

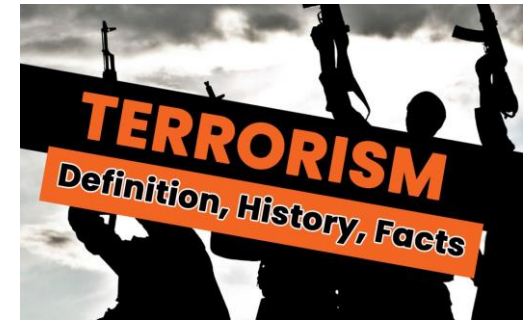
Terrorism and Strategy

HAYAT ALVI, PH.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

US NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

HAYAT.ALVI@USNWC.EDU



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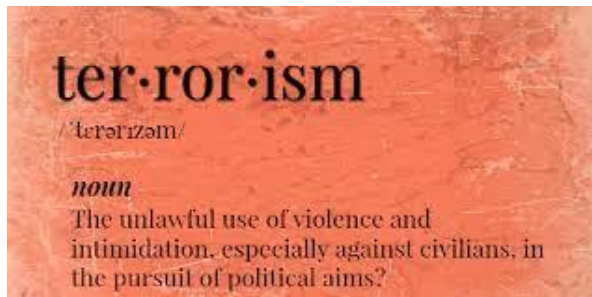
Defining Terrorism

- * Dilemma for defining terrorism
- * Lack of universal consensus on a standard definition
- * Subjective nature of defining/perceiving terrorism
- * The issue with “labels”

United Nations Definition of Terrorism:

“A UN panel, on March 17, 2005, described terrorism as any act intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.”

<https://dema.az.gov/sites/default/files/Publications/AR-Terrorism%20Definitions-BORUNDA.pdf>



**Using TERROR & FEAR to achieve
(political/military) objectives**

Example in U.S. History ...

"...if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I submit..."

Brown and his men entered three cabins, interrogated a number of men, and eventually killed **five** of them, all with swords and knives. Some were killed quickly, while others, who resisted, were cut in many places. Brown and his men then departed.

[A Look Back at John Brown | National Archives](#)

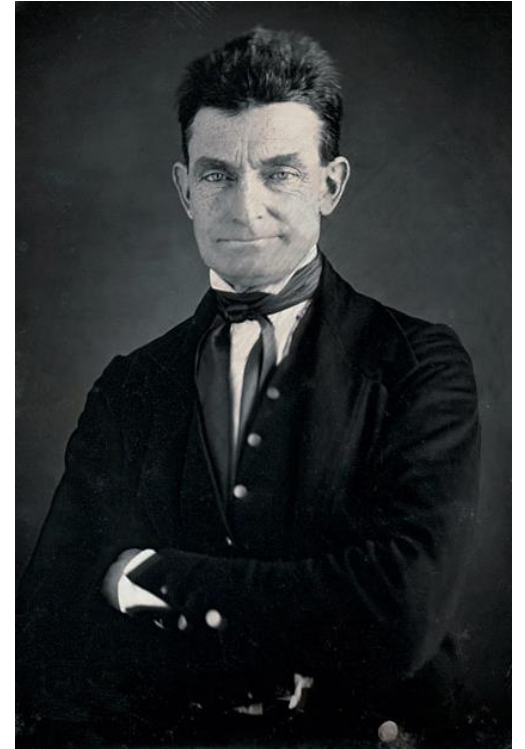
He believed he had a JUST CAUSE

Terrorist or Hero?

One man's terrorist is another man's hero

"John Brown's Holy War" – Documentary Film (Feb. 2000)

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/brown/>



Abolitionist John Brown
1800-1859

Terrorism and Strategies

- **Terrorists usually target political entities**
- **Terrorists attack civilians for “SHOCK VALUE” and for MESSAGING**
- **Terrorists embrace and promote their ideologies – secular and religious**
- **Terrorists want to establish a “UTOPIA” (especially religion-based groups)**
- **Terrorists claim to fight for a “JUST CAUSE” (i.e., fight against injustice)**

Ends – Ways – Means

Stages of Terrorism

DISORIENTATION: Shock value of the terrorist attack

TARGET RESPONSE: Terrorists want capitulation of target, but instead there could be public backlash against the terrorists, and it could increase repression

GAINING LEGITIMACY: Terrorists try to show the inability of the target to meet the needs of the people, especially in times of crisis

Limitations of Strategic Terrorism

Assumptions: Terrorists make assumptions about the public's reactions

Escalation Trap: Terrorists might escalate their attacks to undermine target governments, but that could instead lead to the escalation trap – the government responds with greater force

CONCLUSION

Strategic framework to carry out a campaign of terrorism to attain ends through military means, consisting of:

- **Disorientation**
- **Target Response**
- **Gaining Legitimacy through Grassroots Agitation**
- **Rational Calculation of the Utility of [their] methods**
- **Limitations of Strategic Terrorism: Assumptions & Escalation Trap**
- **Gamble on Emotional/Psychological Impacts**

Primary Elements in Terrorism Strategy: “If the goals of a combatant are relatively limited and do not affect issues of national survival, then they may be able to attain their objectives through less direct means than destroying an opponent’s means of resistance (i.e., an adversary’s armed forces).” Clausewitz

Ends – Ways – Means

Counterterrorism Strategy

Questions to consider:

What causes people to have grievances against their government? - Feel a sense of injustice?

How can governments ensure that they do not face an angry public?

How can governments ensure that they can protect society from terrorism?

How can governments disrupt terrorists' messaging?

What can the public do to prevent terrorism and/or the proliferation of terrorist ideologies?

Is counterterrorism most effective in fighting terrorists by *military* means?

How does one fight against a distorted (religious) ideology that might appeal to society?