucial stories, they frame them in ways that primarily serve the objectives of the news business, they privilege stories that come from the current administration, and they seldom do the hard work required to be an effective watchdog of government. Clearly, these charges are very reminiscent of the complaints about torture coverage.

Although one cannot expect the news media to provide the kind of coverage that the critics would like without drastic changes in news organizations, audiences, and politicians, there are options that might make news coverage of torture a more effective tool in the fight to eliminate it. Here are four suggestions:

- (1) Amnesty International and similar institutions concerned with human rights violations are experts in investigating torture cases. Rather than trying to duplicate their work or conduct similar investigations, elite media, like the ones analyzed here, should make these non-governmental institutions a regular beat that journalists routinely visit. Research shows that most of the published news originates from regular beats. If elite papers increase their coverage of torture news, other media are likely to follow the leaders.
- (2) Rather than balancing torture stories with denial stories by officials of the accused governments, the news media should concentrate on evaluating the credibility of the torture claims. That could take the format of Political Fact Check programs, which have become popular

in the US media to check the truthfulness of politicians' assertions. Fact checking would serve two purposes. It would give audiences a context for evaluating the torture charges brought to their attention and it might encourage human rights organizations to be more zealous in documenting the torture accusations submitted to them.

- (3) Many "little" stories become "big" because one or several reporters, supported by their news organizations, focus on them over extended periods of time, bringing attention to the facts as they surface. That is what happened in the American press when the Abu Ghraib torture situation became widely covered. It would not have happened without the investigative work of reporters at the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *New Yorker* (Umansky, 2006). Coverage of the Watergate scandal during the Nixon administration is another example. There should be more journalism honors and prizes for such ground-breaking stories and more pressure on young journalists to be passionate about alerting their audiences to the horrors of torture situations.
- (4) Finally, the media can provide important support to public figures, like legislators, chief executives, cabinet-level officials, and civic and religious leaders who are trying to enforce anti-torture public policies. If used as intended, the anti-torture policies and institutions that are already in place are sufficient to sharply reduce torture incidents. But it requires action by governmental leaders to awaken them from their perennial dormancy. The news media can play a big role in backing leaders who are committed to human rights protection and even in encouraging them to come forward. The news media deserve a lot of credit for the fact that most of the public places itself in the anti-torture camp in response to pollsters' questions. Now it is time for the media to concentrate on the political leadership level as their next mobilization target.

APPENDIX

Three coders were involved in the process. They cross-checked their findings and resolved differences in interpretations, followed by recoding. The codebook was designed to answer the following questions:

- (1) How is the story documented? Does it rely only on government sources?
- (2) Was counter-evidence available that would have permitted different media framing?
- (3) What is the incidence of use of "torture" compared to euphemisms like "mistreatment," "scandal", "abuse"?

- (4) How often are the following frames used? (a) this is an isolated case; (b) only a few evil individuals are involved; (c) the majority of soldiers and other official actors don't use evil methods; (d) the actions were not authorized by officials.
- (5) Are the events reported by the story "event-driven" or indexed to official actions? Or are they linked to information from blogs? How much room does the particular event provide for investigative reporting?
- (6) Who is quoted in the story? How many government officials? How many partial/impartial outsiders?
- (7) Do the quoted parties allege or deny occurrence of torture?
- (8) Who is blamed for the torture: government, individuals, organized groups? What are their alleged motives: need for information, cruelty, revenge, etc? What are their (including press) justifications for dissembling about torture?
- (9) Is "torture" defined? How?
- (10) Is there a discussion of the role of reporters in war-time? Does it refer to clashing values like patriotism, vs. neutrality, vs. humanitarianism, etc? What aspects are stressed?

NOTES

- 1 This is the "ticking bomb" scenario. Thousands will die or be maimed if the ticking bomb cannot be found and disarmed. Torture of the terrorist will produce the essential information. Thousands of innocent lives will be spared. The interrogator-torturer is a hero who should be praised, rather than condemned for the brutality of the methods.

Overall, media voices, as well as authors of recent books dealing with terrorism and torture, lean toward dismissing the ticking-bomb scenario as unrealistic. Moreover, they argue that tortured prisoners will say anything – true or false – to stop their pain, so that their testimony is grossly unreliable. The reality is not quite that simple. There are ticking bombs, but they are not everywhere. What percentage of risk justifies so-called anti-terrorism measures? And what percentage of the testimony provided by tortured prisoners actually discloses vital information? What methods are appropriate to discover what a captured terrorist may know? Where, on a continuum of harsh treatments, does abuse end and terrorism begin?

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12 Reversed negatives: how the news media respond to “our” atrocities

Rodney Tiffen

“It never happened and besides they deserved it.” The title of Edward Opton’s (1971) article on responses to the My Lai massacre succinctly captures the acute psychological discomfort that his respondents felt when presented with graphic evidence of the atrocities US soldiers had committed in that unfortunate Vietnamese village. Their simultaneous desire both to deny and justify what their own countrymen had done has no cognitive logic but does have an emotional constancy – the reluctance to believe that their own troops had committed such terrible acts.

War – despite the manifest immoralities it typically brings – is a moral commitment, and evidence of immorality by one’s own side undermines that commitment. Public support for war is usually premised on the idea that the threat is so terrible and so imminent that waging war is a lesser evil than letting the enemy triumph, that the current loss of life will prevent larger tragedies later (see Bellamy, this volume, about a related point concerning torture). And yet, as the responses to My Lai show, this moral calculus does not rest on a dispassionate dissection of evidence. So we need to probe the dynamics of the emotions and perceptions that accompany the moral decision making.

The fusion of affective and cognitive dynamics in the support for war was insightfully explored in the work of a pioneering psychologist in this area, Ralph K. White. White was a founder of Psychologists for the Study of Social Problems in 1946, and had a career that moved between the United States Information Agency and academic social psychology. He was one of several psychologists during the following decades who developed the analysis of the psychology of participants in conflicts (White, 1986). One of the group, Uri Bronfenbrenner (1986), for example, developed the mirror image hypothesis showing how adversaries each tend to attribute to the other similar characteristics and motives. (It was this type of thinking – of trying to see how issues looked from both sides of a divide – that perhaps later gave rise to charges by conservatives of moral equivalence. As Carmen Lawrence

indicates elsewhere in this volume, attempts to consider both sides threaten the binary thinking that accompanies the dehumanization of enemies.)

Invoking these psychologists is not to endorse psychological reductionism. Perhaps the most egregious example of such reductionism – and hence the inadequacy of its explanatory framework – is Sigmund Freud’s (1966) essay “Why war?” The essay resulted from a magazine’s gimmick where Albert Einstein was able to ask anyone in the world a question. Einstein asked Freud “Why war?” Freud’s reply – shorn of its complexities – was to conjure up a death instinct.

Such an explanation, however, utterly fails to explain why people under the influence of this death instinct join into large, often cohesive, social units to fight, rather than, for example, all individuals waging war against all other individuals. Moreover, although there is a mix of emotions involved when people go to war, the sense of social obligation, of a grim duty, is at least as apparent as any blood lust. Finally, such a universal and constant death instinct is unable to explain the long periods of peace that nations often enjoy, and which some nations have enjoyed for generations.

White and his colleagues come at the problem from an ideologically opposite approach. While Freud stresses the inevitability of war, White has, if anything, a pacifist bias, and is always looking for grounds to be optimistic, to posit alternative ways of resolving conflicts. However, while his view is not nearly as sweeping as Freud’s generalizations about instincts, at times there is a tendency to explain all conflicts in terms of fear and insecurity and misperception, to see everyone as “fearful warriors” (White, 1984).

White offers much more penetrating and historically grounded explanations than Freud, but sometimes his approach also shares problems about levels of analysis. Like many social psychologists when they explain political phenomena, there is a de-emphasis on the importance of institutions and of historical and political variations. In White’s work on misperception, nation states – both governments and public opinion – are often treated as undifferentiated unities. There needs to be more attention to whether everyone shares the perceptions, and how social structures and political institutions create channels of information, which pattern those perceptions.

Nevertheless, despite these problems it would be wrong to underestimate White’s achievements. His work is suffused by an old-fashioned tolerance and decency, and his manifest empathy for many different viewpoints is an impressive intellectual and imaginative achievement. Moreover his work is grounded in a close attention to historical

documentation. Here I particularly want to draw on White's theses about how misperception can lead into war.

White and misperception in wars

White (1970) distinguished six "typical, recurrent forms of misperception" (p. 32):

- (1) *The diabolical enemy image*. This refers to the tendency to view the other side as motivated purely by evil and aggressive designs. The enemy's actions are interpreted in the worst possible light. Ambiguities are interpreted with an often false presumption about the enemy's aggressive intentions. There are two somewhat contrasting themes in White's work on this dimension. The first refers to a negative image of the whole nation. "The enemy, if he is to be tortured or killed, must first be dehumanized. He must be viewed as a devil or the dupe of a devil, not as a full human being" (White, 1970, p. 242). On the other hand, there is also what he terms the "black top image," where only the leaders are bad; and their people are oppressed (White, 1970, p. 30).
- (2) *The virile self-image*. This refers to how patriotic pride becomes a pre-occupation with prestige, and how then the prospect of humiliation becomes intolerable. The self-image of being courageous, firm, indomitable is often accompanied by a rigidity of thinking, and a bias toward action images and strong responses that make escalation more likely. Similarly the virile self-image makes it more difficult to reverse a course once decided upon – we must honor our commitments; see it through to the finish, "stay the course" – because to back down or retreat is ruled out.
- (3) *The moral self-image*. While only evil is attributed to the enemy, only good is attributed to the self. Our side is seen as fighting for noble reasons – patriotism, democracy – and there is an inability to see how anyone could interpret our actions otherwise.
- (4) *Selective inattention*. This is something of a catch-all category, but White's main concern is how a narrowing of consideration of possibilities occurs, including a failure to think through how the other side may respond. Black and white thinking, and the inability to see shades of grey – you're either with us or against us – lead to a failure to make crucial distinctions. It also involves a concentration on the short term, and an exaggeration of the immediate stakes (e.g., Vietnam and the domino theory).

- (5) *Absence of empathy*. This involves the inability to see how the situation looks from the other’s perspective. This inability leads to a failure to predict accurately how they will respond, and in turn is a force for escalation. An early and compelling demonstration of the role of misperception in crisis decision making was the 1970 study by Ole R. Holsti and his colleagues of cabinet documents in the five major European powers in the lead-up to World War I. Each thought that its actions were driven by necessity, but interpreted its adversaries as acting through choice (Holsti, 1972). White quotes from a memoir by a former official under President Kennedy, Roger Hilsman:

Statesmanship is a higher art than partisan leadership, and Kennedy could reach across and establish a relationship with adversaries. It was based not only on an instinct that one ought to avoid cornering an enemy but a reasonableness, an openness, a largeness of spirit that permitted him to understand how the other fellow might see things differently (White, 1970, p. 120).

Whether this estimate of Kennedy by one of his admirers is justified or not, it is hard to imagine one of President Bush or Australian Prime Minister Howard’s officials writing anything similar.

- (6) *Military overconfidence*. White here points to the paradox that exaggerated fear can be combined with an exaggerated military confidence. “Military over-confidence is a self-deluding manifestation of the virile self-image” (White, 1970, p. 242). It typically involves a belief in imminent victory – that (as in World War I) the war will be over by Christmas; or prominent neo-Con and Republican insider Kenneth Adelman’s forecast that the Iraq war would be a “cakewalk” (Isikoff and Corn, 2006, p. 212). A further aspect of military overconfidence is to overestimate the extent to which key groups will support one’s own side.

White’s central concern was with government decision makers and their perceptions in conflict situations. Nevertheless, his writings are also suggestive of the cognitive structure needed for public support for war, while in turn, to have mass support for war in a democracy, it is necessary to have news coverage supportive of its main themes, and White’s classifications are suggestive for how we might approach analyzing news coverage. While examining these major cognitive themes in support for war in public opinion, news coverage, and official propaganda, there is no presumption in any particular case as to whether claims are true or false. Finally, the logic of his six categories is less than

watertight, and for the purposes of analyzing themes in public support for war, I will regroup them into three:

- (1) The diabolical enemy image.
- (2) The moral self-image.
- (3) The virile, efficacious self-image.

Together these yield the major themes for supporting war: we are right; our cause is just; our motives pure. The enemy is an inhuman, irrational aggressor. There is no choice, we must fight. We can win, and victory is worth the cost. Retreat is intolerable.

News coverage and selective perception

My focus in this chapter is to build upon White's work on social perceptions, but also to address the issue of levels of analysis by looking at the channels of information that shape public perceptions of war, namely the news media. Unlike White, my main concern is not with policy makers' perceptions, but rather with news coverage of wars in democracies. The norm – for reasons explored below – is that the news media will tend to support governments in war-time, especially in the early stages of a war, and especially when it is perceived as moving towards a successful conclusion.

It is important to note that these patterns of news coverage do not derive from some floating ideological or psychological tendencies, nor in any simple sense from “bias” by journalists, but rather they come from the institutional workings and socio-political context of news institutions. They flow from the nature of news production, the news media's access to information and their news values, the publicity efforts by major sources, their perception of their audience's attitudes, and the socio-political context in which they operate. Understanding these institutional workings also illuminates the contingencies affecting when news coverage is going to adhere most closely to supportive themes and when not.

Especially in the early stages of a war that has public and bipartisan political support, news coverage is influenced by two basic factors – that nearly all the most important news sources fall on one side of the conflict, and the news audience falls entirely on the same side of the conflict. In domestic conflicts – especially party conflicts where the audience is broadly evenly split and there are important sources on both sides – there are commercial and institutional incentives toward balance (Tiffen, 2000). In international conflicts with strong public support and all major domestic sources on one side there are fewer constraints.

Reporting a war is full of logistical difficulties and obstacles to journalistic access. In some wars such as the long-running conflicts in the Congo, terrible massacres have gone unreported partly because no reporters were close enough to know about them (although this reflects not only immediate obstacles but a lack of organizational commitment reflecting a perception of lack of audience interest). The long range of contemporary weaponry also limits access. The position of British reporters on warships during the Falklands War gave them no access to anything else, inducing professional claustrophobia among some (Morrison and Tumber, 1988).

In ground wars, a reporter’s capacity to move with the troops depends on official arrangements regarding access. The arrangements regarding embedding in the Iraq war are an accentuation of these arrangements, but despite the controversy surrounding it, it extends the logic that always existed. As one veteran reporter, Keyes Beech, told me regarding his work in the Vietnam War, you’re with the troops. They’re the ones you’re with and your sympathies are naturally with them (Tiffen, 1978). Moreover, the reporters know that their audiences (and editors) have the same sympathies and emotions.

This skewed access of course also offers dominant sources great opportunities to have the initiative in their relations with the news media. They can use their briefings and statements to direct attention to some aspects rather than others, to release compelling news film, to frame issues the way they want, to make claims that reporters often can only belatedly, if ever, test.

This institutional logic of the balance of sources and audiences is accurate, but does not alone capture the high passions that accompany any military commitment. News organizations are very aware of the official and public sanctions that may follow coverage that runs against the patriotic mood, in particular any coverage that does not seem to appreciate the sacrifice made by the troops going to war. Moreover, the news executives more than likely share these views. They are not just conforming because of fear of the consequences if they don’t, but because they positively embrace the same views as the government, and some also see commercial opportunity in it. “Gotcha!” – the London *Sun* headline when the British sank the Argentine warship *Belgrano* – was one infamous peak of a jingoism that the media both feeds off and feeds when war fever is at a pitch (Morrison and Tumber, 1988).

In the past, especially during periods of total war, censorship of the news media was the norm. However, during limited wars – fought at a distance from the metropolitan power, where societies are not totally mobilized for war and their survival is not seen as being at

stake – censorship is more difficult, and has become steadily less possible anyway in this age of instant and globalized media (Tiffen, 1992). The decline of censorship is one reason for the increasing efforts at news management by militaries and governments. Nevertheless, even if official censorship is now less feasible, governments in war-time have an impressive political arsenal for ensuring conformity. Although news media at times celebrate their adversarial relationship to officialdom, in times of high patriotic fervor and if the most important forces in the polity are arrayed behind the war effort, the news media are reluctant to isolate themselves and incur the wrath of the government. Similarly, they are sometimes reluctant to make an intervention that may seem partisan.

During the Iraqi saga, among American news organizations, which generally pride themselves on reporting without fear or favor, there were at least two such instances of editorial reluctance. In March, 2003, just as the Americans were about to invade, senior writers for the *Washington Post*, including Bob Woodward, had “information that the basis for this war was shakier than many believed.” Pentagon correspondent Thomas Ricks said “There was an attitude among editors: look, we’re going to war, why do we even worry about all this contrary stuff?” (Bennett *et al.*, 2007, p. 34; Tumber and Webster, 2006, p. 58). *New York Times* reporter James Risen, after extensive investigative research, had documented the extent to which legal safeguards regarding surveillance had been abandoned after 9/11 at the direction of the White House. He was ready to publish in the lead-up to the 2004 election, but the paper only ran the story in December after the election (Powers, 2006).

Taking such institutional and socio-political contexts into account also throws perspective on the controversies over the Arabic-language satellite news service al-Jazeera. The Gulf War of 1991 was sometimes labeled CNN’s war. They transmitted from Baghdad when all others had evacuated or been expelled. Their continuous coverage attracted huge audiences globally as well as in America. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, for example, said he watched CNN for hours each day (Allen *et al.*, 1991). In contrast, the Iraq war beginning in 2003 could be dubbed the Fox News–al-Jazeera war. Fox News, with its vociferous pro-Republican bias, flourished in the post-9/11 ethos of support for Bush and an eagerness for decisive action. Unlike its main competitor CNN, Fox News spent much less on news gathering and instead highlighted the views of its presenters. While this played well to one part of the political spectrum in the United States – and seemed to pressure the more mainstream news media to veer towards the right – it never held any attraction for non-American audiences.

While a major American news channel had become more jingoistic and less appealing to any non-US audience, a new international satellite news service had also grown up in the meantime, one that was appealing greatly to audiences in the Middle East. Begun in 1996, from late 2001 onwards al-Jazeera attracted many American criticisms from Donald Rumsfeld (Noujaim, 2004) and others. Without examining the exact merits of the various controversies, much of the difference in al-Jazeera’s news coverage is explained by its different audiences and different sources. Arab audiences are more interested in Arab casualties, just as American audiences think American casualties are most important. al-Jazeera’s commitment of journalistic resources to the conflict is at least as great as that of any Western organization, while their journalists’ linguistic skills and ability to move through Arab societies give al-Jazeera access to many sites that Western reporters often lack (Miles, 2005). Similarly, Arab politicians are keen to appear on al-Jazeera to reach their constituents.

Such considerations also illuminate controversies over the Western media’s role, and especially when critical reporting is likely to emerge. News coverage is at its most conforming when there is a bipartisan commitment to the war; unity between political leaders, senior officials, and lower ranks; when it is early in the war; and when there is a prospect of quick victory. The longer wars last, especially if there does not seem to be any end in sight, the more critical reporting develops. Partly this may be a response to the domestic political and public moods, but in addition the news media increasingly gain expertise, and have more independent sources on which to draw.

The main stimuli to critical coverage are when (1) there are divisions within the allied side; and (2) official expectations are not fulfilled, manifested in military disasters or problems, and especially casualties on one’s own side. It is not the balance between ally and enemy that in any sense fuels criticism, but divisions within the allied polity. Many myths have grown up about the performance of the news media during the Vietnam War, often for example conflating different periods of this extremely prolonged conflict. Before the long era of Vietnamization beginning in 1969 under President Nixon, news coverage reached a crisis during two periods. The first was in 1963 in what turned out to be the final months of the Diem regime, and the second was following the shock of the Tet offensive in early 1968. In both cases, it was how developments punctured the official optimism, plus divisions within the American forces and officialdom, that were the main stimuli to critical reporting (Tiffen, 1983).

While the issues over images in media coverage of war are constant in some aspects, in other ways as the nature of war and the nature

of media both change the relationship is also dynamic. Technological changes have most obviously changed both media and warfare, and the media are a far more massive presence in contemporary wars than they were in the past. More subtle but also important are changes in public thinking. For example, in previous centuries and generations, there was much more overt racism in the population, which made demonizing the whole enemy population much easier. No one would now talk of Iraqis as Kipling did of Germans in World War I – “there are only two divisions in the world today, human beings and Germans” (Knightley, 1978, p. 84). Although of course racism is not absent today, it is qualitatively much less than in earlier generations, and so at the least there is not the indifference to Iraqi casualties that there was to German and Japanese casualties in World War II.

Going back even further, the first time that the media played an independent critical role in war reporting was the London *Times* during the Crimean War. This occasion has been properly celebrated for several reasons. It signaled the assertiveness of a democratic press, with the editor of the *Times* famously proclaiming that the role of the press differed from that of diplomacy, that the press lived by disclosure. It was also one of the first occasions when a newspaper had sent its own correspondent to report on a war. William Howard Russell, the “father of a miserable tribe” (Knightley, 1978), as he described himself, was greeted by the military in an early depiction of their limited grasp of public relations, by having his tent cut down by an officer who resented his very presence.

Russell’s reporting caused great political controversy in England. The focus of his critical coverage was not the rightness of the cause, or questioning the need for war; it involved the competence of its conduct. Russell reported on the poor conditions and lack of support given to the soldiers. Most press criticism of wars since has involved similar types of criticism, especially reflecting the grievances and problems of our own troops and officers. It must be stressed, however, that because lives are at stake, even seemingly “technical” criticisms of the prosecution of the war are emotionally and politically explosive.

While Russell was a lone professional journalist in the 1850s Crimean War, now there are contingents from all over the globe able to transmit across the world instantly. We know more about contemporary wars more quickly than ever before, including often access to the enemy side. Nevertheless, issues about the quality of media coverage are if anything more intense than ever, and the themes of White’s propositions about misperception are still crucial to understanding these issues. White wrote that “Empathy normally has the disturbing effect of requiring

us to see double – to hold in suspension two interpretations of the same facts, the other fellow’s and one’s own. Complexity and uncertainty are introduced. The human mind, seeking simplicity and certainty, rebels. And empathy is choked off” (White, 1970, p. 284). Whether the human mind seeks simplicity and certainty, the news media certainly do, and political debates shun away from complexity and uncertainty. The news media are geared toward moral simplicity and the presentation of certainty. The great bulk of the time this reinforces the main themes supporting the war. In the case of the current war in Iraq, in the four-plus years the war has lasted at the time of writing, the nature of the media coverage has changed greatly. However, in crucial ways issues deriving from White’s schema are still apparent.

The war in Iraq

Saddam’s endless evil and Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)

Iraq is the most morally problematic war since Vietnam. It is no small thing for a democracy to go to war on the basis of a fiction. So the pre-war period – the politics of the stampede regarding the urgent threat of Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction – is one where news coverage needs to be closely examined. How did the US administration and its allies in Britain and Australia get away with their hit-and-run claim-making about Iraq’s WMDs?

White’s observations on the diabolical enemy image are very pertinent to the politics and media coverage of this period in two respects. One is the way in which it was possible to extrapolate from Saddam’s moral monstrosity to a related but distinct set of propositions about his aggression, how the certainty about his evil motives covered weaknesses in the evidence about his alleged actions, and how a lower threshold of evidence was necessary for claims about his aggressive designs. The second is the loaded political debate in the lead up to the war about WMDs.

Among strong global competition, Saddam was, without doubt, in the top league of brutal dictators, abusing human rights and terrorizing his own population. He used chemical weapons against the Iranians and against his own Kurdish population. In the decade leading up to the Gulf War, he built up a huge arsenal of weapons, including chemical and biological weapons, and was working toward a nuclear bomb.

The aim here is not to question this dominant imagery and these firmly established facts, or to suggest there was a more virtuous side to Saddam. Rather, it is to see how his undoubted evil was extended

into an image of reckless, determined, and insatiable aggression. In his twenty-four years in power, Saddam committed two acts of external aggression. He invaded Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990. In neither case was the military action morally justified. But both related to longstanding Iraqi grievances fueled by some immediate provocations. In the attack on Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, Saddam was acting with a green light from the United States and the major Arab states, including Saudi Arabia (Lando, 2007). The campaign against Kuwait followed from his desperation and resentments after the prolonged war against Iran, and the impoverished state in which it left Iraq, as his Arab neighbors worsened his economic plight by lowering the price of oil.

While there is no doubt Saddam had had militaristic ambitions, and his military aggression had damaged his people enormously, and while he always maintained great braggadocio and public defiance following his devastating defeat in the Gulf War, it is far from clear that he wanted to commit suicide by engaging with American power again. To question whether Saddam had actively aggressive designs in 2002 is not to suggest any virtue on his part but simply a bully's capacity to recognize superior power.

The series of false accusations against Saddam in the lead up to the March, 2003 invasion – from his involvement with the 9/11 bombers, to the importing of uranium from Niger, importing aluminium tubes for use in a nuclear centrifuge, his mobile biological weapons laboratories, the training of al-Qaeda in chemical weapons, and others – constitutes one of the most remarkable episodes of false claims in recent democratic history. Eventually the Iraq Survey Group (2004) found that none of these charges was true (Barton, 2006, p. 256).

In retrospect what is remarkable is the way that a sense of urgency was generated even though no new actions by Saddam fueled it. It illustrates first the initiative that officialdom had in its relations with the media, and the much lower standards of evidence needed to print anti-Saddam stories than to refute them: how ambiguities were resolved to confirm rather than challenge the dominant image.

Second, the loaded nature of the debate is stark. Given Saddam's record of past abuses, given his tyranny, given the doubts about the real situation and the possibility that he might have WMDs, it would have been political suicide to appear as a dupe of Saddam. There was no political mileage in saying the charges against Saddam were false.

Moreover, especially as time went on, there was a shift in the onus of proof – Saddam was guilty unless he could prove he was innocent. Because, as Donald Rumsfeld said, the absence of evidence was not

evidence of absence, the refutation of any particular detail was never sufficient to damage the general scenario. In the end, it was being demanded of Saddam that he provide positive evidence of disarmament.

The hidden casualties of allied bombing

There has been continuing controversy over the number of war-related deaths in Iraq. By far the highest estimate (Burnham *et al.*, 2006) is that published in the British medical journal, the *Lancet*, which for the period up to July, 2006 gave a figure of 654 000 extra fatalities due to war, with 600 000 directly due to violence (Thieren, 2006). That figure is based on cluster sampling and survey data (courageously) gathered from nearly 2000 households and 12 000 people and then extrapolated to the population. For the same period the Iraq Body Count, a conscientious group who have documented incidents reported in the media since the start of the war, had a figure of 48 783. This group does not claim to have an exhaustive tally – although they do dispute the *Lancet*’s figure as much too high (Dagadan *et al.*, 2006). Iraq Body Count acknowledge that their own methodology depends centrally on the media’s capacity and willingness to report casualties, and of course this is far from constant. They scour the world’s media to look for reports, and while they perform a very valuable service that highlights the nature of many fatalities in Iraq it rests upon a very fallible source.

Some other groups have given tallies for more limited periods. The Iraqi Ministry of Health and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq offer annual estimates for recent periods, the latter giving a higher figure than the former – 34 000 Iraqi civilians killed in 2006, for example (UN News Service, 2007). Accepting this UN figure and very roughly extrapolating a similar rate to the whole period of the war would give a fatality count of around 130 000. The total must remain contentious and in doubt until it is possible post-war to undertake a proper census. Even the death rate before the war began (when the state institutions were functioning as normally as they could under Saddam) is a matter of dispute. Nevertheless, our current concern is less with the total, than with different types of fatalities.

Which of these fatalities were visible in the news? The problem with the Iraqi Body Count methodology is of course that fatalities do not have an equal chance of appearing in the news, and there is furthermore a patterning in which deaths are covered. American and allied casualties are more likely to be covered. Prominent people are more likely to be covered. Casualties in Baghdad – close to journalists and officials – are more likely to be covered. Casualties who occur in a more

newsworthy way – either because of the size of the incident, or its novelty, or at a particularly sensitive time – are more likely to be covered. Casualties who are publicized by the pronouncements of the American and allied governments are more likely to be covered. Casualty events that occur in front of a TV camera are probably the most likely to be covered.

In turn, the obverse of all these conditions identifies the casualties least likely to be covered. For example, an isolated killing outside Baghdad where no Westerners are involved is extremely unlikely to be reported in the Western media. First, it is not likely to come to the attention of any Western journalist. Second, it is likely to fall below the threshold of newsworthiness. Third, it does not fit within any resonant news narrative salient to Western publics.

During the Iraq war, very few Iraqi victims of aerial bombing have been covered in the news. The *Lancet* study in 2006 identified air strikes as contributing around 13% of violent deaths where a specific cause was known – the same proportion as car bombs (Burnham *et al.*, 2006, p. 1425). Air-strike victims constituted around 40% of children's deaths from violent causes. But car bombs figure in the news much more frequently and prominently than deaths from air strikes.

This absence of the casualties of air wars has been a recurring feature in the news coverage of contemporary wars. This is firstly for logistical reasons, because journalists are almost never present to see the effects of the bombing at first hand. It is also that the public relations arms of governments rarely focus on the civilian casualties and damage wrought by such bombing – unless they have no choice. Indeed, they go to considerable lengths – especially in the first Gulf War – to do the opposite. Many years later it was gradually disclosed that the smart bombs that received so much attention in press briefings at the time constituted a small proportion of the total tonnage of bombs dropped (Bowcott, 2003) and the precision of those used had also been considerably exaggerated (Norton-Taylor, 2002). In the Vietnam War, also, the bombing was the worst covered aspect of the fighting.

In the political aftermath of September 11, and the American determination to attack al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, the lack of interest in the casualties of allied bombing – an indifference to civilian casualties that plagued the war effort for years to come – brought recurring conflicts between the American government and al-Jazeera. CNN told its reporters that if they found themselves covering civilian deaths they should make it clear it was the country's leaders who were responsible for the situation Afghanistan was now in, and that every

such report should begin by referring to the casualties of 9/11 (Miles, 2005, pp. 141–142). For much of this period, al-Jazeera was the only TV news organization covering the areas being bombed. When they reported, for example, deaths from American bombing of a hospital, it was denied, Donald Rumsfeld describing it as ridiculous, but the report proved to be true (Miles, 2005, p. 144). This period climaxed with American bombing of the al-Jazeera bureau in Kabul, but “the war in Afghanistan cemented Al Jazeera’s reputation as a world-class news network” (Miles, 2005, p. 171).

The hidden casualties of allied behavior

News coverage and public opinion are normally particularly sympathetic to our troops in the field. The dangers they run and the possibility of their losing their lives, leaving their loved ones behind to face the dangers, plus the closeness of reporters to them, naturally all tend to produce sympathetic coverage of our troops. These sympathies generally support a pro-war politics (Bacevich, 2007).¹ One of the least covered aspects of wars is the misdeeds of those troops. This was particularly so in the early period of triumphalism, especially before the horrors of Abu Ghraib drew unavoidable attention to allied misdeeds.

Dahr Jamahl, a young freelance journalist, started to hear stories of torture by Americans soon after his arrival in Iraq. In May, 2004, he heard an account of a man from Kirkuk who was arrested after seeking to intercede between soldiers and some locals. He was held for a month, and then dumped at Baghdad General Hospital in a coma. The US medical report didn’t mention the bruises from beatings and electric shocks. The 57-year-old man entered custody healthy, but emerged in a vegetative state. His family only found him because the Red Crescent of Tikrit posted photos of him on buses trying to identify him, and a friend saw them. Jamahl related the story ending with the family caring for their unresponsive father, and the lack of any satisfactory explanation by the American military. He sent the report to 180 American papers but none was interested, until a few months later Seymour Hersh of the *New Yorker* took it up (Jamahl, 2004; personal communication, March, 2007).

The obstacles facing reporting of such incidents were encapsulated in an experience of *Los Angeles Times* reporter Ann Louise Bardach. In the second half of 2004, she met a 40-year-old former marine sergeant recently returned from Afghanistan. He was deeply distressed by what he had seen in his tours of duty, especially offering vivid tales

of torture and intimidation by the CIA of people who had only vague associations with the Taliban. Bardach said that when the ex-marine told her his story, she “didn’t quite know what to do with it.” Partly this was because of the mental state of her informant, who was seeing a psychiatrist for post-traumatic stress disorder, and who was in a distressed state that would have made it difficult for him to cope with public pressure. Indeed, he later committed suicide. But in addition, “such allegations were not yet being reported – and many Americans would probably have found his accusations unimaginable. For multiple reasons I put his story on the backburner” (Bardach, 2006, p. M1).

Later, as more critical themes became more prevalent, there was more willingness to accept the possibility of such behavior. As retrospects on what went wrong increased, there was more attention to the actions of US troops. For example, Thomas Ricks in the *Washington Post* – two-and-a-quarter years after the war began – reported that from “its first days in Iraq in April 2003, the Army’s Fourth Infantry Division made an impression on soldiers from other units – the wrong one” (Ricks, 2006). He said they had a reputation for conducting indiscriminate sweeps of the local population. One officer commented on their capricious detention practices. According to one colonel “every male from 16 to 60 was detained, and when they got out they would be supporters of the insurgency” (Ricks, 2006).

This last comment focuses on a crucial issue – that such behavior is not only immoral but counter-productive. Apart from the moral issues involved, deaths from air strikes and mistreatment by allied troops are crucial factors in affecting attitudes of the population and so prospects for some sort of successful resolution. President Hamid Karzai got considerable news attention in the West recently when he warned that civilian casualties were damaging support for foreign forces in Afghanistan (Anon., 2007). Civilian casualties no doubt contribute to the rather startling poll result that in early 2006, 47% of Iraqis approved of attacks on US-led forces in Iraq. While only 16% of Kurds had this opinion, 41% of Shias did and fully 88% of Sunnis did (Brookings Institution, 2007, p. 57).

An inexplicable parade of abstracted deaths

In many ways news coverage of the Iraq war is far more critical and skeptical in 2007 than it was in 2003. It reflects the political conflicts among the allies, the puncturing of official optimism as the war has defied confident predictions of imminent victory. There has been a reaction in the media – especially the quality media – against

the manipulation of them in the lead-up to the war. When evaluating current coverage, the starting point must always be the considerable obstacles facing the media. Many journalists have risked their lives to cover news in Iraq, and so have their crews and fixers. We should never take for granted their efforts or underestimate the difficulties they encounter.

Iraq figures in the news frequently, most usually because of a report either of domestic politics surrounding the war in one of the Coalition partners or because of reporting violent incidents from Iraq. However, because the latter have become so common, they often no longer reach the threshold for commercial television news coverage, for example (one consequence is that the gap between quality print media – especially the more “liberal” newspapers – and popular media – especially television – has become greater). It has to be a slow news night, or a particularly big, or spectacular, or politically significant explosion to gain TV coverage, and of course Western casualties are more newsworthy than Iraqi ones. But with media habituating to violence in Iraq, a bigger hit is needed to make headlines or receive in-depth coverage.

It is not only the increasing threshold of newsworthiness, but the news’ formulaic coverage. Dead Iraqis rarely have names or families or lives. They are presented anonymously, as statistics. Moreover, there is typically the reporting that an incident occurred without attention to either its perpetrators or their aims, or how this action fits within any larger scheme.

This formless violence with little pattern is conducive to war-weariness, but not to understanding what is occurring. There is a faceless enemy with no names or purposes beyond committing violence. To some extent this vacuum of meaning can be filled by politicians who increasingly define the enemy in moral terms rather than with substantive descriptions, for example as terrorists. It makes it more difficult for any realistic debate about strategic options to occur.

Conclusion

The media form a massive presence in major international wars involving the West: an intense and volatile political force, whose unfavorable stories can quickly escalate into major political and diplomatic problems for war managers. On the other hand, governments waging war retain considerable advantages in pressing themes favorable to the war’s prosecution. White’s insights about decision makers’ misperceptions are also pertinent to news coverage. In terms of predominant patterns of coverage, the media’s access to different types of information, the levels

of evidence they require to publish particular stories, and the causal narratives and news frames surrounding information, news is typically supportive of the official themes in prosecuting a war. Combining the situation and workings of the news media with White's patterns of recurrent misperceptions leads to three general propositions:

- (1) Coverage of stories and information supporting the dominant themes of virtuous and virile self-image and diabolical enemy image are more prevalent, and much easier to have published and accepted than those that challenge those themes.
- (2) The effectiveness of the war effort, its execution and prospects, are questioned more readily than the moral basis of the conflict.
- (3) The prevalent pattern of the portrayal of violence and suffering conforms to the perceptual and moral frames that support the war.

Nevertheless, on those rare occasions when the dominant moral imagery is reversed in news coverage, when the moral negatives are attributed to our side, such as in the torture at Abu Ghraib, the result can be politically explosive. As Lewandowsky, Stritzke and colleagues have shown elsewhere in this volume, audiences, especially those supportive of the war, often process such dissonant information in ways that minimize its implications. Moreover, Graber's content analysis in this volume has shown that news coverage of torture still relies heavily on government sources, and the distribution of blame in accounts of torture often conforms to the officially promoted moral schema. Similarly, Tulloch in this volume also highlights the prevalence of "bad apple" explanations for such atrocities. All these chapters accurately capture the dominant trend. However, news coverage that challenges the dominant moral schema can set in train unpredictable political reactions, and this helps to explain why allied governments devote such energy to minimizing their occurrence.

NOTE

- 1 The son of Bacevich, a lecturer at Boston University and an opponent of the war, was killed in Iraq. Among the hundreds of messages he received were two directly holding him personally culpable for his son's death because of his public opposition to the war (Bacevich, 2007).

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13 Terrorism and TV news coverage of the 2001 Australian election

David Denmark

The terrorist attacks of September 11 and the ensuing War on Terror both reflect an essential role for the mass media as the conduit of information through which the public at large evaluate the politics of terror. On the one hand, it seems clear that terrorists routinely utilize the mass media to convey their agendas to a worldwide audience – a “symbiotic relationship” in which the media’s publicity represents the “oxygen of terrorism” (Carruthers, 2000, p. 168). But equally, on the other hand, the War on Terror, perhaps the highest-profile military policy in a generation, has depended on media news coverage as its informational vehicle to the public and to voters charged with judging the efficacy of governments and their policies. Both, then, reflect the adage that “politics is increasingly conducted via the mass media” and war, as Clausewitz argued long ago, is merely an extension of politics (in Brown, 2003, p. 43). This chapter, relying on several of my research studies into these dynamics,¹ examines voters’ utilization of mass media coverage of terrorism and national security issues in their issue and vote choice evaluations during the 2001 Australian federal election. Called on October 5, just six weeks after an asylum-seeker incident in the waters off of Australia, and three weeks after the terrorist attacks of September 11, this election affords a unique opportunity to explore voters’ reliance on media cues in their assessment of the War on Terror and a government whose electoral fortunes rested on the issues of terrorism and national security.

The 2001 Australian election

In several respects, the 2001 Australian election represents the best opportunity in Western democracies to examine voter reactions to terrorism and to the War on Terror in the immediate post-9/11 climate. First, because the election was called just three weeks after September 11, and amidst the additional national security sensibilities raised by the high-profile *Tampa* asylum-seeker incident in late August, voters, as we

will see, were exposed to massive media news coverage of these issues during the five-week election campaign. As a result, the electorate generally was confronted with the issues of terrorism, national security, and defense in the context of electoral competition.

Second, Australia's voters were presented with two distinctive partisan alternatives – one closely associated with these eleventh-hour national security issues, and the other all but excluded from them. This is the case because the Prime Minister, John Howard, worked aggressively to fuse the issue of asylum seekers with the issues of terrorism and national security, thereby framing what became the Coalition government's campaign battle cry, "border protection."²² Indeed, by denying sanctuary to asylum seekers who had become marooned aboard the Dutch container vessel *Tampa* after their boat had sunk, and arguing that one could not be certain that the ranks of asylum seekers did not harbor terrorists, Howard was able to focus the media's attention on national security issues, which inherently favor the nation's leader in times of uncertainty.

The Australian Labor Party (ALP), despite looking for nearly a year as though it would ride to victory on voter concerns about domestic issues such as health, education, and the goods and services tax (GST; Bean and McAllister, 2002), suddenly found itself behind in the polls, and unable to undermine the Prime Minister's advantage on security issues in times of international crisis. By necessity, then, it essentially ceded the issues of terrorism and refugees to the Coalition – publicly supporting all the government's initiatives on these issues in an attempt to remove them from the arena of electoral debate (Warhurst, 2002). The result, clearly evident in the Leaders' debate, the party's TV advertising, and the party's official campaign launch, was the near-total orientation of the ALP and its leader, Kim Beazley, around domestic issues. All told, then, Labor's electoral fate in 2001 was bound to an agenda of domestic issues that had been trumped by the media's primary focus on international security issues.

Media coverage and differential effects on issue salience for voters

In the lead-up to the 2001 election, as we have seen, Australia's voters were confronted with distinct issue agendas, imbued with a decidedly partisan cast – Labor nearly exclusively espousing domestic issue reform, and the Liberal–National Coalition focusing much of its media air time on international issues, especially terrorism, asylum seekers, and national security. On the face of things, this issue dichotomy

should have redounded overwhelmingly to the benefit of the Coalition, given the fact, as we will see below, that television news devoted the lion's share of its coverage to the more sensational issues associated with terrorist attacks and refugee standoffs on the high seas. Nonetheless, even in an especially TV-dominated campaign such as the 2001 election, the impact of the media's agenda on voters' issue salience, and hence on their electoral evaluations and vote choice, can be expected to be anything but universal. This is the case because the media's impact on voter decision making has long been shown to be constrained by voter receptivity to these informational cues – an interactive process that renders even high-profile and dramatic media cues differentially evident in voter sensibilities.

Beginning with Converse (1966), researchers for more than half a century have found voters' predispositions – especially their political loyalties, interest, and awareness – to constrain both their exposure to media messages and their receptiveness to them (Graber, 1989; Zaller, 1991, 1992). The result is a non-linear, or “U-shaped” effect for the impact of media cues on individuals' political attitudes and behavior. Those voters with the strongest existing political loyalties, awareness, and opinions are the most likely to expose themselves to media news and information, but the least likely to be affected, owing to their resolute political beliefs and orientations. Voters with the least entrenched political loyalties, the weakest beliefs, and the lowest levels of political information are theoretically the most open to the influence of the mass media. However, their lack of interest in politics means they are the voters who are least likely to expose themselves to, or pay attention to, media news coverage of election campaigns. It is voters with moderate levels of political loyalties, interest, and information who have been shown to be the most affected by media cues – they alone who have sufficiently high levels of interest in politics to seek out campaign news coverage, and also sufficiently poorly formed political beliefs and loyalties to preclude their being able to counter-argue with the new media cues (Converse, 1966). In short, as Graber (1989) reminds us, media effects hinge on the interaction between audiences and messages – a process in which the voter's predispositions fundamentally constrain the impact of media messages.

The differential impact of media messages across the electorate can be expected to assume an especially distinctive form in Australia's unique electoral context. Because voters with the lowest levels of political interest and information are, in voluntary voting systems, the least likely to vote (Brody and Sniderman, 1977), the range of media effects on decision making is constrained to those higher-educated and

politically interested individuals who cast votes. Australia's system of compulsory voting yields a participating electorate with a far greater range of predispositions, and therefore of media impact on voter evaluations and decision making (see Denmark, 2002, 2005a). This is of consequence, especially for the influence of television – the focus of this study – as Australian research has shown that a large proportion of Australian voters continue to rely upon free-to-air television for their political news and information (see Ward and Stewart, 2006; Denmark, 2005b), while Australian political parties continue to structure their campaigns around television as the “central link between the parties and the voters” (McAllister, 1992, p. 175).

Issue agenda-setting and issue priming

While the behavioral impact of television cues can be expected to be limited to a narrow range of voters who watch TV news coverage of the election campaign but have not already decided their votes, research has shown the most important impact of television may well not involve vote change, but the raising to prominence of various issues in terms of the awareness of the electorate. Here, as McCombs and Shaw first showed in 1972, media issue coverage, by emphasizing the importance of some and not other issues, conveys its issue agenda to the media's audience – “agenda-setting” (see McCombs and Shaw, 1993; and Ward, 1995). But even here, voter predisposition is a significant factor in constraining both the exposure of voters to media messages and their absorption of those cues (see Iyengar *et al.*, 1982; and MacKuen, 1984). Thus, voters with high levels of interest in politics may well be the most likely to avail themselves of television election campaign news coverage, but are the most likely to ignore those cues, as their issue awareness and beliefs are the most highly entrenched. At the same time, those voters with low levels of political interest and loyalty are theoretically the most susceptible to media issue agenda-setting, but the least likely to pay sufficient attention in order to take on board the media's issue orientation (Weaver *et al.*, 1981; Norris *et al.*, 1999).

Despite these limits on media impact, the Australian electorate, because compulsory voting forces virtually universal participation in the voting process, can be expected to yield larger than typical effects for media agenda-setting, particularly in the realm of “issue priming.” Here, media news coverage of key issues is argued to provide voters with evaluative frames of reference for judging political leaders and parties (see Price *et al.*, 1997; McCombs and Ghanem, 2001). As voters with even the lowest levels of political interest must nonetheless

cast votes in Australian elections – precisely those whom research has shown to rely on media cues, especially leader images on TV, to decide their votes (McAllister, 1992) – individuals confronted with the high-impact images of terrorism and asylum-seeker incidents in the 2001 Australian election might well be expected to have employed those cues in their evaluations of election issues and the political alternatives in the lead-up to election day.

All told, then, this chapter explores the impact of television election campaign news coverage on voter issue evaluations and voter decision making in an exceptionally TV-dominated election. The 2001 Australian election confronted voters with sensational images of terrorism and national security and with calls by the incumbent government to guard the nation's borders, while the Labor opposition sought to rekindle voters' smoldering, if less sensational, dissatisfaction with various domestic realities, including health, education, and taxes, and asked voters to elect a new government. These dynamics, as we will see, afford a number of insights into the differential impact of television cues on voters' judgments in the era of terrorism.

Data and methods

This chapter utilizes two sets of data. The first derives from an original content analysis of a sample of television news coverage from the five-week election campaign – October 5 to November 10, 2001.³ Channel 9 (Australia's most watched commercial channel) and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC – public TV), which are broadly indicative of television coverage overall, are used for most of the detailed analyses, as they simplify the reporting process. The rankings of TV coverage devoted to various international and domestic issues during the election campaign that are analyzed in this chapter are the product of measurements of the number of seconds given to various issues, weighted by their prominence in the news bulletin (see note 3 for details).

The second data set used in this analysis is the 2001 Australian Election Study (Bean *et al.*, 2001), a self-completion survey of a probabilistic sample of the Australian electorate, administered in the weeks immediately following the 2001 federal election. Its questions, by tapping respondents' evaluations of various issues and policies, the parties and their leaders, and the factors that figured most prominently in their election-day decision making, allow the assessment of the electoral impact of television's cues. This chapter, then, utilizing these two data bases, explores the nexus between television news coverage and voters'

electoral judgments, in a campaign whose hallmark was television's sensational images of terrorism and national security.

Findings and discussion

Television issue coverage

Fundamental to an analysis of the impact of television-conveyed cues in voter decision making is to specify the agenda of political issues to which voters were exposed. [Table 13.1](#) reports the total weighted time that Channel 9 and the ABC devoted to the twelve issue concerns specified in the Australian Election Survey (AES). Clearly evident in the rankings of issue coverage is the prominence afforded the issues of terrorism and refugees/asylum seekers. While there are some small differences between the coverage provided by the ABC and by Channel 9, both gave these two issues their highest profile coverage across the election campaign. Indeed, the aggregate weighted time given by these two networks to terrorism and refugees/asylum seekers (33 303 weighted seconds) overshadowed the coverage given to all of the other issues (25 942 weighted seconds). If the time devoted to the issue of defense and national security (4473 weighted seconds) and immigration and multiculturalism (112 weighted seconds) is added to the other two international issues, we can see that fully 38 158 weighted seconds, or 64.4% of television's total election campaign issue coverage, was devoted to these four international issues.

The relative focus of TV news on the issues of terrorism and refugees/asylum seekers across all of Australian television's national news bulletins during the 2001 election campaign is graphically apparent in [Figure 13.1](#) (Denemark *et al.*, 2007). Television's focus on these two international issues in the two case study channels, above, can be seen as broadly indicative of the pattern of coverage for all of the national bulletins to which Australia's voters were exposed – the two “twin towers” of terrorism and refugees/asylum seekers overshadowing television's coverage of domestic issues.

And yet, despite TV's emphasis on terrorism and asylum seekers in television news during the 2001 election campaign, Australia's voters, considered as a whole, did not embrace those issues as the “issue of most concern” personally in deciding how to vote on November 10. [Figure 13.2](#), which reports the proportion of voters who cited these twelve issues as most influential in their vote choice, shows there was no clear-cut adoption of television's most heavily covered issues in voters' political evaluations. Despite garnering 56% of TV news coverage

Table 13.1. 2001 TV election campaign news coverage for twelve issues included in the Australian Election Study; total weighted times and ranks.

AES issues	ABC total weighted time	ABC rank	Channel 9 weighted time	Channel 9 rank	Aggreg time	Aggreg rank
Refugees/asylum seekers	12499	1	6991	2	19490	1
Terrorism	6340	2	7473	1	13813	2
Health	4157	3	1395	5	5552	3
Defence and national security	3929	4	814	6	4743	6
Taxation	3206	5	1851	4	5057	5
GST	3056	6	2237	3	5293	4
Education	1759	7	613	7	2372	7
Unemployment	1079	8	516	8	1595	8
Industrial relations	634	9	0	11	634	9
The environment	366	10	58	9	424	10
Worker entitlements	150	11	10	10	160	11
Immigration multiculturalism	112	12	0	12	112	12

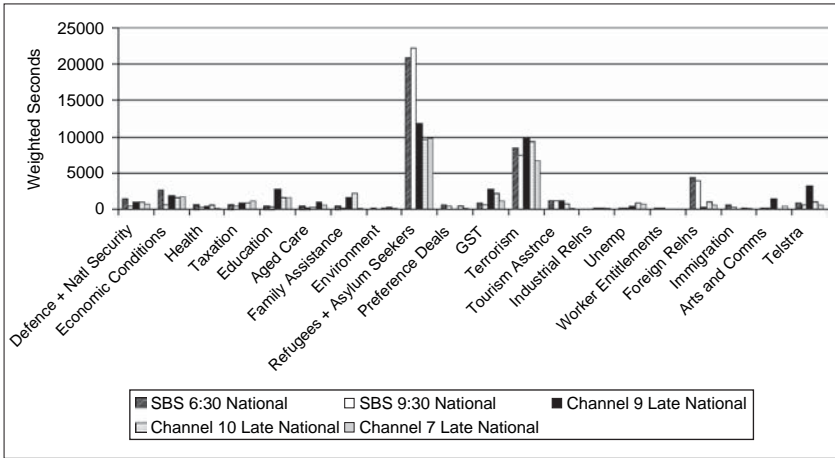


Figure 13.1 TV news coverage of all major issues; national bulletins: 2001 federal election campaign. A version of this figure originally appeared in Denmark *et al.* (2007).

across the campaign, the two issues of terrorism and refugees/asylum seekers were only mentioned by 18% of respondents as the issue of most concern in deciding their vote. If the other two international issues, defense and national security, and immigration and multiculturalism, are added to this tally these four international issues received, as noted above, 38 158 weighted seconds, or 64% of television issue coverage. However, this translated into only 29% of issue citations by voters. On the other hand, while the eight domestic issues received 36% of the total aggregate TV coverage, 71% of voters cited these issues as of primary concern in deciding their vote. Clearly, then, as research has shown for several decades, while television is an important vehicle of issue salience, it is not a universal one. This is the case even in an election dominated by the sensational television images of issues such as terrorism and refugees.

The essential analytic task in gauging the impact of television news coverage of terrorism and other security issues is to measure the differential influence of these cues among an electorate with widely divergent levels of political interest and sophistication. As we will see, various sorts of voters differentially avail themselves of television's political issue coverage during an election campaign, and they do so with distinctly different levels of attentiveness and openness to the messages they receive. In short, the primary reason for the disparity between the

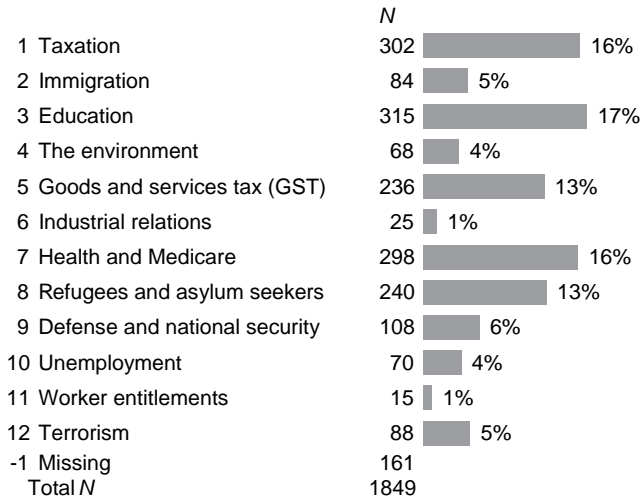


Figure 13.2 Issue of most concern in deciding how to vote: 2001 federal election. Data are taken from Bean *et al.* (2001). A version of this figure originally appeared in Denmark, *et al.* (2007).

level of television issue coverage and the extent to which that coverage informed vote choice in the 2001 election lies in the long-established fact that media messages are perceiver-determined. Thus, the impact of media-conveyed cues about terrorism and national security, even in the emotionally laden days following the September 11 attacks, must be expected to yield profoundly different patterns across the ranks of voters, marked by disparate levels of attitudinal predispositions.

Voter predispositions and exposure to TV campaign news

Given the breadth of evidence showing the importance of voters' political interest in affecting their exposure and engagement with media-conveyed politics, we would expect to see significant variability in voters' reliance on television campaign news coverage in the lead up to the 2001 Australian election. Following Converse's (1966) path-finding study, a number of studies have shown that voters with low levels of political interest are the least likely to expose themselves to political news, while those with the highest levels of political interest and awareness are the most likely to seek out additional news and information through the mass media. The Australian 2001 response patterns reported in Figure 13.3 broadly confirm this expectation. Respondents with high

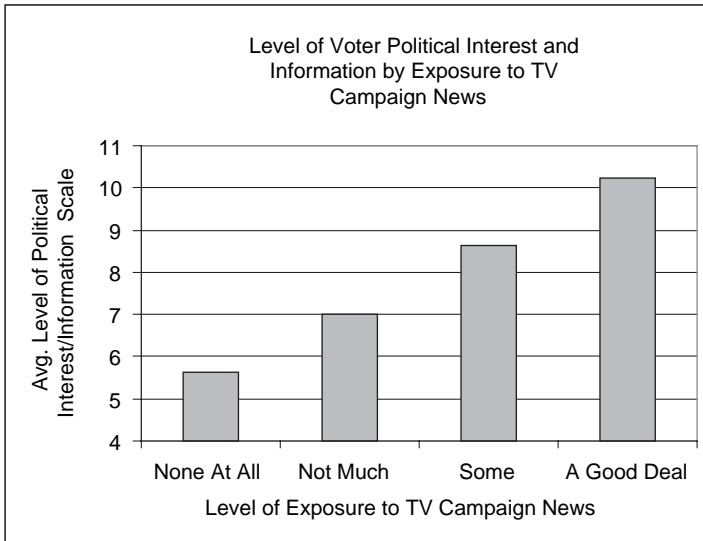


Figure 13.3 Level of exposure to TV campaign news by voters' political interest/information. A version of this figure originally appeared in Denmark and Devereux (2002). Complete details of all variables and measures are available upon request from the author.

levels of political interest and information were highly likely to have watched TV coverage of the election campaign, while those with low levels of interest and awareness by and large opted out of following the campaign through television coverage.

With only one-third of Australians in 2001 claiming to have had a “good deal” of interest in politics generally, and two-thirds saying they had, at most, only “some” interest in politics, the implications for exposure to TV’s issue agenda are obvious; many voters were oblivious to TV’s profile of the political world. Indeed, with only 31% of voters saying they had a “good deal” of interest in the 2001 election campaign, it is not surprising that only 27% say they watched a “good deal” of election campaign news on TV. The other three-quarters of the electorate watched, at most, only “some” of this news coverage on television (see Denmark *et al.*, 2007).

In turn, the connection with the timing of voters’ vote choice is important in terms of their receptivity to media-conveyed cues about the election. Voters with different levels of political interest and awareness tend not only to vary in their reliance on media messages to help them finalize their vote choice, but to complete their decisions at different

points in the lead-up to election day. Research has shown that those who decide their vote long before the election is even called are those with the highest levels of political interest and loyalties. Because their decision making precedes all campaign activity, they effectively divorce themselves from any impact of political messages carried by the mass media.

On the other hand, individuals who decide their vote in the waning days of the election campaign tend to have the lowest levels of political interest and awareness. While they are theoretically the most susceptible to media cues, given their lack of resilient political beliefs and loyalties, they are the least likely to expose themselves to media news coverage. As Converse (1966) and Zaller (1991) have both shown, it is those with moderate levels of political interest and information – those deciding their votes early in the election campaign – who are the most strongly affected by media messages, given the combination of their interest in politics and their irresolute political loyalties. In short, it is anticipated that both the level of voters' political interest and awareness, and the timing of their vote decision, will play a critical role in constraining the impact of television news during the 2001 election campaign.

Overall, these patterns suggest that to gauge the effect of televised coverage of terrorism and national security issues on the outcome of the 2001 Australian election, we need to assess the differential, interactive effects of voters' existing political interest, their exposure to television news, and the timing of their vote choice. These interaction effects are pursued next.

Interaction effects models

Exposure to TV and timing of vote decision: effects on international issues as key to vote choice

One way to examine the interactive effects of media messages and voter predispositions is to employ Converse's (1966) original technique. Converse found that different sorts of voters use varying informational cues to inform their vote decision making at different junctures of the election campaign. Those with high levels of political interest and strong political loyalties tend to decide their vote long before the campaign has even begun – and therefore use media cues purely to reinforce their earlier decisions. Those with the lowest levels of political interest and the weakest political loyalties tend to decide their votes in the last days of the campaign, but do so without paying close attention to media campaign issue coverage. McAllister (1992) has shown that these voters

in Australia, to the extent that they rely on media cues, tend to focus on leader images and not issues to inform their vote choice. It is only voters in the middle, argued Converse – those with moderate levels of political interest and some flux in their political loyalties – who tend to decide their vote early in the campaign, and to rely on media-based issue cues to do so (Denmark, 2005a). If Converse is correct, the importance of international issues in individuals’ vote choices should be the strongest for those deciding their votes early in the campaign.

Perhaps the most efficient way to present the differential effects of media cues for different subgroups of voters is to use interaction effects models. Here, voters are divided into four groups: those who decided their vote long ago, before the campaign began; those who decided as the election was being called; those who decided early in the campaign; and those who decided on or near election day. The differential effects of exposure to TV campaign coverage on the likelihood of citing international issues (terrorism, asylum seekers, national security, and immigration) as being most important in the individual’s vote choice are then calculated for each of these four subgroups of voters, using logistic regression analysis. Figure 13.4 presents the main variable coefficient

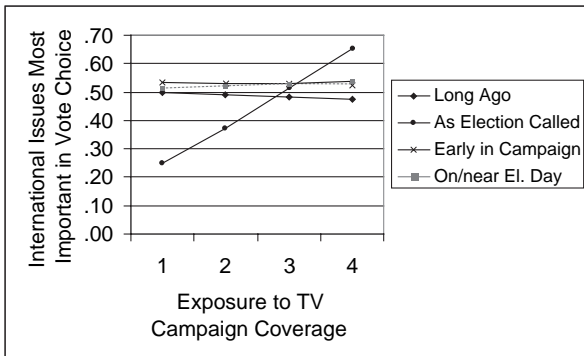


Figure 13.4 Interaction effects of exposure to TV election campaign news with timing of vote decision on considering international issues as the most important in the vote decision. Data are taken from Bean *et al.* (2001). A version of this figure originally appeared in Denmark (2005a). Probabilities are for those respondents who made their vote choice a long time ago (before the campaign), as the election was being called, early in the campaign, and on or near election day. All other variables are held constant at the means (for interval variables) or modes (for dummy variables). See Appendix for complete regression model from which these probabilities are derived.

probabilities for each of these groups, while all other variables in the model are held constant at either their means (for interval variables) or modes (for dummy variables) – see Appendix for the complete regression model results.

As expected, the only group of voters for whom there was a significant effect for exposure to election campaign TV coverage on the likelihood of considering international issues as the most important in their vote decision making was those who decided about the time the election was called. Each of the other three groups of voters shows virtually no impact for exposure to higher levels of TV campaign coverage. But, for those deciding their vote about the time the election was called – amidst the intense coverage that followed 9/11 – exposure to higher levels of TV coverage prompts a three-fold increase in citing international issues as most important in their vote choice. More specifically, in this group, for those who watched the least amount of TV campaign news only 25% cited international issues as the key to their electoral decision making, while 66% of those who watched the most TV coverage said international issues were most important to their political preferences. In short, while each group exhibits a substantial likelihood of citing international issues as important in their vote decision making, it is only those voters who decided their vote around the time the election was called who exhibit significant effects for exposure to TV campaign news coverage. And it is this group that had the highest overall level of reliance on international issues in their vote decisions.

Exposure to TV and timing of vote choice: effects on issue agenda setting

As we have seen, television's news coverage of terrorism and other national security issues elevated international issues to evaluative salience for those who decided their votes about the time the election was called. We would expect, then, to see those voters citing as most important those issues that received the highest levels of TV coverage: issue agenda-setting. [Figure 13.5](#) presents the probability plots for the main effects for voters divided into three groups: those who decided their vote before the election campaign, those who decided their vote as the election was called, and those who decided their vote during the election campaign.

Here, echoing the patterns in [Figure 13.4](#), it was only those voters who decided their vote about the time the election was called who, given high levels of exposure to TV news coverage, were significantly more

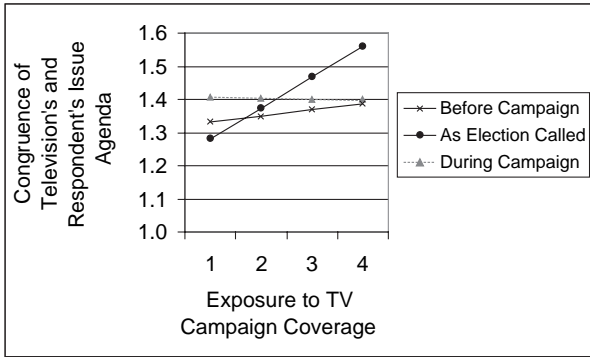


Figure 13.5 Interaction effects of exposure to 2001 TV election campaign news with timing of vote decision on TV agenda-setting. Figures are taken from Bean *et al.* (2001), and original television election campaign news content analysis. A version of this figure originally appeared in Denmark (2005a). Probabilities are for those respondents who made their vote choice before the campaign, as the election was being called, and during the campaign. All other variables are held constant at the means (for interval variables) or modes (for dummy variables). See Appendix for complete regression model from which these probabilities are derived.

likely to cite highly covered issues as being the most important issues. As previous research has shown (Denmark, 2002; Denmark 2005a), those typically highly interested voters who tend to decide their votes before the election campaign, as well as those typically low-interested voters who tend to decide their votes during the election campaign, were both insignificantly affected by TV news coverage in their choice of issue importance. As Converse's (1966) research would suggest, voters with entrenched political loyalties and highly formed political opinions and beliefs are effectively impervious to media messages, because they tend to decide their issue stances and vote preferences long before the campaign messages begin. At the same time, those voters with weak political loyalties and poorly developed political opinions and beliefs are theoretically the most susceptible to the influence of media cues, and don't decide their votes until late in the campaign period. Nonetheless, because they have low levels of engagement with the political process, they too are unlikely to embrace the issue agenda of TV campaign news. The patterns in Figure 13.5 are wholly consistent with Converse's findings.

International security and domestic issue effects on political evaluations

One of the important consequences of television's ability to heighten issue salience during an election campaign is voters' increased use of that issue orientation to guide their political evaluations. Though we have seen that issue agenda-setting and issue assessments are differentially utilized by different sorts of voters, research has long shown that media-conveyed issues can "prime" voters' evaluations of party leaders and policies, and color vote-choice decisions themselves. Thus, as argued at the outset, because the 2001 Australian election sustained two distinctive issue domains in the electoral arena, international security and domestic – strongly associated with, respectively, the Coalition and Labor – we would expect these two issue domains to be strongly associated with voters' evaluations of the political alternatives. Table 13.2 reports five regressions in which measures for the collective issue orientation of the three most important security issues (terrorism, asylum seekers, and national security) and the four most important domestic issues (education, the environment, health, and GST) are tested for their predictive impact on voters' political evaluations. Here, because various other factors can be expected to color voter estimations – including party identification, education, gender, union membership, age, and unemployment – terms have been included to control for their effects. In short, these models test the power of international security and domestic issues to predict support for the leaders of the major parties and the War on Terror, and electoral support for the Coalition, independent of the role played by voters' party identification and other demographic and socio-economic factors.

In the first two columns we see the impact of these two issue orientations on evaluations of the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Labor opposition leader, Kim Beazley. Not surprisingly, voters who viewed the three security issues as most important in their vote choice assigned significantly higher evaluations of John Howard than those who viewed these issues of low importance. At the same time, these voters assigned Kim Beazley significantly lower evaluations. The reverse pattern of evaluations can be seen for the four domestic issues – voters who emphasized the importance of domestic issues assigning high scores to the Labor leader. In sum, irrespective of party identification, voters utilized these issues in their evaluations of the two party leaders – an important focal point of their assessments, given the fact

Table 13.2. *Security and domestic issues in political evaluations, 2001.*

Independent variables	Evaluations of John Howard		Evaluations of Kim Beazley		Support for War on Terror		Coalition vote		Switch to Coalition	
	Regression		Regression		Regression		Logit		Logit	
Female	-.18 (.11)		.13 (.12)		-.23*** (.04)		-.12 (.16)		-.53 (.35)	
3-fold security issue term	1.03*** (.11)		-.61*** (.12)		.54*** (.04)		.75*** (.16)		.73** (.34)	
4-fold domestic issue term	-1.17*** (.14)		1.05*** (.15)		-.25*** (.05)		-1.33*** (.19)		-.97** (.41)	
Coalition party identification [†]	3.69*** (.12)		-1.84*** (.13)		.28*** (.05)		4.05*** (.17)		.31 (.61)	
Age	.01*** (.00)		.02*** (.00)		-.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		-.01 (.01)	
Higher education	-.02 (.14)		.38** (.15)		-.14*** (.05)		-.16 (.20)		-.24 (.45)	
Unemployment	-.10 (.18)		.06 (.19)		.02 (.07)		.11 (.25)		1.78*** (.68)	
Union membership	-.14 (.14)		.26* (.15)		-.08* (.05)		-.00 (.19)		-.35 (.43)	
Constant	3.70*** (.30)		4.38*** (.32)		3.24*** (.10)		-.95*** (.39)		1.65** (.84)	
Observations	1643		1648		1659		1619		165	
R-square	.47		.19		.16					
-2 log likelihood							1072.65		203.61	
R-square (Nagelkerke)							.68		.17	

Source: 2001 Australian Election Study

[†]The party identification term for Model 5 (switch to Coalition) was Strong Party Identification.

The leader evaluations range from 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like).

*Significant at the .1 level;

**Significant at the .05 level;

***Significant at the .01 level.

Complete details of all variables and measures are available upon request from the author, at denemark@cylkene.uwa.edu.au.

that Australian elections have come to rely predominantly on party leaders to appeal to voters (McAllister, 1992).

In the third column, we see that voters who cited the three security issues as most important in their vote choice, independent of their party affiliation, were significantly more likely to support Australian involvement in the War on Terror than those who did not view security issues as important. At the same time, those voters who emphasized the importance of the four domestic issues were significantly more likely to oppose the War on Terror.

Finally, in the fourth and fifth columns, we see the impact of these two issue orientations on vote preferences. In the fourth column, we see the role these issues played in predicting the likelihood of casting a Coalition vote – security issues, not surprisingly, representing a significant predictor of Coalition voting, while domestic issues remained significant factors in voting against the Coalition.

But, despite the clarity of these patterns, many voters may well have used these issue orientations to reinforce, not precipitate, their vote choice. It is the fifth column, therefore, that is the most important litmus test of issue evaluations on vote gain for the Coalition government. Here, we see that voters who embraced security issues as the most important in their vote choice were significantly more likely to switch to the Coalition. Alternatively, those who affirmed domestic issues were significantly more likely to switch to a party other than the Coalition. In short, while we know some voters changed their vote preferences because of media-conveyed issue cues, and others probably used media cues merely to reinforce their existing vote preference, the results in [Table 13.2](#) confirm that the sharply defined issue domains and their politicization in the 2001 Australian election played an important role in securing votes for the Coalition.

Attitudes toward security/domestic issues and voter policy stances

As we have seen, John Howard deliberately blurred the distinction between the issues of terrorism and asylum seekers as a way to focus voter concerns on national security – an issue that has typically benefited the government of the day. While McAllister (2003) and others have argued this fusion of issues was ultimately a vital factor in the government's re-election, it raises the question of whether or not voters who cited the importance of international security issues were, in fact, supportive of conservative stances on the War on Terror, asylum seekers, immigration, and multiculturalism – or merely used these issues as a proxy preference for the Coalition. [Table 13.3](#) reports the level of

Table 13.3. *Attitudes toward social and security issues by international or domestic issue importance.*

Independent variables	Vote choice:		Vote choice:		Means/ Signif.
	International or Domestic issues	Means/ Signif.	Coalition or Non-Coalition	switch to or away from Coalition	
<i>Terrorism and Asylum Seekers</i>					
Go further in fight against terror	International Domestic	3.3** 3.0	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	3.3** 3.0
Turn away asylum seeker boats	International Domestic	1.9** 2.6	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	2.1** 2.4
<i>Immigration</i>					
Reduce the number of immigrants	International Domestic	3.5** 3.0	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	3.4 3.3
Immigrants increase the crime rate	International Domestic	2.4 2.9	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	2.8 2.7
Immigrants take jobs from Aussies	International Domestic	2.8** 3.1	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	3.1 3.1
<i>Multiculturalism</i>					
I distrust people who try to be different	International Domestic	3.3** 3.5	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	3.5 3.6
Migrants should try to be like Aussies	International Domestic	2.4** 2.9	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	2.6 2.8
Migrants should learn about Australia	International Domestic	2.1** 2.5	Coalition Non-Coal'n	To Coalition From Coal'n	2.2* 2.4

Source: 2001 Australian Election Study. Figures in the table are means. Significance levels for the means score levels derive from 2-tailed t-tests for equality of means. All means tests use the Listwise method for the deletion of missing cases. The number of cases, then, is identical for each of the variables within a given set of means tests (Column 1, 2 or 3). The number of cases for the 3 Columns is as follows: Column 1 (International=831; Domestic=979); Column 2 (Coalition=941; Non-Coalition=941); Column 3 (To Coalition=126; From Coalition=117). * Significant at .10 level. ** Significant at .05 level. Complete details of all variables and measures are available upon request from the author at: denemark@cylle.uwa.edu.au

association between international and domestic issues, and respondents' attitudes toward these other policies and social issues. Mean scores for each issue domain are presented, with asterisks denoting the level of significance in the difference between the two.

The scores in the first column of [Table 13.3](#) show that voters who cited international security issues as being most important in their vote choice held significantly different attitudes than those who cited the importance of domestic issues in their vote choice. More specifically, we can see that international-issue-voters were more supportive of Australian involvement in the War on Terror, and were significantly more likely to support turning away asylum-seeker boats. They were also significantly more likely to favor reducing the number of immigrants to Australia, to feel immigrants take jobs from Australian citizens, and to be distrusting of immigrants who resist assimilating into mainstream Australian culture. In short, these patterns point to international-issue-voters as holding fundamentally different stances on the high-profile issues of terrorism and asylum seekers, but also on a number of other related social issues. This suggests that John Howard's fusion of terrorism with voter anxiety about protecting Australian borders was a political appeal that tapped a far richer vein than suggested purely by the asylum-seeker issue.

The second and third columns show the implications of these attitudinal differences in terms of votes cast for the Coalition, and vote-switching to the Coalition. Coalition voters, virtually across the board, were more supportive of these conservative issue stances, even though it was only attitudes toward terrorism, asylum seekers, and migrants learning about Australia that significantly delineated vote switching to the Coalition. Overall, these patterns suggest that television's high-profile coverage of John Howard's stances on terrorism, asylum seekers, and border protection may well have tapped voters' wider anxieties about immigration and multiculturalism. While only a sliver of the electorate switched their vote on the basis of these issues, it seems likely, given the clear-cut association of the broad array of international issues with Coalition voting, that these other issues helped to stabilize and retain the votes of those late-deciding voters who had contemplated bolting from the government on the basis of ongoing concerns over health, education, and GST. In the end, while constrained by voter awareness, receptivity to media news, and the timing of their vote choice, media-conveyed cues about terrorism and national security can be seen as playing an essential role in the Coalition's victory.

Conclusion

All told, despite the differential perceptions of the importance of international issues, the re-election of the government in the 2001 Australian election was assured by the eleventh-hour rise to prominence of the issues of terrorism and border protection. John Howard was able to tap voters' media-conveyed concerns about these issues and win crucial margins of swing votes on that basis, even though the vast majority of voters had made their vote choice before the election had been announced, and most late deciders used domestic issues to firm their preference for Labor. In close-run elections, the margin between electoral defeat and victory reduces to parties' ability to retain potential bolting voters, while securing the preference of the relatively small number of swing votes that separate the two political camps. The survey evidence suggests that, despite the extraordinarily high-profile coverage given to terrorism and the issue of asylum seekers, most of the Australian electorate was unfazed and continued to view domestic insecurity as more important than national security. Nonetheless, amongst those undecided voters with sufficient interest to pay attention to television campaign news coverage, terrorism and asylum seekers were embraced as the key to their vote decision, and became a basis for their vote swing to the Coalition.

Several lessons about media power and the electoral impact of terrorism in voter decision making are evident in the analysis above. On the one hand, despite television giving disproportionate coverage to the issues of terrorism and asylum seekers, only a small portion of voters came to view these as the issues that informed their vote choice. Media cues, it seems clear, are constrained by voter predispositions, even amidst the emotive images and issues of terrorism and international crisis. However, on the other hand, for the strategic margin of voters in 2001 who embraced the primacy of media-conveyed issues, including terrorism, one saw a significant impact of television's issue agenda on their electoral preferences – one that ultimately represented the deciding margin of victory. All told, then, the patterns in the 2001 Australian election serve as a reminder that media cues are perceiver-determined – even in one of the most TV-dominated elections in history. It is voters, not the media, who ultimately determine the impact of the messages they confront.

Table 13.4. Model for Figure 13.4. Interaction effects of exposure to TV election campaign news with timing of vote decision on considering international issues most logistic regression.

Independent variable	Dep. variable considered international issues most important INTLVOTE	
<i>Interaction Effects in Italics</i>		
<i>TV news exposure: vote choice long ago</i>	-.61**	-.03**
<i>BFOR4INT (CAMPTV4 × BFOR4DUM)</i>	(.26)	
EX: TV new exposure: vote choice as election called	.58**	.58**
<i>CAMPTV4 (main effect)</i>	(.26)	
<i>TV news exposure: vote choice early in campaign</i>	-.59	-.01
<i>ERLY4INT (CAMPTV4 × ERLY4DUM)</i>	(.40)	
<i>TV news/agenda-setting: vote choice on or near El. day</i>	-.55*	.03*
<i>LATE4INT (CAMPTV4 × LATE4DUM)</i>	(.30)	
Dummy: vote choice long ago	1.71**	
BFOR4DUM	(.83)	
Dummy: vote choice early in campaign	1.83	
ERLY4DUM	(1.20)	
Dummy: vote choice on or near El. day	1.72**	
LATE4DUM	(.90)	
Interest and information scale	.05	
INTINFO	(.03)	
Care who wins the election	.17	
CAREWINS	(.17)	
Strong party ID	-.05	
STRONGID	(.16)	
Vote switching: house	-.31**	
VOLATILE	(.16)	
Age	.01**	
AGE	(.01)	
Gender (female)	.10	
FEMALE	(.13)	
High education	-.45**	
HIGHEDUC	(.15)	
High income	.00	
INCOME	(.02)	
Constant	-2.72**	
	(.83)	
-2 log likelihood	1395.20	
N	1040	

Note: Figures in the table are regression coefficients (*b*), with the standard error on the line below in parentheses.

*Significant at the .10 level; **Significant at the .05 level.

Excluded dummy group/main effect (**EX**): those who made their vote choice “as election was called.”

The main effect and interaction effects coefficients in **bold** result from adding the original main effect to those of the interaction term coefficients. It is these coefficients that are plotted in the probability figure (Figure 13.4).

Sources: Australian Election study, 2001; and original TV news content analysis.

Complete details of all variables and measures are available upon request from the author at: denemark@cyllene.uwa.edu.au.

Table 13.5. Model for Figure 13.5. Interaction effects of exposure: 2001 TV election campaign news with timing of vote decision on TV agenda-setting multiple regression.

Independent variable	Dep. variable congruence between TV-covered issues and respondent issues viewed as important (“agenda-setting”) ABC9RANK	
Interaction effects in Italics		
<i>TV news exposure: before campaign</i>	-.75	.18
<i>ERLYINT (CAMPTV4 × ERLYDUM)</i>	(.51)	
EX: TV news exposure: as election called	.93**	.93
<i>CAMPTV4 (main effect)</i>	(.48)	
<i>TV news exposure: during election</i>	-.96*	-.03
<i>LATEINT (CAMPTV4 × LATEDUM)</i>	(.54)	
Dummy: decided vote before campaign	1.27	
ERLYDUM	(1.52)	
Dummy: decided vote during campaign	2.22	
LATEDUM	(1.61)	
Care who wins election	.46	
CAREWINS	(.32)	
Strong party ID	.11	
STRONGID	(.30)	
Vote switching: house	-.19	
VOLATILE	(.30)	
Age	.02**	
AGE	(.01)	
Gender (female)	.93**	
FEMALE	(.25)	
High education	-.94**	
HIGHEDUC	(.28)	
High income	.007	
INCOME	(.03)	
Constant	10.10**	
	(1.51)	
N	1098	
R ²	.04	
SE	4.02	

Note: Figures in the table are regression coefficients (*b*), with the standard error on the line below in parentheses.

*Significant at the .10 level; **Significant at the .05 level.

Excluded dummy group/main effect (**EX**): those who made their vote choice “as election was called.”

The main effect and interaction effects coefficients in **bold** result from adding the original main effect to those of the interaction term coefficients. It is these coefficients that are plotted in the probability figure (Figure 13.5).

Sources: Australian Election study, 2001; and original TV news content analysis.

Complete details of all variables and measures are available upon request from the author at: denemark@cyllene.uwa.edu.au.

APPENDIX

Models for probability diagrams: Figures 13.4 and 13.5

NOTES

- 1 See Denmark and Devereux (2002); Denmark (2005a,b); Denmark *et al.* (2007).
- 2 Charlton (2002) contends that this synthesis focused the more diffuse threats of terrorism and refugees: "Because Howard had defined the issue as border protection and linked it with the September 11 terrorist attacks, asylum seekers had become a defence issue" (p. 79).
- 3 The TV news coverage content analysis data were gathered as part of a 2003 Australian Research Council Discovery Grant, "Television election campaign news and Australian politics (DP0344889)": David Denmark, Clive Bean and Ian Ward, principal investigators. It recorded and coded the news bulletins during the five-week campaign for all TV channels in two metropolitan areas, Brisbane and Perth. Original videotapes of the news bulletins were content-analyzed. Each news item was coded for content (issue topic, party or candidate covered, etc.) and the number of seconds recorded. These raw timings were then weighted by the prominence of the item in the news bulletin: a lead story weighted by 10, the second story weighted by 9, etc. The result is the fundamental measure used in this study: "weighted seconds." The weighted seconds for multiple news items on a single topic in one day of the campaign were added together to create a final, cumulative measure, "weighted days."

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Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, and Erin Cassese

Psychological reactions to terrorism are a central ingredient in any terrorist act (Crenshaw, 1986). One of terrorists' major goals is typically to instill anxiety in a target population in order to pressure political elites to negotiate (Friedland and Merari, 1985; Long, 1990). As noted by Long (1990), terrorists often "use the unreasonable fear and the resulting political disaffection it has generated among the public to intimidate governments into making political concessions in line with [their] political goals" (p. 5). In research on reactions to the September 11 terrorist attacks, we find that anxiety undermines support for an aggressive foreign policy, reinforcing the political importance of anxious reactions to terrorism (Huddy *et al.*, 2005, 2007). In light of these findings, it appears that terrorists have a good grasp of psychological reality.

Anxiety is thus a critical component of public reactions to terrorism. Its documented ability to undercut support for aggressive overseas anti-terrorism policies is at odds, however, with the conventional notion that governments arouse anxiety precisely to increase support for overseas military action (Mueller, 2007; see also Pyszczynski *et al.*, this volume). Indeed, the Bush administration in the United States and the Howard government in Australia have both been consistently accused of engineering support for the war in Iraq through the use of fear-mongering tactics such as terror emergency alert systems and high-profile arrests and deportations of Muslim immigrants.

Fear-mongering is not always unsuccessful. Politicians who arouse the threat of terrorism but do not increase public anxiety levels can increase support for anti-terrorism policies. We argue elsewhere that political fear-mongering can work if it raises the specter of an external enemy without arousing significant amounts of fear and anxiety (Huddy *et al.*, 2005). Evidence that threat promotes support for aggressive military action comes from a number of studies on foreign policy attitudes. In past research, Americans have supported overseas military action in

direct proportion to the threat posed by a foreign aggressor to US interests (Herrmann *et al.*, 1999; Jentleson, 1992; Jentleson and Britton, 1998). Likewise, perceived terrorist threat has been associated with support for aggressive military action among Israelis (Friedland and Merari, 1985; Arian, 1989). In our research on the events of September 11, threat promoted support for military action in Afghanistan, but its effects were reduced among those who additionally felt anxious about future terrorism – typically a subset of those individuals who perceive external threat (Huddy *et al.*, 2005).

In this chapter, we detail the often misunderstood political effects of anxiety to underscore that such effects are entirely consistent with past psychological research, even if they appear to contradict conventional political wisdom concerning political fear-mongering. We then examine the determinants of anxiety to understand better who is most likely to respond with anxiety to a terrorist event. Finally, we focus on women's documented tendency to respond with greater anxiety than men to terrorism, and examine the degree to which this anxiety accounts for women's greater reluctance to support war and other attempts to combat terrorism militarily.

Anxiety and opposition to war

We focus in this chapter on anxiety because of its tendency to undermine support for aggressive solutions to terrorism, and an aggressive foreign policy more generally. Why does anxiety undermine support for aggressive military action? Clinical and cognitive psychologists regard anxiety as a response to an external threat, especially a personal threat, over which the threatened person has little control (Bower, 1988; Eysenck, 1992). One of anxiety's key psychological effects is to focus attention on threatening events and to elevate perceived risk (Butler and Mathews, 1987; Eysenck, 1992; Eysenck *et al.*, 2007; Lerner and Keltner, 2000, 2001; MacLeod and Mathews, 1988; Mathews and MacLeod, 1986; Yiend and Mathews, 2001). According to Lerner and Keltner (2000; 2001), anxiety produces a sense of uncertainty and lack of control that elevates future judgments of risk. Anxiety also increases risk aversion because anxious individuals are motivated to reduce anxiety, leading to a preference for safe options (Lerner and Keltner, 2001; Raghunathan and Pham, 1999).

Lerner *et al.* (2003) provide direct evidence of this process. They examined the effects of September 11 in an experimental setting by showing research participants video clips that heightened either fear or anger in response to the attacks. They found that individuals with

experimentally elevated anxiety levels judged the risk of future terrorism more highly than individuals in the anger condition. Moreover, individuals who felt fearful soon after the attacks appraised the risk of future terrorism to be significantly greater six to eight weeks later. This study provides clear evidence that anxiety promotes a heightened sensitivity to threat.

The link between anxiety, heightened perceived risk, and greater risk aversion helps to explain why anxious individuals are inclined to oppose aggressive military action. All aggressive military action is risky to some degree, and anxious individuals are predisposed to see it as more risky than do others. Anxious individuals are also inclined toward risk aversion. These psychological consequences of anxiety lead us to predict that individuals who feel anxious will be inclined to oppose risky overseas military action.¹ In contrast, based on a large literature concerning the effects of threat very generally, we expect those who perceive an external terrorist threat will support military action in the absence of anxiety (Huddy *et al.*, 2005). We tested these predictions on public support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, drawing on data in the Threat and National Security Survey (TNSS; Huddy *et al.*, 2005).

The TNSS is a three-wave national panel study. The first wave of the survey was conducted via telephone with a national sample of 1549 American adults aged over eighteen between early October, 2001, and early March, 2002, focusing on psychological reactions to the September 11 attacks and support for government anti-terrorism policy (Huddy *et al.*, 2005).² The second wave of data collection ($N = 1079$) occurred in October of 2002 after US Congressional debate on the war had ended and included a mix of re-interviews ($N = 858$) and a fresh random-digit dial (RDD) sample ($N = 221$). A third wave of data collection ($N = 729$) occurred in 2003 beginning the day after the war's onset (March 20, 2003) and continuing until June 18, 2003 (see Huddy *et al.*, 2007 for greater detail). The second and third waves focused on reactions to terrorism and support for the Iraq war.

Support for war in Afghanistan and Iraq

Post-September 11 anxiety

Americans exhibited a range of responses to September 11. The survey included four items on fear and anxiety, three on depression and related somatic symptoms, and two items on felt personal threat. In general, roughly half of all respondents felt anxious or worried at least

some of the time when thinking about the terror attacks and the US response.³ Just under a third reported feeling scared or frightened sometimes or very often. Responses to all four questions are presented in Table 14.1. They are combined to form a reliable anxiety scale ($\alpha = .85$).

A minority of respondents also reported symptoms linked to depression. Nearly 40% of Americans reported feeling somewhat or very depressed in the week prior to the interview. A smaller minority (22%) reported that it had been somewhat or very difficult to concentrate on their job and other normal activities in the past week, and an even smaller number (13%) reported having had difficulty sleeping in the previous week because of the terrorist attacks. A reliable depression scale ($\alpha = .80$) was constructed from all three questions (see Table 14.1).

Depressive symptoms were strongly tied to the experience of anxiety ($r = .63$), suggesting that responses to the anxiety questions did not simply convey an intellectual response to terrorism but reflected somatic correlates of emotion. Anxiety and feelings of personal threat were also closely aligned ($r = .62$). Perceived personal threat was assessed with two questions: "How concerned are you personally about you yourself, a friend, or a relative being the victim of a future terrorist attack in the United States?" and "How much, if any, have the terrorist attacks shaken your own sense of personal safety and security?"⁴ A surprisingly high proportion of respondents (68%) reported feeling very or somewhat concerned about being personally victimized by a terrorist attack; 31% were very concerned.

We contrasted these psychological reactions to the overall perception that the nation is at threat of future terrorism. National threat was assessed by two questions on the risk of future terrorist attacks on the USA: "How concerned are you that there will be another terrorist attack on the US in the near future?" and "How concerned are you that terrorists will attack the US with biological or chemical weapons?" Levels of concern were very high: 86% reported that they were very or somewhat concerned about another attack and 84% were very or somewhat concerned about the threat of biological or chemical attacks. A series of *t*-tests reveal that the perceived risk of a future attack is more pervasive than feelings of anxiety [$t(1537) = 53.47, p < .001$], depression [$t(1538) = 32.57, p < .001$], or perceived personal threat [$t(1537) = 71.97, p < .001$]. Americans thus appraised the risk of future terrorism as high, but varied in the degree to which this perceived risk led to a sense of personal vulnerability or strong negative emotional reactions to the attacks.

Table 14.1. Data from the Threat and National Security Survey (TNSS) indicating levels of anxiety and depression in a national sample following September 11.

Reaction	Item	Response options and proportion of responses				
		Very often	Sometimes	Not very often	Never	Don't know/ no answer ^a
<i>Anxiety</i>						
	As you think about the terrorist attacks and the US response, how often have you felt...					
	Anxious?	11.4 ^b	35.7	27.9	23.6	1.4
	Scared?	7.9	23.3	28.7	38.3	0.8
	Worried?	13.0	36.9	25.9	22.9	1.2
	Frightened?	5.6	24.5	27.4	41.3	1.2
<i>Depression</i>						
	In the past week, how difficult has it been for you, if at all, to concentrate on your job or your normal activities because of the way you feel about the terrorist attacks and the events since then?	Very difficult 4.6	Somewhat difficult 17.7	Not very difficult 22.1	Not at all difficult 54.6	DK/NA 1.1
	In the past week how much trouble, if any, have you had sleeping because of the way you feel about the terrorist attacks and the events since then?	A great deal 3.1	Some 9.4	A little 12.1	None 74.4	DK/NA 1.0
	In the past week how depressed have you felt, if at all, about the terrorist attacks and the events since then?	Very depressed 7.8	Somewhat depressed 30.7	Not very depressed 20.1	Not at all depressed 39.9	DK/NA 1.4

^a DK = Do not know; NA = No answer.^b Entries refer to percentages. Data from Wave 1 (10/2001–3/2002) of the TNSS (Huddy *et al.*, 2005).

Support for war in Afghanistan

Conventional wisdom suggests that anxiety and fear enhance support for an aggressive anti-terrorism policy, including foreign military action. But this is not what we observed in data from the TNSS, consistent with our initial expectations. To the contrary, anxious individuals were *less* supportive than non-anxious Americans of military intervention in Afghanistan, and were *less* inclined to support President Bush (see also Huddy *et al.*, 2005; Huddy *et al.*, 2003). These results are evident from analyses presented in Table 14.2.

We estimated the effects of anxiety, national threat, and a number of demographic and political variables on indicators of Bush approval and support for military action using probit analysis, as shown in Table 14.2. Controls include education, gender, race/ethnicity, political party identification, political ideology, and a measure of authoritarianism.⁵ In all tables, partisanship is measured on the standard American National Election Study (ANES; <http://www.electionstudies.org/>) seven-point scale that runs from strong Democrat to strong Republican, political ideology is measured on the standard ANES seven-point scale that runs from strong liberal to strong conservative, age is coded in ten-year intervals, education is in years of schooling, and race and ethnicity is a series of dummy variables of which “white” is the omitted category. All variables, except age and education, are coded to range from 0 to 1.

We mark in bold coefficients that are twice the size of their standard error (SE) rather than indicating usual .05 levels of significance, because typical probability values are known to be incorrect when a large number of coefficients are simultaneously estimated, as in these models. We thus avoid reference to exact probability values in all tables but note that coefficients that are at least twice the size of their standard errors have 95% confidence intervals that do not include zero.

Levels of support for the dependent variables in Table 14.2 are consistent with the findings of other national opinion polls conducted in the aftermath of 9/11 (Huddy *et al.*, 2002). Of respondents in our sample, 90% approved of the way President Bush handled his job, 88% approved of his handling of the terrorist situation, 72% supported increased military action in Afghanistan even if it meant significant US casualties, and 84% believed it would be best if the USA took an active part in world affairs.⁶

Table 14.2 shows the results of probit estimates of responses to each of these questions. As expected, anxiety promoted disapproval of President Bush and his handling of the situation, and led to greater opposition to increased military action and overseas involvement. In contrast,

Table 14.2. *Determinants of Bush approval and interventionist policies: post September 11.*

	Bush approval		Bush: terrorism		Military action in Afghanistan		Active in world affairs	
	Coeff. (SE)	Δp	Coeff. (SE)	Δp	Coeff. (SE)	Δp	Coeff. (SE)	Δp
National threat	.66 (.22) ^a	.11	.35 (.23)	.05	.64 (.15)	.20	.58 (.19)	.15
Anxiety	-.45 (.21)	-.07	-.58 (.21)	-.08	-.32 (.14)	-.09	-.38 (.18)	-.09
Age	.03 (.03)	.04	.04 (.03)	.03	.02 (.02)	.02	.07 (.03)	.09
Education	.03 (.02)	.03	.01 (.11)	.01	-.01 (.01)	-.03	.05 (.02)	.09
Female	.01 (.11)	.00	.09 (.11)	.01	-.37 (.07)	-.12	.05 (.09)	.01
Race/ethnicity								
Black	-.56 (.16)	-.11	-.59 (.15)	-.12	-.48 (.12)	-.15	-.42 (.15)	-.11
Hispanic	-.17 (.19)	-.03	-.24 (.19)	-.04	-.41 (.13)	-.13	-.09 (.16)	-.02
Other	-.25 (.20)	.04	-.35 (.20)	-.04	-.27 (.14)	-.07	-.12 (.19)	-.03
Republican	.84 (.17)	.12	.86 (.18)	.12	.60 (.10)	.16	.34 (.14)	.08
Conservative	.51 (.17)	.07	.18 (.17)	.02	.31 (.11)	.09	.17 (.14)	.04
Authoritarianism	.36 (.16)	.05	.14 (.17)	.02	.23 (.10)	.07	-.54 (.14)	-.12
Pseudo R ²	.14		.11		.07		.06	
N	1409		1419		1308		1374	

^aEntries are probit coefficients with standard errors (SE) in parentheses. All variables are coded 0 to 1 except for age, which is coded in 10-year increments, and education, which is coded as years of schooling. Coefficients in bold have z-scores > 2. The change in probability is estimated for each predictor variable as it ranges from its lowest to highest value. Data from Wave 1 (10/2001–3/2002) of the TNSS (Huddy *et al.*, 2005).

perceived national threat had the opposite effect. It was associated with greater support for US military intervention, US overseas involvement, and with approval of Bush. The effects of both national threat and anxiety were substantial, as can be seen from the estimated changes in probability of Bush approval, approval of Bush's handling of terrorism, support for military action in Afghanistan, and support for an active US role in world affairs in [Table 14.2](#) when each independent variable moves from its lowest to highest value. Consider Bush approval. An individual who perceived the highest level of national threat was 11% more likely to approve of Bush than an individual at the lowest level of threat. The most anxious individual was 7% less likely to approve of Bush than the least anxious individual. These changes were especially striking given the relatively high overall levels of support for Bush and overseas military action at this time.

In addition to the effects of threat, there were several other factors that influenced approval of Bush and increased support for overseas military involvement. Black respondents were consistently more opposed to US military and overseas involvement than were whites (the omitted baseline category for all race and ethnicity variables; the coefficients for black, Hispanic, and other ethnicity convey each group's attitudes when compared to whites). Blacks were at least 11% less likely than whites to approve of Bush and 15% less likely to support military action, as seen in the changes in probability reported in [Table 14.2](#). Authoritarians were more supportive than others of Bush and military action, but were more opposed to increased US involvement in world affairs. Not surprisingly, Republicans were significantly more likely than Democrats, and conservatives more likely than liberals, to support military action; Republicans were also more supportive of the US taking a leading role in world affairs.

Support for war in Iraq

We replicated the previous analyses to determine whether anxiety had similar effects in reducing support for military action in the lead-up to the Iraq war. In general, Americans supported the war in Iraq, although support was far from unanimous. In October of 2002, after the US Congress had voted to support the war, 60% of respondents favored taking military action against Iraq. This declined slightly to 51% who favored taking action with substantial casualties, and 46% who favored the use of a large number of ground troops (and 39% who supported action without the UN). We constructed a scale of war support from three items: (1) "How strongly do you favor or oppose

US military action against Iraq?"; (2) "How strongly do you favor or oppose US military action against Iraq even if it means the US armed forces might suffer a substantial number of casualties?"; and (3) "How strongly do you favor or oppose sending large numbers of US ground troops into Iraq?" Responses to these three questions had a mean inter-item correlation of .79 ($\alpha = .92$). We focused on the origins of war support in October, 2002, before the war began, because the trajectory of the war was less clear then than in the subsequent third wave of data collection from March until June, 2003, after the war had begun.

We regressed the scale of support for the Iraq war on anxiety, demographic, and political factors using ordinary least-squares regression analysis, and replaced national threat with an added variable indicating the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. The results are presented in the first two columns of [Table 14.3](#). We use unstandardized coefficients in regression analyses because they directly convey the magnitude of a variable's impact and thus provide helpful information about effect size. Since all of the variables except for age and education are coded to range from 0 to 1, the coefficients can be interpreted as the expected fraction of the range of war support as each predictor variable changes from its lowest to highest value. Saddam threat was assessed with three variables indicating his possible use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) against the USA, the likelihood that he would use WMDs against his neighbors, and the likelihood that he actively supported anti-US terrorist groups.⁷ The three items were combined to form a reliable scale ($\alpha = .71$). In general, Saddam Hussein was seen as a credible threat by a majority of respondents. Over two-thirds (69%) thought it was very likely that he was actively supporting anti-US terrorists, 49% thought it was very likely that he would use WMDs in the Middle East, and 29% thought it was very likely he would use WMDs against the USA. Perhaps not surprisingly, the perceived threat posed by Hussein was the single most important factor in driving support for the war, and is analogous to the effects of national threat depicted in [Table 14.2](#).

Anxiety played an important role in shaping war support – effects that were negative once again, as expected. Respondents were asked the extent (very, somewhat, not very, and not at all) to which anti-American terrorists made them feel nervous, scared, and afraid. The same question was repeated for Saddam Hussein. All six items were combined to form a reliable scale ($\alpha = .92$). Individuals who felt anxious about anti-American terrorists and Saddam Hussein were more likely to oppose military intervention in Iraq. For example, going from the lowest to

Table 14.3. *Determinants of Iraq war support.*

Determinants	War support ^a		Bush approval ^b		
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Δp
Saddam threat	.57	.04	2.30	.26	.72
Anxiety	-.14	.03	-.73	.22	-.18
Age	-.02	.01	-.11	.04	-.21
Education	-.01	.00	-.04	.02	-.13
Gender (female)	-.09	.02	.18	.12	.05
Race/ethnicity					
Black	-.14	.03	-.65	.20	-.22
Hispanic	-.10	.04	-.24	.21	-.07
Other	-.08	.04	-.43	.24	-.14
Republican	.20	.03	1.53	.18	.40
Conservative	.10	.03	.79	.18	.21
Authoritarianism	.08	.03	.62	.17	.17
Constant	.19	.07			
(Pseudo) R^2	.41		.37		
N	1016		967		

^aEntries for war support are unstandardized regression coefficients with their standard errors.

^bEntries for Bush approval are probit coefficients and their standard errors. The change in probability is estimated for each predictor variable as it ranges from its lowest to highest value, except for education, which is calculated from 6 to 20 years of schooling, and age, from 18 to 85 years. All variables are coded 0 to 1 except for age, which is coded in 10-year increments, and education, which is coded as years of schooling. Entries in bold have z -scores > 2. Data from Wave 2 (10/2002) of the TNSS (Huddy *et al.*, 2005).

highest levels of anxiety results in a decrease in war support by 14% of the scale range as seen in Table 14.3. Analyses reported elsewhere demonstrated that anxious individuals were also more inclined to see Saddam as a threat and to view the war as risky (Huddy *et al.*, 2007). Overall, these findings suggest that anxious individuals' greater aversion to risk undercuts their support for an aggressive foreign policy.

Republicans, conservatives and authoritarians were substantially more likely than Democrats, liberals, or non-authoritarians respectively to support military intervention in Iraq. Older people, women, and minorities were less supportive of the war. Better educated individuals were also less supportive of the war. The effects of education are statistically significant even if relatively small; someone with a twelfth-grade education was a modest 2.8% of the scale range higher in war support than an individual with sixteen years of education.

Similar factors influenced approval of President Bush in probit analyses included in the second half of [Table 14.3](#). In particular, anxiety reduced approval of the president's performance, whereas perceived threat from Saddam Hussein boosted it. As the level of anxiety increased from its lowest to highest values the predicted probability of support for Bush decreased by 0.18. A similar level of change in perceived threat from Saddam Hussein was predicted to boost support of Bush by a substantial 0.72. Other predictors were largely as expected: non-blacks, Republicans, conservatives, and authoritarians were most likely to approve of Bush's performance. Perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, younger people expressed stronger presidential approval than older Americans.

When taken together, the analysis of war support demonstrates clearly that anxiety undercuts support for risky military action. In the aftermath of the terrorist events of 9/11, anxiety heightened isolationism and reduced support for US military activity. In the lead-up to the Iraq war, anxiety undercut war support and enhanced the view that the war was risky. Overall, potentially dangerous overseas military action seems to be unappealing for fearful and anxious individuals. President Bush's actions and rhetoric were also less reassuring to those who experienced anxiety after 9/11, and felt anxious about terrorism and Saddam Hussein in the lead-up to the Iraq war. These findings contradict popular wisdom but are consistent with psychological evidence that anxiety heightens perceived risk and increases risk aversion.

Determinants of anxiety

Americans who responded to terrorism with anxiety were less supportive than others of anti-terrorist military action. This raises the obvious question of why some people are more inclined than others to react anxiously to terrorism. We took a step back to look more closely at the determinants of anxiety after the events of September 11 and in the months before the Iraq war. We regressed self-reported anxiety on a series of standard demographic and political attitudes, and added several additional predictor variables that indicated proximity to the events of September 11. These include living in the New York metro area and knowing someone who was killed in the attacks. Anxiety was measured in Wave 1 with the four-item anxiety scale reported in [Table 14.1](#) and included in analyses in [Table 14.2](#). In Wave 2 (October, 2002), the six-item anxiety scale reported earlier and included in [Table 14.3](#) was unpacked to form a reliable scale of anxiety toward terrorists ($\alpha = .89$) and Saddam Hussein (also $\alpha = .89$). Three other

Table 14.4. *Determinants of anxiety.*

Determinants	Terrorists and US response: Wave 1		Anti-US terrorist: Wave 2		Saddam: Wave 2		Iraq war: Wave 2	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Gender (female)	.18	.01	.19	.02	.23	.02	.24	.02
Age	-.03	.00	-.00	.01	-.00	.01	.01	.01
Education	-.01	.00	-.00	.00	.00	.00	-.00	.00
Race/ethnicity								
Black	-.00	.03	.02	.04	-.06	.04	.06	.04
Hispanic	.04	.03	-.05	.04	-.06	.04	.08	.04
Other	.00	.03	-.04	.04	-.15	.05	-.01	.05
Republican	-.05	.02	-.05	.03	.01	.03	-.10	.03
Conservative	.04	.02	-.04	.03	.01	.03	-.01	.03
Authoritarianism	.04	.02	.04	.03	.00	.03	-.03	.03
Know someone	.08	.02	.06	.02	.05	.02	.04	.02
NY Area	.11	.03	.08	.05	.06	.05	.02	.05
Adjusted R^2	.16		.12		.13		.17	
N	1478		1031		1019		1005	

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with their standard errors. All independent and dependent variables are coded 0 to 1 with the exception of age (in 10-year increments) and education (years of schooling). Coefficients in bold are at least twice the size of their standard error. Data in the first set of columns are from Wave 1 (10/2001–3/2002), and data in the remaining columns are from Wave 2 (10/2002) of the TNSS (Huddy *et al.*, 2005).

items were added to form a reliable scale of anxiety toward a possible war in Iraq ($\alpha = .90$).

First, we considered the origins of anxiety in the months after September 11. Regression analyses (ordinary least squares) presented in the first column of Table 14.4 demonstrated that women, younger people, the less educated, Republicans, those who lived in the New York metro area, and those who knew someone directly affected by the attacks were most likely to report feeling anxious. The effects of gender are large, with women scoring roughly 20% of the scale range higher in anxiety than men. Other effects are more modest. Those with a high-school education (twelve years of schooling) were 5.6% ($4 \times 0.014 = 0.056$) of the scale range in anxiety higher compared to those with a college education (sixteen years of schooling). The effects of knowing someone affected by the attacks and living close to the World Trade Center site were consistent with other evidence that direct personal experience of terrorism has an especially powerful

effect on the development of anxiety and related psychological symptoms (Galea *et al.*, 2002; Gordon and Arian, 2001; Piotrkowski and Brannen, 2002; Schuster *et al.*, 2001; Silver *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, in analyses reported elsewhere, we found that indicators of proximity influenced anxiety but had no impact on the perceived national threat of terrorism (Huddy *et al.*, 2005). This finding is consistent with other studies that have found heightened psychological reactions to 9/11 among those who lived closest to the attacks.

Anxiety also had a political component. Republicans experienced somewhat less anxiety than Democrats, feeling reassured, perhaps, by the presence of George W. Bush as President. In analyses not shown here, this effect was visible in the first three months after the attacks, but not afterward. Finally, in analyses reported by Huddy *et al.* (2005), there was a slight decline in perceived threat and anxiety over time. Both declined significantly in the months after 9/11, but demonstrated little further decline after the new year, consistent with the findings of other national studies (see Davis and Silver, 2004).

To understand better the origins of anxiety in the lead up to the Iraq war, we examined its three component scales – anxiety about anti-US terrorists, Saddam Hussein, and the war in Iraq. As seen in Table 14.4, proximity to the 9/11 attacks – knowing someone who was killed in the 9/11 attacks and residence in the New York metro area – had small to no effects on anxiety about terrorists, about Saddam, and the Iraq war. In contrast, anxiety about the war was flavored more by political considerations than proximity to the events of 9/11; Republicans were substantially less anxious than Democrats about the war. Gender was the one consistent factor that affected all forms of anxiety; women were much more anxious than men about terrorists, Saddam, and the war.

Gendered reactions to terrorism

Emotional reactions to physical threat

Women consistently reported higher levels of anxiety than men in response to war and to terrorism. This was one of the largest and most robust findings to emerge from our analysis of the determinants of anxiety reported in Table 14.4. These findings fit with evidence from numerous studies that women reported higher levels of anxiety about war and terrorism, personal vulnerability, and anxiety in response to the events of September 11 (Fischhoff *et al.*, 2003; Goodwin *et al.*, 2005; Huddy *et al.*, 2005, 2002; Lerner *et al.*, 2003; Skitka *et al.*, 2004;

Solomon *et al.*, 2005). Silver *et al.* (2002) found that women were more likely than men to experience post-traumatic distress and to exhibit more severe symptoms following the 9/11 terror attacks. Similar gender differences in response to terrorism have been observed in Israel (Raviv *et al.*, 2000; Solomon *et al.*, 2005).

Other research studies also show that women report higher levels of anxiety than men about war. Women are more pessimistic than men about the costs of war – including military and civilian casualties – and report more depressive symptoms such as difficulty sleeping and concentrating at work in response to military conflict. Women are also more fearful for their nation's troops, and are more worried about retaliation or an escalation of conflict, and the possibility of nuclear war (Bendyna *et al.*, 1996; Conover and Sapiro, 1993; Gwartney-Gibbs and Lach, 1991). Women's stronger emotional reactions to terrorism and war are intriguing, raising questions about both the origins and political consequences of this gender difference.

It is instructive to examine the magnitude of gender differences in anxiety after the events of September 11 to flesh out the regression results presented in Table 14.4. Only 17% of men reported feeling scared very often or sometimes as they thought about the September 11 attacks, compared to 45% of women – a difference of 28 percentage points. A substantial percentage of men (35%) reported feeling scared or worried about terrorists very often or sometimes, but a far larger percentage of women did so (63%). Gender differences of a similar magnitude were observed for feeling frightened in response to the attacks. Differences were more muted on feeling anxious (41% of men compared to 53% of women). The enormity of these differences in reactions to terrorism should not be understated. They are significantly larger than the gender gaps observed in other realms of public opinion – such as support for social welfare policies – which rarely exceed 10 percentage points (Huddy *et al.*, 2008).

The gender differences in anxiety observed in the lead-up to the Iraq war, and analyzed in Table 14.4, were of similar magnitude. The largest gender differences emerged in feeling afraid. For example, 72% of women compared to only 42% of men reported that anti-US terrorists made them feel somewhat or very afraid. In a similar vein, 69% of women and only 31% of men reported that Saddam made them feel somewhat or very afraid; and 70% of women compared to 31% of men reported that the war in Iraq made them feel afraid. Gender differences were somewhat more muted on feeling nervous and worried, but were still sizeable. For example, 85% of women compared to 66% of men said that anti-US terrorists made them feel nervous a great deal or somewhat, resulting in a gender gap of 19 percentage points.

War support

In past research, women have not only reported higher levels of anxiety in response to terrorism, they typically express lower levels of support for overseas military intervention than do men, and are less likely to endorse the government's use of force. Women were somewhere between 7 to 9 percentage points less supportive of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam (Shapiro and Mahajan, 1986). Gender differences of similar magnitude are evident in support of the Gulf War (Bendyna *et al.*, 1996; Conover and Sapiro, 1993), and of the military campaign in Afghanistan and the Iraq war (Huddy *et al.*, 2005). Women are also more inclined than men to support peaceful and less militaristic solutions to international disputes (Fite *et al.*, 1990; Nincic and Nincic, 2002), although findings on this point are not entirely uniform (Wilcox *et al.*, 1996).

Gender differences in war support raise the obvious question of whether or not women's greater anxiety concerning physical threats, terrorism, and war can help to explain their greater opposition to war. We tackled this question directly by examining whether the gender gap in war support in Afghanistan and Iraq (presented earlier in [Tables 14.2](#) and [14.3](#)) was mediated by anxiety about war and terrorism. This hypothesis has not been subject to prior empirical test and fits with a large, growing body of work on the existence of political gender gaps in different domains of public opinion (Huddy *et al.*, 2008).

We conducted mediational regression analyses to examine whether anxiety mediated the effects of gender on support for action in Afghanistan, reported in [Table 14.2](#). At odds with our initial expectations, anxiety had no effect on the coefficient for gender on war support. This suggests that the gender gap in anxiety toward terrorism did not explain the gender gap in support for anti-terrorist military action. The coefficient for anxiety was large, significant, and negative in the equation predicting support for military action in Afghanistan. It did not, however, have much impact on the coefficient for gender, which dropped slightly from -0.41 to -0.37 when anxiety was added to the equation.

We extended analyses of the gender gap in war support to the Iraq war. As noted in connection to regression analyses presented in [Table 14.3](#), gender had a large and significant impact on support for the war. To test whether anxiety mediated this gender gap, all three distinct anxiety measures concerning anti-US terrorists, Saddam Hussein, and the war were added separately to the original regression equation, as seen in [Table 14.5](#). The various anxiety measures were entered separately,

Table 14.5. *Anxiety as possible mediator of gender effects on war support, October, 2002 (Wave 2).*

Determinants	Support for Iraq war							
	Basic model		Plus terrorist anxiety		Plus Saddam anxiety		Plus war anxiety	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Gender (female)	-.12	.02	-.12	.02	-.11	.02	-.06	.02
Age	-.02	.01	-.02	.01	-.02	.01	-.01	.01
Education	-.01	.00	-.01	.00	-.01	.00	-.01	.00
Race/ethnicity								
Black	-.13	.04	-.13	.04	-.13	.04	-.11	.03
Hispanic	-.11	.04	-.11	.04	-.11	.04	-.09	.04
Other	-.07	.04	-.07	.04	-.07	.04	-.06	.04
Authoritarianism	.09	.03	.09	.03	.09	.03	.08	.03
Republican	.23	.03	.22	.03	.22	.03	.21	.03
Conservative	.11	.03	.10	.03	.10	.03	.09	.03
Saddam threat	.53	.04	.54	.04	.55	.04	.55	.04
Anxiety: terrorists			-.05	.03				
Anxiety: Saddam					-.07	.03		
Anxiety: war							-.025	.03
Adjusted R ²	.37		.37		.38		.41	
N	1017		1006		998		984	

Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with their standard. All independent and dependent variables are coded 0 to 1 with the exception of age (in 10-year increments) and education (years of schooling). Coefficients in bold are at least twice the size of their standard error. Data from Wave 2 (10/2002) of the TNSS (Huddy *et al.*, 2007).

better to assess whether anxiety about terrorism (which was linked directly to the events of 9/11) or anxiety about war (which was more partisan and only weakly connected to 9/11) was most likely to mediate the gender gap in war support.

Once again, anxiety about terrorists failed to mediate the effects of gender on war support. This can be seen by comparing the coefficient for gender in the first equation (with no controls for anxiety) with the coefficient in the second equation, which includes anxiety toward terrorists – they are identical. Similarly, anxiety about Saddam had little or no effect. In contrast, anxiety about the war did mediate the gender difference in war support. The coefficient for gender on war support was -0.12 without anxiety in the equation; the coefficient was halved to -0.06 when anxiety about the war was included. This is a substantial

reduction and suggests that part of women's opposition to war stems from their greater anxiety about its possible consequences. The Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) showed that 56% of the effect of gender on support for the Iraq war was mediated by anxiety about the war, and this mediation was highly significant ($p < .001$). This may help to explain why the gender gap in war support is more pronounced in the early stages of a conflict when there is maximum uncertainty about the possible consequences of military action (Bendyna *et al.*, 1996; Conover and Sapiro, 1993; Wilcox *et al.*, 1996).

Conclusion

The effects of terrorism depend heavily on how a targeted public responds. But, as demonstrated in this study, not everyone responds to the threat of terrorism in the same way. Most Americans perceived a high level of future terrorist threat to the nation (Smith and Rasinski, 2002), but only a minority expressed considerable anxiety in response to the 9/11 attacks. And these related, but differing, psychological reactions to the external threat of terrorism – perceived threat versus anxiety – had very different effects on public support for anti-terrorism policies. As perceived threat increased, there was heightened support for overseas military action and stronger approval of President Bush. In contrast, those who experienced high levels of anxiety were less supportive of aggressive military action against terrorists, generally favored increased American isolationism, and disapproved more of President Bush's performance.

Popular wisdom suggests that politicians' fear-mongering about terrorism is an attempt to manipulate public support for aggressive anti-terrorism action. But if such strategies elicit public anxiety, they are unlikely to succeed, based on the findings of our research. On the other hand, if fear-mongering heightens a sense of national threat without increasing public anxiety, it is likely to increase support for aggressive government anti-terrorist policies. Our analysis suggests that perceived terrorist threat promotes public support for an aggressive national security policy. The Bush administration seemed aware of this link and issued terrorist alerts into the early months of 2002, perhaps helping to explain why the perceived risk of terrorism remained relatively high during this period. At the same time, this strategy holds clear risks for government officials who wish to take aggressive action against terrorists. To the extent that terrorist warnings elevate levels of anxiety, they could also undercut support for overseas military action. In order to garner public support for military action, an affected government must make people aware of the risk of terrorism without unduly scaring them.

We examined the origins of anxiety in this research, and discovered that it depends to some degree on social and physical proximity to the events of 9/11. It is difficult to say what might happen if the United States were attacked again in the near future. Based on our results, it is plausible that a future threat or actual attack directed at a different geographic region would broaden the number of individuals directly affected by terrorism and concomitantly raise levels of anxiety. This could, in turn, lower support for overseas military action. In contrast, in the absence of any additional attacks, levels of anxiety are likely to decline slowly over time (we observed a slow decline in this study), weakening opposition to future overseas military action.

Anxiety and the gender gap

The single largest predictor of anxiety in response to terrorism was gender, with women consistently reporting higher levels of anxiety than men. We examined this finding more closely to determine whether such anxious feelings help to explain the gender gap in support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Women's greater anxiety about terrorists did not simply explain their greater opposition to war. But their greater anxiety about the Iraq war did help to explain why they were less enthusiastic about it than were men.

Our findings thus hint at the importance of anxiety as an explanation for the gender gap in war support. It is difficult to know specifically what made women anxious about the Iraq war. It could have been anxiety about US casualties or the prospect of terrorist retaliation. Nonetheless, the findings are clear. Women's greater anxiety about the war diminished their support for it. These results suggest that women's reluctance to respond to terrorism with force is due more to their anxiety over the use of force itself than the anxiety generated by the threat of terrorism, although more research is needed to resolve this issue.

Different theoretical explanations have been advanced to account for observed gender differences in reported anxiety levels. One possibility is that men and women differ somewhat in basic personality characteristics that determine their reactions to threatening events (Conover and Sapiro, 1993). Costa *et al.* (2001) recently examined the existence of gender differences in self-rated personality traits across numerous, diverse cultures and found robust but small differences in four of the big five personality factors. Of greatest relevance to this research, women score more highly on neuroticism (e.g., anxious, depressed, vulnerable) in addition to several other facets of personality. Similar differences have been widely reported in other studies (Eagly and Steffen 1984).

It is important to note that such personality differences are small, on average, and swamped by variation within each gender. They could arise from innate tendencies associated with women's biological role as mothers. Alternatively, they could stem from women's innate or learned fear of rape and sexual assault (Ferraro, 1996). Or, they could develop through gender-role socialization, in which girls are taught to be more physically cautious and boys are taught to take physical risks. We remain agnostic on this point.

As yet, we have no simple answer to why some women feel more anxious than men in response to acts of terrorism and war. We believe that further investigation into anxious and other emotional reactions to terrorist violence will prove to be a fruitful area of social science research. At a minimum, our research suggests it is simplistic to assume that everyone responds in the same way to terrorist threat. Reactions to threat are complex in interesting ways that shed light on the future trajectory of support for government anti-terrorism policies.

NOTES

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- 1 Gray (1994) argues that anxious individuals scrutinize the environment carefully in an attempt to weigh the risks associated with action and inaction, and take the least risky path. Anxious individuals thus often choose to avoid action, but they can decide to act when the perceived risks associated with inaction outweigh those associated with action. Thus, anxious individuals, while typically avoidant, could support military action if they perceive inaction as more risky.
- 2 Respondents were similar to the national population in terms of median household income (from \$40,000 to \$50,000), were slightly more middle-aged (30% were aged 45 to 59 years old compared to 27% nationally), somewhat better educated (37% of adults over 25 years old had a college degree compared to 24% nationally), somewhat less black (8% versus 13% nationally), and somewhat more female (56% versus 52% in the nation).
- 3 Respondents were asked both about terror attacks and about the US response, because of anxiety's tendency to generalize across disparate intellectual objects. In a second wave of data, there was a very high correspondence between this measure of anxiety and one stripped of any reference to the US response, suggesting that responses were strongly linked to anxiety about terrorist acts (Huddy *et al.*, 2007). This stripped scale also had similar political effects, and was linked to lowered support for military action.
- 4 The two personal threat questions were highly correlated ($r = .52$).

- 5 An adequate authoritarianism scale ($\alpha = .61$) was constructed from combining items on a preference for obedience, respect, and good manners among children over more expressive and creative values (Feldman and Stenner, 1997).
- 6 The exact question wordings are as follows: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is dealing with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington?"; "How strongly do you favor or oppose increasing the level of military action, even if it means that US armed forces might suffer a substantial number of casualties?"; "Do you think it will be best for the future of the United States if the country takes an active part in world affairs, or if the country stays out of world affairs?"
- 7 Specific item wording is as follows: "If the US does not take military action in Iraq – how likely is it that Saddam Hussein would attack the US with biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons in the near future? ... how likely is it that Saddam Hussein would use biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons against countries in the Middle East including Israel, in the near future? ... how likely is it that Saddam Hussein is actively supporting anti-US terrorist groups at present?"

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15 I'm right, you're dead: speculations about the roots of fanaticism

Carmen Lawrence

In the title of the fifth of his 2004 Reith Lectures, “Climate of fear,” Nigerian poet Wole Soyinka succinctly summarized the mind-set of the zealot: *I am right; you are dead*. Although such deadly dualism is rare in Australian political discourse, my two decades as an elected representative and my training in academic psychology have convinced me of the need to understand and to prevent the development of such sentiments, even when they fall short of violent expression. I will attempt to canvass some of the questions we need to explore if we are to develop a comprehensive understanding of the processes by which any individual or group or a state can develop “a self-righteousness that can only be assuaged by homicidal resolution” (Soyinka, 2004). In particular, I will examine the importance of the perception of difference and fear-based identity formation in generating fanatical ideas and violence.

On September 11, 2001, nineteen al-Qaeda adherents – apparently motivated by political grievances – hijacked and then crashed four commercial aircraft into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania, callously murdering almost 3000 people. What followed was the propulsion of the term “terrorism” to an unprecedented level of international prominence. As Selden and So (2004) observed, “[n]o word in the contemporary ... political lexicon is more frequently invoked or more emotionally charged than ‘terrorist’” (p. 3).

One of the first reactions people invariably have to events such as those which shook the world on September 11 and brutally shortened so many lives is to ask: why? How could this have happened? What drove these people to such murderous acts? Who are they? And how could they?

It is part of what it means to be human to seek to understand such catastrophic events, especially those created by human hands. While we may rail at the fates (or question our gods) when the implacable forces of nature destroy our homes and kill our families, for the most part we do not read these events as resulting from human action. Furthermore, unless there has been negligence in prudent protection from nature’s

threats, we do not expect explanations that invoke human motivation and planning.

It is in the nature of human curiosity to seek to understand events and the circumstances that shape them. Scholars too are interested in how people make sense of these emotionally charged events, how they explain them, and how different, seemingly contradictory, accounts of what seems to be the same event can develop and fertilize mutual incomprehension.

It is possible, as Butler (2004) has suggested, that terrorist attacks can give us a way out of this blindness through a deeper reflection – “To be injured means that one has the chance to reflect upon injury, to find out the mechanisms of its distribution, to find out who else suffers from permeable borders, unexpected violence, dispossession, and fear, and in what ways” (p. xii). Such reflection gives us a chance to imagine a world in which violence is minimized.

Normally our stories incorporate metaphors and images that can give us some insight into how people generally make sense of their social and political worlds. Read carefully, the stories may reveal the deep fears, perceived threats, and grievances that drive the conflicts that seemingly allow some lives to be treasured and others to be discounted altogether. Such narratives are important because they justify and, indeed, encourage certain kinds of action while condemning others. For the purposes of the current discussion, defining the September 11 attacks as acts of war rather than criminality was used to justify the killing of those not in any way responsible for the attacks on the twin towers as the unavoidable casualties of conflict – so-called collateral damage – a reasoning that is in many ways remarkably close to that used by some terrorist groups. (For further elaboration of this argument about common language and logic, see Saul, this volume). When questioned, many terrorists depict themselves as soldiers who are engaged in war and justify the atrocities they have committed because they believe their cause is just (Silke, 2004).

As Ross (2007) has argued, “the powerful images these stories contain include judgments about the motivations and actions of their own group, and others” that are “especially relevant in times of high uncertainty and high stress.” It is when people are most disoriented after sudden, violent events, when they are forcefully reminded of their own mortality, that they are most likely to fall back on shared stories to help them cope with the heightened fear of death. Numerous studies under the banner of “Terror Management Theory” show how these cultural worldviews (and our defense of them) operate to influence the way we respond to reminders of our own mortality. In such

circumstances, people are more likely to exhibit increased prejudice and aggression toward those who question their beliefs, those with different worldviews, and those who are, or appear to be, different from them (see Pyszczynski, this volume, for a more detailed exposition of these arguments).

Researchers seeking to understand the genesis of terrorist attacks need to explore the “how could this have happened?” question without succumbing to the inevitable partisanship of the shared worldviews. As Fromm reminded us in 1971, to study such phenomena, “everything must be doubted, particularly the ideological concepts which ... have assumed the role of indubitable, commonsensical axioms.” As he said, this is possible “only if one does not take the concepts of one’s own society or even an entire historical period – like Western culture since the Renaissance – for granted” (Fromm, 1971, p. 1). Indeed, part of the task is to observe and understand how such views are constructed and how they affect behavior – on all sides. To inquire how terrorists come to act as they do is also to invite questions about whether such acts are unique, or whether they share common features with other violent acts: a path that some find extremely uncomfortable.

This, of course, is made difficult by the suspicion that pursuing how certain violent actions came into being may paralyze our ability to make moral judgments about right and wrong. It is almost as if we fear moral contagion; that, in attempting to understand the point of view of the other we will be taken in by it. But as Inga Clendinnen (2000) has said, while she has “no liking for fanatics, no stomach for the infliction of pain on any sentient creature and no patience with the arrogance of organized religions” (p. 106) she nonetheless persists in seeking to understand such people and actions – their intellectual and social milieu – in order to recognize their characteristic patterns of thought and behavior. To find causes is not to find excuses.

In some quarters, the desire to avoid the “loss of moral clarity” in condemning terrorism amounts to a refusal even to contemplate that events have a knowable cause beyond simply categorizing them as “evil.” In the extreme formulation of this stance, the danger we are confronting is portrayed as evil itself; the phenomena of terrorism and the motivation of terrorists are deemed unintelligible except by reference to supernatural forces. Such a simplistic view precludes further thought and stops us looking deeper into causes; once something has been identified as evil, there is nothing left to explain. However, it is a counsel of despair to argue that terrorist acts are inexplicable. If we accept this argument, we abandon attempts to understand (and minimize) the drivers of terrorist acts and acquiesce in reactive measures to

“eradicate evil”: measures probably as effective as the employment of stakes and garlic to drive out vampires.

Shortly after the attacks on the USA, President Bush announced that the US would lead a worldwide crusade “to rid the world of evil” and “evildoers.” For some, this echoed the missionary calls of Islamic extremists and earlier utopian projects designed to rid the world of evil and suffering, projects that caused – and are causing – more suffering than they sought to prevent. It would pay us to remember the massive destruction that has been wrought in the service of various visions of purification and renewal.

The inevitable corollary of this approach is a brutal kind of binary thinking: the response to terrorist attacks quickly becomes a war between the forces of “good” and “evil,” between civilization and barbarism, and excuses any action that has as its goal the elimination of those who have been identified as belonging to the group of “evildoers.” This is a particularly dangerous “frame” when it includes the proposition that the terrorists are, by definition, Muslims who hate us for no understandable reason, simply because of who we are. What is more, this coarse rendering of the problem seems designed to push Muslims into the embrace of the terrorists – “you’re with us or against us.” Instead of seeking to mobilize resources to analyze – and counter – the processes of indoctrination and the development of extremist religious and ethnic ideologies, we are encouraged to believe that we are confronting dark forces whose motivation is beyond understanding (See Louis, this volume, for further discussion on this issue).

This thinking also silences those who might demur from the action taken: “you’re either with us or you’re with the terrorists.” More nuanced positions are instantly repudiated, with a resulting climate of anti-intellectualism. In the United States immediately after September 11, anyone who sought to understand the reasons for the attack on the United States was likely to be portrayed as attempting to exonerate those who launched the attack – many were called “excusenicks” and publicly castigated. Apparently even to think about the grounds and causes of the current global conflicts is considered impermissible.

This refusal to undertake any systematic historical and political analysis is not unfamiliar to Australians. At the time of writing this, we have just witnessed similar tactics used in the so-called “emergency intervention” in the Northern Territory. In response to a damning report on child sexual abuse in remote Indigenous communities, the government, without reference to the communities, sent in the military and emergency medical teams to “stamp out” child abuse, introduced discriminatory quarantining of welfare payments, and

moved to repeal long-established land rights. Anyone suggesting that the government's program to tackle child sexual abuse might be deficient in any way, particularly in ignoring the origins of the problem, was quickly labeled as indifferent to the suffering of children, and, by implication, a friend of the pedophiles. In the often emotionally-charged debate about terrorism, critics and dissenters have been variously excoriated as traitors, anti-Semites, moral relativists, terrorist sympathizers, post-modernists, adolescents, collaborators, or just old-fashioned "pinkos."

Such denigration and the threat of being located with "the enemy" clearly seek to destroy the credibility of people who hold views at variance with the official story and, in so doing, automatically to invalidate those views. Such tactics successfully constrain commentary and analysis both within academia and in the media. This form of censorship has the inevitable effect of limiting the "sayable," and thus open debate is effectively throttled. In a democracy, as in academic life, the exclusion of those who have critical or dissenting views in the larger debate on policies and politics is corrosive. We need an intellectual space in which histories can be recounted in all their complexity.

Embedded in much of this censorship is a forced consensus on what various terms will mean; for example, terrorism is held only to apply to non-state actors and excludes the killing of civilians in other circumstances. Such a limited definition coupled with the call to arms in the "War on Terror" has allowed the Russian government, for example, to characterize the Chechen struggle for independence as terrorism, and to cast its own repressive tactics against Chechnya as justifiable self-protection. It means people have become reluctant to ask, for example, whether attacking an Islamic country might not further propagate anti-Western sentiment. Unfortunately, the resistance to viewing events or situations in terms of root causes and examining the role that past actions may have played effectively denies the possibility of developing interventions that might prevent a repeat of these atrocities. Furthermore, to accept the characterization of terrorists as "evil" is to be tempted to abandon caution and agree to extreme measures to defeat such implacable and elusive foes.

Many people are uncomfortable even discussing possible explanations of terrorism and terrorist acts because it raises the very real possibility that past policies may have contributed to present problems. But without understanding, no corrective action is possible. An Australian government statement on terrorism in 2004 even insisted that "the notion of root causes is misleading. It implies there is something we can offer to correct or mitigate the threat" (Australian Government, DFAT, 2004).

While the people who perpetrate terrorist atrocities may not be able to give a full account of their motives, even to themselves, this should not preclude us from attempting to comprehend what causes them to engage in such destructive acts. At least, it seems clear that the September 11 murders were construed as some kind of act of revenge against what was perceived as US imperialism and its unabashed support for Israel. Much of the inflamed rhetoric from those terrorists given media coverage at the time was laced with fear and resentment of what they saw as attacks on the Muslim world. Insistence on the ahistorical nature of terrorists' strikes means that US Vice President Dick Cheney's conclusion in his speech to the Institute of American Enterprise is inevitable: "Such an enemy cannot be defeated, cannot be contained, cannot be appeased, negotiated with; it can only be destroyed" (Cheney, 2003). All the evidence is, however, that it certainly cannot be destroyed with force. At the very least, we should note what the terrorists claim are their objectives, even though we repudiate their actions. It is easy to agree that there is no excuse for September 11, but that does not mean that there were no reasons for the attack (see Louis, this volume, for an exploration of this argument).

The essence of contemporary terrorism is the readiness to attack apparently random targets – in markets, in trains, in restaurants, in office blocks. Clearly the intention of the perpetrators is to seize public attention by the brutal and horrific nature of the attacks and to generate high levels of fear and anxiety in order to achieve certain political objectives (see Clarke and Newman, this volume, for a discussion of how targets are chosen.) The grisly, spectacular violence – the mass killings, the suicide bombings, the video-beheadings – is designed for the media age. The whole world is immediate witness to the carnage wrought by terrorist acts, wherever they occur.

Such attacks are carefully calculated by their perpetrators to provoke powerful dread – and an over-reaction. Richardson (2006) has characterized the general motivation of terrorists as revenge, renown, and reaction, and it follows that to deal with terrorism requires a focus on stemming the impulse for revenge, trying to limit the publicity given to terrorists, and refraining from acting in ways that broaden the terrorists' appeal, whatever their objective.

It is truly horrifying that there are people who are willing to kill and maim others with whom they have no particular quarrel. In terms of lives lost, the impact of terrorist acts is usually relatively small, but the psychological impact can be massive, particularly if the attacks are carried out by suicide bombers whose desire to kill others is greater than their own will to live. Inevitably these images of destruction invite

questions: “What kind of person can murder innocent men, women, and children, and is prepared to sacrifice their own life in the process of killing and maiming others? How can such a person be considered in the same terms as the rest of humanity?” (see Tulloch, this volume, for further consideration of these types of questions). In some quarters, only certain types of inquiry that accord with the idea of personal responsibility are permitted: those that point to personal pathology or individual circumstances that mark the terrorists as exceptional. What we know, of course, is that the vast majority of research does not indicate that terrorists are psychologically abnormal and, as Pape (2005) has argued, the evidence is not supportive of the idea that most suicide bombers are religious fanatics; rather, they are driven by nationalism and hold secular strategic goals such as seeking to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory the terrorists view as their homeland. (See Louis, this volume, for a detailed discussion of terrorist motivation.) Although this description may be debatable when applied to some of the more recent terrorist attacks, it does suggest that we need a broader understanding of terrorist events. What, for example, were their motives? How do they explain their actions to themselves and to others with whom they share the terrorist cause? The insistence that their motives are simply crazy or that they “hate freedom and democracy” or hate us “because of who we are” puts a full stop to any further inquiry. The social sciences and humanities should be able to offer a more rational assessment of causal factors and a more sophisticated understanding of the motivation, religious-fundamentalist or otherwise.

An interesting and important inconsistency here is that, except in the context of analysis of totalitarian regimes, we rarely ask the same questions about people who order or inflict terror and kill for the state. But, on the face of it, they share a belief in the rightness of their actions, especially if the victims of their violence are members of some despised “other.” Like combatants in other conflicts and those who act as agents of oppressive regimes, terrorists also devote a lot of energy to the work of demonizing the people they kill and try to avoid thinking of them as fully human. The universalist ethic of giving equal value to all human lives and the understanding that human life is “precarious” are amongst the first casualties in human conflict. We can, as Butler (2004) puts it, be rendered “senseless ...before those lives we have eradicated and whose grievability we have indefinitely postponed” (p. xviii). (See Bellamy, this volume, for further discussion of the importance of a universal commitment to non-combatant immunity).

Attempting to understand terrorism is, in part, an attempt to understand how human beings arrive at the point where they can torture and

kill one another without apparent regret. Sadly, examples are plentiful throughout history to demonstrate that, through the normal processes of human thought and emotion, individuals can be so manipulated and deformed that ordinary people became “Hitler’s willing executioners” (Goldhagen, 1996). During the Holocaust, doctors employed their skills to experiment on and kill disabled people, communists, homosexuals, gypsies, and Jewish people (Lifton, 2000). Across various oppressive political regimes, otherwise unexceptional men (and occasionally women) have become torturers and murderers for tyrants like Stalin, Pinochet, Mao, Saddam Hussein, and Pol Pot. Around the world, from places like South Africa, Rwanda, Kosovo, and Darfur, otherwise law-abiding citizens have perpetrated acts of genocide that have completely denied their victims’ humanity – slaughtering them with no more thought than they would give to swatting a fly. Finally, as seen in Bali, Jakarta, London, Israel, and with great frequency in Iraq, there are some who place so little value on their own lives and those of others that they appear to have no compunction in obliterating themselves to murder hundreds and thousands of people they have never met.

The uncomfortable answer to this question of how these actions are perpetrated, I think, is that under certain conditions we may all be capable of such brutality or, at least, indifference to it. Our psychological make-up and cultural conditioning make us vulnerable to certain persuasive messages, especially when fear is at the core. A common element underlying all this bloodletting is the relentless depiction in these communities of some group of people, identified by religion, race, or ethnicity, as dangerous, as threatening a community’s safety or way of life. We know that, when a people are made to feel threatened in this way, they will often attempt to eliminate the perceived threat, sometimes by violent means. Very often, the characterization of some people as dangerous, as “folk devils,” is incorporated into propaganda campaigns engineered by political figures seeking to gain political advantage by exploiting primitive fears. Arthur Miller depicted this process brilliantly in his acclaimed play, *The Crucible*.

Such dark fears are easily exploited by the unscrupulous; there is considerable evidence that when fear is engendered in any community, people become more punitive and less concerned with the welfare of those they define as “others” (Pyszczynski, 2004; and also this volume). High levels of threat and fear reduce our capacity for rational thought, increase our reliance on group stereotypes, and increase the likelihood that we will behave toward outsiders with heightened distrust, suspicion, and prejudice (Pettigrew, 2003). Hitler was only able to construct the awful machine that spawned the Holocaust because

of a pre-existing political culture of anti-Semitism on which he could draw to drive the relentless campaign to eradicate European Jewry. His depiction of the Jews as vermin, as dangerous and highly infectious bacilli intent on destroying the fabric of German society, the gruesome caricatures of Jews as rapists and ritual murderers in *Der Stürmer* (*The Attacker*) both reflected and amplified commonly held fears. Such fears may be contained in the shared stories we learn from our families, and which are reinforced by social institutions and broader social conversations amongst our political leaders and in the media. They often define our identity, who we are, and what we value, as well as prejudicial ideas about the “other”: stereotyped images, with little or no basis in fact or experience, which cast some people in the role of outsiders, as beyond society and dangerous to the nation’s values and interests. People can be induced to accept such prejudicial ideas and come to accept them as self-evident truths, especially if they are uncontested. When, for example, Muslims are depicted as hostile to Australian values and described as being alone among migrant groups in not being “easily absorbed into the mainstream,” then their “outsider” status is reinforced.

“Identity,” as Buruma (2002) sees it, “is a bloody business.” It is “what gets the blood boiling, what makes people do unspeakable things to their neighbours. It is the fuel used by initiators to set whole countries on fire; when the world is reduced to a battle between ‘us’ and ‘them.’” Some identities are indeed formed – or reinforced – in opposition to others, and may incorporate hostile and prejudicial attitudes to those groups. Chief among the sources of such prejudice is fear – the expectation that “the stranger” will do one harm and that other groups’ different views of the world will undermine or corrode one’s own. (See Moghaddam, this volume for an exploration of these issues.)

Some group identities include explicit assumptions that other groups are not to be trusted and may be treated with hostility and disrespect. In some cases such prejudices are based on an uncompromising view of the centrality of one’s own group: the tendency to see one’s group as superior and more deserving than others. The conquest of Australia and the displacement of Indigenous Australians would not have been possible without an attitude of racial superiority. Claims made by many religions that only their own adherents will be saved, whereas all others will perish, have a similar character. My own upbringing was blighted by the divisive certainty that only Catholics were eligible for the Divine Kingdom. I worried a lot about my (few) Protestant friends.

Of at least as much concern to me as Australian Sheik Hilali’s now notorious remarks that women provoked rape because of the way they dressed, (he likened them to “uncovered meat”), was his less

commented-upon condemnation of those who are not of his faith as evil and deserving of eternal damnation. Another “us” and “them” construction, which is, at its core, an incitement to hatred: “Those who disbelieve amongst the people of the Book and the polytheists, where will they go? Surfers Paradise? Gold Coast? Where? To the fire of hell. And not part-time, they’ll be in it for eternity. What are these people? The most evil of God’s creation on the face of earth” (al-Hilali, 2006). Such dogmatic religiosity, which appears to be on the rise amongst Christians, Jews, and Muslims, leads to the intolerable assumption that “we are decent and admirable human beings, whereas you are evil and debauched.”

Following Sheik Hilali’s sermon, what we witnessed was a classic demonstration of the “ideology of antagonism”: each group seeing the other as an enemy and seeing itself as an enemy of the other. This is dangerous territory and it is now a global phenomenon; Muslims and Westerners are joined in a macabre dance of mutual loathing from which no good can come. Research published by the Pew Institute (Pew Research Center, 2006) uncovered some very crude stereotypes: Muslims saw Westerners as fanatical, violent, intolerant, and disrespectful toward women – as well as selfish, immoral, and greedy. In parallel, Westerners were only slightly less critical of Muslims, regarding them as fanatical, violent, intolerant, and disrespectful toward women, and each group blames the other for the strained relationship. The only reassuring feature of the survey was that when Muslims and Christians lived together, they were less critical and more generous in their appraisal of each other: “fear of the other” diminishes when we rub shoulders (e.g., Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006).

In the absence of first-hand experience, the sense of difference between “them” and “us” can be magnified to a point where “the other” becomes so alien as to be seen as not fully human. They stop existing as human beings with whom we share a great deal of common ground. As a consequence, our capacity to empathize with their suffering and take in the nature of the hurt inflicted on them becomes partially obliterated. How else could we deny the reality of the experience of the generations of Indigenous Australians stolen from their parents in the service of assimilation, refusing to acknowledge the shattering effects of dispossession? How else could so many be unperturbed by the Australian government’s policy of indefinitely incarcerating asylum seekers in remote detention centers, where depression and despair were the inevitable consequence?

It is only when people are directly confronted with clear evidence that others are more like us than not, when we see their faces and know their

names and stories, that this barrier is breached. As Orwell (1953) wrote in explaining his reluctance, while fighting in the Spanish Civil War, to shoot a man holding up his trousers as he ran, “I did not shoot partly because of that detail about the trousers. I had come here to shoot at ‘Fascists’; but a man who is holding up his trousers isn’t a ‘Fascist,’ he is visibly a fellow-creature, similar to yourself, and you don’t feel like shooting at him.”

There is no doubt that seeking to understand the genesis of terrorist acts and the motivation of terrorists requires careful and dispassionate analysis, using all the tools at our disposal. Such inquiry inevitably necessitates the temporary suspension of shared assumptions about our own group in order to begin to understand the worldview of those committing or inciting such acts. Despite some politicians’ insistence that terrorists’ motives are beyond comprehension and that to attempt to understand them, except by recourse to notions like “evil,” is to excuse their actions, there is little doubt that our future capacity to limit the growth of such extreme behavior, including by states, depends ultimately on our ability to understand, and therefore prevent it. As the staunch opponent of totalitarianism, Isaiah Berlin (1990), reminded us in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*,

If we are to hope to understand the often violent world in which we live (and unless we try to understand, we cannot expect to be able to act rationally in it or on it), we cannot confine our attention to the great impersonal forces, natural and man-made, which act upon us. The goals and motives that guide human action must be looked at in the light of all that we know and understand; their roots and growth, their essence and above all their validity must be critically examined with every intellectual resource that we have. (p. 2)

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16 Reducing terrorist risk: integrating jurisdictional and opportunity approaches

Joseph Clare and Frank Morgan

After September 11, 2001, some experts have argued that citizens of Western democracies are being subjected to new global forms of terrorism (Beck, 1997). The popular media have reinforced the view that we are living in a qualitatively different world (Mythen and Walklate, 2006). A passage from *The Australian* newspaper (September 11, 2006) captures this position:

“I knew ... the world was quite never [*sic*] going to be the same again. You couldn’t escape the realisation that this was something like nothing else,” [former Australian Prime Minister] John Howard recalled. He had met Mr. Bush the day before the attacks, and “George Bush and I didn’t talk about terrorism on September 10, 2001.” The Prime Minister said Australians had “adjusted in a very sensible way” since then. “They understand things have changed, they accept the need for new laws, they support those laws but they are getting on with their lives and doing the things we want to do while having in the back of our minds there may be one day a terrorist attack which (will) inflict mass casualties on this country,” Mr Howard said. (Shanahan, 2006)

These “new laws” that John Howard was discussing included the Australian Anti-Terrorism Act (No. 2) 2005, which gave markedly increased powers to Australian authorities in a range of areas including surveillance, detention, and individually focused control orders. The justification for these changes was based essentially on the argument that everything was different post-9/11, and that such modifications were seen as essential to ensure public safety, as terrorism could not be effectively countered within the existing legal and social framework. Similar legislation has been introduced in other parts of the world based on the same underlying assumptions.

This chapter seeks to explore current assumptions about terrorist risk and introduces a structure for classifying terrorism-prevention strategies. We sketch an inter-disciplinary framework based on the range of academic perspectives presented within this volume and argue that optimal outcomes for terrorist risk reduction can be achieved by

simultaneously (1) taking a society-wide psychological/sociological approach to lowering general support for terrorism, and (2) implementing ongoing situational strategies to reduce terrorist opportunity.

Questioning the necessity of the “other”: alternatives to exclusionary actuarial strategies

One approach to risk management is to apply a model of risk-based criminal justice: generally termed *actuarial justice* (e.g., Feeley and Simon, 1992, 1994). This model of justice: (1) sentences offenders according to future risk of offending rather than past deeds; (2) assesses risk prediction via statistical methods; (3) is attentive to the risks that may be posed by unsentenced prisoners prior to trial; and, (4) tends to focus on the incapacitative benefits of detention, rather than other aims such as rehabilitation, proportionality, or deterrence. Under this model the return of an offender to prison because parole conditions have been breached may be seen as a sign of correctional agency *success* rather than *failure*, because active monitoring has detected potentially risky behavior before it leads to fresh offending. Hence, the traditional correctional focus on reducing recidivism rates is transcended under the new penology (Feeley and Simon, 1992). As Harcourt (2007) convincingly demonstrates, actuarial approaches have become increasingly embedded in United States law and in law enforcement over at least the past thirty years through parole prediction, decisions about pre-trial detention, determination of sentence lengths, the classification of prisoners, tax auditing, profiling of drug couriers, and racial profiling in airport searches and in other domains. Consequently, a strong case can be made that many new legal powers introduced by the Australian Anti-Terrorism Act (No. 2) 2005 represent an extension of existing trends toward actuarial justice, rather than a radical new direction for the legal system.

Feeley and Simon (1994) argued that the application of actuarial strategies for crime reduction in the United States has reflected an attitude that sections of the population exist (and necessarily always will) for whom traditional techniques for deterrence will not work. Specifically, Feeley and Simon were referring to these sections of society as the *underclass*, which, due to economic developments and globalization, had become necessarily and permanently excluded from the economic norms of society. Feeley and Simon explored the possibility that this shifting economic framework had removed the prior employment opportunities for this section of society, making deterrence unfeasible, and reintegration and rehabilitation redundant. As O'Malley (2004, p. 328) explains, what follows from this position is “a strategy designed

quite specifically for this irredeemable, irremediable and dangerous *Other* population,” who “are not like us and cannot become like us,” and thus must be dealt with through “the specific strategies of categorically exclusionary risk.”

O’Malley (2002, 2004) argues that the economic exclusion of this underclass became popular in political and social discourse in conjunction with activity designed to dismantle the welfare state in the United States. At that time a strategy of social exclusion and incapacitation was chosen, rather than adopting a socially focused approach that would include marginalized sections of society through economic support and social justice. In addition to managing the socially disadvantaged, this exclusionary style of actuarial justice has been applied to various groups of criminals, such as persistent violent and sexual offenders. The fundamental issue here is the assumption of an inevitable difference between two groups, the *normal* and the *other*: with the conclusion being the need to exclude the evil, be it crime generally, violence, sexual assault, or, as is discussed below, terrorism.

Since 2001, the political climate in Australia has endorsed the exclusion of various sections of society, such as asylum seekers, Muslims, people of Middle-Eastern appearance, and, most recently, African refugees. Ostensibly, much of the justification for this exclusionary approach to “managing” sections of Australian society has been provided by fear of terrorism. However, adopting this stance is implicitly to assume that these members of our society cannot be deterred from terrorist action. The unspoken basis for the exclusion in this case is religious/political grounds as opposed to economic grounds, as with the underclass, previously.

O’Malley (2002, 2004) further argues that this actuarial, risk-based justice is simply one type of risk regime, driven by conservative, exclusionary, and punitive politics, and that alternative, inclusionary risk management regimes do exist. History shows that it is not necessary to adopt individual and small-group perspectives to effectively manage risk for crime: a useful example being contributory social insurance, which became a cornerstone of social security (O’Malley, 2004). Explanations of crime can be provided in terms of other social factors, such as opportunity for offending or current cultural norms. Indeed, O’Malley notes that a central assumption of situational crime prevention is that nobody is exempt from the temptation to commit crime. Therefore criminals are not distinctive types of person, and in an important way crime is *normal*. When applied to prevention, this insight favors an approach that seeks to control risky situations and vulnerable targets rather than categorically risky types of persons.

A fundamentally important point emerging from O'Malley's (2002, 2004) analysis is that for all crime, including terrorism, the logic of risk reduction does not inevitably lead to a focus on *outgroups*. On the contrary, risk can and should be managed in less exclusionary ways if effective prevention is to be achieved. The application of an exclusionary actuarial approach to managing terrorist risk has two faults. First, by identifying *at-risk* sections of society, it is implicitly assumed that there is homogeneous support for terrorist ideals within the excluded group, and that there is a large disparity of opinion between this group and the rest of society. This assumption falls foul to a well understood social-psychological phenomenon, by which outgroup members are perceived as having a much higher degree of similarity to one another than members of one's own group (e.g., see Devine, 1995; Levine and Moreland, 1995, and Pyszczynski *et al.*, this volume, for further discussion of these issues). In reality, however, there will be heterogeneity of attitudes toward terrorism within these currently excluded outgroups, just as the range of dissatisfaction with government activity (and the like) varies across society generally. Second, the exclusionary approach ignores the fact that terrorist activity is not the norm – and instead will only be attempted by the members of society who hold the most extreme points of view.

Moreover, as the assumption that certain sections of society necessarily pose an elevated risk has been shown to be unfounded for other types of crime, it stands to reason that this is also true for terrorism. Regardless of how a population is stratified, there will be within-group variance in support for terrorism, and active involvement in terrorism is the exception, not the norm, in all populations. Therefore, an alternative to current exclusionary practices should be sought that aims to shift the distribution of support for terrorism via long-term, sustained intervention. This suggestion is explored in the following section.

Approaches to society-wide risk reduction: an analogy with public health

We suggest that useful analogies and contrasts may be drawn between current actuarial practices of monitoring and exclusion on the one hand, and epidemiological models of prevention of disease and illness on the other. We believe that the analogy is useful because it draws attention to contrasting approaches to risk reduction at (1) the level of potential individual targets or potential individual offenders, and (2) the broad social or population level. We introduce the analogy with considerable care because medical models of treatment have received criticism when

applied to the social sciences previously (e.g., see Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Nevertheless, we believe there are lessons to be learned in the ways in which the analogy does and does not transfer to the case of crime and terrorism.

Arguably the best exponent of the public health model is the epidemiologist Geoffrey Rose (e.g., 1992; 2001), who outlines two strategies for disease reduction known as the *high-risk* and *population* approaches, respectively. The high-risk model of prevention focuses on individuals within a population and seeks, particularly via screening procedures, to identify those individuals who have high levels of risk with respect to disease outcomes. Thus, the general practitioner routinely checks for high blood pressures as indicative of future stroke risk, and checks cholesterol levels as predictors of heart attacks. The individuals thus identified represent a high-risk tail of a continuous distribution as depicted by the area under the curve to the right of the cut-off bar in [Figure 16.1a](#). The high-risk strategy of prevention requires the health clinician to work with these individuals to reduce the risks to their health, for example through exercise, diet, or drugs. If the strategy were entirely successful the resulting distribution would look like [Figure 16.1b](#) – a distribution with its high-risk tail removed.¹

In contrast, the population strategy accepts that the risk distribution of individuals reflects a property of the population as a whole. For example, Rose (2001) notes that the distribution of blood pressure in Kenyan nomads is considerably different from that in London civil servants. In both cases, the shape of the distribution is approximately normal, but the mean is considerably lower for the nomads than it is for the public servants. The determinants of the distribution depend little on the characteristics of individuals in each population (e.g., their genetic characteristics) but they do depend considerably on population-level differences in lifestyle. Both populations have an extreme distribution tail, but for the nomads even the high-risk individuals in the tail are at only moderate risk of adverse cardiovascular outcomes. The population strategy of prevention therefore attempts to reduce risks of adverse health outcomes for the whole population. Examples in public health include anti-smoking campaigns for the general public, universal wearing of seat-belts in motor vehicles, and the introduction of fluoride into public water supplies. An illustration of the operation of the population strategy is provided by [Figure 16.1c](#), with the population strategy resulting in a significant reduction to the mean risk for the population and a negligible proportion of the population remaining above the high-risk cut-off level.

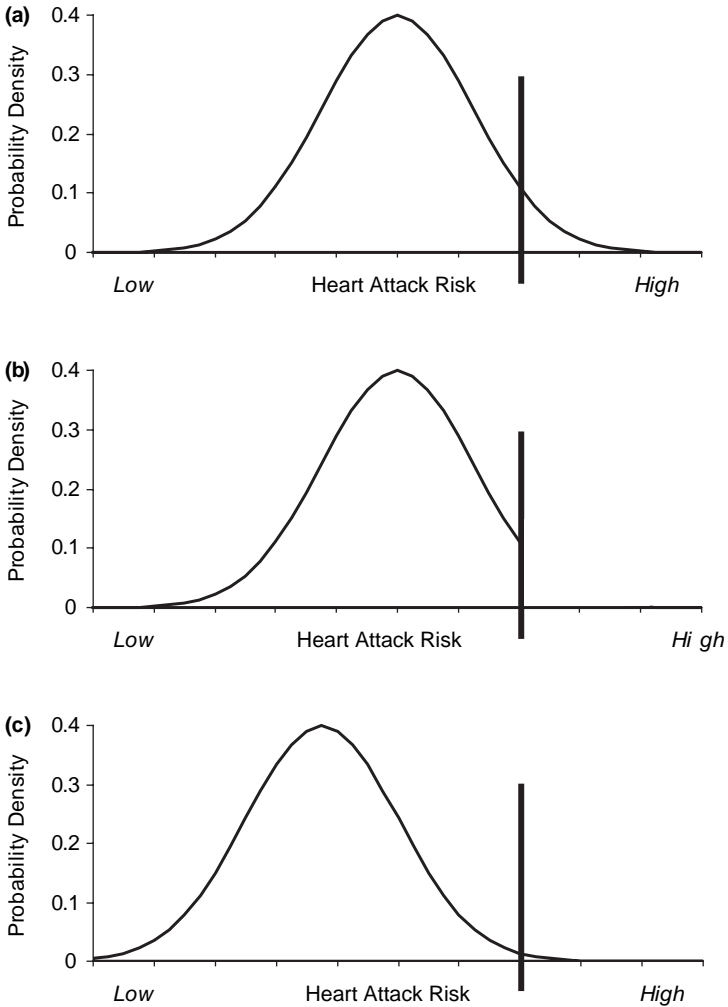


Figure 16.1 Rose’s representation of risk distributions for heart attack: (a) pre-high-risk interventions, (b) ideal post-high-risk intervention, truncating distribution of risk, and (c) ideal post-population targeted intervention, shifting the distribution of risk.

Extending the public health analogy to terrorist risk in society, the issue of interest is not why some individuals exhibit strong support for terrorist ideals, but why some societies have a higher mean risk of terrorism than others. In a similar way that risk for hypertension in individuals and groups can be reduced via both narrow and broad

preventive strategies, so too can the risk for terrorism be addressed by either broad or narrow interventions.

With respect to crime, most approaches to risk reduction have narrowly focused on the individual offender or suspect, rather than more broadly on victims and potential targets (e.g., see Fattah, 1989). While we accept that the policing of terrorism will inevitably involve the use of intelligence with respect to the planning of terrorist events and the use of legal strategies to incapacitate terrorist suspects (see McCauley's discussion of the value of a traditional policing approach to combating terrorism within this volume), we also consider the lack of general attention to targets or victims a major omission of terrorism research to date (an exception being Clarke and Newman, this volume). Rose was concerned with the risk of suffering disease, a focus that could be most closely compared with a risk of victimization within criminology or terrorism. We are suggesting that there is an equivalent distribution of risk of committing a terrorist act, and that both victimization and offending need to be considered. In the case of terrorism the word *population* seems less appropriate than it is with respect to health, so we adopt the term *jurisdictional* to capture the sense of prevention measures that mobilize politics, the law, education, and public information toward influencing citizens as a whole within any jurisdiction.

We contend that there will be heterogeneous support for terrorism (in the form of dissatisfaction with governments, etc.) across society as a whole. We also suggest that at any given time there is a certain section of society that holds such extreme support for terrorist ideals that they pose a high risk of committing terrorist acts (i.e., individuals at the top floor in Moghaddam's *staircase to terrorism*, this volume). Maintaining support for group-based exclusionary approaches to risk management leads governments to implement actuarial strategies that target those members of society that are considered to be high-risk, with a view to truncating this distribution of risk (much like the approach to those at highest risk of heart attack displayed in [Figure 16.1b](#)). However, as Rose (2001) demonstrated with disease, there is an alternative to this in the form of a jurisdictional approach that seeks to reduce the levels of risk across society as a whole (i.e., targeting individuals at the ground floor of Moghaddam's "staircase to terrorism"). If successful, the outcome of such an effort would be to have fewer members of the distribution with extreme support for terrorism, which would logically translate to an overall reduction in the likelihood of experiencing terrorist attacks.

The assumption here is not that individuals with extremely high support for terrorism will cease to exist, but that they will represent a markedly smaller proportion of the overall distribution of views. This

approach assumes that terrorism is both normal and inevitable, as a situational crime prevention approach assumes about all crime, and that no interventions can remove all terrorism, just as no medical intervention can remove all disease. Furthermore, it makes no exclusionary assumptions about which members of a population are most likely to hold strong support for terrorism, thus accounting for the possibility of examples such as Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, who typically may not have been considered to be a member of the excluded, high-risk group judged most likely to commit terrorist acts.

In the following section, we outline a range of jurisdictional interventions designed to effect this population shift. However, prior to doing so, it is important to explain that although population-based strategies for reducing disease risk have been demonstrated to be highly effective, there are still limitations to this approach. As Rose (2001, p. 432) outlines, such an approach offers very little short-term or immediate benefit to individuals, and from an evaluative perspective it can be difficult to gauge the impact of these types of interventions as “Grateful patients are few in preventive medicine, where success is marked by a non-event.” Likewise, seeking to lower the overall support for terrorism and addressing the underlying motivating factors for these attitudes requires a long-term strategy, and it is likely that the benefits of this implementation will remain uncertain for some time.

Operationalizing a jurisdictional approach to reducing terrorist risk

Two approaches are explored in this volume that could be combined to operationalize a jurisdictional approach to reducing general support for terrorism within societies: (1) aligning legitimate political parties with terrorist groups and fostering a functioning political environment that allows legitimate ways for voicing dissatisfaction, and (2) acknowledging the existence of underlying root causes that motivate and perpetuate terror. In combination, these approaches can operate to lower the likelihood of any individual beginning to climb the staircase to terrorism (as discussed by Moghaddam, this volume). These points are expanded briefly here.

Ensuring there is a functioning political system to address dissatisfaction

Louis (this volume) discusses the possibility that reducing the frequency of terrorist behavior requires a shift in the perceived utility of terrorism

relative to the alternatives to terror. Both Louis and Moghaddam (also this volume) discuss how the absence of functioning political and social systems acts to increase the perceived utility of terror: a situation that could be ameliorated through cultivation of an environment suitable for collective personal security and happiness. As Louis discusses, it is not the case that the individuals who end up committing terrorist acts are themselves disadvantaged: instead, terrorist acts can stem from an awareness of relative disadvantage. In discussing a case study of terrorist recruitment in India, Louis summarizes how terrorist activity was justified from the basis of expediency owing to the perceived corrupt nature of politicians and the incapacity to instigate social change. Therefore, anti-terror activities should target underlying belief structures that simultaneously assert (1) that alternatives to terror are ineffective, and (2) that terrorism can, and does, achieve long-term, sustainable social change.

Louis (this volume) offers some conclusions on how these belief structures can be targeted effectively. First, because treating all members of perceived high-risk groups as equivalent to terrorists increases the probability of high-risk group members identifying with terrorist groups and adopting terrorist norms, terrorist groups should be defined as narrowly as possible. Second, viable, functional alternatives to violence need to be developed to achieve political change. Third, terrorist groups should be separated rhetorically and socially (a point also argued by McCauley, this volume), and they should be engaged by non-terrorist partners who are led by non-violent leaders. As history has shown, aligning terrorist groups with moderate political parties that advocate their cause can attenuate, as opposed to exacerbate, terrorist-initiated violence (e.g., the IRA and Sinn Fein).

Acknowledging the existence of underlying causes that motivate and perpetuate terror.

In follow-up interviews with members of Mohammed Sidique Khan's home town in the north of England, John Tulloch (who also contributes to this volume) learned of the role the collective Ummah played in this individual's decision to orchestrate a suicide attack on the London Underground in July, 2005. The Ummah refers to a shared sense of community or nation that crosses borders, and encapsulates Muslim people from around the world. These individuals Tulloch spoke to were well-educated and they considered themselves to be British, but also could understand how Sidique Khan had reached the conclusion that he did: the shared frustration and disempowerment of Muslim

people in different parts of the world reached these individuals in their northern England community (Tulloch, 2006, July 6–7). However, as Lawrence (this volume) suggests, in the current political climate, the idea that past and present governmental policy contribute to motivation for terrorist activity is an uncomfortable one for many to digest, and to discuss “root causes” is asserted to be misleading, while “correction” or “mitigation” of terrorist threat are impossibilities (Australian Government, DFAT, 2004). In attempting to resolve the discrepancy caused by these two directly competing stances, Lawrence emphasizes that one does not have to agree with the actions of terrorists to acknowledge the reasons underlying their motivation.

A major assumption underlying the critique of exclusionary styles of risk management as unjust, and of the argument that no groups within society should be classified as beyond rehabilitation, is that *root causes* for support for terrorist ideals *can* be identified. In addition to the issues raised by Louis, already discussed, two additional causal factors underlying violence and terror are presented in this volume. First, Pyszczynski *et al.* use *Terror Management Theory* to explain how violence begets violence through existential fear. According to Pyszczynski *et al.*, actual and implied threats of humiliation and injustice cause a self-perpetuating cycle of violence that is underpinned by the competing needs of all parties to re-establish their individual and collective senses of value and the perceived accuracy of their worldview. This need is a powerful motivator for terrorists and counter-terrorists alike, and an unwillingness to acknowledge this process is destined to contribute to the propagation of violence and extremism. By extension, as Pyszczynski *et al.* explain, to accept that this pattern can contribute to ongoing violence brings us closer to developing constructive solutions to these problems. Emphasizing commonalities between various worldviews, in the form of core compassionate values, a sense of common humanity and the value of family, and the value of caring relationships, may well attenuate or reverse the trend by which existential fear motivates violence and fuels xenophobic fear.

The second process addressed in this volume that contributes to the root cause of terrorism is discussed by Bellamy and Saul in their respective chapters. Bellamy examines the role state-sanctioned torture plays in enhancing the motivation and support for terrorist acts and explains that, because of its necessary involvement of non-combatants, the practice of torture is both legally and morally wrong. That said, however, it remains the case that while no states will publicly defend the use of torture, it is still endorsed, utilized, and outsourced around the world today (including incidents perpetrated by

Coalition forces in Iraq, as discussed by Tiffen, this volume). Bellamy explores the position that torture and terrorism are often conterminous because to justify employing one facilitates the justification and validation of the other: a cycle that can only be broken through a universal and absolute application of the reaffirmation of non-combatant immunity.

This position is paralleled by Saul's discussion (this volume) that there is a large degree of equivalence between the logic underlying arguments in support of state-based torture and that justifying terrorist action to combat excessive uses of force by governments: to utilize one is to legitimize the other. The problem of torture is compounded by the legal sleight-of-hand that Saul (this volume) discusses regarding the advantageous manipulation of legal ambiguity and technicality that states incorporate to redefine torture-type acts as legal and acceptable. As Saul explains, this not only undermines the ideal of the rule of law, but also fails to convince those opponents of the state of the acceptability or legality of these actions. This reframing (which Saul terms *instrumentalist lawyering*) is also utilized to justify examples of terrorist action through the argument of non-innocence: that is, the suggestion that some non-combatants are not innocent legitimizes them as terrorist targets.

*The staircase metaphor: a broad model for
reducing support for terrorism*

Moghaddam (this volume) proposes a staircase metaphor to act as a conceptual model to outline how individuals who feel dissatisfied with their sense of social identity, the relative treatment of the group they identify with, and/or the impoverished nature of the material conditions they endure, can move from the ground floor of the staircase to terrorism up to the top floor, where a small number of individuals are ready to commit terrorist acts. Once this climb is commenced, at each level of progression, individuals are faced with fewer and fewer degrees of freedom that afford them the opportunity to retreat from terrorism. As Louis (this volume) also argues, a sense of inability to initiate change and a perceived failure of existing political and social structures can result in these individuals disengaging from mainstream moral norms, and embracing moral reasoning that legitimizes terrorism as a tool for achieving just ends.

As there are no necessarily fixed contextual or dispositional factors that cause individuals to climb the staircase to terrorism, the purpose of this metaphor is to demonstrate the gradual progression that

disaffected members of a general population can make to being terrorists. Furthermore, Moghaddam is seeking to emphasize that long-term risk minimization will only be accomplished by focusing attention on the ground floor with a view to reducing the likelihood of individuals starting to climb the staircase. As such, operationalizing a jurisdictional approach to reducing terrorist risk may go some way toward decreasing dissatisfaction at the ground-floor level, and by extension lowering the overall levels of support for terrorism across society by enabling and empowering the development of constructive collective identities.

In summary, the analysis presented in this section suggests that optimal, long-term strategies for terrorist risk reduction will have a jurisdictional focus. We have outlined a number of avenues that can be explored in attempting to achieve this goal, all of which fit well within a staircase metaphor explaining the stages of progression to becoming a terrorist. As outlined earlier, we consider jurisdictional attempts to shift the distributions of support for terrorism to be one component of an integrative approach to reducing terrorist risk. The next section of this chapter will explore the second major component of this inter-disciplinary framework, designed to be implemented in parallel: decreasing the opportunity for terrorists to act.

Decreasing immediate threat: focusing on terrorists or opportunity

Advocating for a long-term commitment to addressing the jurisdictional factors that motivate terrorism is not to argue that immediate implementation of counter-terrorism measures is unnecessary or inappropriate. Moghaddam (this volume) explicitly states that such measures form part of a comprehensive approach to addressing terrorism. Whereas Moghaddam referred to immediate approaches that target *individuals* and *networks*, Clarke and Newman (this volume) discuss the importance of *opportunity* in committing terrorist attacks. This distinction is a crucial one. Instead of attempting to truncate the distribution of risk through exclusionary actuarial approaches, this approach seeks to reduce the availability of suitable targets (thus controlling opportunity). Neither of these approaches attempts to address underlying motivation, and risk-reduction strategies resulting from these approaches naturally bifurcate into those concerned with the immediate threats arising from potential offenders, and those concerned with measures that minimize ongoing threats to high-risk targets. The following sections outline these divergent responses.

Targeting potential terrorist individuals and networks

Almost all major counter-terrorist initiatives currently in operation have a short-term focus and have been directed at individuals already on the highest floor of Moghaddam's metaphorical staircase. Despite the fact that the majority of successes against terrorism post-9/11 are attributable to traditional police work firmly embedded in rights-oriented criminal justice procedures (as discussed by McCauley, this volume), there has been a strong trend for individual-focused actions to involve police and security agencies operating with *new* legal powers of detention, interrogation, and surveillance, and an emphasis on the proscription of groups alleged to support terrorism. One example of such legislation in Australia is the ability of authorities to detain without trial non-suspects who may have information about terrorist activities. Despite being labeled "one of the most controversial pieces of legislation considered by the Parliament in recent times" (Australian Government, Parliamentary Joint Committee, 2002, Chapter 3), the assumption that potential high-risk offenders should be targeted in this way is taken for granted.²

We argue that strategies targeting potential terrorists present the greatest dangers to human rights and assert that amongst all risk-reduction strategies these are most likely to encourage the kind of terrorist responses they are designed to prevent. These excessively broad interpretations of terrorist activity and the proscription of certain groups tend to restrict access to non-violent, political options for pursuing legitimate causes, and thereby maximize the potential for driving individuals into violent non-political activity. As a result, despite its current populist prevalence, we argue that extremist legislation that places considerable restrictions on human rights makes the weakest contribution to the inter-disciplinary framework for reducing terrorist risk proposed here.

Targeting potential terrorist opportunities

In direct contrast to these approaches, Clarke and Newman provide an in-depth discussion of the application of situational prevention to terrorism (both within this volume and within their recent book, *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, 2006). The fundamental assumption of a situational approach to crime is that by limiting opportunity, crime can be reduced in a much more certain and expeditious manner than by attempting to address the psychological, social, and biological dispositions that motivate the offender. Concerning terrorism, opportunity can be broadly

defined to encompass the physical environment and the presence or absence of specific individuals. Three important factors to note about situational crime prevention approaches to crime minimization are: (1) they do not discriminate; (2) they do not necessarily produce a “fortress” society, or a Brave New World scenario in which human rights and freedoms are restricted under the guise of increased security (e.g., see Clarke, 1997, for a discussion of this point); and (3) they do not simply result in displacement: that is, terrorists will not simply select the *next-best* target to attack as a result of opportunity reduction (Clarke and Newman; this volume).

Clarke and Newman’s approach calls for careful and separate examination of different forms of crime and does not assume that offenders are pathological. Situational approaches are broadly focused with respect to potential offenders, while adopting a highly focused perspective with respect to opportunities and potential targets. Situational prevention can be applied to the reduction of terrorist opportunity by analyzing and altering opportunity structures to reduce the likelihood of terrorism being committed. There are four pillars to terrorist opportunity: targets, weapons, tools, and facilitating conditions. These opportunities vary as a function of physical, technological, political, and industrial context. Given this variation, Clarke and Newman suggest that meaningful deconstruction of the terrorist opportunity structure must: (1) separately analyze the different types of terrorism, (2) view terrorists as rational, and (3) focus on *how* (as opposed to *why*) terrorists intend to attack. The additional insight provided by this analysis of context enables the implementation of a combination of situational techniques designed to interfere with existing opportunity structures by increasing the effort, increasing the risk, reducing the rewards, removing the excuses, and reducing the provocations involved with terrorist action.

Application of Clarke and Newman’s recommendations for terrorist opportunity reduction would make completing a terrorist attack increasingly difficult. Therefore, it could be argued that attempts to exploit the fewer suitable opportunities would only be made by those members of society who held the most extreme desires to commit terrorist acts. If we consider the distribution of support for terrorism displayed in Figure 16.2, Figure 16.2a shows the distribution and the opportunity threshold prior to the implementation of situational prevention techniques. Following the analysis and changes designed to reduce terrorist opportunities it is reasonable to suppose that the amount of suitable opportunities will be reduced, subsequently pushing the threshold to the more extreme end of the scale, as shown in Figure 16.2b. The variation

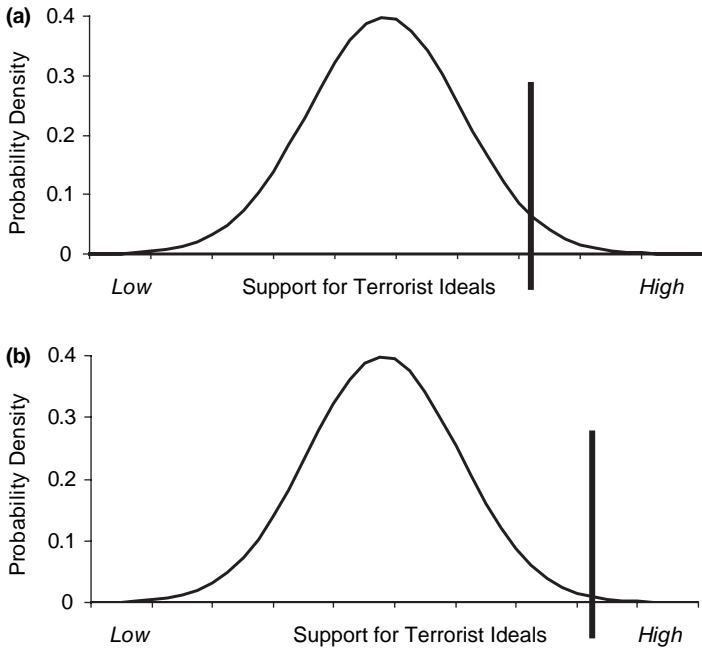


Figure 16.2 Increasing the difficulty of terrorist attack: (a) pre-immediate implementation opportunity reduction interventions, and (b) post-immediate implementation opportunity reduction interventions.

here from the heart attack risk displayed in [Figure 16.1](#), previously, concerns the movement of the threshold of risk to the more extreme end of the scale – a situation that can be achieved without any efforts at all being made to address the motivations for terrorist attacks.

Examples of the successful application of situational approaches to addressing terrorist opportunity include: the introduction of tamper-proof packaging for pharmaceutical products, baggage-screening systems at airports to prevent hijacking, and the physical redesign of United States embassy protections in the 1980s to reduce the potential for takeovers. As Bull and Craig (2006) acknowledge, it is not possible to protect all possible targets. However, the strength of situational prevention is that it is not necessary to protect *all* targets, but instead to focus on those opportunities that are particularly vulnerable or suitable. To this end, Clarke and Newman provide an initial set of guidelines through which vulnerability can be assessed and present this with relevant examples under the headings Exposed,

Table 16.1. *Classification of terrorist risk reduction strategies.*

Concern	Risk reduction strategy	
	Immediate	Jurisdictional
Offender	Exclusionary actuarial justice or traditional policing methods as discussed by McCauley.	Bellamy, Louis, Moghaddam, Pyszczynski <i>et al.</i> , Saul, Tiffen, and Tulloch.
Opportunity	Clarke and Newman	

Vital, Iconic, Legitimate, Destructible, Occupied, Near, and Easy (EVIL DONE).

Integrating jurisdictional and opportunity-focused approaches to reducing terrorist risk

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline a potential interdisciplinary framework for reducing terrorist risk, and to this end we have proposed a classification of anti-terrorism strategies that is illustrated in Table 16.1. As discussed previously, strategies concerned with immediate reduction of terrorist threats can target potential offenders (and their networks) or potential opportunities for terrorist action. With the exception of McCauley's discussion of the positive impact of traditional policing procedures to combat terrorism, offender-focused strategies have a tendency to be founded on an equivalent logic to other types of exclusionary actuarial justice strategies that have been demonstrated as unjustified and unhelpful in other areas of criminology. This contrasts directly with immediate strategies focused on opportunity, which are informed by a highly effective school of criminological thought that does reduce crime. This bifurcated concern largely disappears, however, for jurisdictional strategies to risk reduction, which seek to reduce motivation for potential offenders and by extension has benefits for potential targets and citizens as a whole.

Clarke and Newman (2006, and this volume) emphasize that situational prevention should never be the sole method to safeguard against terrorist attacks. They suggest a number of additional strategies that can operate in conjunction with opportunity-reduction techniques, including:

(1) winning the hearts and minds of those who might be encouraged to support terrorism by political, social and economic policies; (2) removing the support for terrorists provided by particular countries and regimes through diplomatic

means; (3) developing detailed plans for minimizing harm when attacks are made; (4) winning the confidence of home populations so that society is less easily frightened and disrupted by terrorist attacks; (5) strengthening laws and improving legal and judicial procedures to bring terrorists to justice; and (6) where compatible with a hearts and minds campaign and with international law, “taking out” individual terrorists and terrorist leaders. (Clarke and Newman, 2006, p. 3)

This quote emphasizes the connection between jurisdictional strategies designed to reduce support for terrorist ideology and immediate, ongoing measures designed to limit terrorist opportunity. The key to attaining the greatest benefits comes from the integration of these two approaches to reducing risk. As O’Malley (1992) suggests, focusing on opportunity can be directed at risk management, but longer-term changes must involve attempts to change population risk, which necessarily involves influencing ideology. We argue that some of the situational prevention techniques applied to terrorism are consistent with, and contribute to, jurisdictional strategies that target ideology to reduce population-wide support for terrorism. For example, when seeking to manipulate the facilitating conditions of terrorist opportunity (the fourth pillar), Clarke and Newman (2006, Table 15.2, pp. 192–193) propose to: (1) promote ties between local police and immigrant communities, (2) use publicity to isolate terrorist groups from the community and to portray the hypocrisy and cruelty of terrorist acts, (3) work closely with migrant communities and host communities when abroad, (4) avoid provocative announcements, and (5) refrain from maltreating prisoners and have clear rules for interrogation that preserve the rights of non-combatants and prohibit the use of torture in line with international laws and conventions.

The compatibility of jurisdictional and opportunity-focused risk-reduction strategies, motivated by different objectives and designed to be implemented over diverse time frames, is not surprising given the assumptions of Cusson (1986, as summarized by Clarke, 1997, p. 12), that as criminological research progresses the perceived divides between theoretical approaches may “turn out to be mainly of historical interest and ... a synthesis is inevitable and desirable.” We suggest that an integrative approach to reducing terrorist risk, informed by a range of academic disciplines, is both sensible and most likely to succeed. As Smith (2000, pp. 171–172) explains, rather than preferencing either jurisdictional or immediate strategies to the exclusion of the other, “it is necessary to study how persons, behavior, and the social and physical environment interact ... [as] persons develop and change in response to their experience in particular situations, so that changes in situations can produce

more persistent changes in people.” Furthermore, the combination of the academic perspectives we have outlined here leads us to suggest that immediate risk reduction strategies that focus on offenders (and their networks) are likely to be the most dangerous with respect to violation of human rights and enhancing support for terrorism, particularly when they expand the boundaries beyond a rights-focused criminal justice framework (see McCauley, this volume). As such, in order to limit the impact of these unwanted consequences, we would implore governments and policy-makers to acknowledge the combined opinions outlined in this book when defining approaches to future risk reduction.

Conclusion

With respect to reducing terrorist risk, it is worth emphasizing several important points. First, successful implementation of an integrative approach requires a shift in policy and practice, and ongoing, bipartisan support from governments. Second, this integrative approach to risk reduction does not assume that terrorist risk will ever be eradicated as the so-called “War on Terror” does, but it assumes instead that terrorist risk can be effectively managed and reduced. Third, this integrative framework can operate effectively within existing criminal justice systems to counter terrorism in the same manner as all other forms of criminal violence. Fourth, this integrative framework simultaneously targets different time frames of intervention, with jurisdictional strategies likely to take long periods of time for successful implementation, while opportunity-based approaches are able to produce more immediate benefits.

This chapter outlined an inter-disciplinary, integrative framework for reducing terrorist risk. The argument presented here is an exploratory foray that attempts to combine some, but not all, issues surrounding this complex topic. We emphasized the inter-connectedness of a range of strategies to reducing the risk of terrorism discussed within this volume. To maximize risk reduction, it will be important: (1) to encourage a movement away from the idea that there are necessarily high-risk groups in society that justify exclusionary actuarial interventions; (2) to consider that the overall degree of support for terrorism that currently exists within society can be influenced, through a range of psychological, sociological, and legal interventions; and (3) simultaneously to support calls for the immediate implementation of situational prevention techniques in a broad and ongoing manner to reduce terrorist opportunity.

NOTES

- 1 In practice this strategy will never remove the tail entirely, but will reduce the percentage of the population above the cut-off point.
- 2 Some legislation, such as the Aviation Legislation Amendment (2007 Measures No. 1) Bill 2007, has been introduced to deal with potentially high-risk targets, such as airports. However, legislative action has been principally focused on the identification and incapacitation of potential terrorists.

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