

TERRORISM BY DISSIDENTS

This chapter discusses the characteristics of terrorism from below—**dissident terrorism**—committed by nonstate movements, groups, and so-called lone-wolf extremists against governments, ethno-nationalist groups, religious groups, and other perceived enemies. Dissident terrorism is a distinct terrorist typology (among other typologies) that encompasses subnational political violence, and it is therefore important for readers to engage in a focused examination of the nuances of dissident political violence. Readers will probe the different types of dissident terrorism and develop an understanding of the qualities that differentiate each dissident terrorist environment.

It is important to understand that political violence by nonstate actors has long been viewed as a necessary evil by those sympathetic to their cause. Revolutionaries, terrorists, and assassins have historically justified their deeds as indispensable tactics to defend a higher cause. The methods can range in intensity from large-scale wars of national liberation—such as the many anticolonial wars of the 20th century—to individual assassins who strike down enemies of their cause. In the United States, for example, when Confederate sympathizer **John Wilkes Booth** assassinated President Abraham Lincoln during a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., he leaped from Lincoln's balcony to the stage after shouting "Sic semper tyrannis!" ("Thus always to tyrants!").

The U.S. Department of State publishes an annual report that identifies and describes an official list of foreign terrorist organizations. Table 6.1 reproduces a typical list of these organizations.

Why do people take up arms against governments and social systems? What weapons are available to the weak when they decide to confront the strong? Do the ends of antistate dissident rebels justify their chosen means? State repression and exploitation are frequently cited as grievances to explain why nonstate actors resort to political violence. Such grievances are often ignored by state officials, who refuse to act until they are forced to do so.

An example illustrating this grievance-related concept is the rebellion in Mexico waged by rebels calling themselves the **Zapatista National Liberation Front** (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional). The Zapatistas were leftists who championed the cause of Indians native to Mexico's Chiapas state, where starvation and disease were endemic

Learning Objectives

This chapter will enable readers to do the following:

1. Understand and explain the dissident terrorism paradigm.
2. Interpret some incidents of dissident-initiated political violence as antistate terrorism.
3. Interpret some incidents of dissident-initiated political violence as communal terrorism.
4. Discuss central operational attributes of the New Terrorism.

Table 6.1 Foreign Terrorist Organizations, 2016

Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designations are an important element of our counterterrorism efforts. Designations of foreign terrorist groups expose and isolate these organizations, deny them access to the U.S. financial system, and create significant criminal and immigration consequences for their members and supporters. Moreover, designations can assist or complement the law enforcement actions of other U.S. agencies and other governments.

In 2016, the Department of State designated the following terrorist groups as FTOs: ISIS-Khorasan, ISIL-Libya, and al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent. The Department of State also amended the FTO designations of al-Nusrah Front on November 10 to include the alias Jabhat Fath al-Sham and of Lashkar e-Tayyiba on December 28 to include the alias Al-Muhammadiyah Students.

Legal Criteria for Designation under Section 219 of the INA as amended:

1. It must be a *foreign organization*.
2. The organization must *engage in terrorist activity*, as defined in section 212 (a)(3)(B) of the INA (8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(3) (B)), or *terrorism*, as defined in section 140(d)(2) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 (22 U.S.C. § 2656f(d)(2)), or *retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism*.
3. The organization's terrorist activity or terrorism must threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security (national defense, foreign relations, or the economic interests) of the United States.

U.S. Government Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations

Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)	Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT)
Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)	Jemaah Islamiya (JI)
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)	Jundallah Kahane Chai
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)	Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)
Ansar al-Dine (AAD)	Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)
Ansar al-Islam (AAI)	Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT)
Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi (AAS-B)	Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)
Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah (AAS-D)	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia (AAS-T)	Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)
Army of Islam (AOI)	Al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)
Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)	National Liberation Army (ELN)
Aum Shinrikyo (AUM)	Al-Nusrah Front (ANF)
Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)	Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)
Boko Haram (BH)	Palestine Liberation Front–Abu Abbas Faction (PLF)
Communist Party of Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA)	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC)
Gama'a al-Islamiyya (IG)	Al-Qa'ida (AQ)
HAMAS	Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
Haqqani Network (HQN)	Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)
Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)	Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)	Real IRA (RIRA)
Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HUM)	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)
Hizballah	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)
Indian Mujahideen (IM)	Revolutionary Struggle (RS)
Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)	Al-Shabaab (AS)
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)	Shining Path (SL)
Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
Islamic State's Khorasan Province (ISIS-K)	Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)
ISIL-Libya	Jaysh Rijal Al-Tariq Al-Naqshabandi (JRTN)
ISIL Sinai Province (ISIL-SP)	
Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis-Sudan (Ansaru)	

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2017).

and the government had long supported large landowners in exploiting Indian peasants. In January 1994, the Zapatistas began attacking Mexican army troops and police stations in Chiapas. During this initial campaign, approximately 145 people were killed before the rebels retreated into the jungle to continue the conflict. A low-intensity guerrilla insurgency continued, with the government gradually agreeing to address the grievances of all of Mexico's 10 million Indians. By 2001, the Zapatistas had evolved into an aboveground political movement lobbying for the civil rights of Mexico's Indians and peasants. A key reason for the Zapatistas' success was their ability to adopt a Robin Hood image for their movement and thereby garner support from many Mexicans.

The discussion in this chapter will review the following:

- Perspectives on Violent Dissent
- The Practice of Dissident Terrorism
- Terrorist Targets and Weapons
- Dissidents and the New Terrorism



Alex Bowie/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

▶ The IRA at work. A photograph of members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army as they conduct training exercises and a demonstration.

PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENT DISSENT

Policy experts and academics have designed a number of models that define dissident terrorism. For example, one model places dissident terrorism into a larger framework of “three generalized categories of political action”:¹

- revolutionary terrorism—the threat or use of political violence aimed at effecting complete revolutionary change
- subrevolutionary terrorism—the threat or use of political violence aimed at effecting various changes in a particular political system (but not aimed at abolishing it)
- establishment terrorism—the threat or use of political violence by an established political system against internal or external opposition²

Other models develop specific types of dissident terrorism, such as single-issue, separatist, and social revolutionary.³ Likewise, insurgent terrorism has been defined as violence “directed by private groups against public authorities [that] aims at bringing about radical political change.”⁴

To simplify our analysis, the discussion here presents a dissident terrorist model adapted from one by Peter Sederberg.⁵ It defines and differentiates broad categories of dissident terrorism useful for critically analyzing terrorist motives and behaviors. Although each category—**revolutionary**, **nihilist**, and **nationalist dissident terrorism**—is specifically defined for our discussion, one should keep in mind that the same terms are applied by experts in many different contexts.

Revolutionary Dissident Terrorism: A Clear World Vision

The goals of revolutionary dissidents are to destroy an existing order through armed conflict and to build a relatively well-designed new society. This vision can be the result of nationalist aspirations, religious principles, ideological dogma, or some other rationale.



► Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin, prominent members of West Germany's Red Army Faction, also known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang. Both committed suicide in prison.

Revolutionaries view the existing order as regressive, corrupt, and oppressive; their envisioned new order will be progressive, honest, and just. Revolutionary dissident terrorists are not necessarily trying to create a separate national identity; they are activists seeking to build a new society on the rubble of an existing one. Many Marxist revolutionaries, for example, have a general vision of a Communist Party–led egalitarian classless society with centralized economic planning. Many Islamic revolutionaries also have a grand vision—that of a spiritually pure culture justly based on the application of *shari'a*, or God's law. An example of the latter is the Hezbollah (**Party of God**) organization in Lebanon, which is actively agitating for its own vision of a spiritually pure Lebanon; to that end, Hezbollah has its own political movement, armed militia, and social services. Various factions of the Muslim Brotherhood also advocate a rather clear program.

As a practical matter, revolutionary dissidents are often outnumbered and outgunned by the established order. Their only hope for victory is to wage an unconventional war to destabilize the central authority. Terrorism thus becomes a pragmatic tactical option to disrupt government administration and symbolically demonstrates the weakness of the existing regime.

Good case studies for terrorism as a legitimate tactic are found in the Marxist revolutionary movements in Latin America from the 1950s to the 1980s. For example, during the Cuban Revolution, which began in 1956, rebels operating in rural areas waged classic hit-and-run guerrilla warfare against the Batista government's security forces. Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara led these rural units. In urban areas, however, the rebels commonly carried out terrorist attacks because the rural model was impractical in urban-focused conflict. Urban terrorist tactics successfully disrupted government administration and thereby undermined public confidence in Batista's ability to govern. Marxist revolutionaries throughout Latin America used this urban-focused model repeatedly, usually unsuccessfully, so that urban terrorism became a widespread phenomenon in many countries during this period. Carlos Marighella, the Brazilian revolutionary and author of the *Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerrilla*, detailed the logic of urban terrorism in the Latin American context.⁶

Nihilist Dissident Terrorism: Revolution for the Sake of Revolution

Nihilism was a 19th-century Russian philosophical movement of young dissenters who believed that only scientific truth could end ignorance. Religion, nationalism, and traditional values (especially family values) were, they believed, at the root of ignorance. Nihilists had no vision for a future society, asserting only that the existing society was intolerable. Nihilism was, at its core, a completely negative and critical philosophy. Modern nihilist dissidents exhibit a similar disdain for the existing social order but, despite a vague goal of justice, offer no clear alternative for the aftermath of its destruction. The goal of modern nihilists is to destroy the existing order through armed conflict with little forethought to the configuration of the new society; victory is defined simply as the destruction of the old society.

Nihilist dissidents have never been able to lead broad-based revolutionary uprisings among the people or to mount sustained guerrilla campaigns against conventional security forces. Thus, the only armed alternative among hard-core nihilists has been to resort to terrorism. Examples of modern nihilist dissident terrorists include the leftist **Red Brigade** in Italy and the **Weather Underground Organization (WUO)** in the United States, each of which had only a vaguely Marxist model for postrevolutionary society. Another example is the Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who had no postrevolution vision. Arguably, Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda

network fits the model because although Al Qaeda has a generalized goal of defending Islam and fomenting a pan-Islamic revival, it offers no specific model for how the postrevolution world will be shaped, and its long-term goals are not clearly defined.

Nationalist Dissident Terrorism: The Aspirations of a People

Nationalist dissidents champion the national aspirations of groups of people distinguished by their cultural, religious, ethnic, or racial heritage. The championed people generally live in an environment in which their interests are subordinate to the interests of another group or a national regime. The goal of nationalist dissidents is to mobilize a particular demographic group against another group or government. They are motivated by the desire for some degree of national autonomy, such as democratic political integration, regional self-governance, or national independence.

Nationalist sentiment has been commonplace—particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries—and can arise in many social and political environments. For example, the championed group may be a minority living among a majority group, such as the Basques of northern Spain. It may also be a majority national group living in a region politically dominated by the government of another ethnic group, such as Tibetans and the Chinese. The group may be a minority with a separate cultural and linguistic identity, such as the French Canadians in Quebec. Some national groups have a distinct cultural, ethnic, and regional identity that exists within the borders of several countries, such as the Kurds, whose Kurdistan is divided across Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria.

Many nationalist dissidents have used terrorism to achieve their goals. This has often been a practical option because their opponents have overwhelming military and political superiority and would quickly prove victorious during a guerrilla or conventional conflict. Examples include Palestinian dissident organizations and the Provisional Irish Republican Army (Provos). In other contexts, the armed opposition must operate in urban areas, which always favors the dominant group or regime because of the impossibility of maneuver, the concentration of security forces, and sometimes the lack of mainstream support from the championed group. Examples include Islamist-inspired terrorists in Western countries and the **Basque Fatherland and Liberty (Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna, or ETA)** organization in the Basque region of northern Spain. These are logical operational policies because for nationalists, “the basic strategy is to raise the costs to the enemy occupiers until they withdraw.”⁷

Chapter Perspective 6.1 explores a troubling practice found among many revolutionary, nihilist, and nationalist paramilitaries and rebel groups. This is the phenomenon of recruiting and training so-called child soldiers.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE 6.1

Child Soldiers

One disturbing—and common—trend among paramilitaries and other armed groups has been the conscription of children as fighters. **Child soldiers** are a serious humanitarian issue, with “children as young as six . . . being used in combat by government and rebel forces in civil wars throughout the world.”^a

“Thousands of children are serving as soldiers in armed conflicts around the world. These boys and girls, some as young as 8-years-old, serve in government forces and armed opposition groups. They may participate in suicide missions, and act as spies, messengers, or lookouts. Paramilitaries and rebel movements have

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assigned child soldiers to heavy combat on the front lines. Some children are drugged prior to entering into combat and have been known to commit atrocities under orders. Girls may be forced into sexual slavery. Many are abducted or recruited by force, while others join out of desperation, believing that armed groups offer their best chance for survival.”^b Here are some examples:

- In India, “Maoist ‘Naxalite’ rebels in Chhattisgarh use children as soldiers. The Maoists induct children as young as six into children’s associations and use children as young as 12 in armed squads that receive weapons training and may participate in armed encounters with government security forces.”^c
- In Sierra Leone during the 1990s and early 2000s, the Revolutionary United Front abducted thousands of children and organized those under the age of 15 into Small Boy Units and Small Girl Units.
- In Democratic Republic of Congo, “children serve in the government armed forces as well as various rebel forces. At the height of DRC’s war, the UN estimated that more than 30,000 boys and girls were fighting with various parties to the conflict.”^d
- In Central African Republic, “hundreds of children, some as young as 12, serve with various rebel groups.”^e
- In Colombia, “thousands of children—both boys and girls—serve[d] in Colombia’s irregular armed groups. The majority serve[d] in the FARC guerrillas, with smaller numbers

in the UC-ELN guerrillas. Children [were] also recruited into successor groups to paramilitaries.”^f

- In Afghanistan “insurgent groups, including the Taliban and other armed groups, use children as fighters, including in suicide attacks. The UN also reports recruitment of children by the Afghan National Police.”^g
- In Nigeria, Boko Haram kidnapped hundreds of boys and girls to use as fighters, “wives” for their fighters, and suicide bombers. The use of children, especially girls, “has become one of the defining, and alarming features of the conflict.”^h

Notes

- a. Amnesty International, *Killings by Government* (London, UK: Amnesty International, 1983), Quoted in Peter Iadicola and Anson Shupe, *Violence, Inequality, and Human Freedom* (Dix Hills, NY: General Hall, 1998), 255.
- b. Human Rights Watch, “Child Soldiers” (2014), <http://www.hrw.org/node/105699>.
- c. Human Rights Watch, “Child Soldiers Worldwide” (2014), <http://www.hrw.org/node/105699>.
- d. Ibid.
- e. Ibid.
- f. Ibid.
- g. Ibid.
- h. United Nations Children’s Fund, “Beyond Chibok: Over 1.3 Million Children Uprooted by Boko Haram Violence” (New York, NY: UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa, April 2016).

Revolutionaries, Nihilists, and Nationalists: Freedom Fighters?

Table 6.2 gives examples of how terrorists perceive themselves. Regardless of their ideology, methodology, or goals, there is unanimity in positive self-perception: Terrorists perceive themselves as members of an enlightened fighting elite. The names terrorist organizations adopt reflect this self-perception, but, as indicated in Table 6.2, organizational names often have nothing to do with the reality of the group’s composition.

Table 6.2 Self-Perception or Self-Deception? Dissident Terrorists as Freedom Fighters

Dissident terrorists adopt organizational names that characterize themselves as righteous defenders of a group or principle. These monikers are always positive representations that project the “higher purpose” of the group. The following categories and examples illustrate the self-perception of armed dissident groups.

Liberation Fighters	Military Units	Defensive Movements	Retribution Organizations	Distinctive Alliances
Basque Fatherland and Liberty	Alex Boncayo Brigade	Islamic Resistance Movement	Revolutionary Justice Organization	Aum Shinrikyo (“Supreme Truth”)
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam	Irish Republican Army	Revolutionary People’s Struggle	International Justice Group	Middle Core Faction
Palestine Islamic Jihad	Japanese Red Army	National Council of Resistance	Palestinian Revenge Organization	Al Qaeda (“The Base”)
Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party	New People’s Army	Jewish Defense League	Black September	Orange Volunteers

THE PRACTICE OF DISSIDENT TERRORISM

Concept: Asymmetrical Warfare

The concept of **asymmetrical warfare** refers to the use of unconventional, unexpected, and nearly unpredictable methods of political violence. Terrorists intentionally strike at unanticipated targets and apply unique and idiosyncratic tactics. This way, they can seize the initiative and redefine the international security environment and overcome the traditional protections and deterrent policies that societies and the international community use.

The Appeal of Asymmetrical Conflict

Dissident terrorists are quantitatively and qualitatively weaker than conventional security forces. In today’s intensive security environment, they simply cannot prevail or last indefinitely in an urban-based guerrilla campaign. Because of this, state-level rivals must resort to unconventional and subversive methods to confront U.S., Western, and other governmental interests. At the same time, they must also deliver maximum propaganda and symbolic blows against the seemingly overwhelming power of enemy states or societies. New Terrorism is thus characterized by a new doctrine that allows for the use of weapons of mass destruction, indiscriminate attacks, maximum casualties, technology-based terrorism, and other exotic and extreme methods.

In adopting asymmetrical methods, inherently weaker extremists essentially wage total war by engulfing an entire enemy interest in their conflict. They are trying to break the enemy’s will to resist by whatever means are at their disposal.

Netwar: A New Organizational Theory

The New Terrorism incorporates maximum flexibility into its organizational and communications design. Semiautonomous cells either are prepositioned around the globe as sleepers (such as the 2004 Madrid terrorists) or travel to locations where an attack is to occur (such as the September 11 hijackers in the United States). They communicate using new cyber and

digital technologies. An important concept in the new terrorist environment is the notion of **netwar**, which refers to dispersed groups of extremists who organize themselves and communicate using modern networking technologies. In this way they are able to coordinate their efforts in an “internetted” fashion without direct command and control. The new internetted movements have made a strategic decision to establish virtual linkages via the Internet and other technologies.

Resources for Funding and Financing Dissident Terrorism

Terrorists and their supporters have amassed sizable amounts of money from a variety of sources, including transnational crime, personal fortunes, extortion, and private charities and foundations.

Large portions of these assets were in the recent past deposited in anonymous bank accounts, thus allowing funds to be electronically transferred between banking institutions and other accounts internationally in mere minutes. During the months following the September 11, 2001, attacks, government agencies from a number of countries made a concerted effort to identify and trace the terrorists’ bank accounts. Law enforcement and security agencies also began to closely scrutinize the activities of private charities and foundations in an attempt to determine whether they were “front groups” secretly funneling money to supporters of terrorist organizations. Since September 11, 2001, government agencies such as the U.S. Treasury Department have covertly tracked global bank data to monitor transfers of money and other banking activities.

Terrorists adapted quickly to the new focus on financial counterterrorist measures. Implementing a process that apparently began during the global crackdown after September 11, 2001, terrorists and their supporters began to transfer their assets out of international financial institutions, where they were vulnerable to seizure. Operatives removed assets from financial institutions and began investing in valuable commodities such as gold, diamonds, and other precious metals and gems.⁸ From the perspective of counterterrorist officials, this tactic can potentially cripple the global effort to electronically monitor, track, and disrupt terrorist finances. From the perspective of terrorists and their supporters, the chief encumbrance of this adaptation is the fact that they could become literally burdened with transporting heavy suitcases filled with precious commodities. However, this is an acceptable encumbrance because it is very difficult for counterterrorist agents to identify and interdict couriers or to locate and raid repositories.

Another adaptation used by terrorists is through an ancient practice known as **hawala**. Hawala is a transnational system of brokers who know and trust each other. Persons wishing to transfer money approach hawala brokers and, for a fee, ask the broker to transfer money to another person. Using the name and location of the recipient, the initial broker will contact a broker in the recipient’s country. The recipient of the money contacts the local hawala broker, who delivers the money. To prevent fraud, the sending broker gives the recipient broker a code number (such as the string of numbers on a \$20 bill). The recipient (who receives the code from the sender) must give the broker this code number in order to pick up his or her funds. No records are kept of the transaction, thus ensuring anonymity. This is a useful system because it relies on an honor system to succeed, and money is never physically moved.

Antistate Dissident Terrorism

A good deal of terrorism from below is by definition antistate. It is directed against existing governments and political institutions and attempts to destabilize the existing order as a precondition to a new society. As discussed earlier, antistate dissidents can have a clear vision of the new society (revolutionary dissidents), a vague vision of the new society (nihilist dissidents), national aspirations (nationalist dissidents), or a profit motive (criminal dissidents). Regardless of which model fits a particular movement, the common goal is to defeat the state and its institutions.

Intensities of Conflict: Antistate Terrorist Environments

With few exceptions, **antistate terrorism** is directed against specific governments or interests and occurs either within the borders of a particular country or where those interests are found in other countries. Thus, antistate terrorist environments are defined by the idiosyncrasies of each country, each dissident movement, and each terrorist organization. The histories of every nation give rise to specific antistate environments that are unique to their societies. The following examples from North America and Europe illustrate this point.

In the United States, leftist terrorism predominated during the late 1960s through the late 1970s, at the height of the anti-Vietnam War and people's rights movements. Acts of political violence—such as bank robberies, bombings, and property destruction—took place when some black, white, and Puerto Rican radicals engaged in armed protest. This changed in the 1980s, when the leftist remnants either gave up the fight or were arrested. Around this time, right-wing terrorism began to predominate when some racial supremacists, religious extremists, and anti-government members of the Patriot movement adopted strategies of violence.⁹

In the United Kingdom, the terrorist environment was shaped by the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland, which was characterized by both antistate and communal violence from 1969 until the peace settlement in 1999. The nationalist Provisional IRA¹⁰ was responsible for most acts of antistate political violence directed against British administration in Northern Ireland. During the same period, Protestant Loyalist terrorism tended to meet the criteria for communal terrorism rather than antistate terrorism because Loyalist paramilitaries targeted pro-IRA Catholics rather than symbols of governmental authority. The IRA responded in kind so that more than 3,500 people had been killed on both sides by the 1999 cease-fire.¹¹

In West Germany, from the late 1960s through the mid-1980s, the leftist **Red Army Faction (RAF)** engaged in a large number of bank robberies, bombings, assassinations, and other acts of antistate violence aimed at destabilizing the West German government. The RAF also targeted the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presence in West Germany, primarily focusing on U.S. military personnel. After the fall of the Communist Eastern Bloc in 1989 and the reunification of Germany, RAF-style leftist terrorism waned. Around this time, rightist neo-Nazi violence increased—much of it directed against non-German *Gastarbeiters*, or guest workers. The perpetrators of this violence were often young **skinheads** and other neofascist youths. Many of these rightist attacks occurred in the former East Germany.

In Italy, the leftist Red Brigade was responsible for thousands of terrorist incidents from the early 1970s through the mid-1980s. Originating in the student-based activism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Red Brigade members were young urban terrorists whose campaign is best described as a nihilist attempt to undermine capitalism and democracy in Italy. By the late 1980s, Italian police had eliminated Red Brigade cells and imprisoned their hard-core members. During this period, Italian neofascists also engaged in terrorist violence, eventually outlasting the leftist campaign, and remained active into the 1990s.

In Spain, antistate terrorism has generally been nationalistic or leftist. Without question, the most prominent was the nationalist and vaguely Marxist ETA. ETA was founded in 1959 to promote Basque independence. The Basques are a culturally and linguistically distinct people who live in northern Spain and southwestern France. Although ETA adopted terrorism as a tactic in response to the Franco government's violent repression of Basque nationalism, "of the more than 600 deaths attributable to ETA between 1968 and 1991, 93 per cent occurred after [General Francisco] Franco's death."¹² ETA was rife with factional divisions—at least six factions and subfactions were formed—but their terrorist campaign continued, despite the considerable political rights the Spanish government granted them and the loss of popular support among the Basque people. A right-wing terrorist group, Spanish National Action (Acción Nacional Española), was formed as a reaction to ETA terrorism.

Sometimes antistate dissident movements, because of their history and political environment, take on elements of both antistate and communal conflict. In Israel, for example, the Palestinian nationalist movement is made up of numerous organizations and movements that

have mostly operated under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), founded by **Yasir Arafat** and others in 1964. From its inception, the PLO has sought to establish an independent Palestinian state. Because it claims the same territory as the state of Israel, the PLO and its affiliates have attacked targets inside Israel and abroad. Until recently, Palestinian armed resistance was characterized by a series of dramatic hit-and-run raids, hijackings, bombings, rocket attacks, and other acts of violence. Israeli and Jewish civilians were often targeted.

Since September 28, 2000, Palestinian resistance has taken on the characteristics of a broad-based uprising—and communal terrorism. On that date, Israeli general Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Temple Mount is sacred to both Muslims and Jews. After Sharon's visit, which Palestinians perceived as a deliberate provocation, enraged Palestinians began a second round of massive resistance, or *intifada*. The new dissident environment included violent demonstrations, street fighting, and suicide bombings. This violence was characterized by attacks against civilian targets. Thus, the Palestinian nationalist movement arguably entered a phase distinguished by the acceptance of communal dissident terrorism as a strategy.

The Logic of Narco-Terrorism

The term *narco-terrorism* was first used in 1983 by Peruvian president Belaunde Terry when Peruvian drug traffickers waged war against antidrug security forces. Although its original meaning referred to a theorized semimonolithic Marxist (hence, Soviet) control of the trade, narco-terrorism continues to be an important concept in the post-Cold War world. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration differentiates between narco-terrorism and drug-related violence, pointing out that the latter occurs visibly and every day in major urban areas around the world, whereas narco-terrorism is less visible and not as pervasive.

The logic of narco-terrorism is uncomplicated: Because of the frequent difficulty in obtaining direct state sponsorship, some indigenous terrorist and revolutionary groups have turned to drug trafficking and arms trading to raise money for their movements. Among traditional criminal enterprises, drug traffickers have been especially prone to engage in criminal dissident terrorism because their product must be grown, refined, packaged, and transported from production regions within the borders of sovereign nations. Thus, among transnational criminals, drug traffickers in particular must necessarily establish a political environment that is conducive to their illegal enterprise.

Communal Terrorism

Dissident terrorism is not always directed against a government or national symbols. It is also often directed against entire population groups—people who are perceived to be ethnonationalist, racial, religious, or ideological enemies. Because the scope of defined enemies is so broad, it is not unusual for this type of terrorism to be characterized by extreme repression and violence on a massive scale. Often deeply rooted in long cultural memories of conflict, **communal terrorism** sometimes descends into genocidal behavior because “while the rival combatants often lack the weapons of destruction available to the major powers, they often disregard any recognized rules of warfare, killing and maiming civilians through indiscriminate car bombings, grenade attacks, and mass shootings.”¹³

Communal terrorism is essentially group-against-group terrorism, in which subpopulations of society wage internecine (i.e., mutually destructive) violence. As with other types of violence, it occurs in varying degrees of intensity and in many contexts. The scale of violence frequently surprises the world, for these conflicts “often do not command the headlines that rivet world attention on international wars and guerrilla insurgencies, but they frequently prove more vicious and intractable.”¹⁴

There are many sources of communal violence, and it is useful to review a few broad categories and illustrative cases. These categories—ethno-nationalist, religious, and ideological—are explored in the following discussion.

Ethno-nationalist Communal Terrorism

Ethno-nationalist communal terrorism involves conflict between populations that have distinct histories, customs, ethnic traits, religious traditions, or other cultural idiosyncrasies. Numerous adjectives have been used to describe this type of dissident terrorism, including “separatist, irredentist, . . . nationalist, tribal, racial, indigenous, or minority.”¹⁵ It occurs when one group asserts itself against another, many times, to defend its cultural identity. This rationale is not uncommon and has been used in Bosnia, the Caucasus, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and elsewhere. In these conflicts, all sides believed themselves vulnerable and use this perception to rationalize their violence.

The scale of ethno-nationalist communal violence can vary considerably from region to region, depending on many factors—such as unresolved historical animosities, levels of regional development, and recurrent nationalist aspirations. It can be waged across national borders (as in the Congo-Rwanda-Burundi region of East Africa), inside national borders (as in Afghanistan), within ethnically polarized provinces (as in the Nagorno-Karabakh territory of Azerbaijan), at the tribal level (as in Liberia), and even at the subtribal clan level (as in Somalia).

Religious Communal Terrorism

Sectarian violence refers to conflict between religious groups and is sometimes one element of discord in a broader conflict between ethno-nationalist groups. Many of the world’s ethnic populations define their cultural identity partly through their religious beliefs so that violence committed by and against them has both ethnic and religious qualities. This link is common in regions where ethnic groups with dissimilar religious beliefs have long histories of conflict, conquest, and resistance. In Sri Lanka, for example, the civil war between the Hindu Tamils and the Buddhist Sinhalese was exceptionally violent, with massacres and indiscriminate killings a common practice. The war ended with the defeat of the Tamil Tigers in 2009.

The following examples of **religious communal terrorism** further illustrate the ethno-nationalist quality of some religious conflicts:

Yugoslavia. Some intra-ethnic internecine conflict occurs because of combined nationalist aspirations and regional religious beliefs. The breakup of Yugoslavia led to internecine fighting, the worst of which occurred in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995. During fighting between Orthodox Christian Serbs, Muslim Bosnians, and Roman Catholic Croats, ethnic cleansing—the forcible removal of rival groups from claimed territory—was practiced by all sides. Significantly, all three religious groups are ethnic Slavs.

Israel. Religion is used in Israel by both Jewish and Muslim militants to justify communal violence. This has been encouraged by members of radical organizations such as the late Rabbi Meir Kahane’s **Kach (Kahane Chai)** (meaning “thus”) movement, which has advocated the expulsion of all Arabs from biblical Jewish territories. Settlers generally rationalize their attacks as reprisals for Palestinian attacks and sometimes cite Jewish religious traditions as a basis for their actions.

Intractable religious sentiment exists on both sides of the conflict in Israel and Palestine, then, with Islamic extremists waging a holy war to expel Jews and Jewish settler extremists seeking to reclaim biblical lands and expel Arabs.

Northern Ireland. Communal dissident terrorism between Catholic nationalists (Republicans) and Protestant unionists (Loyalists) became a regular occurrence in Northern Ireland



▶ A soldier of the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army poses with his machine gun. The LRA engaged in one of Africa's longest-running conflicts.

1956, generally between progovernment Muslim groups and antigovernment Christian and animist groups. The war has been fought by conventional troops, guerrilla forces, undisciplined militias, and vigilantes. In addition, the Sudanese government began arming and encouraging Arabized militants in the Darfur region to attack black Muslims. Tens of thousands died in this conflict, which approached genocide in scale.

Lebanon. In Lebanon, bloody religious communal fighting killed more than 125,000 people during the 16-year Lebanese civil war that began in 1975. Militias were formed along religious affiliations so that Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, Shi'a Muslims, and Druze all contended violently for political power. Palestinian fighters, Syrian troops, and Iranian revolutionaries were also part of this environment, which led to the breakdown of central government authority.

Ideological Communal Terrorism

Ideological communal terrorism in the post–World War II era reflected the global rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The capitalist democratic West competed with the authoritarian Communist East for influence in the postcolonial developing world and in countries ravaged by invading armies during the war. A common pattern was for civil wars to break out after European colonial powers or Axis armies¹⁹ were driven out of a country. These civil wars were fought by indigenous armed factions drawn from among the formerly occupied population. In China, Yugoslavia, Malaysia, and elsewhere, Communist insurgents vied with traditional monarchists, nationalists, and democrats for power. Civilian casualties were high in all of these conflicts.

Examples of ideological communal conflict have occurred in the following countries and regions:²⁰

Greece. The five-year civil war in Greece from 1944 to 1949 was a complicated and brutal affair that in the end took at least 50,000 to 65,000 lives. It involved fighting among conventional troops, guerrilla groups, gendarmerie (armed police), and armed bands. The Greek Communist Party, which had led a resistance group during World War II, fought against the Greek government in several phases after liberation in 1944. The Greek Communist Party eventually lost, in the only attempted Communist takeover in post–World War II Europe to be defeated by force of arms.

Angola. Former anti-Portuguese allies in Angola fought a long conflict after independence in 1975. The ruling Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) is a Marxist-Leninist movement whose ideology promotes a multicultural and nationalistic (rather than ethnic or regional) agenda. Its principal adversary is the National Union for the Total Independence

of Angola (UNITA), mostly made up of the Ovimbundu tribal group. Because the MPLA leadership identified with the international ideological left, the Soviet Union and Cuba supported the MPLA, while the United States and South Africa supported UNITA. This is a rare example of conflict between a multicultural ideological movement and a regional ethnic movement.

Indonesia. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was implicated in an October 1965 abortive coup attempt. The army rounded up PKI members and sympathizers, and many Indonesians took to the streets to purge the Communist presence. During a wave of anti-Communist communal violence, much of it done by gangs supported by the government, roughly 500,000 Communists, suspected Communists, and political opponents of the government were killed.

Ideology was used repeatedly in the 20th century to bind together nations or distinctive groups. It has become, in many conflicts, a means to discipline and motivate members of a movement. When applied to rationalize behavior in communal conflicts, the effect can be devastatingly brutal. Antistate and communal terrorist environments are very dynamic over time, and never static. Table 6.3 reports the top five perpetrator groups with the most attacks worldwide in 2015 and 2016.

Defeat Is Unthinkable: The Terrorists' Faith in Victory

Why do small groups of individuals violently confront seemingly invincible enemies? Why do they engage powerful foes by force of arms when their envisioned goal is often illogical or unattainable? For antistate dissidents, their armed struggle is never in vain. They believe not only that their cause is likely to end in victory but that victory is in fact inevitable. To outside observers, terrorists are almost certainly fighting a losing battle yet persist in their war.

Although antistate dissident terrorists avoid direct confrontation out of a pragmatic acceptance of their comparative weakness, they nevertheless believe in the ultimate victory of their cause. They have a utopian vision that not only justifies their means but also guarantees their idealized ends. Violent confrontation in the present—often horrific in scope—is acceptable

Table 6.3 Five Perpetrator Groups With the Most Attacks Worldwide, 2015 and 2016

	Total Attacks		Total Deaths*		Total Injured*		Total Kidnapped/ Hostages	
	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015
Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)**	1,133	969	9,114	6,178	7,671	6,608	8,379	4,805
Taliban	848	1,104	3,615	4,535	3,572	4,758	1,498	975
Maoists/Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist)	336	347	174	177	141	156	171	707
Al-Shabaab	332	226	740	836	921	561	375	559
Houthi Extremists	267	292	374	978	568	1,704	137	387

Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016, Annex of Statistical Information* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2017).

* Includes perpetrators.

** Excludes attacks attributed to branches of ISIS or ISIS-inspired individuals.

because of the promised good at the end of the struggle. For example, religious antistate dissidents believe that God will ensure them final victory.

Nonreligious antistate dissidents also hold an enduring faith in final victory. Some have adopted a strategy similar to the urban terrorist (or urban guerrilla) model that Carlos Marighella developed. He maintained that rebels should organize themselves in small cells in major urban areas. He argued that terrorism, when correctly applied against the government, will create sympathy among the population, which in turn forces the government to become more repressive, thus creating an environment conducive to a mass uprising.²¹ This model has failed repeatedly because the people tend not to rise up, and repressive states usually crush the opposition. Nonetheless, it exemplifies the faith antistate dissidents have in their victory scenarios—no matter how far-fetched those scenarios may be.

Chapter Perspective 6.2 summarizes the coalitional features of the Palestinian movement. Attention should be given to the PLO and its role as an umbrella for numerous ideological factions.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE 6.2

The Palestinian Movement^a

Some antistate dissident environments are longstanding and have generated many contending factions. A good example of this phenomenon is the Palestinian movement. Palestinian activism against the state of Israel has as its ultimate goal the creation of an independent Palestinian state. The antistate strategies of most of these groups were replaced by a broad-based communal dissident environment (the *intifada*), combined with maintaining Palestinian governing authority in Gaza and the West Bank. The following organizations have been prominent in the Palestinian nationalist movement.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

Formed in 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization is not a religious movement but rather a secular nationalist umbrella organization comprising numerous factions. Its central and largest group is Al Fatah, founded by PLO chairman Yasir Arafat in October 1959. The PLO is the main governing body for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the West Bank. **Force 17** is an elite unit that was originally formed in the 1970s as a personal security unit for Yasir Arafat. It has since been implicated in paramilitary and terrorist attacks. The **Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigades** is a “martyrdom” society of fighters drawn from Al Fatah and other factions; it includes suicide bombers. Traditionally a secular nationalistic movement, the PLO has received significant challenges from HAMAS for the mantle of champion of the Palestinian people.

Islamic Resistance Movement (Harakat al-Muqawama Al-Islamiya, or HAMAS, meaning “zeal”)

HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement) is an Islamic fundamentalist movement founded in 1987, with roots in the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. HAMAS is a comprehensive movement rather than simply a terrorist group, providing social services to Palestinians while at the same time committing repeated acts of violence against Israeli interests. Its armed groups operate as semiautonomous cells and are known as the **Izzedine al-Qassam Brigade** (named for a famous *jihadi* in the 1920s and 1930s). HAMAS has always been at the forefront of the communal dissident *intifada*. In February 2006, HAMAS assumed control of the Palestinian parliament, and in June 2007, the movement seized military control of Gaza from the PLO after fierce fighting. After several years of negotiations, in 2011, HAMAS and Al Fatah reached an accord in Cairo seeking gradual rapprochement and operational cooperation. However, fundamentalist splinter factions such as the Al Qaeda-inspired Jund Ansar Allah (Soldiers of the Companions of God) group formed to challenge HAMAS as being too moderate. A second round of reconciliation talks between HAMAS and Al Fatah resulted in an April 2014 accord. During this period, tensions escalated markedly between Israel and HAMAS, as HAMAS fired hundreds of rockets into Israeli territory, eventually resulting in an Israeli military suppression

campaign in July 2014. Fighting ended in August 2014 after thousands of casualties. HAMAS has several thousand members, mostly in Gaza, and continues to engage in terrorist violence against Israel.

Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

The Palestine Islamic Jihad began not as a single organization but a loose affiliation of factions. It is an Islamic fundamentalist revolutionary movement that seeks to promote jihad, or holy war, to form a sectarian Palestinian state. The PIJ operates primarily from Gaza and is responsible for numerous bombings, rocket attacks, assassinations, and suicide operations. With approximately 1,000 followers, the group actively recruits and trains new members.

Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)

Led by Sabri al-Banna, the Abu Nidal Organization is named for al-Banna's nom de guerre. The ANO split from the PLO in 1974 and is an international terrorist organization, having launched attacks in 20 countries at the cost of 900 people killed or wounded. Most of these attacks occurred during the 1980s, and none have been directed against the West since that time. The ANO at one time boasted several hundred members and a militia in Lebanon, but in recent years its strength is unknown. It has operated under other names, including Fatah Revolutionary Council, Arab Revolutionary Council, and Black September. The ANO has operated from bases in Libya, Lebanon, and Sudan.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

The **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine** was founded in 1967 by George Habash. It is a Marxist-Leninist organization that advocates a multinational Arab revolution. The PFLP was most active during the 1960s and 1970s, and is responsible for dramatic, and lethal, international terrorist attacks. Its hijacking campaign in 1969 and 1970, its collaboration with Western European terrorists, and its mentorship of Carlos the Jackal arguably established the model for modern international terrorism. George Habash died in January 2008. The PFLP continued its terrorist attacks against Israel during the 2000s, engaging in suicide bombings, attacks against security forces, mortar and rocket attacks, and lethal assaults on Israeli civilians.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP-GC)

Ahmed Jibril formed the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command** in 1968 when he split from the PFLP because he considered the PFLP to be too involved in politics and not sufficiently committed to the armed struggle against Israel. The group carried out dozens of attacks internationally during the 1970s and 1980s, but since that time its attacks have occurred with less frequency. The group allied itself with Lebanon's Hezbollah and is responsible for rocket and bombing operations against Israel. The PFLP-GC has several hundred members and receives support from Syria and Iran.

Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)

The **Palestine Liberation Front** split from the PFLP-GC in the mid-1970s and further split into pro-PLO, pro-Syrian, and pro-Libyan factions. The pro-PLO faction was led by **Abu Abbas**, who committed a number of attacks against Israel. The group was very active during the 1980s and 1990s, committing high-profile attacks such as the 1985 seajacking of the cruise ship *Achille Lauro*. The PLF remained dormant for years after the capture and death of Abu Abbas during Operation Iraqi Freedom, but the group has carried out a few attacks since 2008. It is unknown how many followers the PLF has; estimates range from about 50 to 500 members.

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)

The **Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine** split from the PFLP in 1969 and further split into two factions in 1991. It is a Marxist-Leninist organization that believes in ultimate victory through mass revolution. The DFLP engaged in terrorist attacks against Israeli targets primarily during the 1970s and 1980s, although it has participated in operations since that time. The group was active during the second intifada during the early 2000s. With several hundred members, it has committed primarily small bombings and assaults against Israel, including border raids.

Note

- a. Most of these data were found in *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2015* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2016).

TERRORIST TARGETS AND WEAPONS

Terrorists select their targets with the expectation that any moral ambiguities of the deed will be outweighed by the target's propaganda value. Terrorists must calculate that they can manipulate the incident into a positive propaganda context. In many campaigns, the objective has been to disrupt society to the point where the routines of life cannot be managed and the government cannot maintain order. To accomplish this, some terrorist movements have incrementally adapted their methods to new targets.

The following sampling of typical targets indicates that terrorists and extremists must rely on a process of redefining who constitutes an enemy group, thereby turning them into a legitimate target.

The Symbolism of Targets

In light of our previous discussions about terrorist groups, environments, and incidents, one conclusion should now be readily apparent: Terrorists select their targets because of their symbolic and propaganda value. High-profile, sentimental, or otherwise significant targets are chosen with the expectation that the terrorists' constituency will be moved and that the victims' audience will in some way suffer. On occasion, terrorists attempt to demonstrate the weakness of an enemy and terrorize those who trust in that enemy. The following targets are often selected for their anticipated high return in propaganda value.

Embassies and Diplomatic Personnel

The symbolism of embassy attacks and operations against diplomats can be profound. Embassies represent the sovereignty and national interests of nations. Diplomatic personnel are universally recognized as official representatives of their home countries, and attacks on embassy buildings or embassy personnel are conceptually the same as direct attacks on the nations they represent. Assaults on embassies also guarantee a large audience.

International Symbols

Many nations deploy military representatives to other countries. They also encourage international investment by private corporations, which consequently set up offices and other facilities. These interests are understandable targets for terrorists because they can be manipulated to depict exploitation, imperialism, or other representations of repression. Thus, terrorists and extremists redefine military facilities, corporate offices, military personnel, and company employees as enemy interests and legitimate targets.

Symbolic Buildings and Sites

Buildings and sentimental sites often represent the prestige and power of a nation or the identity of a people and can evoke strong psychological and emotional reactions from people who revere them. Terrorists and extremists select these cultural symbols because they know that the target audience will be affected. Interestingly, the target audience can be affected even without violence—their perception of these sites as having been desecrated can involve nothing more than a show of strength at a site.

Symbolic People

Terrorists frequently assault individuals because of the symbolic value of their status—security personnel, political leaders, journalists, and business executives are typical targets. Kidnappings and physical violence are common. In hostage situations, videos and photographs are sometimes released for propaganda value.

Passenger Carriers

From the terrorists' perspective, passenger carriers are logical targets. If the carrier is big, such as an airliner, it provides a large number of potential victims or hostages who are confined inside a mobile prison. International passenger carriers readily lend themselves to immediate international media and political attention. Chapter Perspective 6.3 applies the foregoing discussion to several symbolic attacks against American interests.

Weapons Old and New

Twenty-first-century weaponry can be classified along a sliding scale of technological sophistication and threat potential. This scale includes a high, medium, and low range, summarized as follows:²²

High range. The New Terrorism is defined in part by the threatened acquisition of **chemical agents**, **biological agents**, or **nuclear weapons**. This threat includes the development of **radiological agents** that spread highly toxic radioactive materials by detonating conventional explosives. The first case of widespread use of a biological agent by terrorists occurred when **anthrax** was deliberately sent through the mail in the United States in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

Medium range. Terrorists currently have extensive access to military-style weaponry. These include automatic weapons, rocket launchers, and military-grade explosives of many varieties. Sympathetic state sponsorship and the international arms black market facilitate procurement of a virtually unlimited array of conventional small arms and munitions. These arms have been the weapons of choice for terrorists in innumerable incidents.

Low range. Often forgotten in the discussions about the threat from medium- and high-range weaponry are the powerful homemade weapons that can be manufactured from commercial-grade components. For example, ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO) bombs can be easily manufactured from readily available materials. Iraqi insurgents became quite adept at deploying **improvised explosive devices (IEDs)**, commonly referred to as "**roadside bombs**," against U.S.-led occupation troops.

Firearms

Small arms and other handheld weapons have been, and continue to be, the most common types of weapon that terrorists use. These are light and heavy infantry weapons and include pistols, rifles, submachine guns, assault rifles, machine guns, **rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs)**, mortars, and precision-guided munitions. Typical firearms include the following:

Submachine guns. Originally developed for military use, **submachine guns** are now used primarily by police and paramilitary services. Although new models have been designed, such as the famous Israeli Uzi and the American Ingram, World War II-era models are still on the market and have been used by terrorists.

Assault rifles. Usually capable of both automatic (repeating) and semiautomatic (single-shot) fire, **assault rifles** are military-grade weapons that are used extensively by terrorists and other irregular forces. The **AK-47**, invented by **Mikhail Kalashnikov** for the Soviet army, is the most successful assault rifle in terms of production numbers and widespread adoption by standing armies, guerrillas, and terrorists. The American-made **M-16** has likewise been produced in large numbers and adopted by a range of conventional and irregular forces.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE 6.3

The Symbolism of Targets: Terrorist Attacks Against the United States

Many targets are selected because they symbolize the interests of a perceived enemy. This selection process requires that these interests be redefined by extremists as representations of the forces against whom they are waging war. This redefinition process, if properly communicated to the terrorists' target audience and constituency, can be used effectively as propaganda on behalf of the cause.

The following attacks were launched against American interests.

Embassies and Diplomatic Missions

- June 1987: A car bombing and mortar attack were launched against the U.S. embassy in Rome, most likely by the Japanese Red Army.
- February 1996: A rocket attack was launched on the American embassy compound in Greece.
- August 1998: The U.S. embassies were bombed in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. More than 200 people were killed.
- September 2012: Islamist insurgents attacked a U.S. diplomatic compound and an annex in Benghazi, Libya. The U.S. ambassador and a foreign service officer were killed at the compound. Two Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contractors were killed at the annex.

International Symbols

- April 1988: A USO club in Naples, Italy, was bombed, most likely by the Japanese Red Army. Five people were killed.
- November 1995: Seven people were killed when anti-Saudi dissidents bombed an American military training facility in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- November 2015: Four people, including two American trainers, were shot and killed by a Jordanian police captain at a police training facility near Amman, Jordan.

Symbolic Buildings and Events

- January 1993: Two were killed and three injured when a Pakistani terrorist fired at employees outside the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

- February 1993: The World Trade Center in New York City was bombed, killing six and injuring more than 1,000.
- September 2001: Attacks in the United States against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon killed approximately 3,000 people.
- January 2011: A viable antipersonnel pipe bomb was found in Spokane, Washington, along the planned route of a memorial march commemorating the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Symbolic People

- May 2001: The Filipino Islamic revolutionary movement **Abu Sayyaf** took three American citizens hostage. One of them was beheaded by members of the group in June 2001.
- January 2002: An American journalist working for the *Wall Street Journal* was kidnapped in Pakistan by Islamic extremists. His murder was later videotaped by the group.
- August and September 2014: ISIS broadcast the beheadings of two captive American journalists.

Passenger Carrier Attacks

- August 1982: A bomb exploded aboard Pan Am Flight 830 over Hawaii. The Palestinian group 15 May committed the attack. The plane was able to land.
- April 1986: A bomb exploded aboard TWA Flight 840. Four were killed and nine injured, including a mother and her infant daughter who fell to their deaths when they were sucked out of the plane. The plane landed safely.
- December 2001: An explosive device malfunctioned aboard American Airlines Flight 63 as it flew from Paris to Miami. Plastic explosives had been embedded in the shoe of passenger Richard Reid.
- December 2009: An explosive device malfunctioned aboard Northwest Airlines Flight 253 as it approached Detroit, Michigan. Plastic explosives had been embedded in the underwear of passenger Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

Rocket-propelled grenades. Light self-propelled munitions are common features of modern infantry units. The **RPG-7** has been used extensively by dissident forces throughout the world, particularly in Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. Manufactured in large quantities by the Soviets, Chinese, and other Communist nations, it is an uncomplicated and powerful weapon that is useful against armor and fixed emplacements such as bunkers or buildings.

Precision-guided munitions. Less commonly found among terrorists but extremely effective when used, **precision-guided munitions (PGMs)** are weapons that can be guided to their targets by using infrared or other tracking technologies. The American-made **Stinger** is a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile that uses an infrared targeting system. It was delivered to the Afghan mujahideen during their anti-Soviet jihad and used very effectively against Soviet helicopters and other aircraft. The Soviet-made **SA-7**, also known as the **Grail**, is also an infrared-targeted surface-to-air missile. Both the Stinger and the Grail pose a significant threat to commercial airliners and other aircraft.

Common Explosives

Terrorists regularly use explosives to attack symbolic targets. Along with firearms, explosives are staples of the terrorist arsenal. The vast majority of terrorist bombs are self-constructed improvised weapons rather than premanufactured military-grade bombs. The one significant exception to this rule is the heavy use of military-grade **mines**. These are buried in the soil or rigged to be detonated as booby traps. Some improvised bombs are constructed from commercially available explosives such as **dynamite** and **TNT**, whereas others are manufactured from military-grade compounds. Examples of compounds found in terrorist bombs include the following:

Plastic explosives. **Plastic explosives** are putty-like explosive compounds that can be easily molded. The central component of most plastic explosives is a compound known as **RDX**. Nations that manufacture plastic explosives often use chemical markers to tag each batch manufactured. The explosives can thus be traced back to their source.

Semtex is a potent plastic explosive of Czech origin. During the Cold War, Semtex appeared on the international market, and Libya obtained a large supply. It is popular among terrorists.

Invented in the United States, **Composite-4 (C-4)** is a high-grade and powerful plastic explosive. It is more expensive and more difficult to obtain than Semtex.

Ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO). These explosives are manufactured from common ammonium nitrate fertilizer that has been soaked in fuel oil. Using ammonium nitrate as a base for the bomb, additional compounds and explosives can be added to intensify the explosion. These devices require hundreds of pounds of ammonium nitrate, so are generally constructed as car or truck bombs.

Triggers

Regardless of the type of explosive that is used, some bomb makers construct sophisticated triggering devices and are able to shape explosive charges to control the direction of the blast. Examples of triggering devices include the following:

Timed twitches. Time bombs are constructed from acid-activated or electronically activated triggers. They are rigged to detonate after a period of time.

Fuses. A very old and low-technology method to detonate bombs is to light a fuse that detonates the explosive. It can be timed by varying the length of the fuse. Shoe bomber Richard Reid was overpowered after a flight attendant smelled burning matches as he tried to light a fuse in his shoe.

Pressure triggers. Using **pressure triggers**, weapons such as mines are detonated when physical pressure is applied to a trigger. Car bombers in Iraq apparently attached broom handles or other poles to the front of their vehicles as plungers and then rammed their target with the plunger. A variation on physical pressure triggers is trip-wire booby traps. More sophisticated pressure triggers react to atmospheric (barometric) pressure, such as changes in pressure when an airliner ascends or descends.

Electronic triggers. Remotely controlled bombs are commonly employed by terrorists. **Electronic triggers** are activated by a remote electronic or radio signal.

High-technology triggers. Some sophisticated devices may use triggers that are activated by motion, heat, or sunlight.

Types of Bombs

Gasoline bombs. The most easily manufactured (and common) explosive weapon dissidents use is nothing more than a gasoline-filled bottle with a flaming rag for its trigger. A **gasoline bomb** is thrown at targets after the rag is stuffed into the mouth of the bottle and ignited. Tar, Styrofoam, or other ingredients can be added to create a gelling effect for the bomb, which causes the combustible ingredient to stick to surfaces. These weapons are commonly called **Molotov cocktails**, named for **Vyacheslav Molotov**, the Soviet Union's foreign minister during World War II. The name was coined during the 1939–1940 Winter War by Finnish soldiers, who used the weapon effectively against Soviet troops.

Pipe bombs. These devices are easily constructed from common pipes and filled with explosives (usually gunpowder) and then capped on both ends. Nuts, bolts, screws, nails, and other shrapnel are usually taped or otherwise attached, to be released as projectiles on detonation. Terrorists have used many hundreds of **pipe bombs**.

Vehicular bombs. Ground vehicles that have been wired with explosives are a frequent weapon in the terrorist arsenal. **Vehicular bombs** can include car bombs and truck bombs; they are mobile, covert in the sense that they are not readily identifiable, capable of transporting large amounts of explosives, and rather easily constructed. They have been used on scores of occasions throughout the world.

Barometric bombs. These sophisticated devices use triggers that are activated by changes in atmospheric pressure. An altitude meter can be rigged to become a triggering device when a specific change in pressure is detected. Thus, an airliner can be blown up in midair as the cabin pressure changes.

Improvised rockets. Examples exist of the deployment of self-designed rockets by terrorist groups. These are basic designs that are fired without precision at intended targets, but some designs have been significantly upgraded in sophistication. The most famous and frequently used improvised rocket is the **Qassam**, deployed by HAMAS and Palestine Islamic Jihad against Israel.

Case: Weapons of Mass Destruction

Within the context of threats from high-range weapons, it is important to understand the basic differences between four types of weapons: biological agents, chemical agents, radiological agents, and nuclear weapons.

Biological agents. These weapons are organisms or other contagious substances that are manufactured in order to spread disease or cause death. Once biological components are obtained, the problem of converting them into weapons can be difficult. However, experts generally agree that the most likely biological agents terrorists might use would be the following:

- **Anthrax.** A disease that afflicts livestock and humans, anthrax can exist as spores or suspended in aerosols. Humans contract anthrax through cuts in the skin (cutaneous anthrax), through the respiratory system (inhalation anthrax), or by eating contaminated meat. Obtaining lethal quantities of anthrax is difficult but not impossible.
- **Smallpox.** Eradicated in nature, **smallpox** is a virus that is very difficult to obtain because samples exist solely in laboratories, apparently only in the United States and Russia. Its symptoms appear after about 12 days of incubation and include flu-like symptoms and a skin condition that eventually leads to pus-filled lesions. It is highly contagious and can be deadly if it progresses to a hemorrhagic (bleeding) stage known as the black pox.
- **Botulinum toxin (botulism).** Also known as **botulism**, **botulinum toxin** is a rather common form of food poisoning. It is a bacterium rather than a virus or fungus and can be deadly if inhaled or ingested even in small quantities.
- **Bubonic plague.** A bacterium that leads to the disease known as the Black Death in medieval Europe, **bubonic plague** is highly infectious, often fatal, and spread by bacteria-infected fleas that infect hosts when bitten.

Chemical agents. As weapons, these are manufactured chemicals or similar substances that can be spread as solids, liquids, or gases. These are toxic substances that harm or destroy organic material. Some chemical agents, such as pesticides, are commercially available. Others can be manufactured using available instruction guides. Because of many plausible threat scenarios, experts believe that chemical weapons in the possession of terrorists pose a more likely possibility than do biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons. Examples of possible weaponized chemical agents in the arsenals of terrorists could include the following:

- **Phosgene gas** causes the lungs to fill with water, choking the victim.
- **Chlorine gas** destroys the cells that line the respiratory tract.
- **Mustard gas** is actually a mist rather than a gas. It is a blistering agent that blisters skin, eyes, and the nose and can severely damage the lungs if inhaled.
- **Nerve gases**, such as **sarin**, tabun, and VX, block (or short-circuit) nerve messages in the body. A single drop of a nerve agent, whether inhaled or absorbed through the skin, can shut down the body's neurotransmitters.

Radiological agents. To become threatening to life or health, these radioactive substances must be absorbed into a person by being inhaled, swallowed, or otherwise absorbed through the skin. Non-weapons-grade radiological agents could theoretically be used to build a toxic **dirty bomb** that would use conventional explosives to release a cloud of radioactive contaminants. Absent large quantities of radioactive materials, this type of weapon would likely cause minimal casualties outside of the blast radius of the bomb, but its psychological effect could be quite disruptive.

Nuclear weapons. These high-explosive military weapons use high-grade plutonium and uranium. Explosions from nuclear bombs devastate the area within their blast zone, irradiate

an area outside the blast zone, and are capable of sending dangerous radioactive debris into the atmosphere that falls to earth as toxic **fallout**. Nuclear devices are sophisticated and difficult to manufacture, even for highly motivated governments. Although it is conceivable that terrorists could do the same, the challenge is technically and logistically formidable. Most threat scenarios thus envision that terrorists have acquired tactical nuclear weapons such as artillery shells.

DISSIDENTS AND THE NEW TERRORISM

The dissident terrorist paradigm is a good model for analyzing the environments, motives, and behaviors of modern terrorism. Categorizing the goals and strategies of dissident terrorists as revolutionary, nihilistic, or nationalistic is a useful way to understand dissident violence. However, one must remember that terrorism is an evolutionary phenomenon and that terrorist environments are never static. Methodologies and organizational configurations continue to evolve.

Toward the end of the 20th century, two important developments came to characterize the terrorist environment, moving it into a new phase: a new morality (see full discussion in Chapter 2) and decentralization.

Case: Suicide Bombers and the New Dissident Terrorist Morality

“Human bombs” have become an accepted method of political violence in a number of conflicts. Although some examples of suicidal behavior by ideological extremists can be cited, most incidents have been committed by ethno-nationalist and religious terrorists. When considering the tactical and symbolic value of **suicide bombers**, it is instructive to recall the words of the Chinese military philosopher Wu Ch’i: “One man willing to throw away his life is enough to terrorize a thousand.”

In some conflicts, suicide bombings have occurred only rarely. For example, the IRA, ETA, and European leftists and rightists did not use suicidal violence. In others, suicide attacks became common. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, Hezbollah (Islamic Jihad) in Lebanon, several Palestinian groups in Israel, and Al Qaeda are all examples. In other conflicts, suicide operations became a **signature method**, as with Chechen rebels and Iraqi insurgents. The following cases illustrate this behavior:

Religion-motivated suicide and the Lebanon model. Lebanon descended into anarchy for approximately 15 years during the 1970s and 1980s. The fighting was mostly religious, among contending paramilitaries drawn from the Shi’a, Sunni, Druze, and Christian communities.

The group that pioneered suicide bombing as an effective method of terrorist violence in the Middle East was Lebanon’s Hezbollah. The group conducted a series of suicide bombings from 1983 through 1985 against Israeli, American, and French interests. The October 1983 attacks against the French and American peacekeeping troops in Beirut were particularly effective—the attackers killed 58 French paratroopers and 241 U.S. Marines, forcing the peacekeepers to withdraw. This tactic continued through the 1990s during Hezbollah’s campaign against the Israeli occupation of Lebanon’s southern border region. An important aspect of the Lebanese example is that each suicide bomber was later glorified as a martyr. This concept of martyrdom is an important motivation behind the recruitment of young suicide bombers.

Intifada-motivated suicide in Israel. Israel has experienced more suicide attacks than perhaps any other nation. Readers may recall that the Islamic Resistance Movement, better

known as HAMAS, is a Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist movement founded in December 1987 when the first Palestinian intifada broke out. HAMAS's military wing is the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigade, which first appeared in January 1992.

HAMAS made a concerted effort from 1994 to 1996 to establish itself as the preeminent Palestinian liberation organization. It was during this period that it set the precedent—and honed the methodology—for suicide bombings. In 1995 and 1996, its campaign became more deadly as its bombs became increasingly sophisticated. This was the handiwork of an electrical engineer named **Yehiya Ayyash**, the master bomb maker better known as **The Engineer**.

HAMAS had launched the campaign in retaliation for the February 1994 Hebron massacre when Baruch Goldstein killed and wounded scores of Muslim worshippers at the Ibrahim Mosque on the holy site of the Cave of the Patriarchs (for a discussion of Goldstein's attack, see Chapter 7). HAMAS recruited human-bomb candidates into its Izzedine al-Qassam Brigade cells, with the specific mission to attack Israeli civilian targets—primarily at commuter transportation sites. The suicide bombers used shrapnel-laden vehicular bombs, satchel charges (bagged bombs), and garment-strapped bombs, attacks that inflicted significant damage on Israel in terms of the number of Israeli casualties. Four HAMAS bombers, for example, killed 59 Israelis in 1996.

Beginning in 2001, suicide bombers from sectarian HAMAS and the secular PLO-affiliated Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigades carried out dozens of attacks against civilian targets, killing scores of people. The targets, often buses, were selected to disrupt everyday life in Israel. This was not the first suicide bombing campaign in Israel, but it was by far the most sustained and lethal campaign. From 2001 to 2004, approximately 125 suicide bombings occurred, many carried out by young women.

Table 6.4 summarizes the scale of violence experienced during the suicide bombing campaign waged by the Palestinians during a short period of the intifada. It is important that the targets were almost exclusively civilians and that the death toll was acceptable from the terrorists' perspective—200 people killed at a cost of 13 human bombs.

Chapter Perspective 6.4 explores the new morality within the context of Chechen terrorism in Russia. The Chechen Republic lies in the Caucasus region of the Russian Federation. Also known as Chechnya, it has a long history of opposition to Russian rule that dates at least to the 18th century. In the modern era, the region has been at war since 1994.

Terrorist Cells and Lone Wolves: New Models for a New War

A newly predominant organizational profile—the **cell**—also emerged as the 20th century drew to a close. Terrorist organizations had traditionally been rather clearly structured, many with hierarchical command and organizational configurations. They commonly had aboveground political organizations and covert military wings.

During the heyday of group-initiated New Left and Middle Eastern terrorism from the 1960s to the 1980s, it was not unusual for dissident groups to issue formal communiqués. These would officially claim credit for terrorist incidents committed on behalf of championed causes. Formal press conferences were also held on occasion.

The vertical organizational models began to be superseded by less structured horizontal models during the 1990s. Such cell-based movements have indistinct command and organizational configurations. Modern terrorist networks are often composed of a hub that may guide the direction of a movement but has little direct command and control over operational units. These units are typically autonomous or semiautonomous cells that act on their own, often after lying dormant for long periods as sleepers in a foreign country. The benefit of this configuration is that if one cell is eliminated or its members are captured, they can do little damage to other independent cells. It also permits aboveground supporters to have deniability over the tactics and targets of the cells.

Table 6.4 The Intifada Suicide Bombers

The Palestinian intifada increased in scale and ferocity during 2001 and 2002. Fighting in Gaza and the West Bank became pitched battles between Palestinian guerrillas and the Israeli military. Street fighting broke out in Bethlehem, Nablus, Ramallah, and other ancient cities. At the same time, a deadly and unpredictable new weapon was applied extensively by the Palestinians—the human bomb.

Initially used by radical Islamic movements such as HAMAS and Palestine Islamic Jihad, suicide bombing became a regular weapon of secular Palestine Liberation Organization fighters. The Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigades was a secular “martyrdom” society linked to the mainstream Al Fatah organization of the PLO.

This table is a 10-month snapshot of the activity profiles of human bombing incidents.

“Martyr” Profile	Activity Profile		
	Date	Target	Fatalities
22-year-old man, Jordanian	June 1, 2001	Tel Aviv discothèque	20 killed
23-year-old man, HAMAS activist	August 9, 2001	Jerusalem pizzeria	15 killed, including 7 children
48-year-old man, first known Arab Israeli bomber	September 9, 2001	Train depot	3 killed
21-year-old man, engaged to be married	December 2, 2001	Haifa passenger bus	15 killed
28-year-old woman, first female suicide bomber	January 27, 2002	Jerusalem shopping district	1 killed
21-year-old woman, English student	February 27, 2002	Israeli roadblock	3 hurt
19-year-old man	March 2, 2002	Bar Mitzvah celebration	9 killed
20-year-old man	March 9, 2002	Café near Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's residence	11 killed
20-year-old man	March 20, 2002	Commuter bus	7 killed
23-year-old man, wanted fugitive	March 27, 2002	Passover celebration Seder	21 killed
18-year-old woman, engaged to be married	March 29, 2002	Jerusalem supermarket	2 killed
23-year-old man	March 30, 2002	Tel Aviv restaurant	32 hurt
22-year-old man	March 31, 2002	Haifa restaurant	15 killed

Source: Created from Ripley, Amanda, “Why Suicide Bombing Is Now All the Rage,” *Time*, April 15, 2002.

A good example of how a cell can be as small as a single person—the **lone-wolf model**—is the case of Richard C. Reid, a British resident who converted to Islam. Reid was detected by an alert flight attendant and overpowered by passengers on December 22, 2001, when he attempted to ignite plastic explosives in his shoe on a Boeing 767 carrying 198 passengers and crew from Paris, France, to Miami, Florida. Reid was apparently linked to Al Qaeda and had been trained by the organization in Afghanistan. He was sentenced to life imprisonment after pleading guilty before a federal court in Boston, Massachusetts.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE 6.4

Chechen Terrorism in Russia

During the pending collapse of the Soviet Union, a group of Chechens perceived an opportunity for independence and in 1991 declared the new Chechen Republic of Ichkeria to be independent from Russia. Their rationale was that they were no different from the Central Asian, Eastern European, and Baltic states that had also declared their independence. The Russian Federation refused to recognize Chechnya's independence and in 1994 invaded with 40,000 troops. The Chechens resisted fiercely, inflicting severe casualties on Russian forces, and in 1996, Russia agreed to withdraw its troops after approximately 80,000 Russians and Chechens had died.

Tensions mounted again in 1999 as Russian troops prepared to reenter Chechnya. In September 1999, several blocks of apartments were destroyed by terrorist explosions in Dagestan and Moscow; hundreds were killed. The Russian army invaded Chechnya, thus beginning a protracted guerrilla war that also witnessed repeated Chechen terrorist attacks in Russia. Although guerrillas inside Chechnya were mostly suppressed, approximately 100,000 Russians and Chechens died during the second invasion.

Because Chechnya is a Muslim region, Russian authorities have tried to link their conflict with the global war on terrorism. At the same time, some Chechen fighters have become Islamists and sought support from the Muslim world. Russian president Vladimir Putin repeatedly voiced a strong and aggressive tone against Chechen terrorists, stating on one occasion that "Russia doesn't conduct negotiations with terrorists—it destroys them."^a

During the Russian occupation, Chechen separatists waged an ongoing terrorist campaign on Russian soil. Their attacks have been dramatic and deadly. Examples of the quality of their attacks include the following incidents:

From October 23 through 26, 2002, approximately 50 Chechen terrorists seized about 750 hostages in a Moscow theater. During the 57-hour crisis, the Chechens wired the theater with explosives and threatened to destroy the entire building with everyone inside. Several of the female terrorists also wired themselves with explosives. Russian commandos eventually pumped an aerosol anesthetic, or "knockout gas" (possibly manufactured with opiates), into the theater, and 129 hostages died, most of them from the effects of the gas, which proved to be more lethal than expected in a confined area. All of the

Chechens were killed by the commandos as they swept through the theater during the rescue operation.

On February 6, 2004, a bomb in a Moscow subway car killed 39 people and wounded more than 100.

On August 24, 2004, two Russian airliners crashed, virtually simultaneously. Investigators found the same explosive residue at both crash sites. Chechen suicide bombers were suspected, and a group calling itself the Islambouli Brigades of Al Qaeda claimed responsibility.

On August 31, 2004, a woman detonated a bomb near a Moscow subway station, killing herself and nine other people and wounding 100. The Islambouli Brigades of Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility.

On September 1, 2004, Chechens seized a school in Beslan, taking 1,200 hostages. On September 3, as explosives were detonated and special forces retook the school, more than 330 people were killed, about half of them schoolchildren. Russian authorities displayed the bodies of 26 Chechens.

The number and intensity of terrorist incidents declined in 2005 and 2006, largely because of negotiations and Russian success in eliminating prominent Chechen opposition leaders. In March, the president of a separatist Chechen government was killed by Russian troops, and in July 2006, famed rebel leader Shamil Basayev was killed by an explosion that many attributed to Russian security forces.

The conflict has by no means ended. "Incidents of violence rose from 795 in 2008 to 1,100 in 2009, and suicide bombings quadrupled in 2009, the majority of which occurred in Chechnya."^b In 2010, 39 people were killed when two metro stations in Moscow were attacked by two female suicide bombers, for which Chechen leader Doku Umarov claimed responsibility. A Chechen suicide assault on the Domodedovo Airport in Moscow in 2011 killed 36 people. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism reported that in 2012, 150 terrorist attacks occurred in Russia from all sources.

Notes

- a. Judith Ingram, "Rush Hour Blast Hits Moscow Metro," *Washington Post*, February 6, 2004.
- b. Preeti Bhattacharji, "Chechen Terrorism (Russia, Chechnya, Separatist)." In *Backgrounder* (Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations, 2010).

DISCUSSION BOX

THE TAMIL TIGERS

This chapter's Discussion Box is intended to stimulate critical debate about the legitimacy of dissident movements using guerrilla and terrorist tactics.

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is an island nation in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of India. Its population is about 74% Sinhalese and 18% Tamil; the rest of the population is a mixture of other ethnic groups.^a

In April 1987, more than 100 commuters were killed when terrorists—most likely Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers)—exploded a bomb in a bus station in the capital city of Colombo. This type of attack was typical in the Tigers' long war of independence against the Sri Lankan government. The organization was founded in 1976 and champions the Tamil people of Sri Lanka against the majority Buddhist Sinhalese.

The goal of the movement was to carve out an independent state from Sri Lanka, geographically in the north and east of the island. To accomplish this, the Tamil Tigers used conventional, guerrilla, and terrorist tactics to attack government, military, and civilian targets. A unit known as the Black Tigers specialized in terrorist attacks, often committing suicide in the process. Sinhalese forces and irregular gangs often used extreme violence to repress the Tamil uprising.

About half the members of the Tiger movement were teenagers. Indoctrination of potential Tigers included spiritual purity, nationalist militancy, a higher morality, and a glorification of death. At the conclusion of training and indoctrination, young Tiger initiates were given a vial of cyanide, which was worn around the neck to be taken if capture is inevitable. Songs, poetry, and rituals glorified the Tamil people and nation. The Tamil Tigers were very shrewd with public relations, making extensive use of the media, video, and the Internet; they also established a foreign service presence in numerous countries. They also apparently became adept at transnational organized crime, raising revenue for the cause by trading in arms and drugs.

Estimates of membership numbers ranged between 6,000 and 15,000 fighters. They were well organized and disciplined. Women, called Freedom Birds, took on important leadership positions over time as Tamil male leaders died. About one third of the movement were women.

Some Tamil Tiger attacks were spectacular. In May 1991, a young Tamil woman detonated a bomb, killing herself and Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. In 1996, Tigers surrounded and annihilated a government base, killing all 1,200 troops. Also in 1996, a Tiger bomb at Colombo's Central Bank killed scores and injured 1,400 others. In 1997, the new Colombo Trade Center was bombed, causing 18 deaths and more than 100 injuries. The Tamil Tigers operated a small naval unit of speedboats (the Sea Tigers) that intercepted Sri Lankan shipping. Fighting centered repeatedly on the Jaffna peninsula in the north, with both sides capturing and losing bases.

By 1997, the war had claimed at least 58,000 military and civilian lives, including 10,000 Tigers. By 2002, the combatants had fought to a stalemate. In early 2002, both sides agreed to Norwegian mediation to negotiate terms for a lasting peace settlement. Several hundred thousand Tamils eventually fled the island, with more than 100,000 living in India and about 200,000 in the West.

Beginning in 2006, the Sri Lankan government began a massive expansion of its armed forces, doubling its size by late 2008. After a protracted and massive government offensive, the Tamil Tigers were overrun in May 2009, thus ending the 26-year conflict.

Note

- a. Data mostly derived from Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book 2013–14* (Washington, DC: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2014).

Discussion Questions

1. Is terrorism a legitimate tactic in a war for national independence? Does the quest for national freedom justify the use of terrorist tactics?
2. When a cause is considered just, is it acceptable to use propaganda to depict the enemy as uncompromisingly corrupt, decadent, and ruthless, regardless of the truth of these allegations?
3. Is suicidal resistance merely fanatical and irrational, or is it a higher form of commitment to one's struggle for freedom? Is this type of indoctrination and myth building necessary to sustain this level of commitment to a just cause?
4. When a cause is just, are arms smuggling and drug trafficking acceptable options for raising funds?
5. Were the Tamil Tigers terrorists or freedom fighters?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided readers with an understanding of the nature of dissident terrorism. The purpose of this discussion was to identify and define several categories of dissident behavior, to classify antistate dissident terrorism, to describe types of communal dissident terrorism, and to provide examples of these concepts.

The dissident terrorist paradigm identified several categories of dissident terrorism—revolutionary, nihilist, and nationalist. These environments were defined and discussed with the underlying recognition that they are “ideal” categorizations and that some terrorists will exhibit characteristics of several categories. It should also be understood that new models became more common as the 20th century drew to a close—the cell organizational structures and lone-wolf attacks are now integral to the modern terrorist environment.

Antistate dissident terrorism was defined as terrorism directed against existing governments and

political institutions to destabilize the existing environment as a precondition to building a new society. Several antistate terrorist environments were presented as examples. The cases included the United States, several European societies, and the nexus of antistate and communal violence in Israel. The seemingly irrational faith in ultimate victory despite overwhelming odds was examined; this faith in the inevitability of success is at the center of antistate dissident campaigns.

Communal terrorism was defined as group against group terrorism, in which subpopulations of society are involved in internecine violence. Several environments were discussed to illustrate differences in motivations, manifestations of violence, and environments conducive to communal conflict. The evaluated categories were ethno-nationalist, religious, and ideological communal terrorism. Cases were identified to illustrate each concept.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following topics were discussed in this chapter and can be found in the Glossary:

Abbas, Abu	117	Antistate terrorism	111	Basque Fatherland and Liberty	
Abu Sayyaf	120	Arafat, Yasir	112	(Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna, or	
AK-47	119	Assault rifles	119	ETA)	107
Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigades	116	Asymmetrical warfare	109	Biological agents	119
Anthrax	119	Ayyash, Yehiya	125	Booth, John Wilkes	103

- Botulinum toxin (botulism) 123
 Bubonic plague 123
 Cells 125
 Chemical agents 119
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 Chlorine gas 123
 Communal terrorism 112
 Composite-4 (C-4) 121
 Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) 117
 Dirty bomb 123
 Dissident terrorism 103
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 Electronic triggers 122
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 Ethno-nationalist communal terrorism 113
 Fallout 124
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 Gasoline bomb 122
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 HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement) 116
Hawala 110
 Ideological communal terrorism 114
 Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) 119
 Izzedine al-Qassam Brigade 116
 Kach (Kahane Chai) 113
 Kalashnikov, Mikhail 119
 Lone-wolf model 126
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 Nuclear weapons 119
 Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) 117
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 Phosgene gas 123
 Pipe bombs 122
 Plastic explosives 121
 Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) 117
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 Precision-guided munitions (PGMs) 121
 Pressure triggers 122
 Qassam 122
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 Roadside bombs 119
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 Stinger 121
 Submachine guns 119
 Suicide bombers 124
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WEB EXERCISE

Using this chapter's recommended websites listed on the student study site at edge.sagepub.com/martiness5e, conduct an online investigation of dissident terrorism.

1. How would you describe the self-images presented by dissident movements?
2. Based on the information given by the monitoring organizations, are some dissident movements seemingly more threatening than others? Less threatening? Why?
3. Compare the dissident websites to the monitoring agency sites. Are any of the dissident groups unfairly reported by the monitoring agencies?

For an online search of dissident terrorism, readers should enter the following keywords in their Web browser's search engine:

"Terrorist organizations (or groups)"

"Revolutionary movements"

The names of specific dissident organizations

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The following publications provide discussions on dissident activism, protest movements, and violence.

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