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TERRORISM

AND **HOMELAND SECURITY**



JONATHAN R. WHITE

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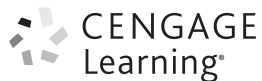
NINTH EDITION

Terrorism and Homeland Security



Jonathan R. White

*Frederik Meijer Honors College
Grand Valley State University*



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Jonathan R. White

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Dedicated to:

Gabe and Sam, my buddies for life,

Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:9

*With love,
Paw Paw*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JONATHAN WHITE is professor of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Frederik Meijer Honors College of Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan. He also served as an instructor in the Bureau of Justice Assistance, State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training program for 15 years. He has lectured in the FBI Academy, in the Department of State Anti-Terrorism Assistance program, in all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, and in law enforcement agencies throughout the world. The Founding Director of GVSU's School of Criminal Justice and former Dean of Social Science, he holds a PhD in Criminal Justice and Criminology from Michigan State University and a Master of Divinity from Western Theological Seminary.



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I began work on the first edition of this book 30 years ago and have reworked it several times to describe constant changes in causes, groups, tactics, and issues. Terrorists constantly employ new methods of murder and destruction as the face of terrorism changes. Yet, no matter how terrorism mutates, one aspect remains constant. Technology provides the means for a relatively small group of violent people to terrorize nation-states, including superpowers.

Professors who have used previous editions of this book have asked for changes and updates to this text. In addition, they have offered valuable critiques, suggestions for new material, and corrections of factual errors. Many of them asked me to reduce historical coverage and to increase discussions of trends and future directions. I hope this new addition meets their expectations, although I do utilize historical discussions to place contemporary events and probable future issues in context.

While this is a new edition, the purpose of the book remains the same. It is designed to introduce criminal justice and other social science students to the field of terrorism and homeland security. The book is also meant to provide a pragmatic background for the law enforcement, intelligence, and military communities. It is a basic, practical introduction for people who will or already do face the threat of terrorism. Many theories, polemics, and models are summarized and compared, but readers will find no grand theory. The purpose is to expose readers to a vast array of issues, campaigns, theories, and opinions.

As stated in the previous editions, issues surrounding terrorism are emotionally charged. Therefore, the information in this text is presented from a variety of positions. The purpose is to explain various points of view without taking sides. Students are exposed to differing interpretations of issues that have spawned heated controversies. Hopefully, the text presents enough information to allow students to make informed decisions.

Overview

This text is designed to provide readers with basic information. The purpose is to provide the background for understanding terrorist movements in many parts of the world. Part I focuses on practical criminology. It begins with a chapter on definitional and historical issues. This is followed by a discussion of criminology, processes of radicalization, and various types of terrorism. Chapter 3 is now completely devoted to the financial aspects of terrorism at the request of multiple professors throughout the United States. It also discusses virtual economies. Chapter 4 has new information about the media and terrorism. One of the foremost changes is an examination of research on the new types of media that are influencing terrorist behavior. Chapter 5 has an enhanced discussion of gender roles and the increasing involvement of women in terrorism. It also discusses tactics and force multipliers.

The remainder of the book builds on the information in Part I. Part II focuses on international terrorism motivated by ethnicity and nationalism. I have included presentations on Boko Haram and al Shabaab in Chapter 7 of Part II even though they claim to be part of a larger jihadist movement. I believe they are more motivated by tribal and familial issues than religion, but these discussions would have fit equally well in the chapter about jihadist violence. Part III examines international ideological and religious terrorism. The final section deals with domestic terrorism and homeland security.

New to This Edition

There are several new items in the ninth edition. Here is a summary of the major additions and updates.

In Every Chapter:

- More focus on current activities and future projections
- Hypothetical examples used to illustrate major points
- General chapter summaries and specific summaries of new chapter objectives

Chapter 1:

- Updated examples of terrorist activities
- Analysis of comparative definitions
- Review of impact of definitions on policy
- Streamlined historical material highlighting major events

Chapter 2:

- Updated criminology with a new emphasis on the value of practical criminology for law enforcement and security forces
- Added emphasis on the importance of recognizing terrorist behavior for state and local law enforcement
- Discussion of lone wolf attacks
- Updated cases related to recent terrorist events and new case studies
- Enhanced discussion of radicalization processes
- Expanded examination of prison radicalization
- Added summary of the debate about the existence of radicalization

Chapter 3:

- Refocused exclusively on terrorist financing
- Defined terrorist financing and money laundering
- Comparison of terrorist financing and money laundering
- Review of national and international efforts to control terrorist financing and money laundering
- Discussion of underground economies
- Examination of private and virtual economies
- Expanded examination of the hawala network
- Discussion of gathering intelligence on financial terrorism

Chapter 4:

Analysis of social media
 Updated research findings on empirical and qualitative studies of media-terrorism
 Comparison of “old media” and “new media”
 Analysis of media biases when covering gender issues

Chapter 5:

Reorganization of chapter structure
 Examination of all subjects, including gender, within a tactical framework
 Summary of recent research on gender and terrorism
 Examination of stereotypes of femininity in Muslim women
 Analysis of the impact of terrorism and counterterrorism on Arab women
 Summary of research on gender and suicide bombing

Chapter 6:

Political analysis of separatist terrorism
 Role of negotiation in separatist terrorism
 Speculation about future potential areas of separatist terrorism

Chapter 7:

Description of nationalistic terrorism
 Reduced discussion of anticolonial historical material
 Addition of recent research findings
 Analysis of endemic violence in Nigeria
 Discussion of political situations in Somalia and Nigeria
 Addition of in-depth discussion of Boko Haram
 Analysis of African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)
 Addition of new material on al Shabaab and its relation to endemic terrorism

Chapter 8:

Summary of the Syrian civil war
 Explanation of changes in international jihadist terrorism
 Summary of terrorism in Syrian civil war with reference to Muslim versus Muslim fighting

Chapter 9:

Coverage of summer 2014 fighting in Gaza
 Summary of Hamas encounters with the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS)
 Impact of the Syrian civil war on the Hezbollah–Hamas relationship
 New analysis of the rise of Fatah and associated splinter groups
 Review of the future of Hamas–Palestinian Authority unity pledge
 Discussion of the issues from both Israeli and Palestinian views
 Updated assessment of al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades

Chapter 10:

Discussion of United Self Defense Forces (AUC) in conjunction with death squad terrorism
Removal of dated material concerning Europe and Nepal
Discussion of Bacrim
Completely revamped section on the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), including peace negotiations
Updated information on Naxalite violence in India

Chapter 11:

Introduction to twenty-first-century Jihadi Salafism
Addition of modern jihadist ideologues Abu Bakr Naji and Abu Musab al Suri
Review of material on *A Call for Global Islamic Resistance* and *The Management of Savagery*
Summary of al Qaeda core's relationship with al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)
Analysis of the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS)
Summary of current activities of ISIS
Examination of Al Qaeda core's split with ISIS
Expanded discussion of al Qaeda franchise with new analysis, including al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Mokhtar Belmokhtar, Ansar al Sharia–Libya, Ansar al Sharia–Tunisia, Ansar Bayt al Maqdis, and al Nusra
Addition of material on new jihadist groups

Chapter 12:

Summary of political debates about the meaning of domestic terrorism
Inclusion of background on Public Enemy Number 1 (PEN1)
Examination of mass shootings
Analysis of racial terrorism and new work on the Ku Klux Klan
Addition of section on extremism versus terrorism
Summary of updated information about domestic jihadist attacks
Presentation of new empirical data on ecoterrorism

Chapter 13:

Analysis of emerging threats to the U.S. homeland
Reorganization of chapter based on input from reviewers
Questioning of the need of intelligence reform
Review of methods of verifying intelligence assumptions

Chapter 14:

Inclusion of new RAND study on information sharing and homeland security
Future analysis of homeland security needs

Chapter 15:

Expiration of some provisions in the USA PATRIOT Act
 Summary of the impact of the USA FREEDOM Act
 Response by various stakeholders to the USA FREEDOM Act
 Critique of National Security Letters
 Examination of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISA)
 Examination of bulk data gathering techniques

Chapter 16:

Examination of community policing and homeland security
 Evaluation of law enforcement militarization and use of military equipment
 Militarization of the “war on drugs” metaphor impact on community partnerships
 Review of law enforcement tactical units

Ancillaries

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PART **1**



Terrorism in Historical and Social Contexts

- 1** The Shifting Definition of Terrorism
- 2** Practical Criminology, Radicalization, and Types of Terrorism
- 3** Terrorist Financing and Money Laundering
- 4** Terrorism and the Media
- 5** Force Multipliers, Gender Roles, and Tactics

CHAPTER 1

The Shifting Definition of Terrorism

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- ▶ Explain the reason *terrorism* is difficult to define.
- ▶ Summarize the impact of context on definitions of *terrorism*.
- ▶ Explain the importance of defining *terrorism*.
- ▶ Outline contemporary attempts to define *terrorism*.
- ▶ Explain where the term *terrorism* originated and how the meaning changed during the history of the nineteenth century.
- ▶ Explain how socialism, anarchism, and communism were mistakenly associated with *terrorism*.
- ▶ Summarize the differing meanings of *terrorism* in Russia from the People's Will through the rise of Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin.
- ▶ Summarize the early history of the Irish Republican Army.
- ▶ Define the term *selective terrorism* as used by Michael Collins.



FBI Headquarters, Washington DC

During World War II, soldiers on several fronts often executed prisoners. It was a routine event on the Eastern Front, and Japanese and Americans killed captives on Guadalcanal. German SS troops executed more than 200 American captives during the Battle of the Bulge. We may call these actions murder today, but few people would use the term *terrorism* to describe them.

In the summer of 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) (also known as the Islamic State, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIL, and Daesh) released videos showing the beheading of American and British hostages. ISIS also filmed mass executions of Iraqi military prisoners. Most of the world's leaders called these murders, and American political leaders frequently refer to ISIS as a terrorist nation/state.

The difference between these two examples might cause heated and passionate debate because *terrorism* is difficult to define. Both of these actions involved a form of terror, but the term *terrorism* is applied selectively. In addition, the meaning of *terrorism* changes over time. The term was originally used to describe the actions of the French government. It would be

applied to groups fighting against capitalism a few decades later and would be employed to describe both Russian revolutionaries and eventually the Soviet government. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the term became synonymous with nationalistic, revolutionary, radical religious, and nihilist groups.

Defining the term is not an academic exercise. The definition helps to determine policy, behavior, and international opinion. It becomes part of a nation's application of military force and its criminal justice system. Defining terrorism can literally be a matter of life and death. This chapter will focus on the problems of defining terrorism and offer a brief history of its shifting meaning.

Difficulties with Definitions

Terrorism is difficult to define because it is not a physical entity that has dimensions to be measured, weighed, and analyzed. It is a **social construct**; that is, terrorism is defined by different people within shifting social and political realities (Schmid, 1992). The term has spawned heated debate because it is nebulous and pejorative. As a result, there are many definitions of terrorism and no single accepted understanding.

Some scholars have opted for a simple definition stating that terrorism is an act or threatened act of violence against innocent people for political purposes (Laqueur, 1987, 1999). Some nations have criminalized terrorism, defining it as a violation of law (Mullendore and White, 1996). Alex Schmid tries to synthesize various positions in an **academic consensus definition** (see Schmid and Jongman, 2005, pp. 1–38, 70–111). Schmid says most definitions of the term have two characteristics: (1) someone is terrorized and (2) the meaning of the term is derived from the terrorists' targets and victims. Many victims of government violence claim that repression is terrorism, while governments tend to define terrorism as subnational violent political opposition (Bady, 2003). There is no standard meaning of the term *terrorism*.

H. H. A. Cooper (1976, 1977b, 1978, 2001) first approached the problem by stating that there is “a problem in the problem definition.” We can agree that terrorism is a problem, but we cannot agree on what terrorism is.

Definitions Influenced by Social Context

The **social context** surrounding the term *terrorism* influences how it is defined. Consider the following examples and the differing meanings of *terrorism*:

- A. In early 2010, a colleague of mine returned from the U.S. State Department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance program in Jordan. He was working with 27 Jordanian police officers—12 Christians, 12 Muslims (all Sunnis), and three agnostics. They never argued about religion, but they were appalled when he outlined the operational methods of Hezbollah. The reason: The Jordanian police officers vehemently stated that Hezbollah was not a terrorist organization. It was a militia fighting the Israeli Defense Forces. Hezbollah is a Shi'ite group, but that made no difference to the Sunni Muslim, Christian, and agnostic police officers. In their minds, Hezbollah was a legitimate militia resisting Israeli aggression.
- B. In January 2015, three men claiming to belong to al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and influenced by ISIS attacked the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, a French satirical magazine based in Paris. They murdered 13 cartoonists who had satirized Islam and then killed two police officers. They would murder four more people before they were killed a few days later. Every government in the

social construct: The way people view reality. Groups construct a framework around a concept, defining various aspects of their lives through the meanings they attribute to the construct.

academic consensus definition: A complex definition based on the work of Alex Schmid. It combines common elements of the definitions used by leading scholars in the field of terrorism.

social context: As used in this book, the historical, political, and criminological circumstances at a given point in time. It is the way people in a culture define actions and issues within a society's general outlook on reality. The social context affects the way terrorism is defined.

West and most governments around the world called this terrorism. More than 1 million people and 40 world leaders marched through Paris to show solidarity against terrorism. Yet, one Islamic leader asked why the world made so much ado over the deaths of 17 people when hundreds of Muslims were being killed around the world every day. He said Western deaths were considered to be the result of terrorism, but Muslim deaths passed unnoticed.

- C. The definition becomes even more complicated in war zones. In Afghanistan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces are fighting two major enemies, a loose association of Central Asian fundamentalist Muslims called the Students, or the Taliban, and another terrorist group known as al Qaeda. News reporters, politicians, and military officers often lump the two organizations into a single group of terrorists, but there are profound differences. Al Qaeda operates as an international terrorist group, while the Taliban forms divergent regional militias and uses **selective terrorism** to support guerrilla operations. More important the theological tradition of the Taliban differs from al Qaeda's infatuation with a violent interpretation of a twentieth-century militant Egyptian theologian. Linking the two organizations under the single umbrella of terrorism results in a profound misunderstanding of the Afghan war (Christia and Semple, 2009).
- D. On November 5, 2009, **Nidal Malik Hasan** went on a shooting spree at Fort Hood, Texas, killing 13 people. There were many reports that Hasan had embraced radical Islam and that he had decided to attack soldiers at Fort Hood as part of a global jihad against the West (Simpson and Gorman, 2009). A former high-ranking intelligence officer immediately called this an act of terrorism, yet many government officials stated that it was the act of a mentally deranged soldier (Sherwell and Spillius, 2009). In this case, even the country that had been victimized by murder seemed unable to decide on a definition of terrorism.
- E. There have been dozens of attacks by domestic right-wing extremists since a bombing in Oklahoma City in 1995. In addition, groups representing a violent interpretation of Christianity, anti-government groups, sovereign citizens, and members of the common-law court movement have killed more than 30 police officers in the past few years. When attacks against law enforcement officers occur, state, local, and federal authorities charge suspects with violations of statutory law. Neither the media nor the public routinely refer to those convicted of such crimes as terrorists, yet their actions are similar to attacks that are called *terrorism overseas*.

selective terrorism: A term used by Michael Collins during the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921). Collins did not launch indiscriminate terror attacks. Rather, he selectively targeted the British military, the police force it sponsored, and the people who supported the United Kingdom.

Nidal Malik Hasan: (b. 1970) an American soldier of Palestinian descent. Hasan was a U.S. Army psychiatrist who became self-radicalized and embraced militant Islam. In November 2009, he went on a shooting spree at Fort Hood, Texas, killing 13 people and wounding almost three dozen others. He was wounded, arrested, and charged with several counts of murder.

The Importance of Defining Terrorism

Aside from the social context, the term *terrorism* is difficult to define because it is pejorative. It is loaded with politically explosive meanings. Therefore, the manner in which terrorism is defined has political consequences. Only nation-states have the freedom to apply the label to their enemies, and the term dehumanizes the people who receive the label. When people are deemed to be terrorists, governments give their security forces expanded powers of investigation, search, and detention. In many cases, they utilize military force to kill opponents without thought of capture or benefit of trial. For example, the United States has employed missile attacks from drones that not only kill terrorists but also destroy innocent civilians in the surrounding area.

Terrorists are treated differently from criminals and other enemies of the state. They are atypical criminals entitled to neither human rights nor civil liberties. This is especially true when terrorists operate from foreign bases. Representatives of the

state may take actions outside the law because people supporting the state frequently believe that terrorists are somehow less than human. The state also has the power to look at all of its citizens and people from all parts of the world as potential terrorists. Therefore, governments can expand social control and limit civil liberties in response to terrorism (Cebeci, 2012).

Definitions of terrorism are also important because they impact policies. Haviland Smith (2008), a retired counterterrorist specialist from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), believes the United States has been less than effective in countering terrorism because of the way the terms *terrorism* and *insurgency* are conflated. Political leaders have used the terms interchangeably, but terrorism, he says, is generally a law enforcement and intelligence issue, while insurgencies are primarily military matters. In addition, the United States sends the wrong policy message to the world. If you are an insurgent against a repressive government that is friendly toward the United States, you can be called a terrorist. Conversely, if you are fighting against a government with an anti-American policy, you are a freedom fighter. This inconsistency has resulted in many poor policy decisions, according to Smith.



Self-Check

- > Why is terrorism difficult to define?
- > What does Cooper mean by saying there is a problem with the problem definition?
- > What examples illustrate contextual meanings of *terrorism*?

Attempts to Define Terrorism

Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman (2006, pp. 5–6) surveyed many scholars who specialize in terrorism and looked for commonalities in the definitions they received. Not surprisingly, the use of force or violence appeared in 83.5% of the responses. Political activities were mentioned in 65% of the definitions, while fear appeared in 47%. About one-third of the definitions mentioned differences between victims and targets, planned actions, and tactical methods. Interestingly, only 6% of the respondents pointed to endemic criminal activity in terrorism despite the fact that almost all acts of terrorism involve violations of criminal law.

Definitions and Policy

Ayla Schbley (2003) believes that it necessary to emphasize the criminal nature of terrorism and move the focus beyond debates about politics. If defined from a political perspective, justifying terrorism simply depends on a person's viewpoint. This is wrong, he writes, because violence targeting defenseless symbolic victims can never be justified by any legal authority. Terrorism is a crime. Therefore, he defines terrorism as any violent act upon symbolic civilians and their property.

Boaz Ganor (2002) sees attacks on civilians as the key element differentiating terrorists from legitimate revolutionaries. Ganor says that debates about the meaning of terrorism are centered in theory, but in the practical world, they need to be defined by terms that transcend theoretical issues. A clear definition is crucial for a nation's policy and for international cooperation. If the world community is not clear about the meaning of terrorism, terrorists will continue to operate under the guise of legitimacy.

Ganor also argues that confusion arises because policymakers in the West use incorrect terms and phrases to describe terrorism. The reality of terrorism is glossed

over with casual references to “guerrillas,” “the underground,” and “national liberation.” As a result, many Western governments get caught in a semantic trap and fail to develop a cohesive international policy against terrorism. Terrorists use the same labels to justify their activities.

The solution, Ganor believes, is to focus on noncombatant civilians. When civilians are the exclusive objects of attacks, the resulting actions are terrorism. Accordingly, he says that terrorism is the use or threatened use of violence against civilians or civilian targets to attain a political objective. Violence is the essence of terrorism, the aim is always political, and civilians are the targets. These features distinguish terrorism from insurgencies and guerrilla wars.

By utilizing the terminology of conventional and unconventional wars, Ganor believes it is possible to differentiate among multiple forms of violence. For example, “soldiers” target military objectives, even though civilians are frequently killed in subsequent fighting. “War criminals,” however, target civilians, their prisoners, and other noncombatants. “Guerrillas” attack military and security forces as well as political leadership. Terrorists are different. They target civilians to send a symbolic message.

If Western governments would recognize the threat to civilians, several things could be accomplished, Ganor believes. Terrorism could be defined, and nations could craft international agreements for antiterrorist cooperation. In addition, legislation could be enacted, offensive action could be authorized, and punishment could be sanctioned. Nations that support terrorist groups could legitimately be identified and diplomatically isolated.

Eric Reitan (2010) approaches the problem differently. He argues that attacks on military and security forces can be acts of terrorism. Traditional definitions, he writes, do not distinguish terrorism from criminal violence or any form of war. Like Ganor, he recognizes the importance of the target, but he expands the victims beyond civilians. Civilians, security forces, and political leaders are a “**Group Target**,” he says. If forces outside the law attack them for political purposes, it is terrorism.

Group Target: A collection of a particular people who are attacked by terrorists simply because they belong to a particular group.

Sound policies, Reitan writes, demand that governments distinguish terrorism from all other forms of violence. The Group Target concept does that. For example, Timothy McVeigh parked a truck loaded with explosive fertilizer by the Murrah federal building on April 19, 1995. One hundred and sixty-eight people were killed, including many toddlers in a daycare center. He did so because he hated the American government and its symbols. Anyone belonging to or associated with the U.S. government was McVeigh’s enemy, including any law enforcement or military personnel who happened to be in the building. Reitan believes that the Murrah building symbolized a Group Target to McVeigh.

Reitan concludes that group targeting is the distinguishing feature of terrorism. If an attack is launched against a target simply because it or its members belong to a particular group, the action is terrorism.

An Insurmountable Problem?

Defining terrorism is important and it impacts policy, but H. H. A. Cooper’s observation remains: There is a problem with the problem definition. The problem causes some researchers to suggest that the definitional dilemma may be insurmountable. Other researchers, analysts, and practitioners say the definition of terrorism is irrelevant. Some people even conclude that terrorism may be justified at times.

Jacqueline Hodgson and Victor Hodges (2013) write that defining terrorism is crucial because it identifies the people who are terrorists and it defines the specific acts that can be legitimately called terrorism. Yet, it is impossible to provide a precise

definition of terrorism. Three factors inhibit efforts to describe terrorism. First, if the definition is too narrow and excludes attacks on state officials, security forces, or military targets, any resulting law or policy will be of little practical value. Conversely, if the definition includes the state and its personnel, the government can use its power to label legitimate freedom fighters as terrorists.

Hodgson and Hodges conclude that when political leaders are given the power to apply the label, they make judgments they are not qualified to make. Labels are applied inappropriately at times as a result, but the public must accept this because governments need antiterrorism policies and antiterrorism laws. Therefore, it is necessary to live with imperfection and to define the indefinable. As a result, enforcement will be discretionary and arbitrary, and at times, policies and actions will be unjust. They say there is no choice except to tolerate some form of injustice within policies, laws, and enforcement because doing so is necessary to take antiterrorist actions.

There is another approach. Nearly 30 years ago, Walter Laqueur (1987, p. 72) offered a simple definition of terrorism, and it is similar to the definition given by the RAND Corporation's longtime counterterrorism expert Brian Jenkins. Terrorism is the use or threatened use of force against innocent victims for political purposes. (You may notice how closely this resembles Boaz Ganor's definition. Ganor replaces *innocent* with *civilian*.) Yet, Laqueur seems not to worry about the definition. He adds a wry comment about the definition in a footnote. No doubt, he says, academics will write volumes about the definition of terrorism in papers and maybe even entire books on the subject. Ironically, none of the publications will help anyone understand the topic.

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2011; accessed February 2015) has an interesting entry in its discussion of the definition of terrorism. There may be situations where an action seems to be terrorism but is not. If terrorists can demonstrate that their actions will correct an evil action that is bad enough to justify stopping it with violence and the outcome is good enough to compensate for their actions, the perpetrators may not be committing an act of terrorism. This is true only if there is no other method for achieving the outcome and the targets are limited to military, security, and political actors. No other people or properties may be attacked. (Laqueur might add that these points provide material for an interesting intellectual debate, but they do not add one iota to our understanding of terrorism.)



Self-Check

- > What are the most common concepts in scholarly definitions of terrorism?
- > How does Ganor's definition differ from other definitions?
- > Is the definition of terrorism important for national policy?

Shifts of Meanings in History

Entire nations change their approach to national security, intelligence, and law enforcement based on the way they define terrorism. This can be demonstrated by recent changes in American defense and law enforcement policies in response to terrorism, and this U.S. experience does not represent a new trend. When the term *terrorism* was first introduced in Western history during the late eighteenth century, governments adjusted their policies based on the way they defined the threat. They continued to do so for the next two centuries.

Terrorism did not begin in a vacuum. Many Americans became acutely aware of modern terrorism after the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and after the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995. Yet, modern terrorism began decades, even centuries, before these events. Terrorism, at least from the Western perspective, grew from the French Revolution (1789–1799), and the word was originally used to describe the actions of a government, not of a band of revolutionaries. Terrorism developed throughout the nineteenth century, changing forms and ideology. The meaning of terrorism changed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well. As Christopher Hewitt (2003, pp. 23–45) observes, the definition of terrorism and antiterrorist policies changes with political tides. The political atmosphere, in turn, changes with history.

The Origins of Terrorism in Western History

The meaning of terrorism has changed with political tides in Western history. Terrorism began as government repression in France, but the French transformed its meaning by referring to Spanish guerrilla tactics in the Napoleonic Wars. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the word was used to describe the actions of revolutionaries. Nationalists copied revolutionary tactics in the early twentieth century, and they were deemed to be the new terrorists. The meaning of terrorism came full circle when Communists in the Soviet Union used terrorism to subjugate the population. After World War II, terrorism appeared in anticolonial movements, political extremism, and religion. All the differing forms of revolution and violence resulted in changing definitions and multiple policies.

The birth and evolution of the Western democracies also gave rise to a paradox, the relationship between democracy and terrorism. F. Gregory Gause III (2005) points to a variety of studies about this relationship, and he comes to a depressing conclusion: Terrorist attacks occur more frequently in democracies than in countries with any other form of government. Citing U.S. State Department statistics between 2000 and 2003, Gause finds that of nearly 530 attacks, almost 390 occurred in countries practicing full or limited democracy. This democracy factor would come into play in the nineteenth century and continue into the twenty first century (see the following “Another Perspective: Terror and Democracy” feature).



ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Terror and Democracy

Many terrorism analysts believe that terrorists need democratic states to function. Totalitarian states, they argue, make it impossible to engage in covert activities. Terrorists need freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of action. Jenny Hocking (2004) takes the opposite view. In reaction to a terrorist attack in Bali, Indonesia, in 2002, the Australian government followed the path of the United States, Hocking

says. Political rights have been trampled in the name of the war on terrorism. A counterterrorist network has invaded civil liberties in Australia, and the Australian Intelligence Security Service has been given permission to pry into the lives of law-abiding citizens. Terrorism is a threat, but overreaction to it also threatens democracies. The internment of terrorist suspects without charge or trial is a greater threat than terrorism.

The French Revolution

The term *terrorism* appeared during the French Revolution (1789–1799). It began with political and economic unrest in 1787, and the government was toppled in 1789. The revolutionary committee that controlled the government executed the king in 1793, beginning a series of mass executions that lasted until the summer of 1794. Edmund Burke, a noted British political philosopher of the eighteenth century, used the word to describe the situation in revolutionary Paris. He referred to the violence as a **Reign of Terror**, and he used the word *terrorism* to describe the actions of the new government.

Members and associates of the Committee of Public Safety were called terrorists by French nobles, their families, and sympathizers. They were responsible for 17,000 legal executions. Some scholars estimate that there were 23,000 additional illegal executions (Tilly, 2004).

Guerrillas and the Spanish Peninsula

In the Napoleonic Wars, the meaning of terrorism started to undergo a subtle transformation. Napoleon invaded **Spain in 1807**, and his army would face a type of threat that it had not experienced up to that point. Small bands of Spanish partisans began to attack French troops. Frequently armed and supported by the British Army, the partisans attacked the French in unconventional manners. They could not gather and face a French corps on a battlefield, but they could murder off-duty soldiers, attack supply columns, and engage in hit-and-run tactics. The Spanish called the partisans patriots, but the French referred to them as terrorists. Thus, the meaning of terrorism shifted away from governmental repression to the resistance of some people to governments. This transformed definition would be maintained through the nineteenth century (Tamas, 2001).

Guerrilla warfare did not originate in Spain, but it was particularly savage there. It served as an asymmetrical method of resisting the French Revolutionary Army. It began a decade before the invasion of Spain when armed citizens loyal to the king fought against the French Revolution. It continued in Spain, and David Bell (2007) says that it came to full fruition when the 1812 French invasion of Russia failed. Russian guerrillas decimated the massive French Army during its retreat from Moscow during the winter of 1812–1813. Few armies could resist Napoleon in the field, but groups of disbanded soldiers and armed citizens were another matter. Bell believes that this signaled an ideological transformation in the meaning of war. Whether his thesis is correct, one aspect of his argument is certain: These guerrilla movements helped set the stage for terrorism.

Reign of Terror: The name given to the repressive period in France (1794–1795). The revolutionary government accused thousands of French nobles and clergy of plotting to restore the monarchy. Executions began in Paris and spread throughout the countryside. Large mobs attacked and terrorized nobles in rural areas. Summary executions (executions on the spot without a trial) were quite common.

Spain in 1807: The Peninsular War (1808–1814) began when Spanish and French forces divided Portugal in 1807. Napoleon, whose army entered Spain in 1807, attempted to use his forces to capture the Spanish throne in 1808. British forces under Sir Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, joined Spanish forces loyal to the king of Spain and Spanish partisans to fight the French.



Self-Check

- > Do you think there is a relationship between terrorism and democracy?
- > What did the term *terrorism* first signify in France?
- > How did the meaning of terrorism change from the French Revolution through the Napoleonic Wars?

1848 and the Radical Democrats

The meaning of the term *terrorism* changed in Western minds essentially because of the nature of European violence in the 1800s. The French Revolution did not bring democracy; it brought Napoleon. The Napoleonic Wars continued until 1815, and then a new international order emerged. Although democracy continued to grow in the United States and in the United Kingdom, royalists reasserted their power in