Introduction

In the last two decades the world has witnessed the emergence of modern terrorism. As a result of joint revolution in jet transportation and satellite communication, today’s terrorists have the capacity to strike at targets of opportunity on a global basis in little over a day and to spread a message of fear and intimidation and publicize their respective causes to a vast audience undreamed of by the most dedicated and skillful terrorists of the past.

While the motivation for these acts may still be stated in terms of the most traditional perceptions of injustice, contemporary terrorism is very much a new form of violence. The impact of technology has led to the development of “Non-Territorial Terrorism”—a form of terror that is not confined to a clearly delineated geographical area. Whether the perpetrators seize an aircraft at 30,000 feet or launch an assault on a target thousands of miles away from a disputed homeland, there is a common characteristic in both acts. Modern terrorists are not limited in their field of operation. They have declared a global war that has no rear echelon or noncombatants. Confronted with this reality, authorities, often imprisoned by geographical and jurisdictional constraints, must evolve new policies to meet an ever-growing threat.

The non-territorial aspects of contemporary terrorism manifest a transformation that will have significant impact on the conduct of international affairs. An appreciation of this change in the global environment is vital because it places terrorism in the context of a changing international system in which terror tactics and strategies are only a part.
International Terrorism

The following aspects of this change, and how they relate to developments in terrorism, may be useful in seeking to ascertain trends in the next decades. In effect, just as technology initiated the emergence of modern terrorism, so it may now be instrumental in the evolution of yet a second generation of modern terrorist innovation.

Changing Trends in Terrorism As a Manifestation of the Rise of Non-State Actors in International Affairs

The technological revolution that is changing modern terrorism is even more significantly transforming the international political system. The impact of technological diffusion transcending arbitrary boundaries has led to the development of organizations that are increasingly challenging the leading role of the nation-state in international affairs. Although the "Relations of Nations" is still a vital factor in the conduct of diplomacy and warfare, other forces are already charting the future courses of international affairs.

In the discipline of international relations there is a growing recognition of the challenge non-state actors pose to the primacy of the nation-state. Such actors include "... universal and regional inter-governmental organizations (IGO's), transnational guerrilla and terrorist groups, multinational corporations (MNC's), and a rapidly growing number of nongovernmental organizations in a wide variety of functional areas." It is, therefore, not by accident that one of the major targets of international terrorist groups are the multinationals, since both actors are non-territorial and operate in an environment where the legalistic geographical boundaries of states may become relics of a decaying order. Like the multinationals, the non-territorial terrorists are becoming crucial players in what may ultimately be a new international establishment.

The Breakdown of the Monopoly of the Coercive Power of the State and the Consequent Blurring of the Line between Public Force and Private Violence

One result of the erosion of the dominance of the state system is the challenge to monopoly of the coercive power to the state which is at the heart of national sovereignty.

On the ultimate level of super power competition there is still a monopoly in terms of what has aptly been called a balance of nuclear
terror, although the nuclear club will be growing rapidly in the next decade. But even the existence of the current monopoly has placed limits on the behavior of the Soviet Union and the United States based on their mutual recognition that unless alternatives to a nuclear confrontation are found, the ultimate results could lead to a global holocaust. Hence, there is an attempt to avoid a super power confrontation that could escalate into a conventional and then a nuclear war.

The possession of massive superiority in both conventional and nuclear weapons may have placed constraints on the major powers, but such constraints are not shared by a small radical or reactionary regime who may welcome a nonnuclear conflict with its neighbors. Furthermore, even if the interests of the major powers should be involved in such local or regional conflicts, they may be reluctant to enter the conflict directly because of their concern over super power confrontation. The experience of the Cuban missile crisis, when such a confrontation almost took place, may help to explain in part why the United States only resorted to a limited tactical strike in an attempt to free the hostages in Iran, instead of engaging in a full-scale war that could have led to Soviet involvement. The monopoly of nuclear force is, therefore, a limiting factor for those who have the capacity to utilize a nuclear option. It is, however, not a restraint for aggressive regimes who may wish to initiate conventional conflict in their area.

In pursuit of the goal of avoiding a direct confrontation in the conduct of their foreign policies, the super powers have increasingly relied on client states to carry out their goals. The Cuban involvement in Africa in support of Soviet policy is a case in point. However, what is particularly significant in understanding the changes in terrorism is the fact that increasingly the Soviet Union either directly or indirectly through its client states has supported various terrorist groups in seeking its objectives. While the relationship among the various groups and the USSR are quite complex, the "Russian Connection" is apparent. It should also be noted that this direct and indirect support of clandestine groups does not simply apply to the major powers and their respective clients. Various revolutionary regimes, such as Libya, have also supported multinational terrorist groups in their own campaigns of regional conflict and global destabilization.

The involvement of states in supporting terrorist groups has not only given these organizations the training and bases of operation to...
make them a credible threat, but has also enabled a number of
terrorist groups to achieve a degree of legitimacy as significant,
non-state actors in international affairs. They have become forces to
be reckoned with whether they are pursuing their own objectives or
those of a sponsor state.

The breakdown of the monopoly is perhaps most keenly felt in the
tenuous existence of the new states in the transitional area. In these
countries it is often unclear who holds the monopoly. The regime
may ultimately rely on terrorism justified in the name of “legitimate
force” in the exercise of its police power against the terrorists who
are seeking to destroy the regime. The regime may also employ
vigilante groups to engage in terror tactics that consequently may be
difficult to attribute to the state. Concurrently those engaging in
“agitational terror” against the regime may also attempt to mask
their actions by hiring private groups to do their bidding. In the
conflict in El Salvador, the disintegration of Lebanon, and other
instances, the monopoly of force of the state and the terrorism of
those opposed to it cannot clearly be differentiated. To the victim in
the street it makes no difference whether it was the “terror from
above” or the “terrorism from below” or whether the violence was
conducted with or without external support.6

Finally, this blurring that has enabled terrorist groups to become
significant forces challenging the state system is reflected in the fact
that they, like the states, are practicing their own type of diplomacy,
an invidious change in international relations.

Contemporary Terrorism as a New
Form of the Diplomatic Method

The seizure of the hostages in Iran pointed to another ominous
characteristic of the new generation of modern terrorism. States are
not only using terrorist groups but emulating their tactics as an
instrument of foreign policy. It is not significant in the Iranian case
that the act was initiated by non-governmental groups. What is
important is the fact that ultimately it became an act of state hostage-
taking that was employed by a government much in the same way as
terrorist hostage-taking: as a means of dramatizing a cause and
attempting to pressure a more powerful state to overreact or acquiesce
to a number of demands. The title of the American Broadcasting
Company’s long running coverage of the incident “America Held
Hostage” effectively conveyed the similarity between a terrorist act and a state using the techniques of international terrorism. The act was not the traditional “state terrorism” of the past aimed at controlling a population in a given area; rather it was aimed largely at a foreign adversary whose representatives were held in captivity.

Placed in a broader context, the behavior of Iran, Libya, and other countries points to the development of rogue, or outlaw states, who no longer use terror as an instrument of maintaining internal control, but rather as a technique in a new diplomatic method—“armed diplomacy”—as a means of carrying out foreign policies. To these states terrorism is as surely a part of the new diplomacy as the exchange of ambassadors was in the past. Further more, the assassination of diplomatic personnel, who in the past were considered protected personnel, illustrates yet another aspect of the new “armed diplomacy.” Such acts serve to underscore that in the new international order, much as in the case of terrorism in general, there are no non-combatants or sanctuaries. As practiced by these outlaw states, who do not accept even the basic precepts of international law, which they often regard to be part of a decaying and reactionary state system, the new diplomacy does not seek the peaceful settlement of disputes but a concerted assault on the civic order as it is now constituted. What we are now witnessing is a dangerous variant of the traditional gun boat diplomacy of the past.

Contemporary Terrorism as a New Form of Warfare

If Clausewitz’s often paraphrased dictum is correct that “war is a continuation of diplomacy by other means,” then the contemporary terrorists may be developing a new form of warfare as an extension of their new diplomatic method. This extension is not simply based on a potential change in the rejection of the traditional diplomatic techniques but is also due to the following unique aspects of contemporary terrorism.

In the first place, the non-territorial nature of modern terrorism often calls for different contemporary tactics and strategies than those associated with a geographically limited non-conventional war. Therefore, counter-insurgency programs which are aimed at eliminating the sources of support for the insurgents through either a systems approach aimed at controlling a population or “the hearts and minds approach” geared at winning the loyalty of the population
are not appropriate because of the non-territorial nature of the conflict. In the case of the Israeli/Arab dispute, acts of terrorism take place thousands of miles away from the disputed region. Moreover, other terrorist groups may have an ultimate goal of global destabilization, not the seizure of state power in a given area.8

Secondly, as noted earlier, the "balance of nuclear terror" and the fear that a super-power confrontation may lead to a nuclear war has increasingly led the major powers and their clients to employ terrorist organizations as a means of practicing a form of conflict which is less intense. Contemporary terrorism is "the poor man's (or nation's) substitute for war," can be modified to "the rich man's (or nation's) substitute for nuclear confrontation."

Finally, the potentiality that terrorists can either acquire or make weapons of mass destruction suggests that some rogue states and clandestine groups may not only destroy the balance of nuclear terror but also increase the chilling possibility that individual states and ultimately the world at large may be subject to a type of extortion that makes the present threat of terrorism pale into insignificance.9

The New Players in the New Conflict

The erosion of the nation-state system as a result of the development of non-state actors, coupled with the non-territorial nature of the conflict, suggest that new players and targets will increasingly be involved in terrorist incidents of the future.

As noted earlier, a wide variety of groups having no territorial claims or formal governmental affiliations are increasingly acting with other groups in seeking to engage in regional and international conflict. Therefore, although the monopoly of force is still in the hands of states, it will be increasingly challenged by private groups whose avowed public goals challenge traditional authority. With the development of a second generation of modern terrorism, it can, therefore, be suggested that violence no longer will be directed primarily against the state system but against a whole series of transnational institutions, as already illustrated by the attacks against multinationals, as well as such transnational bodies as personified by the raid on OPEC headquarters. Consequently, as the players change, serious issues are raised in the need to develop strategies to meet the new terrorism.
New Strategies in a New Conflict

The growing linkages between state and non-state actors as well as the breakdown of the monopoly of force in the hands of the states suggest the potential emergence of a new direction in the strategies and accompanying ideologies of the next generation of terrorist organizations. The fact that loose coalitions of such highly divergent groups as the United Red Army of Japan, the PFLP, the Baader-Meinhof Gang, and the Provisional Wing of the IRA are willing to work together, despite profound differences in even the most basic cultural factors, suggests that these marriages of convenience contain a threshold of common values that transcends the traditional ideologies of the left and right and that these common values may form the core of a new ideology of terrorism. While such an ideology may still be in the formative stage, there are a number of themes that describe it.

Firstly, the disdain of the terrorist for the nation-state system suggests the emergence of an international outlook that rejects a commitment to traditional nationalism. What, in essence, the groups are declaring is that they are committed to global revolution—however vaguely defined—which aims at a transformation of the nation-state system as we know it.

Secondly, in seeking a revolution beyond the nation-state system, the emergent generation of new terrorists cannot be neatly labelled as seeking a change either to the right or the left. The basic motivation and subsequent justification for such acts of terrorism can be stated partially in terms of anti-western, anti-technological, and anti-mass society sentiments.

This suggests that while contemporary terrorism has in a sense been a product of technology, the motivation behind the violence ironically often has an anti-technological basis. The terrorists seek to destroy a technological order which they perceive to have imprisoned them in the confines of a repressive state system and which in the future may seek to further hamper their dreams of “liberation” through the domination of the multinational corporations. This anti-technological orientation of the new generation of terrorists eventually may attract extremists within the environmental movement who may view the development of nuclear energy, for example, as just one more example of the power of the corporate world. These linkages have already started, although they have yet to be refined. The support of
the Basque separatists for the anti-nuclear power movement both in France and Spain illustrates the development of this new type of alliance.

As a result of the anti-technological thrust of modern terrorism, it is evident that the industrialized states of the West, as well as Japan, will increasingly be targeted, since they represent what the terrorists regard as repressive industrialized social and political orders. Moreover, the delicate interrelationships between industrialized countries provide numerous targets that could result in massive chaos, which could not be readily achieved in a less developed technological society.

It also seems likely that the traditional social orders as they attempt to modernize as a result of the power of the petro-dollar, will be subject to increasing assault by two groups—those who feel the technological innovation is not being accompanied by necessary political reform and those, in contrast, who fear that such technological innovation will destroy already endangered traditional orders. An anti-technological coalition on both the left and the right will increasingly threaten such countries as Saudi Arabia, which is playing the dangerous game of attempting to industrialize without destroying the traditional leadership and values.

The shifting coalition between modernists and traditionalists, who may both be active second generation terrorists, is ultimately also a reaction against the mass society that is part and parcel of industrialized countries. Ethnic groups on one hand can be expected to continue to use violence as a means of asserting their identity in their wishing to return to, or create, a homeland where they never lived. The vitality of ethnic identification, as in the case of young Armenians who bomb Turkish embassies over a massacre that took place generations before they were born or South Moluccans who wish to return to a homeland where they never resided, is, in part, a reflection of the power of ethnicity not only to survive but also to grow stronger in reaction to the onslaught of mass society. They can be expected to be joined by the terrorists on the left, who also seek to dismantle what they regard to be a "repressive" industrial complex and replace it with their vision of an international utopia.

But perhaps even more chilling is the possible emergence of individuals and groups who have no ethnic or revolutionary motivation behind their resort to terror. We may be witnessing the develop-
ment of the apolitical terrorists, who do not even use the political rhetoric of either the left or the right. In essence, they would represent a new form of mercenaries or criminals who will use the techniques of modern terrorism to engage in a form of extortion unheard of in the past.

The Institutionalization of Terrorism

While it is apparent that terrorism is not a passing phenomenon, it should be emphasized that the new form of diplomacy and warfare in a changing international system is being increasingly institutionalized. The durability of various terrorist groups, the refinement of their techniques, the proliferation of linkages among them suggests the following trend:

One possible development is the emergence of a semi-permanent subculture of terrorism. As succeeding generations of terrorists replace those arrested or killed and acquire a following of active supporters, groupies, sympathizers, lawyers, propagandists, and chroniclers—all in some way dependent on the survival of the terrorist group and the continuation of its activities—it may become a political underground that is able to survive the fate of any specific terrorist group. It may develop its own service industries providing illegal documents and weapons, as well as fences for stolen cash or ransoms.11

If this becomes the case, it may also become a dangerously professional underworld, whose members will acquire even more skills in assaulting for profit targets in both the public and private sector.

The Implications to Authorities

The continuing refinement and institutionalization of the second generation of modern terrorism will create difficult challenges for those who must meet the threat.

While impressive levels of regional cooperation, particularly among the industrialized democratic states of Western Europe and North America, have evolved, the same cannot be said in reference to a coherent international response to terrorism. At the very time when highly divergent terrorist groups have formed clandestine alliances, many nation-states have done nothing, while others have been sympathetic to the terrorists’ causes, or even actively supported them. Moreover, in the United Nations and other international bodies a program of studied inaction characterized by rhetorical debates over
what constitutes terrorism rather than any specific programs is the rule and not the exception. In the immediate future any meaningful progress will still essentially be in the way of bilateral and regional, as contrasted to international, cooperation.

We may anticipate that regional cooperation will increase when the traditionally oil rich Middle Eastern states are increasingly subjected to assaults by domestic and international terrorists of both the right and the left. This may well make them more willing to cooperate with the industrialized states. As their own security is threatened, these countries must deal with the reality of their vulnerability to internal and external terrorist threats.

Yet even if regional cooperation is increased, it will not be sufficient to meet the challenge of the developing terrorist groups. Since the terrorists are often non-state actors, opposing transnational actors will have to integrate their anti-terrorism programs with the nation-states. The multinationals in particular will face the task of coordinating their response with the countries in which they operate, not only on an individual but also a transnational basis. In so doing, they will make profound changes in the area of corporate security to meet the new threat.

Because of the requirements for more effective intelligence, equipping and training of security forces in both the public and private sector, multinational corporations and other transnational entities will very likely develop their own anti-terrorist forces to such a degree that they could challenge the monopoly of coercion held by state security. Furthermore, in instances, a number of these corporations might proceed to hire the new mercenaries as a means of protecting their installations. This could lead to further erosion of the nation-state system, so that it may become difficult to separate the capacity of state and non-state security forces to engage in anti-terror and counter-terror operations. Low level conflict could enter the corporate transnational world.

**Conclusion**

The technological revolution that began nearly twenty years ago and which initiated the age of modern terrorism, has by now so changed the international area that we are presently witnessing the development of a second generation of modern terrorism. This new generation is producing the new actors, tactics, and strategies that
will characterize terrorist groups of the next decades. Although this second generation follows the old tradition of violence, they do so in such a way as to pose a new and invidious threat to the civic order. This threat will demand levels of cooperation among both the nation-states and non-state actors to deal with the challenge. Far more than a growth industry, contemporary terrorism is an integral part of the series of global changes that is challenging those who must deal with them to develop bold and innovative programs.

Notes

1 The National War College recognized the unique aspects of terrorism in an elective course entitled “New Forms of Violence” that was directed by William Witt in 1978.
8 For a discussion of the “hearts and minds” and “system” approaches in territorially based conflicts see Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970).