Tactics and Force Multipliers

Chapter 5

Tactics of Terrorism and Multiplying Force

- Terrorists change tactics continuously
- Jenkins reports six tactics of terrorism:
  1) Bombing
  2) Hijacking
  3) Arson
  4) Assault
  5) Kidnapping
  6) Hostage taking

Tactics of Terrorism and Multiplying Force (cont.)

- Force multipliers:
  - Things that increase striking power without increasing the strength of a unit
  - Force multipliers that give terrorists more striking power include:
    1) Technology
    2) Media coverage and interpretation of terrorist events
    3) Transnational support
    4) Religious fanaticism

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Tactics of Terrorism and Multiplying Force (cont.)

- Most common weapon of terrorism has been and still is the bomb
- Anarchists in 1848 - philosophy of the bomb
  - Only way to communicate with the social order was to destroy it
- Irish Republican Army found the bomb to be the most important weapon after 1969
- Groups throughout the world found bombs could be delivered by suicide attackers
  - Suicide bombings and roadside bombs – weapons of choice against U.S. military in Iraq

Tactics of Terrorism and Multiplying Force (cont.)

- Terrorists tend to increase their effectiveness in bombing by applying explosive technology to their weapons
  - Just as conventional military forces constantly improve the killing power of their weapons
    - Mini-nuke
    - Thermobaric bomb

Tactics of Terrorism and Multiplying Force (cont.)

- Force multipliers enhance destructive power while innovation is used to achieve shock and surprise
- Purpose of a terrorist attack – send a message of chaos and destruction to a larger audience
  - Victims are not the target, they are killed to send a message
  - This is what differentiates terrorism from war
Technology: Cyberterrorism

- Cyberterrorism refers to use of computers to attack technological targets or physical attacks on computer networks
- Targets for cyberterrorism
  - Computers
  - Computer networks
  - Information storage and retrieval systems

Technology: Cyberterrorism

- The most common tactic to date has been the defacement of Web sites
- Terrorists are different than hackers
  - Terrorists launch systematic attacks for political purposes
  - There has been a sharp rise in such attacks, with the Internet providing the vehicle for launching most of the strikes

Technology: Cyberterrorism (cont.)

- Reasons why terrorists find computer technology attractive
  - Allow terrorists groups to remain connected covertly and anonymously
  - Computer networks are less expensive and work intensive than infrastructures necessary to maintain terrorist groups
  - Low-risk
Technology: Cyberterrorism (cont.)

- Cyberterrorism is a threat due to the nature of society
  - Western society needs information and the flow of information to function
  - Cyberterrorism threatens to interrupt or confuse that flow
- Documented cyber-attacks
  - NSA
  - CIA
  - DoD

WMD: Biological Agents

- Biological Agents:
  - Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) produced from natural substances or living organisms
  - Microbes are often “weaponized” to increase their ability to kill
- Have been used for centuries
  - Siege of Caffa, 1346
  - Difficult to control but relatively easy to produce

WMD: Biological Agents (cont.)

- Types of biological agents:
  - Natural poisons or toxins
  - Viruses
    - Small living particles that can infect cells and change how they function
  - Bacteria
    - Bacterium: A very small, single-celled organism
  - Plagues
    - Infectious diseases caused by bacteria
WMD: Biological Agents (cont.)

- Most threatening agents according to CDC are:
  - Smallpox
  - Anthrax
  - Plague
  - Botulism
  - Tularemia
  - Hemorrhagic fever

Biological Agents: Attacks in the US

- Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon - 1984
  - A religious group, the Rajneeshees, infected the town's water supply and at least ten local restaurant salad bars with the Salmonella typhimurium
  - 751 people became ill
  - Purpose of the attack was to reduce voter turnout in local elections in order to elect religious followers to local office

Biological Agents: Attacks in the US (cont.)

- Anthrax mailings, 5 letters - Sept 18, 2001
  - FL - AMI
  - NY - NBC, ABC, CBS, NY Post

- Anthrax mailings, 2 letters - Oct 12, 2001
  - Senate offices of Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle and Senate Judiciary Committee head, Patrick Leahy
Biological Agents: Attacks in the US (cont.)

- 23 people are infected
- 5 deaths
- Dr. Steven Hatfill originally an FBI “person of interest”
- Dr. Bruce Ivins later became the focus of the investigation
- Ivins committed suicide 1 Aug 08, while the matter was still before a federal grand jury

WMD: Chemical and Radiological Weapons

- Chemicals:
  - Generally easier to deliver than biological weapons
  - Faster acting
- Radiological devices:
  - Slower than most chemicals
  - Longer lasting
  - Can be spread like chemicals
WMD: Four types of chemical agents

1) Nerve agents
- Attack the nervous system by interfering with the proper functioning of neurotransmitters
- Tabun (GA), Sarin (GB), VX
- Ingestion, respiration, or contact
- Believed to have been used by Saddam Hussein on 16 MAR 1988 against the Kurdish village of Halabja
  - Over 5,000 villagers killed, mostly women and children

2) Blood agents or cyanogen agent
- Chemical compounds carried by the blood for distribution through the body
  - Toxic effect at the cellular level
  - Zyklon B (hydrogen cyanide)
- Absorbed through the respiratory system
- Used by the Nazis during the Holocaust

3) Choking (or pulmonary) agents
- Designed to impede breathing
- Chlorine gas, phosgene
- Absorbed through the respiratory system
- Used by:
  - British during the Crimean War
  - Union during the US Civil War
  - Germans, French, and British during WWI
WMD: Four types of chemical agents

- Blistering agents (aka vesicants)
  - Chemical compounds that causes severe skin, eye, and mucosal pain and irritation
  - Burn skin and internal tissue areas upon contact
  - Used in: WWII, WWI, Iran-Iraq War (83-88)

- Sulfur mustards, Nitrogen mustards, Lewisite

WMD: Chemical and Radiological Weapons (cont.)

- Chemicals are attractive to terrorists
  - Easier to control
  - Users can avoid area they attack
  - However, chemical weapons are problematic
    - Requires a delivery mechanism
    - Requires large quantities of chemicals
    - Chemicals can be neutralized by weather patterns, air, and water

WMD: Chemical and Radiological Weapons (cont.)

- Nuclear weapons
  - Possibility of obtaining stolen or illegally sold weapons
  - Instructions for building a nuclear device can be found online
  - Obtaining and detonating nuclear weapons is difficult
  - Dirty bombs made from nuclear waste a more likely scenario
WMD: Chemical and Radiological Weapons (cont.)

- Dirty Bomb:
  - A conventional weapon used to spread a chemical or radioactive agent around a large area
- Drawback of the dirty bomb
  - The heat produced by the explosion may destroy the chemical attached to the bomb

WMD: Chemical and Radiological Weapons (cont.)

- It is much easier for terrorists to use a conventional weapon to spread either chemicals or nuclear materials than for them to build a nuclear weapon
- Congress has designated a site in Nevada as a repository for all the radioactive waste used in America's nuclear power plants
  - All this material must be shipped across the country
  - What would happen if terrorists seized some of this material?

The Media as Force Multipliers

- Constant reporting amplifies the aura of small groups
- When attacks are shown over and over again, the striking power of the group is magnified
- Both governments and terrorists benefit from media portrayal of terrorist activity
- Everyone involved in a terrorist conflict tries to manipulate images of terrorist activities
  - Goal is to use the media as force multipliers
The Media as Force Multipliers (cont.)

- Brigitte Nacos:
  - Most terrorist groups have objectives beyond publicity
  - Groups want recognition of:
    - Causes
    - Grievances
    - Demands
  - New forms of communication intensify the spread of information
  - Terrorist groups will attempt to portray respectability in all forms of media
    - Projection of this image is crucial

The Media as Force Multipliers (cont.)

- Gad Wolfson:
  - Media victories are crucial for terrorism
  - How battles are reported as important as battlefield combat
  - Neither side wants to be portrayed as aggressor
  - The media are the primary tool for demonizing the enemy
    - One side presents its own casualties in compassionate and horrific terms
    - Wounded and killed on other side are described as statistics
  - Drama lessens when peace efforts are reported by news agencies
    - Most reports are about talk breakdowns

The Media as Force Multipliers (cont.)

- All forms of media can be used to multiply force
- The Internet is one of the most important force multipliers easily available to terrorists
  - Thus it is gaining attention of security forces
- Online communication brings measure of freedom when other media is heavily controlled
  - Emerging as a major source of information
- Natalya Krasnoboka
  - The Internet does not have an overwhelming impact in democratic countries
  - However, it is a powerful tool for opposition forces in authoritarian regimes
The Media as Force Multipliers (cont.)

- The cinema presents another venue for examination
- Movies can assist terrorism and distort issues
- Movies are responsible for strong emotional projections
  - They can be completely grounded in fiction

Economic Targeting and Transnational Attacks

- As the world moves closer to a global economy, terrorists have found that striking transnational or international economic targets increases the effectiveness of terrorist operations
- Three types of transnational attacks can be used to illustrate this issue:
  1) Tourism
  2) Energy
  3) Shipping

Economic Targeting and Transnational Attacks - Tourism

- Bali Indonesia, 12 OCT 2002
  - Suicide bomber detonates a device inside Paddy's Pub
  - A second suicide bomber detonates a powerful VBIED outside the Sari Club across the street
  - 202 fatalities, 209 injured (mostly Westerners)
  - Carried out by Jemaah Islamiyah, a violent Islamist group

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Economic Targeting and Transnational Attacks - Tourism

- There is a relationship between terrorism and tourism, but it is not simple
- Terrorism against tourists has a negative economic impact
- Does not appear to impact domestic travel
- Most frequently affects international travelers
  - Widespread media attention
  - Tourism may drop from selected areas

Economic Targeting and Transnational Attacks - Energy

- Terrorist have vested interest in disrupting oil and gas production due to the clearer economic relationship between energy and terrorism
- Fossil fuels present tempting targets for two reasons
  1. They represent power and strengths of industrialized world
  2. Strikes against oil refineries or transfer facilities have economic impact on the West

Economic Targeting and Transnational Attacks - Energy (cont.)

- Iraq, JUN 2003-FEB 2006:
  - 298 attacks against oil-production facilities
  - 26% reduction in oil production
- Saudi Arabia
  - Al Qaeda states that attacks were designed to destroy the Saudi economy and create an energy crisis in the West
- Pakistan
  - According to Taliban, most effective way to destroy central government of Pakistan is to cripple gas production
Endemic terrorism

- Form of violence occurring in Africa where arbitrary national boundaries have been drawn without regard to ethnic and tribal divisions
- These areas breed all forms of tribal and ethnic conflicts, including terrorism

The Niger Delta

- Oil plays crucial role
  - Used to fund endemic terrorism and corrupt governments
  - Becomes target for those who cannot control production
  - Oil companies investing in the area have greater incentive to focus on security than poverty engulfing the region

Terrorism in the Niger Delta represents a different form of economic attack

- It simultaneously funds terrorists and other violent groups while serving as a target for terrorism
Economic Targeting and Transnational Attacks (cont.)

- If poverty, endemic terrorism, and criminalized politics are not addressed by the industrialized world, areas like the Niger Delta will evolve in two directions
- Become base for emergence of new international terrorist groups while providing excellent resources for training and eluding detection
- At the same time, energy resources of the Delta provide a target-rich environment for developing terrorists

Economic Targeting and Transnational Attacks - Transportation

- Present tempting economic targets as they produce mass casualties with minimal effort
- The costs of protecting transportation are staggering
- Major concern of homeland security
  - Critics of homeland security policies argue that ports remain unsecured due to costs of increased protection
- Attacks on aviation, shipping and transportation facilities increase cost of security

Suicide Attacks and Religion

- Diego Gambetta’s three types of suicide attacks:
  1) Suicide in warfare
  2) Suicide for a principle without killing others
  3) Suicidal terrorism
Suicide Attacks and Religion (cont.)

- The social and psychological appeal is not suicide.
- Common link:
  - Suicide terrorists believe they are sacrificing their lives for a greater good (altruistic suicide).

Suicide Attacks and Religion (cont.)

- Robert Pape:
  - Attackers are so diverse, it may not be possible to find a single profile.
  - Suicide terrorism should be considered a strategic tool.
  - Suicide terrorism gives small groups the power to coerce large governments.
    - Suicide terrorists tend to be more lethal than other types of attacks.
    - They strike greater fear in the target audience.
    - Each attack hints at future horrific attacks.
    - It is a strategy designed to multiply expectations of political victory.

Suicide Attacks and Religion (cont.)

- B. Raman:
  - Suicide attacks are favored because they are intimidating.
  - Suicide attacks generate high casualties as well as publicity for the attacking group.
  - The nature of the attack strikes fear into the enemy.
  - The attacks are effective against superior forces and weapons.
  - Suicide bombers give terrorist groups maximum control over the attack.
Theory of Suicide Terrorism - Pape

Three factors must be in place prior to a suicide terror campaign
1) A nationalistic or ethnic group must be resisting the occupation of a foreign power
2) The foreign power must represent a democratic government whose voters will not allow indiscriminate slaughter and total repression of the people in occupied area
3) There must be a difference in religions of the occupying power and the people living under occupation

Theory of Suicide Terrorism – Pape (cont.)

Suicide terrorism is not caused by a single religion, it is caused by differences in religion
Differences in religion are important in suicide terrorism
These are rules, but based on trends
Not all suicide operations are grounded in Islamic extremism
- Lebanon
- Sri Lanka
- Chechnya
- Turkey/Kurdistan

Models for Suicide Bombing

Rohan Gunaratna:
- All suicide bombing attacks have three things in common
  1) Secrecy
  2) Reconnaissance
  3) Rehearsal
    - Better the rehearsal the greater chance of success
- Other researchers believe there is no single model for suicide bombing