

The 'New' Terrorism: Causes, Conditions and Conflict Resolution¹

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Abstract

This article addresses the tendency for busy policymakers - - if not most humans -- to respond to complex conflicts, including their violent (e.g., terrorist) manifestations, by addressing only their *symptoms* (e.g., number of attacks, number of people killed, monetary value of destroyed property).

The author proposes that we will never deal effectively with the 'new' (9/11-type) terrorism unless we move beyond symptoms to deal also with the underlying conflicted *relationships* which give rise to the symptoms, and then ultimately with the *deep-rooted causes and conditions* of those fractured relationships.

The author offers a comprehensive framework to facilitate doing precisely that: to analyze any particular act of terrorism in terms of the elements of the conflicted relationship that has given rise to it and then by exploring the complex, multi-level causes and conditions of the conflicted relationship in order to design effective responses to it, including its terrorist expression.

INTRODUCTION

It has been said by many that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 irreversibly changed the world, bringing about the U.S.-led "War on Terror" and invasions and occupations of two Muslim states, Afghanistan and Iraq. The attacks in Bali, Indonesia of 12 October 2002 and in Madrid, Spain of 11 March 2004 have reinforced the view that the world is now in the grip of *postmodern warfare*, comprising the 'new' terrorism as well as the 'new' warfare, both of which signal a departure from the Westphalian international system where states are the major actors waging war or peace with other states.

THE 'NEW' TERRORISM

The question arises: what is *new* about the 'new' terrorism? Although terrorism is as old as humankind itself (see Friedman, 2002), the attacks of 9/11 and others cited above are 'new' for the following reasons:

(a) They are "catastrophic" (see Hamburg, 2002), causing the deaths of hundreds or thousands of innocent civilians.

(b) They are launched from within the territory and/or against the civilian populations of major developed, former or current imperialist countries.

(c) They tend to be carried out by young Muslims, usually males, prepared to give up their lives in the execution of their acts of violence (see *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 2004).

Clearly, there is a need to study the 'new' terrorism because it must be stopped. And to stop it, we must know what makes it 'tick.' But there are different roads to Heaven, and we do not always take the best route, sometimes inadvertently winding up further in Hell.

THREE LEVELS OF REALITY

We could respond to terrorism in any of at least three ways:

(a) the level of *symptoms*, i.e., discrete, measurable indicators of a complex conflict, such as acts of violence, number of people killed, monetary value of destroyed property, and/or number of individuals suspected of being terrorists.

(b) the level of *relationships* at the interpersonal, intergroup, interorganizational, international, and/or "inter-cultural" level, that have gone bad and given rise to the symptoms. And/or

(c) the level of *deep-rooted causes* of the fractured relationships that have given rise to the symptoms (see Sandole, 2002).

There is a tendency to locate terrorism within a *Realpolitik* frame and to respond only to its symptoms (e.g., as Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon tends to do with the targeted assassinations of suspected militants).

Attacking symptoms is understandable, given that terrorism is designed to -- and in any case does -- arouse emotions, especially fear and rage. But, if all we do is attack symptoms, then we leave in place the underlying relationships that give rise to the symptoms and worse, we do not address the underlying, deep-rooted causes and conditions of the relationships that have become dysfunctional.

In effect, we bring about a situation like Ariel Sharon and U.S. President George W. Bush have brought about with their respective "wars on terror," where, among others, Israelis and Americans are actually worse off now -- less secure and safe -- than they were before 28 September 2000 and 11 September 2001, respectively.

My goal in this article is to argue that, with regard to global terrorism, we -- the *concerned international community* (CIC) -- can do better than this.

The first step in this direction is to realize that *Realpolitik* -- so-called political 'realism' -- provides only one set of lenses and corresponding tools for perceiving and dealing with terrorism: a set of law-and-order/punitive approaches that influence decisionmakers to threaten, deter, contain, and attack -- all at the sole level of symptoms.

As a former U.S. Marine and former police officer, I have an appreciation for *Realpolitik* when it is used appropriately; e.g., as it should have been in Rwanda in April 1994 and Srebrenica in July 1995, to prevent genocide via the deployment of robust international 'peacemaking' forces.

However, in such cases, *Realpolitik* should be used as part of a larger framework, reflective of other paradigms (e.g., *Idealpolitik*), as is the case in community policing at the domestic level (see Trojanowicz, et al., 1994, 1998). While *Realpolitik* actors would necessarily deal with the symptoms of terrorism, other actors would deal with the conflicted relationships and their underlying causes and conditions that have given rise to the symptoms.

This more comprehensive, multi-actor, multi-task approach is clearly not a part of either the American or Israeli responses to terrorism, nor is it a part of the Russian approach to terrorism in Chechnya. How can we, the CIC, adopt a more *rational* if not also more *ethical* approach to the 'new' terrorism, so that we deal with its underlying relationships and causes *as well* as its symptoms?

One response to this question is to design and employ, as a basis for policy, a framework of analysis that reflects more than *Realpolitik*. I have designed such a framework, the *three pillar comprehensive mapping of conflict and conflict resolution* (see Sandole, 1998, 2003), that I have applied to an analysis of the 'new' terrorism (see Sandole, 2002).

The 3 PILLAR FRAMEWORK

Pillar 1 of the 3 pillar framework (3PF) deals with *conflict elements*, such as

(a) the *parties* to a select conflict that has resulted in, or from terrorism. While individuals are the primary decisionmakers at all levels of relationships, they may also be representing groups, organizations, states, or other levels of analysis.

(b) the *issues* about which the parties are waging conflict by conducting acts of terrorism. These are usually concerned with some aspect of "territoriality" and/or "turf" or status.

(c) the long-term *objectives* that the parties hope to achieve by waging conflict over certain issues, by launching acts of terrorism. These may be concerned with either changing or maintaining a certain state of affairs (e.g., a minority pursuing self-determination by seceding from a larger entity vs. a majority defending the territorial integrity of that larger entity).

(d) the *means* employed by the parties in waging conflict. Clearly, terrorism involves the intentional use of violent, lethal means such as those employed in 'fights' in contrast to those employed in 'games' and 'debates' (see Rapoport, 1960).

(e) the parties' preferred (perhaps indigenous) *conflict-handling orientations*. No matter at what 'temperature' a potential 3rd party intermediary initially finds parties to a conflict -- and with terrorism the situation is clearly intense -- the parties may prefer to handle conflicts in different ways as part of a menu of options (see Thomas, 1975):

(1) *avoidance*. For a variety of cultural, psychological, or idiosyncratic reasons, there are people who avoid conflicts because conflict sets up a "negative force field" that is acutely uncomfortable for them.

(2) *accommodation*. When conflict avoidance does not succeed, then the person may give in to an intimidating 'other,' and in the process, surrender his or her personal autonomy.

(3) *confrontation*. When conflict accommodation does not work and the intimidating 'other' continues to intimidate, then the intimidated actor may explode into rage against the 'other.'

(4) *compromise*. When confrontation leads to "mutually hurting" outcomes, both parties may decide to "split the difference."

(5) *collaborative problemsolving*. The parties may realize, often with the assistance of a 3rd party intermediary, that they can do better than "split the difference" and achieve "win/win" outcomes.

(f) the *conflict environment[s]* are the 'spaces' within which the parties are waging their conflict over certain issues in order to achieve certain goals using certain means (e.g., terrorism), inclusive of institutional, historical, economic, political, social, religious, and/or other settings.

Pillar 2 of the 3PF deals with *conflict causes and conditions*, which may be operative at:

(a) the *individual* level of explanation, which is the concern of, among others, biologists/physiologists, philosophers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and theologians.

(b) the *societal* level, which is addressed by, among others, anthropologists, economists, historians, political scientists, and sociologists.

(c) the *international* level, which is the concern of, among others, diplomats and international relations scholars as well as by the specialists listed for the societal level.

(d) the *global/ecological* level, which is addressed by, among others, demographers, ecologists, and geologists/petrologists) (see Waltz, 1959 and North, 1990).

Pillar 3 concerns *conflict (3rd party) intervention* and comprises two major headings: 3rd party objectives and 3rd party means for achieving them.

(a) Under 3rd party objectives, we have

(1) violent conflict *prevention*: through conflict monitoring, early warning, and early action, third parties may endeavor to prevent a 'house' from "catching on fire" in the first place (also known as *preventive diplomacy* [see Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Lund, 1996]). This was achieved in Macedonia by the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) during the genocidal implosion of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s (see Williams, 2000 and Sokalski, 2003). (Violent conflict prevention includes the prevention of acts of terrorism.)

(2) conflict *management*: when violent conflict prevention has not been attempted or if attempted, has failed, and the house actually "catches on fire," then the CIC may attempt to prevent the fire from spreading by deploying a *peacekeeping* force (see Boutros-Ghali, 1992). The UN did this in Bosnia during 1992-1995, with the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

(3) conflict *settlement*: when conflict management is not tried or if tried, fails, and the fire starts to spread, as it did during UNPROFOR's tenure in Bosnia, then the CIC may decide to put out the fire through *coercive peacemaking* (see Boutros-Ghali, 1992). NATO did this following the genocidal massacres in Srebrenica in July 1995, achieving a "negative peace" (see below) which has since been maintained by two successive NATO-led peace enforcement missions: IFOR (the Implementation Force) and SFOR (the Stabilization Force), with the latter due to be replaced by the European Union (EFOR) by the end of 2004 (see Dempsey, 2004ab; NATO Istanbul Summit,

2004; AP, 2004).

(4) *conflict resolution*: when "negative peace" has been achieved and then maintained, elements of the CIC may attempt, via *noncoercive peacemaking* (see Boutros-Ghali, 1992), to deal with the underlying, deep-rooted causes and conditions of the fire and in the process, move significantly toward "positive peace" (see below). This is a long-term goal of the European Union as it widens and deepens its membership throughout Europe.

(5) *conflict transformation*: when "positive peace" has been achieved for a particular conflict, then the CIC may work with the survivors of the fire to help them build mechanisms that, had they existed earlier, may have prevented the house from catching on fire in the first place. Through such *peacebuilding* efforts (see Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Lederach, 1997), the CIC would be responding directly to the challenge implicit in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's claim uttered centuries ago that "wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them" (cited in Waltz, 1959, p. 232).

(b) Potential 3rd party intermediaries may endeavor to achieve any or all of these objectives through the following means:

(1) *confrontational* and/or *collaborative* approaches.

As has been implied thus far, there are occasions when one party to a conflict may be imposing a genocidal "final solution" on another (e.g., in Rwanda in April-July 1994). In such cases, the CIC might want to -- indeed, *should* -- respond in terms of military force, to either prevent, or failing that, to stop the genocidal violence. Only then could the CIC intervene in terms of other, more collaborative approaches (see Fisher and Keashly, 1991; Fisher, 1997, Ch. 8).

(2) *negative peace* and/or *positive peace* orientations. "Negative peace" is what most people, including diplomats, mean when they think and speak of peace: the absence of violence (war, terrorism), which might be achieved by preventive action or failing that, by action to stop violence. Rarely do people think of "positive peace": the elimination of the underlying causes and conditions of the violence (pillar 2).

(3) *track 1* and/or *multi-track* actors and techniques.

"Track 1 diplomacy" refers to the conflict-handling efforts of official governmental actors, either domestically (law enforcement and social welfare organizations) or internationally (diplomats and military personnel). "Multi-track diplomacy," on the other hand, refers to the efforts of unofficial, non-governmental as well as governmental actors, where, according to the *multi-track framework* of Louise Diamond and John McDonald

(1996):

- (a) Track 1 remains the realm of **official, governmental** activity, peacemaking through diplomacy, with track 2 (*writ large*) subdivided into the following tracks:
- (b) Track 2 (*writ small*) (**nongovernment/professional**): peacemaking through professional conflict resolution.
- (c) Track 3 (**business**): peacemaking through commerce.
- (d) Track 4 (**private citizen**): peacemaking through personal involvement.
- (e) Track 5 (**research, training, and education**): peacemaking through learning.
- (f) Track 6 (**activism**): peacemaking through advocacy.
- (g) Track 7 (**religion**): peacemaking through faith in action.
- (h) Track 8 (**funding**); peacemaking through providing resources. And
- (i) Track 9 (**communications and the media**): peacemaking through information.

Traditionally, official, governmental actors (track 1) have endeavored to achieve and maintain "negative peace" via confrontational means. Since negative peace rarely deals with the deep-rooted underlying causes and conditions of the violence that it addresses, the violence that it does prevent or stop is always lying in wait, ready to be resurrected to rear its destructive head (e.g., in former Yugoslavia). Hence, the need for positive peace, which has been recognized especially by track 1 practitioners such as Joseph Montville (Davidson and Montville, 1981-82) and John McDonald (McDonald and Bendahmane, 1987; Diamond and McDonald, 1996).

Although positive peace is in the process of being framed, more and more, as a goal of governmental actors, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) -- which has recently established an Office for Conflict Management and Mitigation (see www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/) -- it has tended to be the focus of nongovernmental (tracks 2-9) actors.

Accordingly, there has been a need for some time, still in the process of being responded to, for a *paradigm shift* (see Kuhn, 1970) from a sole reliance on *Realpolitik* with its concomitant use of confrontational techniques by governmental

actors to achieve and maintain negative peace, to a more comprehensive frame. Such a new frame should be inclusive of *Idealpolitik* as well as *Realpolitik*, with tracks 2-9 complementing track 1 actors achieving and maintaining positive peace as well as negative peace, via the use of collaborative as well as confrontational approaches.

This realization reflects a major working hypothesis underlying use of the 3PF: In order to deal effectively with violence or violent conflict at any level, including terrorism and the conflicts underlying it (pillar 1), analysts must identify and deal effectively with the deep-rooted causes and conditions of the violence or violent conflict (Pillar 2). Only then is there a firm basis for designing and implementing an intervention into the violence or violent conflict (pillar 3).

A problem may arise at this point because few of us have been educated or trained in terms of the multiple disciplines implicit in pillar 2. We receive our degrees usually in only one field. Hence, as individuals, most of us are like the three blind men who, when asked to grab the whole of an elephant, grab different bits, with each thinking that he has grabbed the totality of the beast. Such is the case when anthropologists (ethnographers), economists, historians, philosophers, political scientists, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, theologians, international relations scholars and others discuss conflict and violence, including war and terrorism: each offers a "different take" on the "same thing."

This unidisciplinarity leads to the tendency for analysts to ethnocentrically highlight their own fields at the zero-sum expense of other -- equally, if not more -- relevant fields as a basis for policy and in the process, become more a part of the problem than of the solution.

One way around this unidisciplinary imperialism and potential policymaking fiasco is for analysts to work collaboratively in multi-disciplinary teams as part of coordinated multi-track efforts. Such teams could generate recommendations for policymakers that capture the complexity of multi-level, multi-actor situations, including the 'new' terrorism (see Sandole, 1999). Such is the promise inherent in use of the 3PF.

APPLYING THE 3PF TO THE 'NEW' TERRORISM

Current expressions of terrorism are associated with ethnic, national, or religious minorities who feel that their voices have not been heard; worse, that they have been oppressed, marginalized, and humiliated. These people are among Frantz Fanon's (1968) "Wretched of the Earth."

For these minorities, there is a felt breakdown between a preferred state of affairs and an actual state of affairs with regard to satisfaction of their *basic human needs* (BHNs) for *identity/recognition, participation, and security* (see Burton, 1997). The greater this breakdown -- or *cognitive dissonance* (see Festinger, 1962) -- between the preferred and actual, the greater the felt *frustration*.

We know from the frustration-aggression literature in psychology that whether frustration results in violence or not against the perceived source of the frustration, depends on the interplay of four sets of factors (see Dollard, et al., 1939):

(a) importance of the frustrated goal (e.g., self-determination to have one's own state and freedom from military occupation).

(b) intensity of the experience of frustration (e.g., military occupation, oppression, imprisonment, unemployment, marginalization).

(c) frequency of the experience of frustration (e.g., police harassment, targeted assassinations, humiliating encounters at checkpoints). And

(d) anticipation of punishment for attacking perceived sources of frustration.

Advocates of *Idealpolitik* approaches to conflict handling tend to emphasize reducing and eventually eliminating sources of frustration through collaborative problem solving. By contrast, advocates of *Realpolitik* tend to recommend increasing the perceived likelihood of punishment for attacking perceived sources of frustration through confrontational means.

This reinforces an issue implicit throughout this discussion. Conflicts are driven by culturally embedded *perceptions* and not by "objective realities." Further, in a world where *Realpolitik* tends to have an edge over *Idealpolitik*, and some minorities' motivation to relieve their frustration through acting out aggressively is *itself* frustrated by the anticipation of punishment, the emotional part of the stressed brain would tend to overwhelm and overtake the cognitive or thinking part (see Maclean, 1975, 1978), with at least two consequences in a win/lose setting:

(a) emotionally stressed parties would tend to *overperceive* threat, and

(b) they would tend to *overreact* to threat (see Holsti, et al., 1968 and Zinnes, et al., 1961).

Under such circumstances, we should not be too surprised if the *Realpolitik* tendency to increase the costs associated with political violence backfires into *increased* acts of terrorism. This example of 'nonlinearity' corresponds to situations in "catastrophe theory," where efforts to continue socializing oppressed peoples into compliance normative systems via punitive means reaches a critical threshold. Then, following a small increase of further 'realist' stimulus, a given person may 'catastrophically' change direction on the obedience-resistance gradient and attack the oppressor (see Zeeman, 1977).

This might be likely to happen if the progressively frustrated-aggressive dynamic of ethnic, national, or religious minorities is experienced in the presence of authoritative legitimation to give up their own lives in order to commit acts of 'catastrophic' violence against a perceived oppressor.

In this regard, Joyce Davis (2003ab) tells us that, while Islam counsels against suicide, it also acknowledges that it is every Muslim's duty to defend the *Umma* (the Islamic community) which is now global. And if all one has to do this is one's body, then *martyrdom* is acceptable.

Accordingly, I would recommend to CIC governments and others that 'globalization' from North to South and West to East should deal with the sources of frustration of Fanon's "Wretched of the Earth," rather than merely increase the costs of their rage exploding further into our consciousness.

CONCLUSION

One of the first casualties of violence or violent conflict is "**win/win rationality**" (*Idealpolitik*), with "**win/lose rationality**" (*Realpolitik*) being strengthened to the point where a self-stimulating/self-perpetuating violent conflict spiral is created (see Sandole, 1999). This is the major risk implicit in any "war on terror" -- not that terrorism will not be combatted, but that it will not be combatted effectively.

The U.S.-led war and occupation in Afghanistan is a case in point: no matter how we may frame the results of U.S. policy in Afghanistan, what seems clear is that the warlords are back in control of large sections of the country, al Qaeda and the Taliban have regrouped, certainly along the border with Pakistan, the opium trade is in full swing, and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) controls only the capital Kabul, with some concern that the mission itself may collapse (see Burnett, 2003; Dempsey, 2004c, Gall, 2004, IHT, 2004).

Accordingly, it is one thing to "smoke 'em out," as President George W. Bush has said: to burn terrorists out of

the caves, but another thing to address and deal with the sources of "why they hate us!" This realization, against the background of the "clash of civilizations" (see Huntington, 1993, 1996) that continues to develop -- in part because of the U.S.-led wars and occupations in two Muslim states -- makes it imperative for the CIC to start thinking "outside the box" (see Sanders, 1998, 2002).

The 3PF represents one fruitful approach for moving in this direction: for responding analytically and operationally to the 'new' terrorism in a comprehensive, more effective manner (see Sandole, 2002), with implications for more effective policy in the global "war on terror."

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Notes

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