Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era

Is a strategy and/or policy of deterrence possible in counter-terrorism?

Whilst punitive and coercive measures consistently form the basis of the majority of state counter-terrorism policies worldwide, remarkably little has been written on the role deterrence plays in combating terrorism. The efficacy and applicability of deterrence depends on the broader question of how one conceptualises and defines terrorism, and whether one deems terrorism insurmountable and 'evil' or recognises root causes, legitimate grievances and pathways to accommodation. In contemporary study and policy, however, the place of deterrence is almost a given, reinforced by an 'orthodox' 'terrorism studies' discourse that has historically framed the 'terrorist' threat from a state perspective. There are, however, more critical voices appearing, especially with the nascent Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) questioning the usefulness of existing approaches and the utility of coercive deterrents in combating terrorism (Jackson, Gunning and Smyth 2007). This essay will utilise a CTS framework to argue that deterrence is counter-productive and that counter-terrorism regimes are imbalanced towards coercive and punitive deterrents at the expense of a focus on addressing root causes and undercutting popular support for terrorists. For many of those that employ it, terrorism is a *strategy* that can be relinquished when more effective means of achieving their political objectives appears (see Richardson 2006; Freedman 2007; Crenshaw 1992, 1998, 2000). The essay will also, however, draw from Conflict Theories and Psychological studies in accepting that some form of 'terrorism' is inevitable and that a certain level of coercive police measures are sadly necessary, whilst continuing to argue that their excessive use is often counter-productive and their deterrent effect negligible.

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

The essay will be split into four sections. The first section will deal with the inevitable definitional and conceptual issues that arise from any terrorism question. The continuing definitional debate in the field of 'terrorism studies' renders the answering of any terrorism question fraught with difficulty, ensuring that scholarly perspectives on the utility of deterrence depend entirely on how both deterrence and terrorism are defined. The second section will detail different conceptions of terrorism and its motivations and how this impacts on scholars' and policymakers' views on the efficacy of deterrence. The third section will critique orthodox approaches, using contemporary examples to illustrate the fallacy and counter-productive nature of deterrence; it will advocate the pursuit of root causes approaches and investigate reasons for the continued pursuit of ineffective deterrence policies. A brief final section will detail how the debate on deterrence reflects a broader cleavage between 'orthodox' and 'critical' theories of terrorism, before advocating the inclusion of more critical approaches in the study of terrorism.

Definitional issues and the evolution of meaning

This section will firstly discuss how different definitions and conceptions of terrorism and deterrence inform perspectives on the relevance and efficacy of 'deterrence'; secondly, it will consider the difficulties caused by the perpetual metamorphosis of terrorism and its definition for effective deterrence.

Firstly, the seemingly interminable debate on the definition of terrorism (for extensive discussion see Hoffman 1998) reflects the highly contested nature of terrorism, with its inherently political nature ensuring that agreement will always be marred by the conflicting viewpoints of those involved, as well as its organic and perpetually evolving nature. Terrorism's inherent subjectivity is one of the major stumbling points to an acceptable definition, with the only commonalities in the discourse on 'terrorism' being that it is inherently political as well as the term itself being considered pejorative (Hoffman 1998; Jenkins 1980). Thus given the seeming impossibility of definition and the evolving nature of the concept, we cannot say with any certainty what 'counter-terrorism' itself consists of, or which actor is supposed to be doing the deterring. Thus 'counter-terrorism' itself must be considered as a policy that counters whatever its proponents define as 'terrorism', which is inherently problematic; the term 'counter-terrorism' generally reflects Western state models and understanding of terrorism.

The term 'deterrence' also requires adequate definition in order to effectively answer this question. The differentiation between narrow, punitive and legalistic definitions of deterrence and broader versions that include influence and address root causes is central to any answer. Deterrence, as it is generally conceptualised by the majority of the terrorism studies field and by state counter-terrorism agencies, has a negative, punitive meaning. Ross and Gurr define deterrence as being 'achieved by increasing the risks for terrorists and people who might join or support them' (1989, p408), generally by the risk of punishment or operational failure. The threat of punishment, operational failure and coercive reprisal are understood to deter terrorists from making attacks. Policies that are intended to have a deterrent effect include 'new antiterrorist laws (national and international), more stringent penalties, extradition treaties, increased surveillance, and the (publicized) development of antiterrorist squads, tactics, and technology' (Ross and Gurr 1989, p408). This narrow definition is shared by Morral and Jackson, who argue that state counter-terrorism policies have 'deterrent effect chiefly through their effects on terrorist views of utilities, disutilities, and uncertainty' (2009, p6). Such a view leads to state pursuit of stronger police forces, better intelligence, more invasive and punitive legislation and physical protection of high-profile targets. This view of deterrence conceptualises it as being separate from any other aspect of counter-terrorist strategy, a 'stick' that may be used in conjunction with a 'carrot' or as a policy in itself (Frey 2004).

Broader definitions of deterrence could include anything that deters terrorists from undertaking attacks. Whilst not losing the potential for coercive measures, these policies could range from the provision of inducements to join the political process to attempts to tackle the root causes of terrorism. Many scholars have been critical of the purely coercive responses of state counter-terrorism policies, arguing that a broader conceptualisation of 'deterrent' could include 'an *influence* component […] that has both a broader range of coercive elements and a range of plausible positives' (Davis and Jenkins 2002, p.xviii). Were such a broad definition of deterrent widely accepted it would certainly be possible to argue that deterrence could work. However, the generally accepted conceptualisation of deterrence is punitive, focusing on 'legal and military regimes, and prevention within a legalistic and state-centric framework' (Richmond 2003, p289). This essay will therefore critique this version, arguing that terrorists cannot be

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

deterred by threat of punishment or operational failure and that deterrent policies are counter-productive, creating a negative-sum game in which all parties stand to lose.

Secondly, the definitional difficulties of terrorism and deterrence are made no easier by the continual evolution of 'terrorism' typologies, methodologies and perceived meaning. Even when a broad and subjective definition of terrorism is adopted, as for instance by the United States and its allies in launching the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT), the continual metamorphosis of the phenomenon renders attempts to deter or counter it eternally one step behind. Any look at some of the primary texts in terrorism studies reveals the changing meaning of 'terrorism' over time (Hoffman 1998), its numerous typologies (Wilkinson 1974; Schmid and Jongman 2005) and persistent adaptability (Gunaratna 2008; Hoffman 2007), illustrating the complexity and impossibility of creating a deterrent framework. Gunaratna shows how, after the furious retaliation of the GWOT, Al Qaeda adapted to avoid the greatest build-up of retrospectively coercive deterrent forces and legislation in the history of counter-terrorism (2008). He argues that in order to survive rafts of measures aimed at destroying it, Al Qaeda transformed itself into an 'ideological vanguard' rather than a centralized unitary organization and that 'while the threat of al Qaeda has evolved, to a large extent, the conception of al Qaeda utilized by security and intelligence services in the West has not' (2008, pp59-60). Thus the Western response is both continuously playing catch-up and proving ineffective at deterring terrorism. The continual mutation is highlighted by the debate over 'new' and 'old' terrorism that has emerged, with 'new' terrorism characterized by 'lethal violence perpetrated by unidentified, often suicidal, amorphous and nebulous non-state groups' (Franks 2006, p205) creating a new age of 'mass terror' (Wilkinson 2000; for further debate see Laqueur 1999; Copeland 2001).

Conceptual basis for the suitability of deterrence or engagement

Scholars' and states' stance on the causes of terrorism play a large role in their understanding of the efficacy of deterrence and the attributes of other responses. If one aspect of the question relates to the practical efficacy of deterrence, the other reflects the 'possibility' of a deterrence strategy which is entirely dependent on the conceptual positions of those orchestrating counter-terrorism. Thus whilst a deterrence strategy may not be sure of unmitigated success, policymakers' and scholars' conceptual disbelief in the potential for terrorist compromise or response to 'positive' approaches may render any other strategy impossible. Such a conceptual straightjacket is compounded by a domestic political need to avoid 'weakness' and concerns of 'macho' image that dissuade non-coercive responses (Frey 2004). Therefore in the view of some, coercive deterrence – be that deterring attacks completely, or diverting them through 'risk transfer' (Morral and Jackson 2009) – is not only possible as a counter-terrorism strategy, but is in fact the only strategy.

If one believes the 'orthodox' view that terrorists are psychotic and irrational, it would be understandable to consider no policy short of coercive measures appropriate. In such an instance terrorists are beyond negotiation and are a problem to be managed, diverted and deterred as best as possible from major targets through coercive measures. This is the approach of Morral and Jackson, who argue that since 'terrorists respond dynamically to security measures' deterrence strategies should pre-empt and manipulate terrorist reactions, diverting them to lesser targets and producing 'net security benefits' (2009, p1). The repeated invocation of 'evil' to characterise terrorists after 9/11 reflects an orthodox state construction of terrorists with whom dialogue, negotiation and compromise is totally impossible. Such a conception was made clear by the US budget of 2003, which stated that 'America has evil, cold-blooded enemies capable of unprecedented acts of mass murder and terror' (Office of Management and Budget 2002, p15). Some have therefore argued that the GWOT 'relies on a structure of understanding enmity and security which bears striking resemblance to the understanding of good and evil in the Cold War era' (Campbell 2002, p6). President Bush's statement that 'you are either with us or against us' (quoted in Norris 2004, p4) highlights the subjectivity of state response, that the principal distinction in the GWOT is one between friend and enemy (Coleman 2003) and that US state response sees no middle ground between a victorious coercive policy and unconditional surrender.

Similarly, many who believe that some forms of terrorism are motivated by extremist ideology consider any approach

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

short of coercive deterrent and reprisal ineffective. Wilkinson points to Al Qaeda's 'absolutist and grandiose ideology pledged to recasting the entire international system' (2007, p29), casting doubt on the efficacy of any Western accommodation with an organisation that advocates its destruction. However, whilst many argue that such ideological dogmatism ensures the appropriateness of a coercive response, such as Wilkinson's argument that there is 'corrigible' and 'incorrigible' terrorism in which a non-coercive approach is only applicable to the former (quoted in Richmond 2003, p290; see also Stern 2010 on compulsive violence), many others argue that counter-ideological approaches are possible. Scholars have pointed to the success of deradicalisation program s in Egypt and Saudi Arabia as proof that ideological dogmatism can be overcome and does not need to be treated solely with coercive measures and deterrents (Hassan 2006; Blaydes and Rubin 2008; Gunaratna and Ali 2009; Stern 2010). Equally, in the UK former Islamist extremists such as Ed Husain are proof that the process of extremist ideological radicalisation is not a one-way street, and there is potential for extremists to be brought into the mainstream (Husain 2007). There is also an argument that whilst some organisations such as Al Qaeda are radical ideological groups, they are still grounded in specific practical grievances that can be addressed (such as US troops in Saudi Arabia and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan (Marlin 2004)) as well as having members whose motivations are multifarious and addressable.

Many scholars, particularly those with more critical influences, conceptualise terrorism not as a result of evil but as a rational strategy or method used by politically motivated actors for whom it is often a final option for the furtherance of their objectives. Louise Richardson argues that terrorism is a strategic method that can be used by any actor and that she is 'struck by how futile counter-terrorist policies are likely to be when they are based on a view of terrorists as one-dimensional evildoers and psychopaths' (2006, p2; see also Freedman 2007; Franks 2006). Crenshaw argues that the 'resort to violence [is] a willful [sic] choice made by an organization for political and strategic reasons' (1998, p7; see also 1992), implying that if states can make accommodation strategically superior to terrorist acts, terrorists may rationally renounce violence as counter-productive.

Other positive approaches to counter-terrorist policies include psychological and socioeconomic studies. Psychological studies have revealed various reasons for terrorist support and recruitment and illustrate the fallacy of state constructions of terrorist 'evil' and nihilistic motivation (Silke 1998). Crenshaw argues that there is too much consideration of terrorists in isolation, without the vital social, economic and political context that provides them with their motivations, and pathways to engagement and redress of grievances (2000). In the case of the London bombers, both Farrar and Spalek linked radicalisation to poor economic and social status, with violent responses reflecting an 'extreme variant of violent urban protest' (Farrar 2005, p1; Spalek 2007; Gurr 1970 for socioeconomic motivations). Thus given the incredible causal and motivational diversity it is grossly unrealistic for state policy and orthodox theories to treat terrorism and its proponents as an homogenous entity to be fought and deterred, but not understood. Attention should be paid to the growing literature suggesting that incidences of terrorism can be reduced by the redress of grievances and engagement with its root causes, and the delegitimisation of the state in the eyes of terrorists (Franks 2006; Bjørgo 2005; Tellidis 2010).

A small caveat to this argument is put by Conflict Theorists, who argue that terrorism is just another manifestation of conflict, which can be defined as the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups (Miall, et. al 1999; see also Galtung 1990 on structuralism; Burton 1990 on human needs theory). Therefore the total destruction of terrorism would entail the elimination of conflict, which is 'an immutable part of human nature' (Malik 2000) and therefore impossible. By this reckoning, any attempt to engage with terrorism's root causes or provide terrorists with superior strategic alternatives is doomed to fail by inherent human conflict. Whilst this essay agrees to a certain extent that some level of conflict is endemic and that terrorism is the 'natural weapon of the strategically weaker side' (Richmond 2003 p290), it still argues that positive engagement policies will have a greater impact in counter-terrorism than deterrence. Rather than accepting violence as inevitable and hiding behind coercive and counter-productive deterrent policies, it is possible to undercut vital popular support for the 'incorrigible' terrorists (Wilkinson in Richmond 2003, p290) by engaging with the root causes of terrorism and attempting to bring terrorists into the mainstream. Therefore, whilst some terrorists will remain, their potential for effective action will be severely diminished.

The Fallacy of Deterrence

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

Aside from conceptual difficulties and scholarly diversity over the application of a 'roots', engagement or positive approach to tackling terrorism, the simple truth is that the alternative policy of deterrence does not work. This section will use contemporary examples to illustrate the fallacy of deterrence. It will firstly address the psychological shortcomings of deterrence; secondly, it will discuss the impossibility of effective and comprehensive defence and deterring attacks; thirdly, it will address the counter-productive nature of coercive deterrent policies, using the GWOT as an example.

Firstly, utilising psychological frameworks, the state cannot hope to genuinely deter actors who are so wedded and committed to a cause that many are willing to sacrifice their lives to achieve their objective and kill others. Psychological studies suggest not only the level of commitment required to sacrifice one's own life but also the inherent rationality of terrorist actions suggesting that the actor who carries out violence has arrived there as a result of a logical strategic choice, given its optimal efficacy and a lack of effective alternatives (Crenshaw 1998, 2000; Silke 1998). Making it slightly harder to attack a target, or punishing the constituency from which terrorists have come, whilst providing no strategically superior alternatives will have no deterrent effect. Terrorism is a final choice on a rational progression through strategic options, attempts at deterrence isolated from any provision of alternatives still leaves terrorists with nowhere to go in terms of advancing their political goals.

Several other scholars have argued that there is rationality even in the seemingly irrational act of suicide terrorism (Pedazhur 2006; Pape 2005; Ganor 2005). Allied to this is the role played by 'apocalyptic belief systems and charismatic forms of authority' (Dawson 2010, p1) as well as other motivations such as group identification (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008; Hafez 2006), in which radicalised individuals perceive a rational vested interest in their 'martyrdom' whether it be on the altar of ethno-nationalist heroism (Crenshaw 2000) or in the idealised pursuit of seventy 'black-eyed women' that await the Islamic martyr (Laqueur 2003, p86). Policy must seek to understand the mental framework in which terrorists operate and realise that repressive measures of questionable legality such as putting body scanners in airports (BBC 2010a), or increasing controversial police 'stop and search' powers (Travis 2010) will do nothing to deter them.

Secondly, some state responses appear to accept that it cannot deter attack, attempting instead to deter terrorists from attacking *certain targets* by surrounding them with defensive measures and making any attack of questionable operational success. This is premised on the idea that any 'gains' in terms of carnage inflicted or people killed would not be as beneficial as they could have been elsewhere and do not outweigh operational or training costs of a (captured or killed) operative. The problem with this approach is that it assumes that all targets can be 'attack-proofed' and ignores the fact that that 'there are too many possibilities and too few trained people to do everything everywhere' (Davis and Jenkins 2002, p36). The best that such an approach can hope to achieve is to divert attacks away from particular targets, the result of which is attacks shifting 'from hard targets to soft ones such as commercial infrastructure and population centers [sic], making mass fatalities and casualties inevitable' (Gunaratna 2004, p94). The installation of body scanners in UK airports will potentially only stop bombs on planes, whilst creating another ideal target of crowds of people milling around waiting to be checked. This diversion effect can be clearly seen in the attacks on London's transport network in 2005, reflecting state knowledge that crowded places and the transport network are preferred terrorist targets (Home Office 2009, p104). CONTEST, the UK counter-terrorism strategy, lists the places and things it is trying to protect as:

'critical national infrastructure, crowded places, the transport system, our borders, and our interests overseas; and protection against threats from insiders and from the misuse of hazardous substances' (Home Office 2009, p104).

This list might as well simply read 'everywhere and everything' and illustrates the impossibility of covering all the bases.

If one were to follow this approach to its logical conclusion, adequate physical protection would require some sort of police state, and even then the omnipotent state still could not remove violent intent and thus the terrorist threat. Those who subscribe to the 'orthodox' view that terrorism will be better prevented with deterrent measures manifested in better quality intelligence and policing (Wilkinson 2000 and 2007; Treverton 2009) are seemingly blinkered to the enormous practical difficulties and implications. The problems encountered by stretched security

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

services struggling to cover all their responsibilities – from terrorism, crime and counter-espionage (BBC 2010c) – as well public outrage at alleged complicity in torture (Cobain and Norton-Taylor 2010; BBC 2010d) surely suggest that such policies are neither sustainable nor acceptable in a liberal democracy.

Thirdly, the use of coercive strategies and attempts at deterrence, in terms of target diversion, physical protection and the threat of reprisal, has had no deterrent effect and often proven counter-productive. In the wake of 9/11, the huge Western response has not deterred further attack but has in fact encouraged it by alienating and radicalising large numbers of Muslims around the world, adding to grievances and the cycle of violence. A growing literature claims that the West is 'promoting counter-terrorism measures that actually undermine security' (Passas and Maimbo 2008, p182) and cites overwhelming evidence that 'repressive overreaction plays in to the hands of terrorists' (Wilkinson 2000, p115). The GWOT ideally illustrates how attempts to 'deter further violence with a particularly harsh exemplary punishment backfire spectacularly' (Hoffman 1998, p61).

In a post-9/11 world where there has been unprecedented counter-terrorism funding, cooperation and repressive measures carried out by liberal democracies, the 'deterrent' has never been greater. Even if a terrorist is unafraid of death (or in fact embraces it) there is the possibility of indefinite detention and 'advanced interrogation techniques' at Guantanamo Bay for a captured terrorist or anyone associated with them. The 'Financial War on Terror' means there is the possibility of financial repercussions for any associates, as well as extreme difficulties funding attacks (Biersteker and Eckert 2008; Roth, Greenburg and Wille 2004; Taylor 2007). There is even potential for military incursion in territories used by the terrorist, with all of the accompanying carnage. Yet support for terrorist organizations has not demonstrably diminished and attacks (both attempted and carried out) have continued and even increased. The Madrid and London bombings are strong examples of the fallacy and counter-productive nature of deterrence and proof that the coercive response to 9/11 not only failed to deter future attacks but was in fact their primary causal factor.

The July bombings in London are an example of both the backlash caused by repressive and coercive measures and the neglect of a positive 'roots causes' approach. The attacks were (mostly) motivated by Britain's part in the GWOT, in particular the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. The leader of the bombers summed up his motivations:

'Your democratically elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible…until we feel security, you will be our targets' (Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London 2006, p18).

Whilst there is a lot of literature recognising and debating the causal responsibility of Britain's foreign policy and misguided pursuit of the GWOT (Kennedy-Pipe and Vickers 2007; Wilkinson 2007; McGhee 2008; Brighton 2007) there is also a debate as to how British citizens were radicalised and transformed into 'home-grown bombers'. Whilst there is a fierce debate over the suitability of the UK's 'multicultural' policies (see McGhee 2008, Brighton 2007; Werbner 2005) many scholars agree that feelings of persecution against Muslims worldwide and 'of being besieged' and criminalised as Muslims by security policies in Britain (Sanghera and Thapar-Björkert 2007, p548) had an important role in radicalising the attackers. Even ponderous state authorities accepted that 'the development of the home-grown threat and the radicalization of British citizens were not fully understood or applied to strategic thinking' (Intelligence and Security Committee Report 2006, p43). The root causes of the alienation of British Muslims were not taken into account by strategists, nor were the negative and radicalising impact of Britain's part in the coercive reaction to 9/11.

Draconian domestic security policies such as 'stop and search' powers were aimed at catching and deterring terrorists (BBC 2005) but succeeded only in the opposite purpose, binding British Muslims together in the shared perception of their criminalisation and discrimination. Even moderate Muslim leaders have been moved to complain of discrimination and that there 'does not seem to be any connection between the number of Muslims who have been stopped and searched and the numbers of people who have been charged or convicted' (Siddiqui in Verkaik 2004). The July bombings perfectly illustrate the fallacy of 'orthodox' deterrence; the failure to address root causes left a sizeable minority alienated and prone to radicalisation, repressive counter-terrorist measures and military reprisal furthered alienation and protective deterrents diverted the bombings onto the 'soft' target of the transport network.

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era

Written by Alistair Nason

The Financial War on Terror also illustrates the failure and counter-productive nature of deterrence. The policy of 'going after the money' reflected a belief that curtailing terrorist finance could cripple their operations and that 'effective financial controls can have a positive deterrent effect' (Biersteker and Eckert 2008, p1). National and international policies were instigated, through the UN, World Bank, IMF and other ad hoc international associations of states to increase and extend financial regulation. The central features of these regulations were 'Know Your Customer' approaches and the imposition of more stringent record keeping procedures (Biersteker and Eckert 2008). Such a regulatory approach, however, was designed for the formal Western banking system and its application to less structured systems has had disastrous consequences, especially on Muslim populations. The discourse on 'hawala' or informal-money-transfer-systems, illustrates how US assertions that it comprises 'wealthy banks and sophisticated technology, all at the service of mass murderers' (Bush in De Goede 2003, p514) needlessly criminalised a huge aspect of Muslim finance and alienated populations in parts of the world that depended on this legitimate system for basic sustenance (Ballard 2005; Passas and Maimbo 2008).

The example of al-Barakaat bank in Somalia perfectly illustrates the 'bull in a china shop' approach of Western reprisal and deterrence. Accused of funding terrorism and even arranging 'for the shipment of weapons' (Bush in CNN 2001), al-Barakaat had its assets frozen and Somali businesses in the US were raided. However, over five years later, after a well-funded investigation and unprecedented cooperation from surrounding states, no evidence was found linking the bank to terrorism. The consequences of US action (backed by UN and EU measures) were disastrous. Al-Barakaat is the 'only bank, the largest employer, and the only Internet service provider in war-torn Somalia' (De Goede 2003, p51) and the ban on transfers is keeping 'between $400 million and $1 billion out of Somalia's economy' (Medani 2002, p3). This illustrates the disastrously counter-productive nature of the financial War on Terror. Not only did Western action alienate huge numbers of people, especially Muslims who felt rightly victimised, but it failed to deter or stymie future attacks. The Madrid bombers funded themselves through petty crime (Biersteker and Eckert 2008) and the London bombers were 'self-financed [with] no evidence of external sources of income' (Report of the Official Account of the London Bombings 2005, p23) using defaulted personal loans, bounced cheques and credit cards to fund an operation costing just £8,000 (Ibid., pp23-24).

'Orthodox' versus 'Critical' terrorism studies: pathways to progress?

The debate over the utility of deterrence and coercive methods is in many ways a microcosm of the growing debate between 'orthodox' and 'critical' terrorism theorists. Broadly speaking, more 'orthodox' theorists adopt a 'problem-solving' state perspective, advocate greater coercive capacity and more effective intelligence and security measures, whilst displaying conceptual blinkers when discussing root causes or the possibilities of engaging with 'terrorists'. As such, 'orthodox' reflection of state bias is often so blatant that much of its output resembles 'counterinsurgency masquerading as political science' (Schmid and Jongman 2005, p182; for other 'Orthodox' theorists see Ranstorp). The emergent 'Critical Terrorism Studies' (CTS) research agenda (Jackson, Smyth and Gunning 2007) has criticised the current field for 'core epistemological, methodological and political-normative problems, ranging from a lack of conceptual clarity and theoretical sterility to political bias and a continuing dearth of primary research data' (Gunning 2007, p363). The CTS has created a new Critical Studies on Terrorism journal, and, along with other critical scholars, advocates the need for less acceptance of state framing of the terrorist 'problem' and less desperation to be 'policy-relevant', as well as willingness to investigate 'roots' approaches (Franks 2006; Bjørgo 2005; Tellidis 2010).

The reaction of the field to this development has been mixed. Whilst many have welcomed the creation of the CTS, arguing that critical theory is helpful in the progression of any academic discipline, others have denied the need for a CTS, arguing that 'claims to novelty or to a distinctively critical focus are exaggerated or misplaced' (Boyle and Horgan 2008; see also Michel and Richards 2009). The encouraging thing about this seeming cleavage within the field is that broader ideas and approaches are being debated by all stripes of scholar with a blurring of the lines between 'orthodox' and 'critical' theorists ensuring that many scholars are taking a more critical approach. What is discouraging, however, is that whilst there is an increasing realisation of the potential merits of a 'roots' approach, rather than conducting primary research and engaging governments in debate, the field seems to be consuming itself

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era

Written by Alistair Nason

in divisive polemic about who said what first, critical extent and policy-relevance.

Despite a noticeable critical turn, however, there is still a large part of the discourse that advocates solely police responses and pays only lip-service to 'roots' approaches. Many are still convinced of the deterrent effect of certain policies, arguing that they are easy to criticise, citing problems in assessment as a defence. US officials have claimed that the absence of attacks within the United States since 9/11 is evidence of the success of deterrence (Biersteker and Eckert 2008, p289), but such arguments, as well as those that point to isolated successes of protective deterrents in stopping terrorist attacks, are very difficult to quantify.

There are still many who have become convinced of the need to address root causes to an extent, but who do not recognise that many of those root causes are in fact *created* by overwhelming coercive responses. Bruce Hoffman, in his suggested counter-terrorist policy for the new Obama administration, does recognise the need to break the 'cycle of terrorist recruitment among radicalized "bunches of guys"', but he also then advocates a 'strategy that harnesses the overwhelming kinetic force of the American military' (2009, abstract), surely a contradictory approach. Equally, Davis and Jenkins, whilst calling for the introduction of an 'influence' element to US policy, claim that it can be coupled with a 'United States willing to lower its standards of evidence, presume guilt, violate sovereignty, attack pre-emptively' (2002,p60) in order to provide a stronger deterrent. This is something it has already done, as has been shown, with disastrous consequences.

Thus whilst there has been growing recognition of the failure of a totally coercive approach, recognition has been slow in coming and remedial policies have not gone far enough. The UK's revised counter-terrorism strategy now recognises the importance of preventing radicalisation, but it has not been given the level of commitment it requires. Of CONTEST's four strands of 'Pursue, Prevent, Prepare, Protect' (Home Office 2009), 'Prevent' makes up less than a quarter of a document based on deterrence and punitive responses. Even in the 'Prevent' strand, only one sub-point is related to dealing with the root causes that create radicalisation, with the others based on arresting those already radicalised. With such a police focus, there have been accusations that 'Prevent' represents an attempt to spy on the British Muslim community and a recent parliamentary report suggest it may be counter-productive (Taylor 2010).

Conclusion

This essay has argued that deterrence not only does not work in discouraging terrorists through fear of punishment, operational failure and diversion to lesser targets, but in fact *encourages* terrorism through grievances created by coercive overreaction. The examples used of the enormous and often indiscriminate military and police responses to 9/11 illustrate the sense of suffering and victimisation brought upon large and hitherto peaceful populations, especially Muslims, creating a backlash of alienation and radicalisation that wrought the Madrid and London bombings. The aims of the majority of terrorists planning attacks (and often carrying them out) are not generally in line with Al Qaeda pre-9/11 but based on a sense of Muslim grievance at Western coercive responses to 9/11. Examples of this in the US alone are provided by the shooting rampage of a US Muslim army Major at Fort Hood (Allen and Bloxham 2009), the shooting of a US soldier at a recruiting centre by a Muslim man angry at US foreign policy (Barnes and Dao 2009) and by the attempted bombing of a US airliner on Christmas Day 2009 (Eggen, DeYoung and Hsu 2009).

This essay does recognise that a certain level of coercive capability is necessary, and that terrorism cannot be wiped out entirely, as that would entail the total removal of conflict. Western responses can, however, take a more nuanced view on the causes of terrorism, attempt to remove grievances and utilise compromise and dialogue as a means of wresting from hardcore terrorists the popular support that they desperately require. The increasingly critical tone and debate within the field of terrorism studies is a good start, but it is only a start.

Bibliography

Allen, N. and Bloxham, A. (2009) 'Fort Hood shooting: 13 killed and 30 injured at US Army base', *The Telegraph* 6 Nov, available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/6512329/Fort-Hood-

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

shooting-13-killed-and-30-injured-at-US-Army-base.html, accessed 14 March 2010

Ballard, R. (2005) 'Coalitions of reciprocity and the maintenance of financial integrity within informal value transmission systems: The operational dynamics of contemporary hawala networks', *Journal of Banking Regulation*, Vol. 6 No. 4, pp. 319–352.

Barnes, S. and Dao, J. (2009) 'Gunman Kills Soldier Outside Recruiting Station', *New York Times*, 1 June, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/02/us/02recruit.html

BBC 2008 'Stop and search increase revealed', available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7399152.stm, accessed 9 March 2010

BBC 2010a 'Airport Body Scanners May be Unlawful', available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8516574.stm, accessed 10 March 2010

BBC 2010b

'Rove "proud" of US waterboarding terror suspects', available at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/8563547.stm, accessed 10 March 2010

BBC 2010c 'A Snapshot of Spies and Their Accountability', available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8563501.stm, accessed 10 March 2010

BBC 2010d 'MI5 has "dubious record" on Binyam Mohamed, judge says', available at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8538410.stm, accessed 10 March 2010

Biersteker, Thomas J. and Eckert, Sue E. (2008) 'Introduction: The challenge of terrorist financing', in Biersteker, Thomas J. and Eckert, Sue E. eds. *Countering the Financing of Terrorism*, pp.1-16, (London and New York: Routledge)

Bjørgo, T. (2005) *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward,* (Abingdon: New York: Routledge)

Blaydes, L. and Rubin, L. (2008) 'Ideological Reorientation and Counterterrorism: Confronting Militant Islam in Egypt', *Terrorism and Political Violence* Vol. 20 No. 4, pp461-479

Brighton, S. (2007) 'British Muslims, multiculturalism and UK foreign policy: "integration" and "cohesion" in and beyond the state', *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 1, pp. 1-17, January 2007

Burton, J. (1979) *Deviance, Terrorism and War*, (Oxford: Martin Robertson)

Burton, J. (1990) *Conflict: Human Needs Theory,* (London: MacMillan)

Campbell, D. (2002), 'Time is broken: the return of the past in the response to September 11', *Theory and Event*, Vol. 5 No. 4

Cobain, I. and Norton-Taylor, R. (2010) 'What and when MI5 knew about torture', *The Guardian* 10 March 2010, available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/mar/10/mi5-mi6-torture-intelligence-timeline, accessed: 12th March 2010

Coleman, Mat (2003) 'The naming of 'terrorism' and evil 'outlaws': geopolitical place-making after 11 September', *Geopolitics*, Vol. 8 No.3, pp.87-104

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

Copeland, T. (2001) 'Is the "New Terrorism" Really New?,' *Journal of Conflict Studies* Vol. 21 No. 2, pp7-27

CNN (2001) 'Bush cites crackdown on money networks that work for "mass murderers", November 17, available at: http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/11/07/inv.freezing.assets/index.html, accessed: 11 March 2010

Cragin, K. and Gerwehr, S. (2005) *Dissuading Terror: Strategic Influence and the Struggle Against Terrorism*, (Santa Monica: RAND corporation)

Crenshaw, M. (1992) 'The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behaviour as a Product of Strategic Choice', in Reich, W. (1992) *Origins of Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Crenshaw, M. (2000) 'The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the 21st Century', *Political Psychology*, Vol. 21, No. 2, June, pp. 405-420

Davis, P. K. and Jenkins, B. M. (2002) *Deterrence and Influence in Counterterrorism*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation)

Dawson, L. (2010) 'The Study of New Religious Movements and the Radicalization of Home-Grown Terrorists: Opening a Dialogue', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 1 – 21

De Goede, M (2003) 'Hawala discourse and the war on terrorist finance', *Environment and Planning D*, Vol. 21 No. 5: pp513-532

Eggen, D., DeYoung, K., Hsu, S. (2009) 'Plane suspect was listed in terror database after father alerted U.S. officials', *The Washington Post*, December 27, available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/25/AR2009122501355.html, accessed 12 March 2010

Farrar, M. (2005) 'Leeds footsoldiers and London bombs', *Open democracy* 22nd July 2005, available at: http://www.opendemocracy.net/content/articles/PDF/2696.pdf, accessed 28 November 2009

Franks, J. (2006) *Rethinking the Roots of Terrorism*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

Freedman, L. (2007) 'Terrorism as a Strategy', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 42 No. 3, June

Frey, B. (2004) *Dealing with Terrorism – Stick or Carrot?* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar)

Galtung, J. (1996) *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict* (London: Sage)

Ganor, B. (2005) *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle*, (London: Transactions Publishers)

Gunaratna, R. (2002) *Inside Al Qae'da: Global Network of Terror*, (London: Hurst)

Gunaratna, R. (2008), 'The evolution of Al Qaeda' in T. J Biersteker and S. E. Eckert (eds.)*Countering the Financing of Terrorism*, (New York: Routledge), pp47-62

Gunaratna, R. and Bin Ali, M. (2009) 'De-radicalization Initiatives in Egypt: A Preliminary Insight',*Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 32 No.4, pp277-291

Gurr, T. (1970) *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press)

Hafez, M. (2006) *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace)

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

Hassan, M. H. B. (2006) 'Key Considerations in Counterideological Work against Terrorist Ideology', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp531-558

Hoffman, B. (1998) *Inside Terrorism* (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson)

Hoffman, B. (2007) 'The Global Terrorist Threat: Is Al-Qaeda on the Run or on the March?', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp44-58

Hoffman, B. (2009) 'A Counterterrorism Strategy for the Obama Administration', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 21 No. 3July 2009, pages 359 – 377

Home Office (2009) *CONTEST: Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare. The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism*, available for download at: http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism-strategy/, accessed 12 March 2010

Horgan, J. and Boyle, M. (2008) 'A case against 'Critical Terrorism Studies'', *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 51-64

Husain, E. (2007) *The Islamist*, (London: Penguin)

Intelligence and Security Committee Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005 (2006) available online at:http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/corp/assets/publications/reports/intelligence/isc_7july_report.pdf, accessed 14 March 2010

Jackson, R., Gunning, J., and Smyth, M. (2007) *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, (Abingdon: Routledge)

Jenkins, B. M. (1980) *The Study of Terrorism: Definitional Problems*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation)

Kennedy-Pipe, C. and Vickers, R. (2007) ''"Blowback" for Britain?: Blair, Bush, and the war in Iraq, *Review of International Studies* 33, (2007) pp205-221

Laqueur, W. (1999) *The New Terrorism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Laqueur, W. (2003) *No End to War: Terrorism in the 21st Century*, (New York: Continuum)

Malik, O. (2000) *Enough of the Definition of Terrorism*, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs)

Marlin IV, R. O. (2004) *What Does Al Qaeda Want?: unedited communiqués,* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books)

McCauley, C. and Moskalenko, S. (2008) 'Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 415-433

McGhee, D. (2008) *The End of Multiculturalism? Terrorism, Integration and Human Rights*, (New York: Open University Press)

Medani, K. M. (Summer, 2002) 'Financing Terrorism or Survival?: Informal Finance and State Collapse in Somalia and the US War on Terrorism', *Middle East Report* No. 223, pp2-9

Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O. and Woodhouse, T. (1999) *Contemporary Conflict Resolution,* (Cambridge: Polity Press)

Michel, T. and Richards, A. (2009) 'False dawns or new horizons? Further issues and challenges for Critical

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era

Written by Alistair Nason

Terrorism Studies', *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Vol. 2, No. 3 December, pp.399-413

Morral, A. R. and Jackson, B. A. (2009) 'Understanding the Role of Deterrence in Counterterrorism Security', (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation)

Mueller, J. (2006) *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*, (New York: The Free Press)

Norris, A. (2004) '"Us" and "Them": The politics of American self-assertion after 9/11', *Metaphilosophy* Vol. 35 No.3, pp249-272

Pape, R. (2005) *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, (New York: Random House)

Passas, N. and Maimbo, S. M. (2008) 'The design, development, and implementation of regulatory and supervisory frameworks for informal funds transfer systems' in Biersteker, T. J and Eckert, S. E. (eds.)*Countering the Financing of Terrorism*, (New York: Routledge), pp174-192

Pedazhur, A. (2006) *Suicide Terrorism – Root Causes of the Culture of Death,* (London: Routledge)

Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005 (May 2006), available at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/7-july-report?view=Binary, accessed 9 March 2010

Richardson, L. (2006) *What Terrorists Want,* (London: John Murray)

Richmond, O. (2003) 'Realizing Hegemony? Symbolic Terrorism and the Roots of Conflict',*Studies in Conflict and Terrorism Vol. 26, pp289-309*

Ross, J. & Gurr, T. (1989). 'Why terrorism subsides: A comparative study of trends and groups in Canada and the United States', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Jul., 1989), pp. 405-426

Roth, J. Greenberg, D. And Wille, S. (2004) *Monograph on Terrorist Financing* (Staff Report to the Commission), National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, available at: http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/staff_statements/911_TerrFin_Monograph.pdf, accessed 23rd February 2010

Sanghera, G. and Thapar-Björkert, S. (2007) 'Political Radicalism in Bradford, UK',*Islam, Politics and Security in the UK*, Chatham House Briefing Paper, October 2007, pp4-6

Schmid, A. and Jongman, A. (2005) *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature,* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing)

Silke, A. (1998) 'Cheshire-cat logic: The recurring theme of terrorist abnormality in psychological research', *Psychology, Crime & Law*, Vol. 4*,* pp51–69

Sofaer, A. (2010) 'The Best Defense? Preventative Force and International Security', *International Affairs*, Vol. 89 No. 1, pp109-118

Spalek, B. (2007) 'Disconnection and Exclusion: Pathways to radicalization?' in Abbas, T. (ed.) (2007)*Islamic Political Radicalism: A European Perspective*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) pp192-206

Stern, J. (2010) 'Mind Over Martyr: How to Deradicalize Islamist Extremists', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89 No. 1 pp95-108

Taylor, John B. (2007) *Global Financial Warriors: The Untold Story of International Finance in the Post-9/11 World* , 1 – 28 New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company

Deterrence and Terrorism in the Modern Era
Written by Alistair Nason

Taylor, J. (2010) 'The Big Question: Are efforts to tackle home-grown Muslim extremism backfiring?', *The Independent,* Wednesday 31 March, available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/the-big-question-are-efforts-to-tackle-homegrown-muslim-extremism-backfiring-1931455.html, accessed 31 March

Tellidis, I. (2010) 'terrorist conflict vs. civil peace in the Basque conflict' in Richmond, O.*Peacebuilding: critical developments and approaches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)

Travis, A. (2010) 'Stop and search powers illegal, European court rules', *The Guardian* Tuesday 12th January 2010, available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jan/12/stop-and-search-ruled-illegal, accessed: 11 March 2010

Treverton, G. (2009) *Intelligence for an Age of Terror*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Verkaik, R. (2004) 'Muslim leaders blame Blair's war on Iraq for growing alienation', *The Independent*, 1 April 2004, available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/muslim-leaders-blame-blairs-war-on-iraq-for-growing-alienation-568404.html , accessed on: 15 March 2010

Werbner, P. (2005) 'The translocation of culture: "community cohesion" and the force of multiculturalism in history', *Sociological Review*, Vo. 53 No. 4, November 2005, pp.745-768

Wilkinson, P. (2000) *Terrorism versus Democracy* (London: Frank Cass)

Wilkinson, P. (2007) *Homeland Security in the UK: Future Preparedness of Attacks since 9/11*, (London: Routledge)

—