

“The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology – when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends – and we will oppose them with all our power.”

President George W. Bush, West Point, New York, 1 June 2002¹

“One source of tension, however, is some policymakers’ insistence on the possibility of a fixed and unambiguous “terrorist profile,” a list of characteristics that permit identification of actual or potential terrorists.”

Martha Crenshaw²

1 Questions, Uncertainties and Ambiguity: Discussing the Phenomenon of Terrorism

Has terrorism undergone substantial change in recent years? Is the “New Terrorism” really new? What makes the “New Terrorism” a novel phenomenon? To begin with, what exactly constitutes the “New Terrorism”? If there is, indeed, a new breed of terrorism, then in what way does it differ from the old kind? Is the greatest differ-

- 1 Quoted in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (September 2002), p. 13. This document is available as html or PDF file at the website of the White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>.
- 2 Martha Crenshaw, “The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the 21st Century,” *Political Psychology*, Vol. 21, No. 2, (June 2000), pp. 405–420, 407.

ence between the old type of political violence and the “New Terrorism” that the latter has worse consequences in store than the former – that it is more dangerous? Is the “New Terrorism” synonymous with the sub-state actor application of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), much apprehended by the international community after the collapse of the Soviet Union? Ought it, therefore, to be equated with the mass casualty terrorism (MCT) that in recent years has continuously made for much publicity in the mass media?

This essay will attempt to answer the above queries to some extent, and most likely not in a conclusive manner. After all, this subject is not only controversial because it presupposes unethical practices, implies violated standards of morality, is predicated upon the flagrant breach of international norms and constitutes a frustrating field of inquiry, to boot: The “New Terrorism” – terrorism as such – is first and foremost an ambiguous phenomenon resisting any kind of universally applicable definition.

Before we ask how new or dangerous it really is, we would probably first want to know what the “New Terrorism” is. In order to adequately answer this question, however, we have to backtrack and take a close look at “traditional” terrorism. And this is where the trouble with this equivocal phenomenon begins. The former is still in the making; the latter became prominent in the wider context of the process of decolonization and the attendant national liberation struggles in Asia and Africa for some three decades after 1945. Subsequently, it achieved infamy in the age of European student protest during the late 1960s and early 1970s. As is the case with the earlier and “traditional” type of substate political violence, there is no single definition of, and no unchallenged consensus on, what the so-called “New Terrorism” actually is.³ Notably, Christopher

3 For problems in the general definitional debate on terrorism, cf. Alex P. Schmid, Albert J. Jongman et al., *Political Terrorism. A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature*, 2nd edition (Amsterdam & New Brunswick: North-Holland Publishing Company & Transaction Books, 1988), pp. 1–38.

Daase maintains that, concerning the various conceptions of the “New Terrorism, the definitional issue is even more acutely contentious.”⁴

In spite of the many premature obituaries written for political terrorism in the later 1980s, when Action Directe, the Brigade Rosse and the Rote Armee Fraktion appeared feeble at best and were evidently at the verge of collapse, terrorism as an operational adjunct to political violence movements and its latest, recycled and tremendously mediagenic manifestation, the so-called “New Terrorism,” are regnant today and continue to haunt international relations more than ever before. Hyperbolized and consequently portrayed as “super terrorism” and even inflated to “hyper terrorism,” the “New Terrorism” has been deeply impressed in the popular mind in the course of the past ten years – courtesy of the mass media.

Furthermore, the intensely discussed concept of the “New Terrorism” has wreaked havoc in an otherwise levelheaded academic community. And all the while it continues to elude pundits and “experts” (with the latter group having undergone a veritable “inflation of honors”), government analysts and journalists alike. Even with the emergence of the alleged new developments of terrorism since the 1990s, the definitional debate on the “traditional” and the “New” terrorism has only generated one conclusive result: That there is still no agreement on any meaningful level about what constitutes terrorism.

Conceivably, the problem is not primarily situational but structural, in that some of the participants of this debate are driven by incentives that call for an *instrumental* definition legitimizing counter-measures (e.g. “terrorism is an intrinsically evil practice and it needs to be cut off at its roots by any means available”) rather than being motivated by a desire to identify a *functional* common

4 A lucid and critical article on the subject of the definitional debate was written by Christopher Daase, “Terrorismus – Begriffe, Theorien und Gegenstrategien. Ergebnisse und Probleme sozialwissenschaftlicher Forschung,” *Die Friedens-Warte*, 76 (2001) 1, pp. 55–79, pp. 77–79.

denominator that would help to better explain this elusive phenomenon (e.g. “the fundamental design of terrorists is to intimidate the target audience”). Therefore, if to some participants in the debate the objective is the justification of countermeasures against the perpetrators of terrorism, and to others it is a better understanding of the problem, then one should not be surprised at the current, inconclusive state of the definitional debate on terrorism, which is but a reflection of a more general conflict between diametrically opposed interests and perceptions.⁵ The present condition of the debate is therefore best described as making matters terribly unwieldy.⁶

Indubitably, the manner in which this debate is conducted is not productive and has not made much headway since a much younger chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) took to the stage at the United Nations General Assembly in 1974 and called himself a “freedom fighter.”⁷ Yet Yassir Arafat’s speech was not only an historic assertion of the rights of his people to armed resistance in pursuit of independence and self determination: It also left the world with a seemingly insoluble quandary, which is encapsulated in the adage that one man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist, and vice versa.

Arafat’s irritating bequest continues to bedevil forces opposed to terrorism in the present day, and, for all intents and purposes, it makes any attempt at a hard distinction between the licit use of *force* and the illegitimate use of *violence* with respect to terrorism

- 5 Governments that rank the battle against political violence movements high up on the national security agenda, for example the Sri Lankan government, have been vocal critics of “sterile philosophical debate” on the subject of terrorism in international organizations. David J. Whitaker, ed., *The Terrorism Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 87.
- 6 Martha Crenshaw, “The Psychology of Terrorism: An Agenda for the 21st Century,” p. 406.
- 7 For the full text of PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat’s address to the UN General Assembly, cf. <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cahier/proche-orient/arafat74-en>. The actual quote referred to in the text is: “Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter’s gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.”

quite impossible. When is it force and when is it violence? States do not always employ their legitimate monopoly on force in the pursuit of vital national interest (e.g. “black ops”); similarly, rebels frequently claim to use violence in the name of a higher, or even in the service of a publicly mandated, cause (the “counter-state” of guerilla warfare).⁸

In the context of the present essay, the broader definitional debate – a field unto itself – will therefore not feature prominently, at least to the extent that it pertains to instrumental definitions; its terms of reference will be largely ignored. Instead, a functional approach to the definition of terrorism, as employed by political violence movements (PVMs) in the past and the present, will take precedence.⁹ “Terrorism can be demystified,” the historian Everett Wheeler argues, “when *method* is found in the madness of the ‘crazies’ and terrorism stands revealed as a rational (if certainly radical) strategy of *psychological warfare* and coercion.”¹⁰ Terrorism,

8 Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Boston: Little Brown, 1987), pp. 147–149.

9 The terminology used in this essay, specifically the term “political violence movement,” (PVM) is an effort at creating a functional, and hopefully clearer, nomenclature by removing value-laden, pejorative and stigmatizing connotations inherent in the popular use of the ill-defined and instrumental term “terrorism.” The term “political violence movement” subsumes religiously or politically ideologized and/or radicalized sub-state actors employing *terrorist tactics* in pursuit of their strategic (i.e. single-issue, political and/or religious) objectives. On this point cf. Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism*, p. 149. Furthermore, David Tucker has observed: “To the extent that terrorists with religious motivations also have political and social agendas – for example the establishment of an Islamic state – they will labor under the same kinds of constraints that terrorists with political and social agendas labor under as they struggle to achieve their political goals.” David Tucker, “What is New About the New Terrorism and How Dangerous is It?,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 1–14, p. 7.

10 Everett L. Wheeler, “Terrorism and Military Theory: An Historical Perspective,” in Clark McCauley, ed., *Terrorism Research and Public Policy*, (London: Frank Cass, 1991), pp. 6–33, 11 (my italics).

then, incorporates and employs a variant or mode of, or even only elements of, psychological operations (PSYOPS). In any event and whatever the impact, terrorism certainly is manifest as *methodical* violence on the physical and psychological planes.¹¹

For clarity's sake and somewhat modestly, terrorism will here be treated as an operational method – a *tactic* –, not as an illegitimate, insidious and potentially conspiratorial *strategy* or policy shunned by some and embraced by others – although it might in certain cases also be that. While not denying the legitimacy of a moral component and its proper place in the overall discussion of the topic, the general question asked here is not: Right or wrong? Instead, we would do well to ask questions such as: What, why, how and who? By extension, this also applies to the discussion on the so-called “New Terrorism.” If meaningful answers are to result from this inquiry, the separability of the two sets of research questions is a prerequisite and key premise to this effort.

If we discard the “instrumental” dimension of the terrorism research agenda, then what constitutes terrorism in a functional sense? In a purely functional sense, terrorism is a deliberately chosen means to an end: a tool, a tactic and a method. But as the method of terrorism does not exist in a vacuum, its relationship with the actor and his environment constitutes a significant dimension in the study of political violence. The juxtaposition of the motives underlying the actor's choice of terrorism and the method itself largely corroborates the productive value of a functional view of terrorism.

While the methodical aspect of terrorism itself as such does not give rise to grave contention, the interrelationship between the actors' manner of reasoning, his motives and objectives that represent the intellectual framework underpinning the use of terrorism

11 An excellent exposition of the psychological warfare dimension of terrorism is Dr. Schleifer's as yet unpublished piece. Ron Schleifer, “Terror – The Psychological Warfare Perspective,” (unpublished draft essay in the author's possession), pp. 7–8.

is subject to intense debate, and has even given rise to questions about the mental soundness of “terrorists.” The circumstance that at least in the Western world indiscriminate violence is presently not readily associated with premeditation and careful planning, partially accounts for the Western portrayal of terrorism – especially suicide terrorism – as “madness.” Arguably, the application of a value system beyond the Western world is the result of inappropriate intercultural transposition.¹² At the end of the day, however, terrorist violence constitutes unacceptable behavior in clear breach of Western civilizational values: It is beyond the normative pale of behavioral codes prevalent in Western society.

In spite of Western normative behavioral strictures, most users of terrorism are perfectly calculating and rational. Ironically, selecting terrorism as a means to an end bears this out, but the causal (and unreliable) cost-benefit calculation alone cannot fully account for its widespread and long-standing use. To complicate matters, there is more than one manner of reasoned thought leading to the choice of terrorism as an adequate method. Significantly, the various “rationalities” that come into play in the formation of motive and definition of objectives that culminate in acts of terrorism do not always originate in the narrow conceptual confines of the Cartesian dictate and its Kantian causal corollary.

Conceptions of “rationality” are not necessarily the exclusive product of early modern Western history and its culture of political thought; the processes leading to the constitution, and the criteria governing the present boundaries, of the Western system of reasoned thought are almost certainly not identical with those of other cultures. Beyond the narrow theoretical conception of rationalism, “rationalities” in the sense of consistent systems of reasoned thought are as a rule the result of formative processes informed, even conditioned and instilled by a culturally and historically imprinted social

12 Schleifer, “Terror – The Psychological Warfare Perspective,” pp. 13–14.

environment – just as has been the case in the West. In the final analysis, context does shape the rationale of terrorism.

At the same time, terrorism is still the choice tactic of *various* types of “rational” actors. The basic proposition here is that when all is said and done, especially as it pertains to the use of terrorist violence against noncombatants, there is no such thing as a single rational system of reasoned thought in an *applied sense* that accounts for terrorism. Rational reasoning itself is subject to interpretation, especially by those employing it to arrive at decisions to kill and maim their victims and draw up justifications for their actions. This also applies to their apologists. Hence the differentiation between “rational” and “irrational” terrorists is either moot, definitional hair-splitting, or politically expedient. Even if there are indeed “irrational,” pathological terrorists acting out their compulsive fantasies, both the “sane” and the “insane” have at least one good reason to use terrorism that obviates this distinction: It usually works – at least in the short term.

To some extent, the disproportionately powerful short-term effect, or shock value, of terrorist attacks on the hearts and minds of target audiences explains the resilience and pervasiveness of terrorism around the globe (causal value/cost-benefit). It also evinces an incredulity among witnesses that frequently accompanies dramatic terrorist attacks, and which is encapsulated in the words: “How could they do it?” The central problem of our inability to see terrorism for what it is – a deliberately chosen “weapon” or method of warfare in the hands of determined men and women –, can be found in the collective refusal of Western society to believe in the rational decision-making capability of those who use terrorism, not the terrorist activists’ lack of it; in our proclivity to apply our measure to their deeds (incompatibility of norms).

To complicate matters still further, the “rational,” or reasoned, choice of terrorism as a mode of low-intensity warfare with a tremendous psychological impact is not always the result of readily comparable motives. As we have seen, the choice of terrorism as

a type of warfare is not necessarily informed by identical or even similar contextually defined value systems. Admittedly, on a fundamental and purely pragmatic level there may be similarities and recurring traits among the criteria that lead to such a decision; that still does not allow for unqualified comparison of motives. As James Dingley and Michael Kirk-Smith have argued: “Terrorist acts of violence are incomprehensible in purely rational terms of ‘means-end’ analyses, but are redolent of cultural imagery...”¹³

As mentioned above, the reason *why* terrorism is used by PVMs is thus intricately linked to the questions of *what* terrorism and the “New Terrorism” constitute in a subjective sense *to the actors* and their target audience. Hence, the reason *why*, in the final analysis, is also a matter of how terrorism is perceived and understood by its perpetrators and its victims against the highly idiosyncratic backdrop of their respective social, political, cultural and even historical environments. For this reason, a digression into the anatomy of motive – the question *why* – seems appropriate, before we ask *what* terrorism is beyond its purely functional aspect and look into the question of *how new* and *how dangerous* a phenomenon the “New Terrorism” really is.

Why use terrorism in the first place? There are likely more possible answers than can be suggested here. Nevertheless, one answer probably is that the tactic of terrorism usually is not exclusively a matter of *preference*, but frequently also a matter of *perceived necessity* resulting, for example, from an authentic disparity of capabilities in any given conflict to wage high-and low-intensity war. Usually, such decisions are shaped in the context of an “incumbent versus insurgent” setting. In such a scenario, the resulting asymmetric relationship between the contending forces is one of the determinants that usually create incentives for the side with the lesser combat capabilities to adopt terrorist tactics. Viewed

13 James Dingley and Michael Kirk-Smith, “Symbolism and Sacrifice in Terrorism,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 102–128, p. 115.

from this angle, pragmatic reasons should be cited in support of an externally conditioned rational choice for terrorist tactics over a different mode of combat. Terrorism frequently constitutes the weaker party's only feasible means of waging war against a more powerful enemy – the “poor man's coercive diplomacy.”¹⁴

At the same time, it is not unheard of for the stronger side, for example an incumbent, to take recourse to terrorism in the functional sense in order to either successfully cow or more effectively combat the opposition; to fight fire with fire. Characteristically, this appears to be the case in situations in which internal security is jeopardized, or about to be compromised, although the use of terrorism also seems to have found a role in the area of clandestine foreign policy operations.¹⁵ Terrorism is therefore not the exclusive

14 James K. Campbell, “On Not Understanding the Problem,” in Brad Roberts, ed., *Hype or Reality?: The “New Terrorism” and Mass Casualty Attacks*, (Alexandria, VA: Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, 2000), pp. 17–45, p. 26.

15 Totalitarian regimes, such as were in power in National Socialist Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union from the late 1920s and early 1930s onward, were wont to employ terrorism in pursuit of controlling, intimidating, or even wholly eradicating their respective political opposition, for example in the course of the “Night of Long Knives” directed against Adolph Hitler's erstwhile confidant Ernst Roehm and his “Sturmabteilung” (SA) in 1934 and the Stalinist purges beginning in 1935/1936, for which see <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/GERnight.htm> and <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1936purges.html>. For an example from the later Cold War period in Europe, cf. Thomas Auerbach, *Einsatzkommandos an der unsichtbaren Front*, (Berlin: Links Verlag, 2001). More recent examples would include the “death squadrons” employed throughout Latin America during the 1980s, especially in El Salvador. For reference, see: <http://www.geocities.com/~virtualtruth/avengers.htm> and <http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/publicaciones/ministerio/espanol/autodefensas.pdf> (in Spanish). A very good syllabus on the subject of vigilante right-wing organizations in Latin America, such as the Grupos de Autodefensa in Colombia, can be found at [http://ladb.unm.edu/retanet/plans/search/retrieve.php3?ID\[0\]=465](http://ladb.unm.edu/retanet/plans/search/retrieve.php3?ID[0]=465). Of especial interest in regard to incumbent use of, or, in the least, connivance at the use of terrorist tactics, see House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Resolution*

preserve of rebel movements and other insurgent sub-state actors.¹⁶ Moreover, if this observation about the “bipartisan” application of terrorism in a functional sense is only partially correct, it goes a long way to exemplify the limited usefulness of, and biases inherent in, any instrumental definition of terrorism.

What makes the application of terrorism attractive to its perpetrators? At least for the insurgent side, an attempt at a response can be risked. The single most compelling argument for terrorism as a tactic to advance interests or, in Clausewitzian terms, as a continuation of policy by other means, is that it is less resource-dependent and logistics-intensive than conventional warfare, intensely media-genic and low-cost to boot. The most attractive asymmetric feature of terrorist tactics is its exponential disseminative yield and communicative force, largely enabled by the bizarre, symbiotic relationship between the perpetrator and the mass media of open societies. By committing a symbolic deed, PVMs repeatedly and successfully co-opt the mass media in a deliberate effort to intimidate the wider audience, by delivering a *proof of concept*. Ideally for the PVM, the concept that is proven is simple: “We can do this again, and again, and again...you are vulnerable and nobody can protect you against the kind of threat that we represent.”

In medieval and early modern European history, a good example of a symbolic deed illustrative of a cause – a pseudo-violent *Ersatz* act –, is the burning of effigies as a substitute for killing a real person – usually himself or herself a representative or figure head of the opposing side. More current is the ramming of the World Trade

of Inquiry Concerning Death Squads in El Salvador: Report (to accompany H. Res. 463), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1984) and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Resolution of Inquiry Concerning the Central Intelligence Agency and Death Squads in El Salvador: Adverse Report* (to accompany H. Res. 467), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1984).

16 Cf. Wardlaw’s definition of “repressive terrorism.” Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism. Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 14–15.

Center in New York with commercial airliners. The events of 11 September 2001 were not only a religio-political statement, but also substituted for a proof of concept of a successful war waged against a United States vulnerable to asymmetric enemy attack. Moreover, “9/11” functioned as a simultaneous morale-building measure deriving much force from its unique and therefore exemplary quality. Another well-known example is the staging of televised mass hijackings and suicide attacks that are clearly intended to galvanize and inspire partisans. Or undertaking a mission with limited objectives of a symbolic and/or representative character in mind, e.g. the attacks on the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 and the capture of Israeli athletes in order to demand the release of members of the Black September Organization.¹⁷

Indubitably, in open societies the preferable channel of dissemination – the vehicle for this powerful yet simple message of fear – is the mass media. “Getting the attention of the mass media, the public, and the decision makers is the *raison d’être* behind modern terrorism’s increasingly shocking violence.”¹⁸ The intended target group of such performance violence, however, is only indirectly the wider audience of broadcast media customers, i.e. the public at

17 For the strange relationship between terrorism and the mass media see Murray Sayle, “Terror and Television. Re-Thinking the Day When Made-For-Television Terrorism was Born,” *Prospect Magazine*, (October 2001), [n.p.]. On the power of symbolism to boost morale, foster cohesion and cement solidarity among supportive “constituent” communities in the context of PVM terrorist tactics, cf. Dingley and Kirk-Smith, “Symbolism and Sacrifice in Terrorism,” pp. 122–124.

18 Brigitte L. Nacos, *Terrorism and the Media. From the Iran Hostage Crisis to the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 8. Also see by the same author, “Accomplice or Witness? The Media’s Role in Terrorism,” *Current History*, (April 2000), pp. 174–178. Another good article on the responsibility of the mass media is Virginia Held, “The Media and Political Violence,” *Journal of Ethics*, (1997) 1, pp. 187–202. A strident critic of unfettered reporting on terrorism is Grant Wardlaw. See his chapter entitled “Terrorism and the media: a symbiotic relationship?” in Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism*,. pp. 76–86.

large. It is frequently the people's custodians in the government, the decision-makers, who are exposed as impotent in the face of terrorist attack, and who are therefore usually the ultimate target of terrorism – with the public doubling as an audience and as a lever against the government. In a crisis, public insecurity and the resulting pressures on the authorities to either provide adequate protection against PVMs, or otherwise to give in to terrorist demands, render the government in its capacity as the decision-making authority especially vulnerable – even more so in the face of an increasingly risk-averse public.

For the incumbent, the use of terrorist tactics is attractive because it frees its operatives from moral and legal constraints and therefore affords a state greater operational latitude and room for maneuver. If a policy of targeted assassination indeed qualifies as a form of terrorism, then the CIA-coordinated “Phoenix Program” undertaken by the United States with the declared goal of eliminating Vietcong and North Vietnamese officers during the Vietnam War in clear violation of the Geneva Convention may here serve as an illustrative example.¹⁹ Similarly, the KGB's persecution of, and efforts at discrediting, Soviet dissidents at home and abroad, closely seconded by the East German ministry for state security's (“Stasi”) terrorist capability for deployment in West Germany, was no less a program devised to effectively terrorize the opposition during the Cold War.²⁰ Israel has repeatedly engaged in concerted efforts

19 Douglas Valentine, *The Phoenix Program* ([n.p.]: iUniverse.com, 2000); Mark Moyar, *Phoenix and Birds of Prey: The CIA's Secret Campaign to Destroy the Viet Cong*, (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1997).

20 This is impressively described in Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn, transl. by Thomas P. Whitney, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1919–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1997). For Stasi capabilities to employ terrorism in West German during the Cold War, cf. Auerbach, *Einsatzkommandos an der unsichtbaren Front*.

at preemptively eliminating hijackers, suicide attackers and their suppliers and support networks in the course of so-called “initiated attacks”.²¹ As of October 2001, and following a 25-year-long hiatus, U.S. President George W. Bush has explicitly advised the CIA to eliminate designated targets implicated in terrorist activity in an effort to “take the battle to them.”²²

But ultimately, and also for the purpose of the present discussion, it does not matter which side to a conflict is using terrorist tactics. The point is that terrorist tactics have a long historical record and in the past have been used to devastating immediate effect on the ground, albeit mostly with little success in terms of achieving a stated strategic long-term objective – with only a few exceptions to the rule. What matters is that terrorist tactics do enjoy considerable popularity among a number of PVMs in the present, especially with such that struggle with situations of *adverse asymmetry* resulting from incumbent conventional military superiority. And they will likely be used in the near future for reasons that have nothing to do with morals and ethics, or any other kind of normative behavioral or legal code, but, conversely, are closely linked to the dictates of circumstance and necessity. In the final analysis, the reasons why terrorist tactics will continue to represent an attractive choice to ethnic-separatists, political extremists and religious fanatics alike are, as stated above, predominantly pragmatic.²³

21 A comprehensive and detailed description of Israeli counter-terrorism strategy, including “strikes against terrorist leaders” is available on the counter-terrorism link of <http://www.ict.org.il/>. For a recent example of “initiated attacks” cf.: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/middle_east/2305481.stm.

22 David Gow, “Bush gives green light to CIA for assassination of named terrorists,” *The Guardian*, (29 October 2001).

23 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, (New York: The Free Press, 1991), pp. 59–62. As van Creveld incisively commented: “Their [i.e. the guerillas’ and terrorists’] methods were, admittedly, not nice.” p. 60.

Labeling the use of terrorism “irrational” is in fact more than the result of inappropriate cultural and intellectual transposition: It is an act of self-deception. If Clausewitz did make a valid observation when he contended that the objective of waging war is the breaking of the enemy’s will, then it follows that in an age of waxing low-intensity conflict, of rising defense expenditure and the relatively unchecked proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, heavy military ordnance and small arms, terrorism constitutes a cost-effective, efficacious, advantageous and, most importantly, *perfectly rational* asymmetric mode of warfare that has the credible potential to achieve victory in the spirit of the Clausewitzian postulate.