Background for The “War on Terror”

September 11 changed the United States’ understanding of terrorism. Prior to these attacks, Americans typically viewed terrorist events and actors through the lens of foreign affairs, quite removed from “everyday” concerns. Terrorist events involving Americans did occur, occasionally on American soil, but a sense of American invulnerability never truly wavered. September 11 challenged this presumption; as well as perspectives on the history of terrorism, compelling some to reexamine past events in order to find portents of the future tragedy.

A look at the development of the literature on terrorism beginning in the early 1980’s until now reveals some cognitive dissonance. In introducing this material, it is not my intention to explain terrorism or define terrorism in this section. In fact, it is the very definition of terrorism is challenged by the assortment of initiatives collected under the title of the American War on Terror. Prior to September 11, “terrorism” was understood more broadly by more people. Although a single definition has never been uniformly applied, hence the inclusion in this digest of such organizations as the IRA and PLO, and the absence of certain other frequently, though reckless labeled as terrorist. I will presume that the “terror” is primarily associated with topics associated with the War on Terror. The history sections are particularly honest to this conviction, though they also point to some areas that are neglected by the current paradigm.

The History component is divided into two sections, prior to and after 2002. Sources are mostly limited to books, as they provide a more expansive treatment of topics than would typically be found in articles.

The Reports section provides reports from government agencies, non-governmental organizations and think tanks. The reports present a diversity of opinion and differing recommendations on how best to confront terrorism. Sources date from 1979 onwards, the year of the Iran Hostage crisis, a clearly identifiable point in time in which Americans were confronted by a terrorist act.

The section on Law presents laws passed within the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as United Nations Conventions and NATO Plans intended to address and deter terrorism. Additional sources analyze how international laws and legal cooperation among nations help fight terrorism.

General Background: Pre-2001

This section focuses on literature written before 2001. The section on the Periphery of Terror focuses principally on terrorist activity outside the purview of the Bush administration’s War on Terror. The section on the Roots of September 11 is concerned with how terrorism has become of special interest to the West. The section on Technology discusses its role in dealing with terrorism.

Periphery of Terror

Many subjects are addressed by the authors in this collection, including corporate and executive targets; medical preparedness; and responses to terrorist events by airlines, banks and insurance companies. Also includes a chronology of transnational terrorist attacks on American business people.


Authors in this collection look at the conflict of Northern Ireland through the lens of terrorism. Chapters discuss the roles of the international community and the Catholic Church, with special focus on both the IRA and Ulster Loyalists.


A collection of essays with chapters providing reviews of two European terrorist groups, evaluating the implications of historical terrorist activity on Europe’s future. The authors suggest tools for combating terrorism in consideration of European integration and more fluid borders.


ABSTRACT: From the Ku Klux Klan to Aryan Nations, the groups profiled in this fascinating, frightening book are organized, armed and growing. Written with the complete cooperation of the leaders of these revolutionary groups, Soldiers of God is the first book to let these masterminds of hatred speak their minds in their own words. Through interviews and documents, the authors weave the views of this expanding underground movement within the context of modern America to help us comprehend these forces at work against our nation - from within.


Dempsey argues that the FBI’s response to terrorist threats has systematically infringed on the First Amendment and other constitutional principles. He looks at specific FBI investigations and
presents developments since the passing of the 1996 Antiterrorism Act as disturbing. See also the section on the Patriot Act.


A short account of rape as weapon in war and armed conflicts. The author discusses the deliberate choice by governments and militias to use women as surrogates to perpetuate physical and psychological harm on an entire group as a form of terror.

Peter Hamilton. 1979. Espionage, Terrorism and Subversion: An Examination and a Philosophy of Defence for Management. Leatherhead: Peter A. Heims Ltd.


Provides specific case examples from the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland on topics related to terrorism such as membership in proscribed organizations, surveillance, interrogation, detention and use of the military.


ABSTRACT: Americans and Europeans are divided over designing and carrying out policies toward countries that repress human rights, develop WMDs, and/or support terrorism. This divide occurs over profound disagreements over which foreign policy tools - sanctions, engagement, military force - to employ to change the behavior of problem countries. “Problem” countries selected for treatment in this study are Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Nigeria.

Roots of September 11


ABSTRACT: Harclerode provides a chronological history of major terrorist actions over the last thirty years and shows how countries under threat responded with the formation of counter-terrorist units within their Special Forces. He explains how Special Forces are organized, armed, trained and deployed.


Authors in this collection focus on the relationship between violence and religion. Authors put the topic in a legal framework, asking if terrorists have rights and whether the laws of war can be effective in addressing terrorist acts.


The writers in this collection wrestle with the tension between the media’s freedom to disseminate information, the public’s right to know, and the need of governments and security forces to contain terrorism. The book looks at three particular media environments: the US, UK and Europe.


ABSTRACT: Leeman analyzes the possible discursive responses to terrorism, prescribing “democratic rhetoric” as the most strategic counterterrorist response available. He examines counterterrorism as a response to terrorism, considering each side as one-half of a dialogue. Given the inherently anti-democratic nature of terrorist discourse, he hypothesizes that the best discursive strategy is to shift the dialogue by using democratic rhetoric.


This collection provides a brief analysis of the problems confronting law enforcement, the legal system and the media when dealing with terrorism. Two chapters pay particular attention to hostages: one on the hostage-taking in Iran in 1979 and the other on how the right to free press may impede on the safety of hostages.


This group of essays is intended to provide various perspectives on the relationship between the media and terrorism. Chapters present the views of researchers, governments, broadcasting agencies and memoirs and interviews with terrorists themselves.


Technology


A collection of essays providing multiple viewpoints on the concept of terror. Authors represent different understandings of the definition of terrorism, some arguing that acts of terrorism can be justified according to context, as well as state sponsorship of terrorists.


The authors in this collection consider the links between terrorism and energy sources, including threats to the U.S. energy industry. They cite attacks which have already taken place against pipelines and electric facilities and conclude with a section on policy suggestions.


ABSTRACT: Examines the history and development of chemical and biological weapons and discusses their proliferation, association with terrorism, and efforts to control their use.

This book provides writings on biological, chemical and nuclear threats as well as weapons of mass destruction. The collection includes a chapter on the connection between religion and terror as well a section on containing Iraq.


Stern considers the increasing likelihood of the use of weapons of mass destruction being used by terrorists. She provides a section on state terrorism that includes a discussion on Iraq’s WMD program and the after-affects of the first Gulf War.

General: 2001-2004

This section represents recent work on terrorism. These works are particularly informed by the new American policy position in this area. Literature has generally grouped in the following areas: Religion, Counterterrorism, History and Analysis of Terrorism, and September 11.

Religion


Bukay discusses contemporary Islamic fundamentalism displayed today as a relatively new phenomenon. He argues that this form of fundamentalism, more aggressive and violent, poses the greatest existing threat to modern society.


ABSTRACT: In order to properly comprehend September 11, one needs an elementary knowledge of Islam. Hiro provides historical information as well as an understanding of Islamic fundamentalism as an ideology both of resistance and of governance. He also discusses events in Afghanistan and on 9/11.


Counterterrorism


ABSTRACT: The essays in this collection offer a unique overview and evaluation of the counterterrorism policies of ten countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Israel and Turkey. Each country section concludes with a post-September 11 assessment of current counterterrorist practices.

A virtual dictionary of terrorist organizations, events and terminologies. The book also includes a brief, but comprehensive chronology of terrorist events and a useful bibliography on multiple issues such as counter-terrorism, the media and terrorism by region.


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Nacos provides a comprehensive examination of the media coverage of September 11, and considers how terrorists manipulate the media to their advantage. She concludes with recommendations for effective and ethical news coverage of terrorist events.


O’Sullivan briefly examines the historical use of sanctions, and gives historical context for the relative effectiveness of sanctions. She compares sanctions with other strategies in four cases: Iran, Iraq, Libya and Sudan.


This collection of essays addresses the role of U.S. intelligence organizations in foreign affairs. Content begins on the eve of World War II and continues to the present day, including two essays questioning the capacity of the CIA and the FBI to respond to new terrorist threats.


Carr provides examples of terrorism defined as war through history, tracing this phenomena back to the Roman Empire. The author argues that warfare against civilians should never be reciprocated in kind and suggests preemptive military offensives as a solution to all terrorist threats.


Coulter, a prominent author in the American conservative movement, examines foreign policy issues from the Cold War to the present terrorist threat, arguing that American liberal attitudes have consistently undermined U.S. interests and security.


Davies begins with a review of the history of modern terrorism and terrorist organizations, focusing heavily on the PLO and the IRA, with mention of Al-Qaeda. The book provides global examples of terrorist events and counter-terrorist actions.


Kronenwetter provides much material for further research on terrorism, including a selection of terrorists groups, a chronology of events and a selected bibliography. His book also contains interesting documents such as an apology from the IRA and a summary from the trial of Zacarias Moussaoui, the “20th hijacker”.


ABSTRACT: Examines the trials of Mahmoud Abouhalima, Ramzi Yousef, Mohammad Salameh, Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, and others for their roles in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.


This short history looks out from a U.S. government perspective and places a heavy emphasis on Islamic manifestations of terrorism, looking at particular leaders such as Qaddafi and Osama bin Laden. Piszkiewicz provides an edited list of terrorist organizations as defined by the U.S. Department of State.


September 11


Written by a retired U.S. Army colonel, this book provides descriptive accounts of military actions followed by examples of military technology and tools. It also addresses such issues as money laundering and the media, concluding with high-tech solutions to warfare such as weather modification, antigravity physics and human psychokinesis.


The authors give a comprehensive overall look and brief treatments of the multiple business sectors both detrimentally affected and helped, by 9/11. These areas include insurance, real estate, transportation, security products and services. New employment opportunities are also discussed.


ABSTRACT: Provides a recent history of the FBI’s investigation of first amendment activities, discusses the limits of legal restrictions on the FBI’s authority, and argues that the 1996 and 2001 Antiterrorism Acts curtail civil liberties in the name of fighting terrorism.


Written in part by a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense, this book provides a particular viewpoint on how to win the war on terror. With a heavy emphasis on Islamic threats, the authors identify U.S. enemies and offer advice on how to fight these enemies and promote democracy.


Argues that the Bush administration uses the war on terror to solidify its political base, manipulate public perceptions of a terrorist threat, and to justify the necessity of conservative social and economic agendas.

ABSTRACT: Schulz argues the Bush administration’s War on Terror” has prioritized security at the expense of human rights. He explores America’s historically ambivalent response and disregard for human rights and theorizes that greater respect for these rights will ultimately help win the war on terror.


Laws


A selective listing of portions of the United States Code, highlighting the titles and chapters that relate to terrorist activities.


Presents numerous case studies, with particular focus on genocide and cyber-terrorism. Briefly examines the role of the FBI’s overseas Legal Attachés as well as intergovernmental efforts to combat terrorism. Provides U.S. state and federal laws that address terrorist threats and acts.


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This collection is edited by the Egyptian lawyer who led the first revolt against the British occupation. Bassiouni contributes three of the chapters in a book which considers national liberation movements, extradition and the formation of an International Criminal Court.


This Act makes specific provisions for dealing with issues of terrorism. It includes sections on terrorist property, outlining conditions for the exposure and seizure of terrorist forms of financing. It also expounds upon counter-terrorist activities, making exceptional, temporary provision for Northern Ireland around the prosecution and punishment of particular offences.


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Addresses the tensions between state sovereignty and international law. Topics addressed include: human rights and humanitarian law; the International Criminal Court; the individual in national law; and a feminist perspective.


This web site includes a full listing of the relevant conventions of terrorism proposed by the United Nations. It includes earlier conventions dealing with the protection of diplomats and the taking of hostages, as well as recent documents addressing terrorist financing and the protection of nuclear material.


Passed in response to terrorist attacks in Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center in 1993, this Act restricts prisoners’ rights of habeas corpus, a primary method for challenging state-imposed death sentences. It also encourages immigration policies to deter “alien terrorists”, including allowances to narrow asylum provisions and expedite deportation of criminal aliens.


The purpose of this act is to improve the ability of the United States to prevent, prepare for, and respond to bioterrorism and other public health emergencies.


This Act implements the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings to strengthen criminal laws relating to attacks on places of public use as well as the International Convention of the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism to combat terrorism and defend the Nation against terrorist acts, and for other purposes.


**Reports**


Responds to President Bush’s order that non-citizens would be subject to detention and trial by military authorities. It notes the U.S.’s responsibilities as a signatory to the Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the historical justification for using military commissions. The report concludes that trials should be limited in scope and “full and fair”.


This report reviews the challenges confronted by the international human rights movement in 2003. It looks in part at the War on Terror and resulting violations of human rights standards such as unlawful detentions, unfair trials and torture. It reflects upon the UN’s crisis of legitimacy and documents the human rights situation in 155 countries and territories.


