A New Age of Violence: Terrorism as an Asymmetrical and 'Existential Threat'

https://www.e-ir.info/2017/09/27/terrorism-as-an-asymmetrical-and-existential-threat/

STROBE DRIVER, SEP 27 2017

As the threat and actions of terrorists have become more focused, their outcomes have a greater impact on populaces of nation-states. Their actions by necessity have demanded a change in thinking by governments of nation-states—particularly Western nation-states. The rethink has been brought about by the pursuit of civilian (undefended) locales and the successes individuals and terrorist groups have achieved in targeting them. The attacks on what has become colloquially known as 'soft targets'—the attack on the World Trade Center[1] being the most significant in recent times–has permitted terrorism and therefore terrorists, to attain a newfound prominence. Historically, the commentary associated with terrorism consisted only of it representing a threat which employed 'asymmetrical' tactics to disrupt populaces. Placing improvised-explosive-devices in public spaces, kidnapping and targeting government buildings is to list only several examples of commitment to what are termed 'target rich environments.'[2] In more contemporary times the political rhetoric, largely by Western politicians' have morphed terrorism into a more lethal dyad: the combination of being an asymmetrical- and an existential- threat. Adding the new terminology ascribes and signals, a fundamentally different view of terrorism and extends it beyond simply being non-state actors taking up arms against the State to that of an actor or actors, using violence as a means of personal expression. Terrorism therefore, has been given a renewed prominence and is a higher level of menace.

Since 2001, there have been numerous attacks: the Westgate shopping mall attack by Al-Shabaab in Nairobi (Kenya, 2013), in which 67 people were killed[3]; the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls by Boko Haram in Chibok (Nigeria, 2014);[4] and the shootings in the *Charlie Hedbo* office in Paris (France, 2015) by Al-Qaeda, in which 11 people were killed.[5] Notwithstanding the ferocity of the attacks they continue and in the process have drawn in other actors and due to the connecting of the words 'existential' and 'threat' by commentators—notably Western politicians—has triggered a renewed urgency to, and in, Western polity. Liberal-democracy, good governance; fair and equal elections, rule-of-law; the illegality of exogenous actors challenging the authority of the State; and transparent government is to name only several components that have been re-asserted as appropriate governance. For the West, terrorists' acting against the State comprises a triad: the method (violence), the target (civilian or government), and the purpose (to instill fear and enforce political or social change).[6]

The usage of the term 'existential threat,'—especially in political forums and the news media—it is fair to argue has gripped the public imagination and therefore, terrorism has gained a renewed vigour; and the term has further created a robust and enduring fear throughout the West. A broad yet accurate summation of why terrorism has gained such importance is the increasing number of individuals are 'finding' themselves through their personal experiences and resorting to violence in order to prove their commitment to a cause. It is the perceptions that lead to action that requires analysis and it is necessary to delve deeper into what is meant by the term 'existential'; whether terrorism fulfills the requirements within the definition. This article will also intertwine terrorism as a multi-faceted matter within societal and cultural boundaries and perspectives.

Existentialism: An Overview

Acknowledging that there are slight variations to the thematic definitions of what it is to be an 'existentialist' and to involve oneself in 'existentialism,' is dependent upon which scholarly practice and interpretation is applied. There are

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variations in the writings of Søren, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Dostoevsky and Sartre–although the schematic of emotion, 'anguish and dread'[7]—are within all of the texts. To be an existentialist by necessity means to be a person that has and applies, an existentialist approach to situations. Within this principled approach, the person—in this case a terrorist—embraces the notions and '… importance of personal experience and responsibility and the demands that they make in the individual who is seen as a free agent in a deterministic and seemingly meaningless universe'[8] An explanation of this is that a human—although Sartre refers to and uses, the gendered term 'man'—

first exists encounters himself and emerges in the world, to be defined afterwards … It is man who conceives himself, who propels himself towards existence. Man becomes nothing other than what is actually done, not what he will want to be.[9]

The aforementioned factors are therefore, and by definition, associated with an 'individual's unique position as a self-determining agent responsible for the authenticity of his or her choices.'[10] What he/she has become is informed by experiences and their decisions are their responsibility alone. The link that is able to be made here is a terrorist, when reacting through the prism of violence is effectively, using violence as an extension of their reality. A terrorist is 'made' through their own unique experiences and understandings associated with what has, or is happening to their country, people, religion, kin, tribe, culture and a multitude of other factors. Terrorism from an existential perspective is when an individual, 'surges up in the world and then defines himself afterwards … and then he will be what he makes of himself.'[11] Theoretically, the individual making the decision to carry out an act of terrorism is doing so with 'freedom, decision and responsibility … [and] these matters constitute the core of personal being.'[12] It is these factors that have contributed to the reconfiguring of terrorism from being a strategic and tactical asymmetrical-threat, to an asymmetrical- and existential-threat. In order to understand existentialism at a deeper level it is necessary to observe how it evolved into a way of deduction. Existentialism was, and remains a response to previous intellectual pursuits of reason and rationale. Existentialism was a reaction to rationalism and empiricism which has at its core the Enlightenment (1685 – 1815),[13] which is 'positivistic'[14] and holds the conviction 'that the true repositories of knowledge are the sciences.'[15] Empiricism retains the predisposition and doctrinal components of 'all knowledge comes from the sense experiences'[16] and that 'the mind is not furnished with a set of concepts in advance of experience.'[17]

The fundamental variance in the two concepts broadly-speaking is that empiricism is a theory of knowledge that comes from experience from which one makes a decision, whereas existentialism defaults to an individual being able to make decisions free from historical and social constraints—regardless of the processes involved a decision is able to be made. Whether the decision made by a person willing to commit a terrorist act is empirical or existential (or a combination of both), is a moot point as what is being analysed here the politico-application of the term 'existential,' and the concomitant considerations therein.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned, the adding of the word 'existential' to the word 'threat' offers an all-encompassing concept to the practice of terrorism. It is one which moves it as an act, to beyond a rational decision to that of a personal one. According to the political rhetoric the labeling of terrorism in this way is an acknowledgement that when a terrorist act is committed, it is free of social- and historical-constraints—the act is devoid of reason and made solely from personal accord. A drawing together of existentialism and terrorism is now able to be made.

Existentialism: Applied to Terrorism

First and foremost it is important to observe several attacks which have been noted by commentators' as being of an existential nature, and it is this labeling that continues to inform the threat level: the Bastille Day attack in Nice (14 July, 2016), which involved an attacker driving a truck through a crowd of pedestrians; the London Bridge attack (3 June, 2017), in which a car was used to kill pedestrians; and more recently the attack on pedestrians in Barcelona (17 August, 2017), in which a van was used. The type of attack is a reflection of and a response to, what the actor perceives as being an overwhelming problem, and one that he (in these cases the perpetrators were male) must respond to; be part of the cause; and play an active role in opposing the enemy—in these cases the West. What is of interest here, however, is the decision-making according to the existential paradigm and the concomitant psycho- and socio-homogenization of the populace. From this standpoint all members of the populace—military and

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civilian—are bona-fide targets and it can be surmised that the existential decision to attack is one of 'self' against an overarching enemy. The form of attack, the use of vehicles against the populace has become more frequent[18] and this is because terrorists in the tactical- and kinetic-phase of a low-intensity operation require simplicity, opportunism and vulnerability of the target. Attacks on soft-targets do have an existential basis, as an attack requires a high-degree of decision-making by the individual in the process of acquiring the necessary assets, and of following through with the attack. The existential nature of a terrorist attack is equally able to be applied to a small group or an 'army' such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria as the decision-making and homogenization components are similar. Notwithstanding these factors, attacks of this type have been used as strategic and tactical necessities by terrorists for many decades.

During the French occupation of Algeria (1954 – 1962), French military and Algerian government forces were constantly harassed by the guerrillas of the Armée de Libération Nationale (FLN), which objected to French involvement in Algerian affairs. The FLN caused constant disruptions through the use of tactical 'pin pricks'[19] … [consisting of] 'small, highly trained packets [of guerrillas] … [randomly] shelling and mortaring [French] units … a hand grenade thrown into a café here, a burst of machine gun fire on the beach there.'[20] These tactics then, as now, comprise an overall disruptive strategy that is designed to take advantage of small hit-and-run tactics; terrify the public; stretch government authorities and their allies' to an absolute limit; and exhaust government and governance capabilities. All are intended by a terrorist group, when a government is exhausted from the battles, to sue for peace on favourable terms. It is through the use of persistent minor lethal disruptions from which strategic- and political-advantage is gained.

In the Twenty-first century it is a germane observation that the number of attacks appears to be on the increase and without doubt this is due to the news cycle and the immediacy with which an attack is reported. Notwithstanding the carnage the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks 2000-2015 decreased compared to previous decades.[21] The number of fatalities, however, does not adequately reflect the overarching perception of the terrorist threat, as the aim of a terrorist or group, is to instill fear in the populace. The drastic change that has come about for authorities in the West is that they are now dealing with people 'willing to die in pursuit of the action,'[22] in a deliberate way whereas, in previous decades the aim was to survive the attack in order to fight another day. This factor brings existentialism to the fore as the decision to die for a cause (theoretically) presents a willingness to make the ultimate and most intimate of personal decision-making, one which is free of logic and reasoning.

Fighting from this existential platform presents numerous and significant problems to the authorities of nation-states—the West in particular. The most lethal form of recent disruptions have been by 'lone-wolf'[23] actors, and this is closely followed by actors working within small cells—usually referred to as 'sleeper cells.' The tactics of both have progressively concentrated on 'soft target' disruption, which essentially involves the killing of civilians in public places and from a tactical perspective these attacks have been successful in part, because the individuals' have no followers; are not part of a group; and have no hierarchy of control.[24] Authorities therefore, are reduced in their capabilities as (usually) and by necessity, authorities are pre-positioned as a response to actions; and the attacks are opportunistic and this too, favors the initiator.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned actions and the tangible- and symbolic-outcomes it can accurately be argued that the actor is an existential threat to the people immediately involved; and to the population at large—in the case of the aforementioned the three liberal-democratic nation-states of France, Britain and Spain. Other Western nation-states, because of their similarities to these three countries are also able to claim the dangers of terrorism is existential and therefore, terrorism from this perspective, does represent an existential threat to the West. With regard to individual actions terrorism has morphed beyond large group-think actions such as Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red Army Faction,[25] to being more persuasive to the individuals, and it is here that the connection to existentialism is more erudite and easily made. Individual action—in the case of a lone-wolf actor—has (theoretically) much less influence from forces external to the self, for instance other members of a group or cell, and the individual encompasses existentialism and becomes an existential-threat. There is and remains, however, in the complex narrative of terrorism, an alternate perspective of whether terrorists' deem the West to be an existential threat.

The West as an Existential Threat

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From a broader political perspective the existential threat the West represents—as a body-politic—is usually judged through the prism of political recognition, military-ties and economic benefits and the concomitant non-recognition that non-state actors may have valid claims regarding exploitative government- and economic-structures, and that repression and discrimination are present.[26] Countries with deep-seated and ongoing domestic governance issues and internal frictions are many and the West, through the auspices of the United Nations, has done little in applying comprehensive pressure to bring about change—the Philippines, Israel, Nigeria, Mali and Saudi Arabia[27] is to name only some that have within their societies long-term highly-fractious issues. The West, however, offers ongoing and systemic support for these countries. The West, usually through the mechanisms of the United Nations, persistently fails abysmally in its problem-solving. The Twenty-first century has shown the West to offer more of the same with regard to demanding change. Recent examples of the West's inept handling of crises are Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). Whilst both operations were aimed at regime change[28] it can also be argued that they represent a strategic-foothold for the West in the Middle East which reflects its colonizing history and its inabilities to exercise comprehensive change beyond strategic necessity. The West's intervention in Afghanistan by the United States of America (US) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2001—*Operation Enduring Freedom*—in order to expel the Taliban[29] is a prime example of an involvement that was and remains, ill-conceived, badly-executed and ineffectual as the Taliban continues to be a robust force. A significant part of the reason that Afghanistan is an abject failure is the West comprises the US, ISAF and its allies and a compliant and obsequious Afghan government has sought to make Afghanistan, 'something safe for us [the West], but entirely foreign to the Afghans'[30] which accords to the historic Western notions of the Orient comprising East Asia, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East as being 'silent, available to Europe for the realizations of [its] projects… .'[31]

Consequently, the level of forced intervention by the West and the way in which operations are conducted without doubt promotes an understanding among the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq that the West is an existential threat to their lands, religion, culture, tribe, kin, population and numerous other elements within their societies. Whilst this may broaden the facets of existentialism to a politico-bloc the West is nonetheless, making decisions and enacting choices. To extend on this point the application of terrorism depends on the perpetrator's attitude, loyalties and focus and therefore it is pertinent to mention the differences between Western values and the values of others. To offer a perspective of terrorism, the Taliban was considered to be a terrorist group by the US only after Bin Laden, the self-prescribed leader of Al-Qaeda, 'advised the Taliban to offer a [oil pipeline] contract to an Argentine firm … Unicol [a US firm] lost out. Washington was furious and immediately turned on the Taliban and branded it an 'outlaw regime.'[32] Terrorism as an act for Al-Qaeda and the Taliban is seen of as a reaction to what is often referred to as 'Westoxification'[33] has hinged on many issues although it comes under the macrocosm of the selective inclusion of politico-, military- and economic-principles of the West; and the (selective) application of these to Middle East, Southeast and Central Asian Muslim societies. This has often fueled much of the recalcitrance toward Western societies, and is largely directed at the US and its closest allies. The recalcitrance referred to has inspired, and then drawn in many other actors. An example of this can be traced to the Gulf War (1990- 1991), in which Osama bin Laden, (and his Al-Qaeda followers) did not approve of Saddam's military forces invading Kuwait, however, Bin Laden's greatest objections were the US' maintenance of the Saudi Arabian monarchy; the monarchy's continuing subjugation of Islam's holiest land; and the deployment of US troops on Islam's holy Saudi Arabian soil to fight a fellow Arab state.[34] The West, from this point of view has honed the focus of those that would react against its policies and practices.

The ongoing and consistent animosity toward the West by exogenous and non-state actors in the aforementioned clearly offers examples of the West being deemed an existential threat to their societies.

Conclusion

British forces in Syria, US forces in Iraq and US and Australian forces in Afghanistan are three locations which have presented targets for exogenous actors. The US in Iraq and US and ISAF in Afghanistan are possibly the most significant kinetic interventions with regard to enforcing and reinforcing a Euro-centric/Eurocentrism[35] model of good government and governance. As a result they have drawn the most ire and ongoing reactive violence from exogenous groups; and this shows no sign of decreasing.

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Within the realm of existentialism and as this article has borne out, no power has a dominance over what an existential threat comprises and moreover, there is some disagreement regarding whether terrorism is an existential threat to developed Western countries.[36] What is an existential-threat is dependent on perspectives. Whilst all of the reasons that exogenous groups attack governments—particularly Western ones—is beyond the debate in this article, and bearing in mind there is unlikely to be any unique cause for terrorism,[37] as there is no key event identifying the moment that an actor views himself or herself as a soldier fighting for comrades and cause,[38] an historical underpinning that drives violent reactions by exogenous groups does have a primary focus. Groups and individuals that present and are subsequently involved in fighting Western forces in non-Western environments essentially, 'seek to liberate themselves and their co-nationals from what they perceive to be a colonial situation or a repressive government.'[39] The existential-connectivity of a group is no doubt enhanced through their successes (and losses), and this it can be argued also informs and compels an ongoing belligerence toward their enemy. Thus, ISAF is a force that requires an existential response from an exogenous actor. The followers it is safe to argue, embrace relevant political and cultural ideologies of the group, which in ideologies in turn 'drive the actions'[40] and this relates to lone-wolf as well as group actors. All in some way contribute to 'the interests and desires of the individual become secondary to the group [or individual cause] and he/she will take any steps to advance its [and if the act is a lone-wolf attack it must, by necessity, contribute to the group] goals.'[41] The actions may be different dependent on the actors, however, this article argues that they are driven by observing the West as an existential threat to their religion, culture, and tribe along with many other aspects of their lives and moreover, the acts of violence will continue as long as the West is perceived as an existential threat.

Acknowledging that existentialism is a profoundly nuanced subject matter and one that encompasses many more aspects than those mentioned is a germane yet necessary observation to make. The process of terrorism morphing from a violent asymmetrical-threat to an asymmetrical- and existential-threat, signals a profound change in its trajectory by Western governments. Whether it has been brought about by numerous failed models of interventionism, it is necessary for Western governments to label terrorism as an existential-threat rather than an empirical- or rational-threat. This is due to labeling a threat in this way disentangles the West from accepting and admitting reactions against it may have a reasoned and rationale evidence-base. It is politicians' in the West that have controlled the debate, and observed the catastrophic consequences of the attacks, and have sought to prove that terrorism and terrorists are free from judging their actions through the prism of negative Western influences. Regardless of the way in which the West has approached interventionism and the terrorist threat inspired because of it, the fundamental strategy of interventionism remains ensconced in a flawed US model of action. An action that the West nevertheless, persists in following. This is writ large in the following observation

The American tradition [of fighting wars and of intervention] also tends to neglect the lesson, learned repeatedly in dozens of twentieth-century wars, that the only way to defeat an insurgency campaign is not to attack the enemy but instead to protect and win over the people.[42]

Whilst the West continues with the abovementioned strategy—and follows the US model of action—exogenous actors will continue to perceive the West as an existential threat and their violent reactions will continue. Soft-targets will remain at the forefront of exogenous actors preferred method of objecting to, and repulsing the West.

Notes

[1] For an overarching account of this action. See: 'World trade Center Disaster.' *United States Search and Rescue Task Force.* http://www.ussartf.org/world_trade_center_disaster.htm

[2] James Lutz and Brenda Lutz. *Global Terrorism.* Oxon: Routledge, 2013, 51.

[3] 'Kenya's Westgate shopping mall reopens after tragedy.' BBCNews. 18 July, 2015. *http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33578890*

[4] ee:'Nigeria Chibok abductions: What we know.' *BBCNews.*

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http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32299943

[5] 'Charlie Hedbo attack: Track how events unfolded.' *ABCNews.* 8 Jan, 2015. http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-01-08/paris-newspaper-attack-mapped/6006110

[6] Harvey Kushner. *Encyclopedia of Terrorism.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003, 359.

[7] See: 'Existentialism.' *Dictionary.com/British Dictionary.*

[8] See: M. Rajimanickam. *Modern General Psychology.*' Kachehri Ghat: Bhargava Book House, 2000, 37. https://books.google.com.au/books?id=eJfXkj56H0kC&pg=PA37&dq=deterministic+and+seemingly+meaningless+universe

[9] John-Paul Sartre. *Existentialism is a Humanism.*1945. Edited by Glyn Taylor. Arizona State University. http://www.public.asu.edu/~jmlynch/273/documents/sartre-existentialism-squashed.pdf

[10] I have deliberately suspended the gendered language of the text by Sartre to encompass male and female in this description. Sartre, however describes these actions reflecting 'a deep responsibility for all humanity.' See: http://www.public.asu.edu/~jmlynch/273/documents/sartre-existentialism-squashed.pdf

This essay, therefore argues that an act of terrorism, is considered to be an act on behalf of all humanity and the betterment of it which encompasses fellow humans that believe in their cause, and the saving of those that do not. The cause being exercised through the prism of a certain set of values via recalcitrance and in this case through the usage of violence. The values, whether they be freedom, religion, manumission or a multitude of other precedents is not what is of interest here, as it is the act of violence and its motivations through the prism of existentialism that informs this essay.

[11] Existentialism begins with 'man as existent rather than man as a thinking subject.' Sartre's theorizing and philosophising considers man to be the subject, what happens to him is what makes him, it is the philosophy of the subject rather than the object. See: John McQuarrie. *Existentialism. An introduction, guide and assessment.* London: Penguin Books, 1973, 14 -17.

See: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/existentialism?fallbackFrom=essential-british-english

[12] *Existentialism. An introduction, guide and assessment,* 16.

[13] There is much debate amongst scholars when the Enlightenment began and ended, and feminists' now argue that because women and the poor were excluded the term does not represent an accurate description of history. Notwithstanding the aforementioned and for the purpose of this essay the Enlightenment is 1685 – 1815. See: 'Enlightenment.' *History.* http://www.history.com/topics/enlightenment

[14] 'Positivism' was founded by Auguste Comte and is concerned with positive facts outweighing speculation. See: 'Positivism' *Dictionary.com* http://www.dictionary.com/browse/positivism?s=t

[15] David Cooper. *Existentialism. A Reconstruction.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, 15.

[16] Jack Reynolds. *Understanding Existentialism.* Chesham: Acumen Publishing, 2006, 111.

[17] See: 'empiricism.' *Dictionary.com/British Dictionary.* http://www.dictionary.com/browse/empiricism

[18] For a comprehensive list of terrorist attacks 1970 – 2016. See: The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. *Global Terrorism Database*, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

[19] Alistair Horne. *A Savage War of Peace. Algeria 1954 – 1962.* New York: New York Review of Books, 2006,

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413.

[20] *A Savage War of Peace. Algeria 1954 – 1962*, 413.

[21] Emma Luxton. 'Is terrorism in Europe at an historical high?' *World Economic Forum.* 24 May, 2016. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/terrorism-in-europe-at-historical-high/

[22] 'Is terrorism in Europe at an historical high?'

[23] There are four 'types' of 'lone-wolf' attackers and for the purpose of this essay it is the second 'type' that is of most interest here. The second type is the religious lone-wolf, who perpetrates terrorism in the name of Islam, Judaism or some other belief system.' See: Jeffrey Simon. 'What makes a lone-wolf terrorist so dangerous?' 18 April, 2013. *UCLANews.* http://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/what-makes-lone-wolfe-terrorists-245316

[24] *UCLANews.* http://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/what-makes-lone-wolfe-terrorists-245316

[25] The Baader-Meinhof Group was formed in 1968 and had its origins in the German protest university movement of the 1970s. The group engaged in bank robberies, arson and terrorism. The group decried the US as an Imperialist power and labelled the West German government as fascist and a holdover from the Nazi era. The group was also involved in kidnapping and assassinations and had at least 22 core members. See: John Jenkins. 'Red Army Faction.' The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. *Encyclopædia Britannica.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/Red-Army-Faction

[26] *Global Terrorism,* 16.

[27] President Rodrigo Duterte's of the Philippines ongoing 'war on drugs' has been criticised by*Human Rights Watch* due to the number of unlawful extra-judicial killings. See: https://www.hrw.org/tag/philippines-war-drugs. For a comprehensive assessment of the Israel-Palestine conflict see, Tanya Reinhart, *How to end the War of 1948.;* 'Nigeria: Corruption Fuelling Police Abuses.' See: *Human Rights Watch.* 17 Aug, 2010. https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/17/nigeria-corruption-fueling-police-abuses.; France had been stating for months in 2012, that a West African military force should bring control to Mali. French President Hollande acted and sent troops to Mali in January, 2013—after the Malian Army had been surprised by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. See: John Barry. 'Mali – The French Way of War.' *The European Institute.* https://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/167-european-affairs/ea-january-2013/1683-mali-the-french-way-of-war; The Saudi Arabia government 'promised bin Laden that the foreigners would leave as soon as the [1991 Gulf] war was over. But American forces were in Saudi Arabia a year after the Gulf War ended, and bin Laden felt betrayed. See: Cindy Combs. *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century.* Boston: Longman, 2013, 26.

[28] Joseph Collins. *Lessons Encountered. Learning from the Long War.* Washington: NDU Press, 2015. http://ndu press.ndu.edu/Publications/Books/Lessons-Encountered/Article/915829/chapter-1-initial-planning-and-execution-in-afghanistan-and-iraq/

[29] For a comprehensive assessment of the Taliban in Afghanistan see, 'Soldiers killed as Taliban storms Kandahar base.' *Al-Jazeera.* 27 July, 2017 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/soliders-killed-taliban-storms-kandahar-base-170726080235545.html

[30] Andrew Rohrer. 'Why did we fail in the Afghan war? Because we didn't understand the place.' *Foreign Policy.* 12 Feb, 2015. http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/12/why-did-we-fail-in-the-afghan-war-because-we-didnt-understand-the-place/

[31] Edward Said. *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient.* London: Pengion Books, 1978, 94.

[32] Eric Margolis. *War at the Top of the World.* New York: Routledge, 2002, 94.

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[33] Samuel Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* New York: Simon & Shuster, 2011*,* 212-213

[34] Gilles Kepel. *The War for Muslim Minds. Islam and the West.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004, 98-99.

[35] The definition of 'Eurocentric' is to view societies through the prism of European and Anglo-American definitions of the societies and the World. See: 'Definition of Eurocentric.' *Merriam-Webster.* https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Eurocentric

[36] For a comprehensive understanding of terrorism being a threat to the balance-of-power in Western and non-Western countries see: Peter Jennings. 'Is terrorism an existential threat?' *The Counterterrorism Yearbook 2017*. Australian Strategic Policy Institute. 13 April, 2017. https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/terrorism-existential-threat/

[37] Charles Tilly. "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists,' *Sociological Theory*. Edited by Mustafa Emirbayer. California: Sage Publications, 2004, Vol 22, 5-13.

[38] Marc Sageman. *Misunderstanding Terrorism.* Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2017, 143.

[39] James Lutz and Brenda Lutz. *Global Terrorism.* Oxon: Routledge, 2013, 15.

[40] *Global Terrorism,* 14.

[41] Ami Pedahzur. *Suicide Terrorism.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005, 7.

[42] Thomas Ricks. *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq.* New York: Penguin, 2007, 5-6.

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Strobe Driver completed a PhD in War Studies in 2010 and since then has been writing on War, Conflict, Terrorism and Asia-Pacific Security. During 2018 he was awarded a year-long Taiwan, ROC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fellowship to write an independent analysis of Taiwan – China relations with a focus on when and whether a conflict would break out. The analysis is entitled 'Asia-Pacific and Cross-Strait Machinations: Challenges for Taiwan in the Nascent Phase of Pax-Sino.' All other writings by Strobe can be found on his blog.