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Slaying the Dragon: An Analysis on How to Dismantle Terrorist Organizations

Caroline Kelly

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SLAYING THE DRAGON: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW TO DISMANTLE A
TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

A Thesis

Submitted to the McAnulty College
and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

By

Caroline Kelly

May 2009

SLAYING THE DRAGON: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW TO DISMANTLE A
TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

SLAYING THE DRAGON: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW TO DISMANTLE A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

By

Caroline Kelly

May 2009

Thesis supervised by Fr. John Sawicki

This paper sets out to prove that by using specific analytical guidelines, the most effective policy for ending terrorist organizations becomes evident. Factors such as background information, political and social contexts, motivations, threat analyses, capabilities, and level of public support are the most important aspects to look at. This is because each of these factors reveals something specific – a vulnerability, or shortcoming of the organization that can be exploited.

Furthermore, the three most effective policy options in counterterrorism are politicization, policing, and military. These policy options are not the sole solutions though. They are often combined with aspects of another policy, or complimentary strategies such as intelligence collecting, community reconstruction, social welfare programs, job training, negotiations, etc.

The analytical outline will reveal one of these three major policy options as the most effective and potentially successful strategy for ending a terrorist organization.

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Introduction and statement of the problem

Terrorism has become a threat to international peace and security all over the world. It is not a new problem but is relevant to United States National Security. While al-Qaeda and its affiliates – currently the highest profile threat – pose the largest threats to Islamic and secular nations, they are not impossible to defeat. Terrorist organizations have been defeated throughout history. The most effective policies and approaches in defeating terrorism have been politicization, policing and military actions in cooperation with sub-policies such as economic sanctions on states that harbor terrorists, intelligence gathering, diplomacy and targeted terrorist killings.¹ None of these policies is likely to work exclusively. Some combination of politicization, policing and military actions will almost always be used. Yet, certain terrorist groups have proven more susceptible to efforts that focused principally in one of these three areas or another.

For a state to decide which policy may be most beneficial in confronting a given terrorist group, the terrorist organization itself must be thoroughly analyzed. There is no single policy that best fits all cases. Further, for very long-lived terrorist organizations, it may be that efforts to disband them may shift emphasis from one area to another over time as the nature of the terrorist group changes. Context matters. Background information including history, political contexts, social contexts, motivations, public support, threat analysis and organizational structure are elements of an analysis that best exploit a terrorist organization's weaknesses, and can help shape policy decisions.

¹ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, **How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons in Countering al Qa'ida** (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 2008), p. 10.

Choosing the appropriate and most effective policies and sub-policies will be more successful if the organization can be analyzed from all angles.

This paper will examine three case studies to illustrate conditions in which these policy approaches have been most effective. Case studies of Aum Shinrikyo, the Irish Republican Army and al-Qaeda in the Iraqi province of al Anbar will review each organization and how the analysis guides particular policy options. This will also provide details of how each of these policies' work are carried out. From these case studies, it will be concluded that through careful analysis, and application of the most fitting policy, terrorist organizations can be defeated.

Operational Definitions:

There are some key definitions that are important to distinguish before proceeding with this analysis. The distinction between terrorism and insurgency is particularly important. Terrorism is a struggle in which violence is purposely used against civilians in order to achieve political goals in connection with a delineating nationalistic, religious and/or socioeconomic component. An insurgency is an insurrection against a constitutional established power for the purpose of achieving political goals. This is done by controlling certain populations by force, and influencing the hearts and minds of the civilians who live there. Insurgents often use terror as a tool to coerce the government into meeting their demands. In this paper, we consider insurgencies that use terrorism specifically as their *modus operandi*. Lastly, for the purposes of this study politicization refers to the transition from using terrorist tactics to using the political process as a means of achieving goals.

Literature Review

This study draws from many disciplines in the field of terrorism research. These subject areas include theories on principal policy options, terrorist organizational compositions and ideologies, as well as examples on how an organization's make-up determines the policy options that are most applicable. This paper relies predominately on secondary sources to lay out the most important theories and empirical data to reinforce this research. The three main policy options focused on in this paper are politicization, policing and military use. The theories used in this research come primarily from Louise Richardson, Seth Jones, Martin Libicki, and Colonel David Galula.

Louise Richardson, of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, grew up in Northern Ireland at the height of the "Troubles" and went on to study terrorism all over the world. Her insights are important to this research because she has studied terrorism in great depth, and her research has focused on aspects of terrorism, terror organizations and the circumstances in which they operate in ways similar to this paper. Seth Jones is a political scientist at the RAND Corporation and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University. Martin Libicki is a senior management scientist at the RAND Corporation who focuses on the relationship between information technology and national security. This paper will use Jones' and Libicki's methodology and apply further analytical tools to shape it. Lastly, Colonel Galula served in North Africa, France and Germany during World War II and was later posted in China. He also served as a UN military observer in the Balkans during the civil war in Greece, and served as France's military attaché in Hong Kong. Most famously, he served in Algeria during France's

battles with Islamic revolutionaries in the late 1950s. Here he developed theories and practices for counterinsurgency that are useful in countering terrorist organizations operating in a similar mode (e.g., using terrorist violence to change the political arrangements of a state, as was the case in Algeria in the 1950s when Galula served there, and still is today). His background gives him first-hand experience with communist guerrilla strategy and tactics in counterinsurgency.

Next, we briefly review the three major policy options – politicization, policing and military actions – before examining our three case studies.

Politicization

Politicization has been successful in many circumstances. In **How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida**, Seth Jones and Martin Libicki argue that terrorists believe violence is the only way to reach their goals.² There might be alternatives however if an organization's goals are narrow enough. It is often easier for a government to negotiate a settlement when terrorists' goals include reforms in policy and/or social changes, or when the desired changes are possible for the state³. Note, however, that there are changes that a state cannot consider without fundamentally violating its structure and the political philosophies on which it is built. For example, the political changes demanded by the Taliban in Afghanistan today are for the government to abandon democracy and, among other things, rights for women, and replace it with an extremely harsh misogynous theocracy. In circumstances such as this, political accommodation is not possible.

² Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 9.

³ Ibid., p. 18.

In circumstances in which political accommodation is possible, the government incurs less costs in negotiations than in employing counter force or acceding to terrorists' demands.⁴ Opening up to negotiations could potentially save money, resources, and most importantly lives. Therefore if negotiations are possible it is often in the state's best interest to engage. This method usually appeases the general population as well, because the continuation of terror badly affects the community. Many would rather not endure lasting violence. Also, when the political arena becomes available to terrorist organizations, terrorism is no longer the sole way of meeting their demands.⁵ Being involved in politics gives terrorists alternate methods of expressing their concerns and grievances, and allows them to participate in making change. Terrorism is a tactic used for asymmetric warfare – when the organization does not have enough power to influence or take on the state. This changes when terrorist groups are allowed access to the political process.

Another example of when politicization may be the preferred method is when a state's police and/or military is not efficient enough to dissolve the terrorist organization by military or police means, but, the organization cannot achieve victory using its tactics. When violent operations become useless, terrorists must find another method to be effective. In this case, initiating change through the political system can yield better results.

⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past** (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), p. 10.

Louise Richardson also sees political measures as a significant policy option for countering terrorist organizations and argues this theory in **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**.⁶ She believes negotiations between the government and terrorist organizations can arrive at compromises and concessions for the sake of ending resistance, and bring about socioeconomic and political reforms. This is effective with the organization and reaches the targeted open society. Those who would otherwise support terrorists, such as sympathetic civilians, will get behind the political agenda to enact change, but international cooperation, extradition agreements, police borders and intelligence efforts must accompany negotiation.

Policing

Jones and Libicki found that when the transition to nonviolence cannot be made politically, police force is most effective. The exception is insurgencies because when the organization is too large, trained in guerrilla warfare, or too well armed. Police are effective because they can more easily gain information on organizational structure, tactics, strategies and membership than politicians and military forces.⁷ Arguably they are more integrated into the community and are trained to do this. For example, police may have records of previous offenses of those in terrorist groups (very often, terrorists have transgressed the law in the past) and so can more easily track potential terrorists. Often, they can use the law to their advantage and incarcerate potential terrorists on other charges such as fraud, money laundering, drug trafficking and assault.⁸ When the military is used, the community can often be intimidated, or feel repressed and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 9.

⁸ Russell D. Howard, et.al. **Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment: Readings and Interpretations 3rd Edition** (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), p. 531.

sympathize with the terrorists's cause.⁹ Police, however, are already a familiar face in many circumstances, whether threatening to an individual or not. Unless they are tools of oppression in an authoritarian state police are less intimidating than soldiers.

Furthermore, police have the advantage of being able to lobby for antiterrorist legislation to aid their efforts.¹⁰ Legislation can involve modest standards for search and seizures, surveillance privileges and criminalizing other activities that terrorists need to function. This policy option encompasses the standard police operations, collecting intelligence, capturing key leaders, passing legislation and using the assistance of foreign actors.

Richardson acknowledges the need for police and appropriate laws in the fight against terrorist organizations.¹¹ She further advocates special legislation to increase government and police power to arrest and detain suspects, and to gain intelligence. Such police action includes disrupting finances and other petty crimes that terrorists use to finance their operations.

Military

Richardson emphasizes the military as a tool to be used against terrorists. The military can be used both to protect civilians and to engage in direct fighting with the terrorists themselves. Along with military action, there is a great need for intelligence (e.g., human, signals, satellite).¹²

⁹ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. XIV.

¹⁰ Boaz Ganor, **The Counter-terrorism Puzzle: A Guide for Decision Makers** (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005), p. 183.

¹¹ Louise Richardson, Democracy **and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Colonel Galula expresses a useful theory on this subject in Stephen T. Hosmer and Sibylle Crane's **Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16-20, 1962**. Insurgents often use terrorist tactics and must be dealt with carefully. An insurgent's goal is to control a population, and is usually successful when conducted in a state with a weak government and incompetent police force.¹³ Population control usually starts in areas distant from the central government where the local population is already supporting the terrorists or insurgents. The bases that many insurgencies create are often also centers of operations and political unity. From these bases, insurgents devise plans for guerrilla warfare and as they spread and reach larger populations – they expand their operations. In many circumstances, such as in Iraq and Palestine, strong parties will emerge and use terrorist tactics to achieve political concessions.

The military is essential in circumstances such as these where the terrorists have significant military potential themselves. This is because in most cases police forces are not strong enough alone to defeat insurgents, and the insurgents' goals are too outlandish to be able to negotiate. In cases such as this, terrorists will simply kill the police – as we see in Mexico today. Galula believes militaries should recognize that insurgents are not mobile, because if they leave an area they potentially lose control of the population. The military must push insurgents back from their occupied areas and create an alternative political party so that returning insurgents would not have a hold on that element of society.¹⁴ A good example is the province of al-Anbar in Iraq. There, the people were dissuaded from supporting al-Qaeda and the U.S. military could drive their overt

¹³ Stephen Hosmer and Sibylle O. Crane, **Counterinsurgency: A Symposium, April 16-20, 1962** (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 1963), pp. 2-3.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

presence temporarily from population centers. Because of this, the population turned against al-Qaeda, and it now has no lasting support in that region and no influence on the area. The local tribes kept them out by these initiatives.

Counterterrorism measures are particularly difficult if terrorism has gone unmanaged for too long because it is nearly impossible to collect intelligence once the terrorists have established firm control over an area.¹⁵ Terrorists/insurgents become familiarized with the area and with members of the society, so intelligence officers would be immediately recognized and the operation would be unsuccessful. Guerrillas would have already contaminated the minds of the civilians who often are struck already with fear and so are less likely to divulge information that could be useful to counterterrorist forces. If counter measures begin at the onset of the conflict, however intelligence can take hold in the community clandestinely – before the terrorists/insurgents become too familiarized with their atmosphere. A successful counterinsurgency must have better intelligence than the insurgents which is mainly achieved through having the support of the community or tribal group. In this way the majority of the community will provide more support to the party conducting the counterterrorism efforts. That majority can influence a hostile minority and neutralize it.

Seth Jones and Martin Libicki support Colonel Galula's theory that military use is mostly successful in the case of terrorist insurgencies.¹⁶ Insurgent groups tend to be larger, with a more goal-oriented focus on seizing power. Jones and Libicki theorize that insurgents tend to have mid-level goals. Police alone are not sufficient with these types

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁶ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 8.

of groups because insurgents are often well armed and highly motivated, and police are outnumbered.

Barry Posen argues in “*The Struggle Against Terrorism: Grand Strategy, Strategy, and Tactics*” that the military is important to counter al-Qaeda in its entirety.¹⁷ Affiliates and cells of al-Qaeda operate differently than many previous terrorist groups, and it would not be possible for the United States, or any modern nation, to negotiate peace with al-Qaeda. Military force may not always be the best choice either. Posen does acknowledge police action, but stresses police intervention as a means of gaining intelligence. Police forces know their surroundings and people often feel comfortable with police working in their communities. Nonetheless, the police role should not be limited to intelligence.¹⁸

Group Assessment

Louise Richardson’s book, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past** is particularly helpful in distinguishing different types of terrorist organizations. She researches and analyzes revolutionary, ethno-nationalist and religious or millenarian organizations. After describing these groups’ goals and strategies, she analyzes various policy approaches that have attempted to counter these organizations. Her research complements the thesis of this study by supporting the theory that policy makers should identify a group’s underlying motivations and tactics before choosing counterterrorism

¹⁷ Barry Posen, “The Struggle Against Terrorism: Grand Strategy, Strategy, and Tactics,” *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 39-55, Winter 2001/2002, p. 42.

¹⁸ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, pp. xiii-xiv.

procedures.¹⁹ She describes the structure, motivations, downfalls and successes due to government action in a selection of groups.²⁰

Furthermore, in **What Terrorists Want**, Louise Richardson makes a connection between an organization's goals and how difficult they are to defeat.²¹ In her discussion, goals are broken down into two categories: temporal and transformational. She describes temporal goals as political goals that can be met without overthrowing the entire political system, and in particular are narrow enough to occasionally permit negotiations. Terror groups that hold such goals appear to be largely nationalist groups such as ETA, IRA, and LTTE. On the other hand, transformational goals are not able to be negotiated, as they require changes that cannot be adopted within the political structure of the state.²² Examples of these include Communist groups' war against capitalism and those who wish to impose Shari'a law on – and in some cases create a Caliphate in – the contemporary Middle East and other Muslim regions.

Another connection that Louise Richardson emphasizes is the relationship between the organization and community. Organizations that are isolated from their communities are usually easier to defeat because they lack financial and logistical support. These types of groups have members who are more likely to defect or splinter into other groups. They are largely left-wing extremists such as 17 November in Greece,

¹⁹ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 7.

²⁰ Studies include: Red Brigades, IRA, ETA (Basque group in Northern Spain), GIA (Islamic group in Algeria), FALN-FLN, FARC, Hamas, Israel, Fatah, Hezbollah, PKK, Chechen terror groups in Russia and Chechnya, LTTE, and Aum Shinrikyo

²¹ Louise Richardson, **What Terrorists Want** (New York: Random House 2006) p. 17.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 13

FMLN, FARC, GRAPO and the Zapatistas.²³ Groups that have closer ties with their communities are more dangerous because community members may share the same political or ideological views – or some other bond such as tribal or ethnic loyalties even if they do not partake in terrorism. Furthermore, when the police or military search for terrorists it is unlikely citizens who are loyal to the organization’s people or cause will offer assistance.

Colonel David Galula, a key contributor in Stephen T. Hosmer and Sibylle Crane’s book, **Counterinsurgency: A Symposium**. He also gives an in depth account of how military operations were successful in Algeria in **Pacification in Algeria 1956-1958**.²⁴ In Hosmer and Crane’s book, as well as in his own **Counterinsurgency Warfare, Theory and Practice**,²⁵ Col. Galula gives operational counterinsurgency theory. But in **Pacification in Algeria**, he gives analyses on how those theories are put into practice. Accounts of how the population in Algeria was controlled and supported by the French highlighted military success in counterterrorism efforts. Col. Galula’s theory works on paper and in the field. He demonstrated the military options can be a successful tactic in insurgencies involving terror tactics.

Similarly, R. W. Komer presents a military case study which is a counterinsurgency success in **The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort**.²⁶ What is important in this account of counterinsurgency are the patterns of insurgent operation, factors that made insurgency

²³ **Antifascist Resistance Groups October First** (GRAPO) is a Spanish Maoist group.

²⁴ David Galula, **Pacification in Algeria 1956-1958** (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 1963).

²⁵ David Galula, **Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice** (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1964).

²⁶ R.W. Komer, **The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort** (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 1972).

favorable as a tactic, responses to the insurgency by the military and necessary policy implications that followed.²⁷

Conceptual Framework:

The independent variables in this study are the three principal policy options – politicization, policing and military action, supported by various sub-policies such as diplomacy, international support, economic sanctions and social relief. The analysis of a group's characteristics and the context in which they operate, plus the most effective combination of principal and sub-policy suggestions, should produce an effective policy that can overcome terrorism. The dependent variable is terrorist activity.

This study focuses on several types of terrorist organizations ranging across a spectrum of ideologies and political orientations, including left-wing and right-wing political movements, religious and nationalist ideological motivations, and groups that seek to change economic conditions and regime types. Selecting a policy option requires identifying those characteristics of a terrorist organization. This includes its background features, political and social contexts, and threat capabilities, that affects its success, and connecting these policy options causally to a decrease in terrorist activity – the dependent variable.

To match an independent variable with a dependent variable, this paper adopts an approach based on qualitative research. The goal is to analyze individual terrorist

²⁷ Note that the Malayan Emergency and the British response to it present one of the best examples in which military, political and police efforts were used almost in a perfect balance to defeat an insurgency. On the political side, the British pledged, and did, give independence to Malaya. The British and the Malayan government passed special laws to support counter-terror and counter-insurgency efforts, and rigorously insisted on doing everything according to the rule of law. Special Branch police forces were created, whose efforts were fundamental in identifying and routing out insurgent political structures. And, military operations hunted and defeated insurgent terrorists in the jungles.

groups' characteristics and actions, and use this information and what we know about past counter-terrorism efforts to construct adequate policy options. Specifically, we want to show that by (A) identifying the key characteristics of an organization and (B) matching policy options that have been successful in the past for terrorist organizations with similar characteristics, then this will lead to the defeat of the terrorist organization under consideration (C). We do this by considering the three case studies outlined above, and what they tell us about which approaches work best against groups with certain characteristics.

Research Design:

To set up the basis of this research, we will use relevant theories and expert explanations of how to counter terrorism, and will collect data regarding past events through several second-hand accounts of past counterterrorism efforts. This is descriptive and explanatory research, where variables will be tested against each other to make assertions about current and future terrorist threats. The research will observe and assess policy options that governments have used in the past to quell the terrorism that plagued their states. Terrorist organizations are motivated by anything from political and social surroundings, ethnicity, nationality and religion. The measurements being studied will have taken place throughout history, up until what is going on today.

Analysis

The main analysis in this study uses background information including history, political and social contexts, and major stakeholders. Threat analysis will focus primarily on terrorist organizational structure, public support and operational capabilities. This outline for analysis covers the most crucial factors of an organization and selectively

rules out inappropriate policy options and conclusions. The observer may learn a lot about the organization's weaknesses by studying the data provided by this analysis.

In the background segment of analysis, a lot can be said for a group's history, and the political and social context in which it operates. For example, the non-elite Salvadorians were oppressed by the Salvadorian government for decades in ways that harmed innocent civilians in El Salvador. This left many peasants with a laundry list of grievances. From 1880 until 1992, El Salvador's political and economic structure was an elitist agrarian society. When people began to protest in the 1970's, they were met with extreme violence and terror from their government.²⁸ This violent, and intimidating lifestyle had deep roots in peasant history in El Salvador. Their political and economic culture is what spurred the grievances that led to the creation of the FMLN. Because the FMLN's grievances were rooted in a history of labor-repressiveness and class injustice, political negotiations were of most interest to them.²⁹ Groups that seek political concessions usually have narrow goals such as regime change or social justice. In this case, history and social and political contexts showed that democratic transition, land reform and civil rights negotiations could address the terrorist and the popular grievances.

The Irish Republican Army was also motivated by a desire for political change. Catholics sought equal rights and autonomy.³⁰ Because their goals were specific, Great Britain allowed the IRA to use the political arena as opposed to proscription to fight their civil battles. Granting the IRA the opportunity to use the political arena gave them a

²⁸ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, pp. 64-65.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 23

³⁰ Tim Pat Coogan, **The IRA: A History** (Niwt: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1993), p. 260.

civil fighting ground that did not require the use of violence in open society. As a result, terrorist activities lost some of their appeal.

Threat analysis:

A terrorist organization's structure can indicate possible policy strategies to dismantle it. Aum Shinrikyo, for example, was centered on a single leader, Shoko Asahara, who believed himself to be the equivalent of Jesus Christ or Buddha. He was the spiritual guru and prophetic leader of the organization.³¹ Once law enforcement caught up with Aum and Shoko Asahara the organization crumbled. Without the leader, the followers did not have a path to follow.

In other circumstances, when the key leader(s) are assassinated or captured, the organization might not collapse, but it does become weakened. This gives government, police or military forces a temporary advantage. Capture of key al-Qaeda figures has temporarily reduced the organization's operational capabilities.³² Furthermore, since 9/11 more key leaders have been targeted and assassinated – weakening al-Qaeda's ability to plan, finance and support operations.³³ Cutting the head off the hydra has not ended al-Qaeda, but it has disrupted the organizational structure and has rattled and reduced al-Qaeda's functional ability.

Public support can make or break an organization and can be dangerous to a state's policy efforts for many reasons. Like Irish Nationalists with the IRA, citizens can resist intelligence collection from the government against their freedom fighters and

³¹ Brian Jackson et.al. **Aptitude for Destruction: Case Studies of Organizational Learning in Five Terrorist Groups** (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 2005), p.11.

³² Angel Rabasa et.al. **Beyond Al-Qaeda: The Global Jihadist Movement** (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 2006), p. 31.

³³ Ibid., p. 32

signal members when troops are coming.³⁴ This phenomenon is not unique. Filipino peasants also warned insurgents about approaching Japanese soldiers during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in WWII.³⁵

Political context matters. In Afghanistan immediately after 9/11, the political structure was so fragmented and the nature of the Taliban government so inimical to U.S. interests, that military operations were the only option. Since the Taliban was overthrown the government has been too weak to employ any kind of coherent, honest police force. Operation Enduring Freedom was able to successfully drive the Taliban and al-Qaeda into the hills of Pakistan with military force.³⁶ The military was the sole option. Politicization has also had problems. Although negotiations have been suggested by Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, it is difficult to determine with whom to negotiate to cause the violence to abate as there are many groups with different leaders.³⁷ Furthermore, negotiations work best when the government is strong and viable not when it is weak and dependent on outside assistance. Given Afghanistan's history and current state, and because of this enduring weakness of the state and the police, military force continues to be a major element of the counter-terror efforts.

Lack of public support can harm a terror organization. In the Malayan insurgency, the insurgents failed to gain the support of the largely Indian population. Not only did they oppose the insurgents, but they supported the government so strongly that

³⁴ Brian Jackson et.al. p. 128.

³⁵ Stephen T. Hosmer, and Sibylle O. Crane, p. 25.

³⁶ John Brown, "The United States Army in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001-March 2002," *U.S. Army Center of Military History*, 2003, p. 26.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

many enlisted in the government's security forces.³⁸ This also made the government's ability to collect intelligence more efficient than that of the insurgents.

Operational capabilities matter in determining an effective counterterrorism policy. If an organization is well armed and has many members successful counter measures may be too difficult for police to undertake alone. When an organization's membership is more than 1,000 some experts assert that the most effective strategy is usually military. In the Algerian Insurgency, for example, the FLN regular forces throughout all Algeria were about 5,000 strong at the height of the conflict. When there are fewer than 1,000 members police often have the resources to deal with the threat.³⁹

Limitations:

There are multiple limitations in this research. First of all, due to time constraints this study was only able to select a handful of organizations to analyze. With more time, we may find that with a larger sample of organizations there are inconsistencies. Furthermore, there are aspects of organizations that do not reflect in this analysis such aspects as financing and personal backgrounds of individual members. These are details that could potentially be significant in prescribing a solution if given adequate analysis. Also, I did not account for the amount of terrorist groups that succeed, or splinter into other organizations, or how and when this most likely happens.

Furthermore, specific types of organizations are more or less prone to certain policy options. For example, religious organizations tend to be less flexible in compromising their goals. Because they see themselves as working as emissaries for a

³⁸ R.W. Komer, p. 27.

³⁹ David Galula, Pacification in Algeria: 1956-1958, p. 11.

higher purpose there is little that can deter these characters. It is possible that common denominators can be drawn about various types of organizations: religious, ethno-nationalists, left/right wing, Marxists-Leninists, etc.

Irish Republican Army Case Study

Background

Historical

In 1920, the Irish War of Independence resulted in the partition of Ireland. A treaty called the Government of Ireland Act was signed in 1921 by minister of finance for Sinn Fein, Michael Collins to give all but six northern Irish states autonomy.⁴⁰ Southern Irish states that had gained autonomy were consolidated as the Irish Free State, later renamed the Republic of Ireland. Although Michael Collins (Fein Party member) had hoped for an independent Ireland, he believed this treaty marked progress.⁴¹ Many Northern Irish were divided at this point, not only because of controversy over whether or not it was acceptable to sign the treaty, but because in signing it, they had to swear on an oath to pledge their allegiances to the British Crown. Michael Collins was assassinated because of this split between interests.⁴²

While the Republic of Ireland functioned independently of the United Kingdom, the six counties in the North were still subjected to British rule. In the 1960s, Catholics

⁴⁰ Seumas McManus, **The Story of the Irish Race: A Popular History of Ireland** (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1968), p. 709.

⁴¹ Tim Pat Coogan, p. 22.

⁴² Richard English, **Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 709.

⁴² Tim Pat Coogan, p.36.

had accepted their disposition and dedicated their fight to gaining equal rights within Northern Ireland.

Ireland denied civil rights to Catholics until the 1960's when Captain Terence O'Neill became Prime Minister of Stormont and worked to build bridges between the two traditions.⁴³ This era was known as the Era of Tolerance, because a minor group of Unionists began to reach out to the Catholics. Although O'Neill's ideas influenced many, his administration's intentions were not put into action by Protestant Unionists. Catholics realized that reform would not take place without a push, so under the influence of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, they began non-violent demonstrations. Under the O'Neill administration, the Irish Civil Rights Movement did achieve voting reforms; however, the Unionists began to feel threatened.⁴⁴ They suspected that the request for civil rights was merely a distraction meant to mask the Nationalist plans for a united Ireland.⁴⁵ Because of this notion, the government reacted against other demands for civil rights for the Catholics, such as decent housing and job opportunities. Also, the British introduced internment – the indefinite incarceration without trial of those suspected of violent associations – in Ireland to contain anticipated Irish violence associated with these demonstrations.

Northern Ireland's reserve police, Ulster Special Constabulary (B-Specials) and British military soldiers were sent to maintain "Protestant law, and Protestant order" in

⁴³ Marc Mulholland, **The Longest War: Northern Ireland's Troubled History** (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 59-60.

⁴⁴ Marc Mulholland, pp. 62-64.

⁴⁵ Brendan O'Leary, "Mission Accomplished? Looking Back at the IRA" *Field Review*, vol. 1, 2005, p. 234.

response to the civil rights protests.⁴⁶ This deployment of troops and misconduct from the police, along with the effective demise of the Real IRA (discussed below) led to the organization of the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

Prior to 1970, the Real Irish Republican Army occasionally launched an attack against the British, but often gave warning before attacks to avoid civilian injury, or targeted infrastructure such as bridges in Northern Ireland. The RIRA steadily dissolved into the political process, never committing whole-heartedly to violent resistance to the British.⁴⁷ When Catholic civilians were being harassed, many would look to their community as their only security (members of the IRA), but they were hardly active. In fact, they were scarce. The community started to say that the IRA stood for “I Ran Away.” It’s about this same time that PIRA was formed from remnants of what the IRA used to be.⁴⁸

The arrival of British troops in Northern Ireland meant that many unemployed, impoverished and disenfranchised Catholics would only have each other for defense. Under internment law reenacted by Northern Ireland’s Prime Minister Brian Faulkner any individual suspected of being an IRA member was imprisoned without formal charges or a trial.⁴⁹ Because the police and British military often acted unethically and had an unspoken loyalty to the Protestants, Catholics often created “no-go” areas – areas that were barricaded from outsiders so that Protestants could not enter. This gave the IRA an environment to organize and convene without interruption. In response to these

⁴⁶ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ *BBC News*, “1971: NI Activates Internment Law,” 9 Aug 1971.

“no-go” zones in both Belfast and Derry, Operation Motorman was launched, in which the British Army forced their way into these Catholic neighborhoods.⁵⁰ They often found little to no resistance from the nationalists who were significantly less trained and not well armed.⁵¹ Bloody Sunday further escalated Catholic distain for the British presence. When Catholics gathered in Derry on Jan. 30, 1972 for a civil rights protest, the British Army’s First Parachute Regiment open fired on an unarmed, peaceful civil rights demonstration, killing 13 unarmed Irishmen. The Catholic community also suggested that those killed by the British on Bloody Sunday were neither armed, nor IRA members.⁵²

Lastly, in the escalation of the Troubles was the death of many prisoners conducting a hunger strike. These strikers fasted indefinitely in order to be recognized as political prisoners. Bobby Sands was among the first to die from the strike because Margaret Thatcher refused to give any concessions to terrorists, and believed that a crime is a crime, despite the ideology it is committed in the name of. Bobby Sands did, however, win a seat in Westminster right before his death.⁵³

By looking at the background of the IRA and the background of Catholic Nationalists in general, it is easy to understand what the main issues were. Whether their motivations were legitimate or not, it is plain to see that the IRA sought equal rights to Protestant Loyalists and devolved control of their government. In this detail alone it is

⁵⁰ The British military had 30,000 troops, 38 regular battalion-sized formations; 27 of which were infantry battalions and two armored regiments and 5,500 members of the Ulster Defense Regiment involved in this situation.

⁵¹ *The UK National Archives*, “No-go Areas and Operation Motorman,” *The Cabinet Papers 1915-1978*.

⁵² Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 70.

⁵³ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 62.

obvious that with narrow political goals, politicization would be a potentially successful policy.

Political Factors

Key players

The Protestant side of the conflict was made up of those nominally loyal to Great Britain. The political parties affiliated with the loyalists were the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The UUP was the more moderate of the two and for the majority of the conflict was led by David Trimble. The DUP was slightly more hard-line and led by Ian Paisley. Also on this side of the conflict, two major paramilitary organizations paralleled the IRA. Those were the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and Ulster Defense Association (UDA). There were various smaller, lesser-known organizations, and the parties and paramilitaries often worked in collaboration as did the Catholic parties and paramilitaries.⁵⁴ The Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP) was the most prominent of the Catholic political parties, followed narrowly by Sinn Fein (the more hard-line party) led by Gerry Adams. The more hard-liners were considered nationalists. Sinn Fein also acted as the political arm of the IRA. The IRA discussed in this paper is the Provisional Irish Republican Army unless otherwise noted. It emerged from the Original IRA and the Real IRA. The PIRA served as the Catholic nationalist's paramilitary terrorist organization.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Marc Mulholland, pp. 24 & 99.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Threat Analysis

Organizational Structure

The IRA was originally structured as a bureaucratic hierarchy that distributed roles to members based on how much power and influence they had within the organization. The highest ranking body of the IRA was the General Army Convention. Acting under the General Army Convention were the Army Executive and the Army Council, which oversaw strategic and tactical developments. Both the Army Executive and Army Council were positions assigned by elections. The Army Council elected a chief of staff who was granted the most authority over the organization. The General Headquarters acted as an executive. It was responsible for implementing and executing the Army Council's decisions. The General Headquarters contained two divisions, the Northern and Southern Commands. Because British intelligence tried to infiltrate the IRA however, they evolved into a cell structure. Each cell functioned as a franchise of the overall corporation.⁵⁶

In this case, organizational structure is an important part of the analysis because it illustrates one of many examples of how the British military and intelligence were incapable of suppressing the IRA. Specifically, the British failed in trying to infiltrate and put down the terrorists. Because of the IRA's evolutionary ability intelligence could never pin down a significant number of members, activities or operations for the military to interdict. Once British troops or intelligence officers started to get too close, their organization would adjust its structure to protect itself.

⁵⁶ Brian Jackson, et.al. pp.95-97.

Public Support

Even though the major issue of concern to nationalists for the duration of the conflict was sovereignty and self-rule, this is not what led to the outbreak of the Troubles. The Troubles began because of the British reaction to the Catholic civil rights movement. Catholics did not have equal rights compared to Protestants. Example of the inequalities that Catholics lived with include things such as housing and employment opportunities, and being unable to participate in local government.⁵⁷ Because the Catholics were trying to gain equality loyalists were afraid of losing power to nationalists if they were to get their way. When British troops arrived to maintain order, loyalists acted quickly to form relationships with them. Because of the collaboration between British troops and loyalists, troops often overlooked loyalist misconduct toward the Catholics or disregarded Catholics' rights. Rather than settling chaotic disputes, nationalist grievances were often exacerbated by British actions that made already festering grievances worse. This resulted in the Catholic populations resenting the British military and police rather than helping them.⁵⁸ Because the United Kingdom deviated from democratic practices and the rule of law, grievances and hostilities rose. And because the IRA was the Catholics' only protection, support from the Catholic public rose. The principal events that resulted in the rise of recruitment and volunteers, as well as public support, were the introduction of internment, curfews, Operation Motorman, Bloody Sunday, and the Royal Ulster Constabulary's (RUC) "shoot to kill" policy.⁵⁹ A large part of the problem was that the British army and police forces took more than just support for loyalists. They were believed, and we now know proven, to be in collusion with loyalist anti-Catholic terrorist

⁵⁷ Richard English, p. 97.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 92.

⁵⁹ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 77.

organizations in Northern Ireland such as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defense Association (UDA). These biases can be seen by the number of Catholics put in internment camps versus the number of Protestants. This same bias applied to arrests and investigations. Many UDA and UVF members were even discovered to be on the British Army's payroll.⁶⁰

One of the United Kingdom's major problems in putting down the IRA was the nationalist public's support for the organization. For this reason, even those who did not approve of the IRA's tactics supported its cause.⁶¹ Support for the IRA stretched to sympathizers in the Republic of Ireland and the United States.

Social factors, including the IRA's level of public support and further motivations shows another angle of how the British military campaign was unsuccessful. Because nationalists in Northern Ireland were largely oppressed, and had minimal rights and no one to defend them against injustices, the IRA was able to take advantage of these circumstances. First of all, because of its support domestically and abroad, the IRA received donations in the form of money, volunteers and ammunition. Also, it was able to train, meet and plan with some level of secrecy. When citizens saw British coming, they would often warn the IRA.⁶² Public support also legitimized nationalist motivations and grievances, and in turn always ensured a high number of volunteers.

⁶⁰ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 88.

⁶¹ A very similar dynamic could be seen in Iraq before 2007, where the Sunni population often supported Islamic extremists with whom they disagreed on many levels, but who were viewed as their only protection against a government that they believed was run by Shi'a Islamists, and against Shi'a militias and death squads.

⁶² This phenomenon is not unique. For a fascinating discussion of Filipino peasants warning insurgents about approaching Japanese soldiers during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in WWII, see Hosmer.

Capabilities

The IRA's capabilities grew as weapons became more available. In addition to imported weapons, the IRA often made their own bombs. IRA members were frequently killed either making or detonating homemade bombs. Jack McCabe, for example, was the only expert bomb maker at the time and blew himself up while mixing explosives on the floor of his garage with a shovel. Before he died he passed on to others what went wrong with his experiment so that others could carry on bomb-making capabilities. In 1969, the IRA only owned 10 guns.⁶³ Myles Shevlin was the only weapons smuggler in the early years who had been involved with any version of the IRA since the 1950s. Explosives failures were so common that in the beginning more IRA members were killed by their bombs than were targets, which is accredited to the level of expertise and the type of unstable explosive being used. By risky and often fatal endurance through trial and error, fatalities from explosives failures were nearly eliminated.⁶⁴

Because IRA bombs were low technology and easily detected by police new innovations had to be created. As munitions technology became available the IRA had units that specialized in explosives manufacturing and supplying munitions to the cells. Eventually, bombing skills progressed to remote manual detonations and to automatic detonations.⁶⁵

The IRA received weapons from sympathizers in the United States and from the Middle East. Libya provided several shipments of arms to the IRA in order to punish the

⁶³ Tim Pat Coogan, p. 279.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 283.

⁶⁵ Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 100.

British for letting the Americans use their bases to facilitate bombing raids on Tripoli.⁶⁶

The IRA General Headquarters also learned how to use foreign contacts and the international arms market after many failed attempts and embarrassing mistakes. In later years as their skills in these facilitation tasks improved, the IRA acquired mortars, rockets, sniper rifles and machine guns. When desired weapons could not be obtained, they were manufactured within the organization – a capability that the IRA also developed over time.⁶⁷

An analysis of capabilities is important in order to know what scale of violence any government is up against, and therefore how much violence it may need to employ in response. Depending on the organization's ability to acquire weapons, train personnel, stockpile weapons, and conduct similar institutional tasks different levels of government forces are necessary to counter them. For example and as previously noted, police forces are usually not capable of taking on large, well-armed organizations. In the case of a large-scale insurgency for example, the military is the only institution trained and well enough armed to match such a level of violence. The IRA was able to either develop weapons internally or use the global market to acquire them. It did not employ insurgency tactics, which is what the British military specialized in countering.

Outcome

What kept the British from being able to suppress the IRA for over 30 years?

The British followed an approach that could be thought of as trial and error. For almost thirty years, the British tried with little success to use its military and police

⁶⁶ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 74.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

forces. This did not work for a variety of reasons. First, military presence intimidated the community. The British army was well skilled in counterinsurgency. In an open society however the military failed in many respects.⁶⁸ An example of this was one of the few occasions British troops opened fired on unarmed Catholics. Instead of demonstrating superiority and power for the British it gave Catholics all the more reason to fight. The military and police forces used undemocratic and unethical procedures. While originally welcomed as protectors, they turned quickly into the common enemy.⁶⁹ By issuing curfews, internment, “shoot to kill” policies and the like, military presence in and of itself was to the Catholics a physical threat on their lives, their communities, and their ability to function normally in everyday life. The Catholics came to see British troops as the threat and as terrorists themselves. Had the British government analyzed the situation in Northern Ireland more thoroughly they may have concluded that their efforts were going against their goals. Not only were the Catholic grievances not accommodated, but they were perpetuated by the military.

Military and police misconduct helped further IRA recruitment and support for the IRA. Catholic citizens would warn IRA members when police were coming by hanging towels on their balconies, or banging pots and pans. The public’s support legitimized their cause, provided safe havens undetectable to intelligence, provided money and solidified the crusading spirit.

The IRA adapted well to the times, to the operating environment and to British counterterrorism efforts. Because of the IRAs organizational learning capabilities, the

⁶⁸ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p.77.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

military and police could never solidify a specific plan. When bombs started to be detected by the military or police, the IRA developed better technology to avoid detection. They sought munitions abroad, or experimented themselves to seek alternatives. Eventually they were able to acquire less detectable remote manual detonation bombs, and then even to automatic detonation bombs.⁷⁰

Also, when the IRA's original organizational structure was penetrated, they reorganized from a hierarchical bureaucracy to a cell structure. Their *Green Book* (training manual) further gave instructions on how to prevent infiltration. An example of this was to never talk about the IRA, politics, or the British in public. They were warned against talking about these sensitive subjects even around other Catholics who might be supportive of their motivations and goals. In this way, the British intelligence could never pick out members while conducting surveillance or human intelligence. Furthermore, they developed their own infiltration skills such as positioning members in government offices to get inside information on counterterrorism policies, or knowledge of intelligence planning.⁷¹ They also learned to pass cryptic messages using the telephone and tap wires monitored by security services. In another area, the IRA learned and trained members in how to manipulate forensic science. In conclusion, the IRA acted as a well trained, well staffed military, and although the British military was a match for the IRA, they never got passed military stalemate.

Although the IRA's initial weapons capacity mostly consisted of sticks and stones, their abilities significantly improved over time until they were able to stalemate

⁷⁰ The same game of measure, counter-measure, counter-counter-measure is going on in Iraq and Afghanistan with respect to roadside bombs today.

⁷¹ Brian Jackson, et.al. pp. 126-129.

the British military.⁷² High and close to equal casualties were accumulated on both sides, and though the Catholics had a smaller population, there was never a lack of volunteers.

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Why did politicization end up being most effective?

Violence was no longer the only means of achieving their goals. Once negotiations reconvened (from previous secret negotiations in the 70s), and the republicans were taken seriously, the Catholic position was validated by the public attention. This gave nationalists another route for achieving its goals. The IRA's objectives were all political and temporal, and therefore were best served in a political arena. Validating the concerns of the Northern Irish early on could have made a difference in support levels. When it did occur, it made Catholics aware that they were being included, as opposed to excluded from decision making. By listening to Catholics the government could have had a better appreciation of their needs and their grievances (the British government was often unaware of the misconduct of its own troops and of the Stormont government in Northern Ireland). For example, allowing Catholics into the police force helped to neutralize many grievances, along with other basic civil rights demands. Also, after getting over the initial road blocks in negotiations, parties were able to feel each other out, and communicate on a mutually respectable and realistic level.

Conclusion

This case study shows that an analysis of the organization's characteristics can imply an appropriate counterterrorism policy. From each analytical category, particularly useful information can be derived. In this case, it is apparent from the background alone

⁷² Tim Pat Coogan, p. 283.

⁷³ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 78.

that politicization may be most successful. In the background we find that Catholic Nationalists have been oppressed by the majority Protestants, supported by the British government. They wanted to gain equal rights and an equal say in the country they see as theirs. Jones and Libicki would characterize these motivations as relatively narrow goals, and Richardson as temporal goals. When goals are narrow enough, and these are so, negotiations are effective. This is what the British government came to find in the process leading up to the signing the Good Friday Agreement. By devolving some control of Northern Ireland to Northern Ireland, and establishing equal rights (in the forms of housing, employment opportunities, etc.) many Catholics felt appeased. Their grievances were validated and their method for addressing them amended.

Military and police efforts were less effective for good reasons. Analysis of the IRA's organizational structure shows the group's resilience. Because the British were consistently trying to collect intelligence and infiltrate the organization, the IRA had to adapt to dodge Britain's intelligence efforts. Because of the IRA's evolutionary ability, the British faced significant challenges in finding out the number of members, activities or operations being planned. Once British troops or intelligence officers started to get too close, their organization would adjust its structure to protect itself. Throughout the "Troubles," the British never gained significant hold on the IRA. While many members were captured, and various operations were stopped before they could be deployed, overall British and Unionist military and police efforts were not successful enough to end the IRA as a terrorist organization. Because the IRA was able to defeat these military and police efforts, and because the IRA's goals were addressable through political action, this approach once seriously attempted was more successful.

Analysis of the Catholic Nationalists' social factors shows that politicization would prove to be the most successful policy in ending the IRA. While not all Catholics supported the terrorist tactics of the IRA, the Catholic community did support members of the IRA in securing their communities from British troops who acted undemocratically and unjustly. Many British troops and police collaborated with Loyalist terrorist groups. This made military and police presence a real danger to Catholic civilians. Many civilians gave donations, safe housing, praise and support to the IRA. This public support created challenges for the British in many other areas such as intelligence collecting. It ended when the population saw that they were adequately represented in the political process and could count on due process under the law.

Lastly, the IRA became well armed over the years. While the organization was an asymmetrical opponent of the British military, it met the military with rising capabilities. Because of those decades passed while the IRA and the British military exchanged blows, millions of pounds were spent and thousands of lives were lost. Despite these investments in time, money and lives, this conflict still ended in a military stalemate. The British military could not defeat the IRA because it was not suitable for the task or the challenge – politicization was.

Politicization succeeded for all these reasons. The IRA sought minimal political concessions. Until the British finally gave up trying to kill off the organization altogether and sought political accommodation, no progress was made.

Aum Shinrikyo Case Study

Background

Historical

Aum Shinrikyo was created in 1984 as a meditation group, and was originally made up of only fifteen members.⁷⁴ Aum incorporated aspects of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, and spread from Japan to Germany, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Australia, and the United States. Due to a booming economy and Japan's post WWII rejection of imperialism and new protections of religious freedom, the group was able to grow into a religious cult, and prepared to use terrorism as a means to its goals undetected by government and the police.⁷⁵ Aum ended up staging at least twenty attacks between 1990 and 1995, half of which biological attacks and the other half chemical ones.⁷⁶

The organization was founded and lead for the duration of its life by Shoko Asahara. Asahara was a paranoid and competitive individual who thought of himself in ways that could be compared to Nostradamus, the second coming of Christ or the Buddha. Because Aum was one of many religious organizations popping up in Japan during this time period, and one whose leaders could not accept rejection, hostilities with Japanese society were ignited from the beginning. This obsessive sense of competition, paranoia, and existential threat was what drove his once yoga based religious group to gradually take on a radical world view, eventually resulting in terrorism.⁷⁷ This competition turned into an existential struggle for survival against other organizations,

⁷⁴ Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 12.

⁷⁵ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 534.

⁷⁶ Jonathan B. Tucker, **Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons** (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2000), p. 207 .

⁷⁷ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past** p. 534.

critics and the government. This transition took place over a period of about thirteen years as the organization officially ended in 1997.⁷⁸

Aum's original goal was to attain a high level of spirituality through meditation and living a modest lifestyle. This seemingly innocent goal began to change when a member was accidentally killed during a religious ritual. Teruyuki Majima was mentally ill, and when he went into a seizure during a ritual, Asahara ordered he be cooled down. He was kept in a bath of water so cold that he died.⁷⁹ When Asahara ordered that his body be secretly disposed of, many members became frightened and began to question the legitimacy of the group. Many considered leaving. Asahara ordered that Aum members who knew of the accidental death and wanted to leave the group be killed.⁸⁰

This transformation of Aum from a religious group that practiced yoga to a terrorist organization continued when Asahara sought to run for election. He was overconfident that the Japanese electorate would give full support to him and his list of candidates. In winning this election, Asahara thought that Aum Shinrikyo would gain further national and international influence. Aum was confident that it would be taking over the Japanese government. When it failed Aum distained interaction with Japanese open society even more than before the election. According to Asahara, society had committed a horrible crime by rejecting Aum, and therefore the Japanese electorate became an enemy.⁸¹ This also worsened Asahara's extreme paranoia. Because he

⁷⁸ Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 13.

⁷⁹ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past** p 537.

⁸⁰ Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 13.

⁸¹ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 538.

considered it impossible for his cult to be rejected or loose legitimately he created delusions of multiple conspiracies that would explain his failure.⁸²

Aum's acts of violence (such as murder) continued throughout the organization's existence, but the evolution to terrorism began as a reaction to Asahara's political failure. To further its violent capabilities Aum began its quest for the acquisition of weapons. Because Asahara had been denied a position as an official member of the state, he apparently believed that he would have to seize the power he thought he deserved and so sought to develop military and weapons capabilities on his own. The list of those Asahara sought to assassinate became broader. For example, these targets included critics, government officials such as judges and human rights workers. An example of this is when Aum planted sarin around the perimeter of a housing development where three judges lived in 1994.⁸³ These judges were involved in a case raised by local citizens who did not want an Aum headquarters in their community. The attack killed seven people, and injured many more. Also, earlier in 1989, Tsusumi Sakamoto, a human rights lawyer, was murdered along with his wife and fourteen month old son for aiding concerned families of Aum members who sought to get their family members out of the group.⁸⁴ This apocalyptic vision that motivated the organization was continued until Aum's dissolution and conversion into Aleph.^{85 86}

⁸² Sara Daly, et.al. **Aum Shinrikyo, Al Qaeda, and the Kinshasa Reactor Implications of Three Case Studies for Combating Nuclear Terrorism**, (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 2005), p. 7.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 541.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 537.

⁸⁵ When Aum Shinrikyo was finally defeated by the Japanese government's effective counterterrorism skills, Aleph continued to be a spiritual group, but abandoned any of the violent or paranoid characteristics of Asahara's leadership.

⁸⁶ Calvin Sims, "Under Fire, Japan Sect Starts Over" *New York Times*, 28 Feb 2000.

Political Factors

Many aspects of the changing international situation were introduced after WWII, through the post-Cold War period, and after the Persian Gulf War made a difference with Aum. The post WWII atmosphere in Japan introduced many previously unknown political and religious freedoms. Civil liberties were very important to both citizens and the government and therefore the legal structure was highly influenced by individual rights. This coincidentally was an obstacle in detecting Aum as a dangerous group. Protections against government infringement on individuals and on religious organizations were strong, and highly valued by society. This atmosphere let Aum's activities go undetected for a long time.⁸⁷

Also, when the Soviet Union collapsed, Eastern Europe and Asia experienced many changes. Russia, for example, was left with an increasing unemployment rate, the economy was broken down and people had little faith left in anything. This vulnerability was an asset to Aum for a few reasons. First of all, it was a good place to recruit members. Many Russians were enthusiastic to join a group that gave their lives meaning. Also, because of the end of the cold war many Russian weapons scientists were unemployed. Aum solicited them to contribute to its weapons development efforts. Soviet weapons experts were quickly hired by Aum.

Furthermore, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the start of the Persian Gulf War fulfilled some of Asahara's prophecies.⁸⁸ This strengthened membership not just in Japan, but in various places around the world.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 46.

⁸⁸ Sara Daly, et.al. p. 7.

The political atmosphere is an important part of the analysis because it shows the constraints under which the police and government were working. Police in Japan, just like in the United States, often run into dead ends when trying to prosecute a case because of legal limitations on their ability to intrude on people's civil rights. There must be probable cause or a warrant to use surveillance; all religious groups share protections from the state, such as tax exemptions, and people have the right to retain a certain amount of uninterrupted privacy. Because individual, religious and political freedoms were taken so seriously after WWII, the police would not easily have been able to prevent these disasters from happening, or foresee that they would happen. After Aum's 1995 Tokyo subway attack, however the country learned that they would have to be able to protect peoples' freedoms while ensuring their security as well. The sarin attack on the Tokyo subway was Aum's most fatal and large scale attack. Twelve people died, and about 6,000 were injured. It was this attack that demonstrated to Japanese officials that something had to be done about Aum Shinrikyo.⁹⁰

Key Players

Key players and institutions involved in the conflict consist of individual members of Aum, the Japanese community and those institutions involved with the police force, such as the standard police force, detectives, intelligence officers, and other bureaucracies that were developed to aid the police. In particular, the Public Security Intelligence Agency, Japanese Criminal Affairs Bureau, Security Bureau, Task Force for Toxic Agent Attack, National Police Agency, Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department,

⁸⁹ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 539.

⁹⁰ Norimitsu Onishi, "After 8-Year Trial in Japan, Cultist Is Sentenced to Death." *New York Times*, 28 Feb 2004.

and Japanese Self-Defense Forces were involved in the collection of intelligence, creation of anti-terrorist legislation, capture of Aum members and prosecution of those involved from Aum Shinrikyo.⁹¹

Motives

Aum Shinrikyo's motives were found in their quasi-religious/millenarian ideology. The purpose of the Aum faith was for all to ascend the levels of consciousness until they obtained nirvana. Asahara was the only member to have reached the highest level. Aum was composed of many different world religions, and even mystical beliefs taken from Nostradamus. It was believed that World War III would be fought between Japan and the United States, and the world would be destroyed by nuclear weapons. Japan would face Armageddon, and be attacked with radiological and chemical weapons. Only people with good karma would survive – karma that could only be attained with training from the Aum organization.⁹²

Because of this ideology, Aum justified mass murder as a way of saving souls. Rather than people being killed in sin, they would be killed in the interest of their own salvation through Aum.⁹³ Killing was justified in that those killed were purified. Because they were murdered, their souls were freed and that person could receive salvation. Furthermore, because of Asahara's doomsday prophecies, this justification fit the mold for mass murder (as in the subway Sarin gas attack). Believing in Aum was the only way to survive the end of the world. Humanity could be spiritually freed by killing all those who opposed or threatened the organization. Because of these beliefs, and the

⁹¹ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, pp. 49-57.

⁹² Daly, Sara, et.al. p. 6.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 47-48.

shady practices that were taken to justify them, many Japanese citizens took action to have Aum shut down.⁹⁴

Based on Aum's motivations and ideology, it is understandable that there would have been absolutely no room for negotiation of any kind. In Louise Richardson's terms, Aum's goals were transformational. They believe to be serving a spiritual duty, and Aum (obeying Asahara) was the only way of fulfilling that duty.⁹⁵

Social Factors (public support)

Aum Shinrikyo had very little to no support outside of the organization itself. Family members tried multiple ways of getting their loved ones to leave the group, and citizens lobbied to keep Aum facilities out of their neighborhoods. In one incident, in the Kameido district of Tokyo, many citizens complained of a strange, foul odor coming from Aum Headquarters and worried about their health. The Department of the Environment inspected the area on multiple occasions. Human rights lawyers and detectives were hired by families' whose relatives moved into Aum compounds and headquarters, gave up their lives to Asahara and began to participate in questionable activities.⁹⁶ Non profit organizations along with government programs were developed to aid Aum members in leaving the group, and provide safety and protection for them in the event they did leave. Aum Shinrikyo Victims Society was one of these. These programs further educated young people against the advantages that Aum might claim to provide.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Calvin Sims, "Still Furious at Cult, Japan Violates Its Rights." *New York Times*, 27 Aug. 1999.

⁹⁵ Louise Richardson, ***What Terrorists Want***, p. 13.

⁹⁶ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 53.

⁹⁷ Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 14.

The lack of public support for Aum is important for a few reasons. It shows that police had a few advantages over Aum. Citizens voluntarily contacted police with information regarding the organization. This kind of information included membership information – many family members asked for help getting their relatives out of the organization. Citizens also tipped off police as to what was going on in their facilities – strange odors and activities were occasionally reported.

Threat Analysis

Organizational Structure

Aum Shinrikyo was organized in a pyramidal structure with Shoko Asahara at the top as the spiritual guru who was the only one to have achieved the elevated state of Nirvana. Because of his spiritual stature he acted as the monarch of the organization. Below Asahara were those members in each level of spiritual consciousness. Those who had reached higher levels of spirituality became close associates of Asahara. They were trusted with the more sensitive jobs – ones that may cause other members to think twice about their membership, defect, or question the organization’s validity. Each level was divided by personal spiritual achievement. To display their progression, each level wore a different color robe.⁹⁸ To rise in the ranks of Aum, members would pay fees, reject family or activities they participated in as part of their normal lives, and pass tests of dedication. This structure was maintained throughout Aum’s duration, however after Asahara lost the election, the organization shifted slightly to mirror the Japanese government. They created a pseudo-government of Japan within themselves.⁹⁹ These

⁹⁸ Philip N. Eates, “The Replication and Excess of Disciplinary Power in Sekigun and Aum Shinrikyo – A Foucauldian Approach,” (BA Thesis., University of Adelaide), p. 160.

⁹⁹ Sara Daly, et.al. p. 7.

stations turned into a twelve member ministry, a head of the House Agency and a Secretariat.¹⁰⁰

The police made a big impact on the organization when key Aum leaders were arrested. Asahara's arrest, as the only fully enlightened person in Aum and therefore their figurehead, had the largest impact as Aum's spiritual guru was now taken away. There were arrests of others in high positions, and as they occurred the organization began to decay.¹⁰¹

Capabilities

Although Aum had very large financial resources, its ability to successfully construct and deploy biological and chemical weapons was shaky at best. Their ability to construct deadly biological agents was a failure, and though their ability to build harmful chemical agents was successful, they were never used in a way that caused truly massive casualties as Aum would have liked. Luckily, this capability was shut down before it was used to kill even more than the 12 who died from Sarin gas poisoning in the Tokyo subway incident.

Due to the organization's inherent paranoia, members mostly sought out methods for creating biological and chemical weapons themselves, rather than seeking outside expertise with the exceptions of their Russian counterpart.¹⁰² Because the organization was so small, its biological weapons acquisition was largely unsuccessful in many ways. Aum tried to use botulinum toxins on many occasions in terrorist attacks, but fortunately, no one was ever harmed. Examples of other biological weapons attempts included efforts

¹⁰⁰ Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 18.

¹⁰¹ Norimitsu Onishi, 28 Feb 2004.

¹⁰² Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 24.

to seek out the Ebola virus and Q fever, and an attempt to disperse anthrax into the atmosphere from the roof of Aum headquarters. After numerous attempts, the small biological weapons program was a failure. They were never able to produce toxins that were strong enough to be fatal. Possible explanations for their failures may be that the engineers of the group did not know that they were working with unthreatening strands of anthrax, viruses were improperly cultivated or they were prepared incorrectly.¹⁰³

Their chemical weapon capability, however, was more successful. Aum had its own chemical plant where it could produce large quantities of chemical agents and the materials needed to weaponize the chemicals. Aum had further laboratories and testing facilities in Australia.¹⁰⁴ It is most likely that Aum was successful with chemical agents because it obtained the Russian blueprints for sarin.¹⁰⁵ The actual blueprints were never found, however Russian experts may have visited Aum facilities and aided in the process. The agents were synthesized in the same manner as those found in the Soviet stockpiles. Other than sarin, Aum used VX (another chemical weapon compound) in assassinations, but it was only developed in small quantities. A few conventional weapons were also acquired, such as AK-47s and bombs.¹⁰⁶

Aum Shinrikyo had very large resources, and the potential for further resources due to its international branches. It had the ability to hire foreign scientists and travel without suspicion. One argument as to why chemical abilities were successful and

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁵ Brian Jackson, et.al. p. 24.

¹⁰⁶ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 539.

biological weapon efforts were not is because these financial resources were put to better use in this field.

Outcome

Why police efforts in the conflict were successful as opposed to other options

Little government action was taken to deter or shut down Aum Shinrikyo until after the 1995 Tokyo subway attack. The efforts that ended Aum are a good example of efficient police response along with exceptional cooperation between the police, the intelligence agency, and the legislature. In response to terrorism in Japan, the police force employed conventional skills they already had, but also developed new ones for the specific situation. The more conventional uses of police action involved raids of all known estate owned by or leased to Aum. Evidence was found that consisted of plastic bags with sarin in them and poisonous chemicals such as phosphorus trichloride stockpiles, illegal drugs, chemicals for the production of sarin, sodium cyanide, hydrochloric acid, chloroform, phenylacetonitrile, glycerol, etc.¹⁰⁷ When police entered and investigated Aum facilities, they were further led to members. Arrests of key members, Asahara in particular, impeded the organization's ability to operate. Furthermore, successful interrogation led the police to various other members on every level. Members were indicted for charges ranging anywhere from the subway gas attack, illegal production of drugs, possession of narcotics and hallucinogens, kidnapping, murder and other acts of violence.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 50.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

As the investigation brought out more and more facts, further actions were taken such as increasing patrols in neighborhoods to make citizens feel more secure, offering consolation services to members of Aum and their families who wanted to leave the cult and return to normal life, setting up temporary police stations in open lots that surrounded Aum compounds, and offering counseling services to victims.¹⁰⁹ Police sponsored programs were installed in child-care clinics and in schools to educate young people and to help Aum members who had fled.

The National Police Agency also had to evolve with the new threat. There was a terrorist organization using terror tactics that they had not anticipated, so the NPA had to learn how to adapt to the situation. For example, they created a bureau that specialized in toxic agents. This was called the Task Force for Toxic Agent Attack in Tokyo Subway.¹¹⁰ Also, detectives from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department were specifically responsible for investigations, rescue of victims and securing witnesses even though each police station had a department for investigations that would report to headquarters at the National Police Agency Criminal Investigation Bureau. Roles were distributed within the police department, and between stations. All together, about 2,500 police department members were involved in the investigation.¹¹¹

Also, because the police had little prior experience in dealing with dangerous chemicals, they quickly, and effectively (relative to the amount of time they had) acquired information on chemical and biological agents, their manufacturing processes, where they are located, and who their buyers were. To ramp up knowledge about

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

¹¹¹ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 50.

chemical and biological agents, NPA, regional police bureau and prefectural police stations each became involved in scientific studies including the study of chemistry, organized crime analysis, physics, public security, and other related topics. These were directed through the Police Policy Research Center. The Japanese military (Japanese Self-Defense Forces – JSDF) also aided the police in that they sent chemical-warfare experts to help police, and established a joint police and army investigative unit.

The NPA also worked with the Japanese Criminal Affairs Bureau and the Security Bureau. The Public Security Intelligence Agency was the primary intelligence agency involved directly with the police. They put Aum under surveillance.

To further assist the police in capturing Aum members, the legislature passed legislation that gave the police additional powers to hunt Aum. For example, an anti-Aum law was created to give police greater ability to conduct surveillance of Aum, and then later on, Aleph. Aleph must submit member lists and explanation of group activities. Tokyo district court forced Aum's break up as a religious institution under Religious Corporation Law, and religious status was revoked under various statutes.¹¹² The reason for this was that the organization did not service the public good.

The Japanese Parliament passed the Law Related to the Prevention of Bodily Harm Caused by Sarin and Similar Substances.¹¹³ This prohibited the manufacture, possession and use of chemical and biological agents that could be used as weapons against society. Also, the Act Pertaining to Control of Organizations that Commit

¹¹² Robyn Pangi, **Consequence Management in the 1995 Sarin Attacks on the Japanese Subway System** (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2002), p. 3.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 34.

Indiscriminate Murder was established.¹¹⁴ Courts helped victims receive compensation from Aum. Aum's assets were frozen, and allocated to victims and their relatives.

Because the Japanese police used similar guidelines for analysis, they chose an effective first response that proved successful. By analyzing organizational structure, tactics, strategies, background information, and ideology, they were able to make a clear decision. Furthermore, Japan was a strong state, with legitimate control over its police force. Also with the little to no public support for the organization police were welcomed into communities and aided with any information that citizens had available. In many cases neighborhoods would work with the police in helping educate young people against the group and help others leave.¹¹⁵ The lack of public support for the organization is always a contributing factor to policing efforts in almost any circumstances. Another indicator that policing was a good policy was that Aum Shinrikyo, as a religious cult, had no interest in, or anything to gain from, negotiating politically. And even though Aum had a decent weapons arsenal, they were never a match for the JSDF. Because of the hierarchical organizational structure of Aum Shinrikyo, the arrest of key leaders made a big impact on the lower levels of the organization. This was especially true when members were faced with interrogation, and the opportunity to report on their co-members. Police also have the power to arrest based on crimes other than terrorism. They were able to make arrests based on crimes that funded the organization such as drug sales and fraud, as well as crimes that were intended to increase the organization's security, such as murder, assassination, and kidnappings.¹¹⁶ The legal system also works

¹¹⁴ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 49.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 52

in police's favor. Legislation can be created to aid in the capture and prosecution of perpetrators.¹¹⁷

Conclusion

The Aum Shinrikyo case is a good example of how a government thoroughly analyzed a terrorist organization and the context in which it operated, and applied a successful counterterrorism strategy. In particular, the political and social atmospheres, level of public support, and Aum's capabilities give substantial evidence to conclude that policing was an effective and successful policy. The political atmosphere shows how the Japanese police, military, intelligence, and government pulled together in cooperation in order to achieve a larger goal. Because of the Japanese's value for democracy and rights, and the fact that the police operated within this set of values, the population did not see police as infringing on their sense of safety and security.¹¹⁸ In fact, communities welcomed the police into their neighborhoods to investigate, make arrests, and to patrol. Citizens often aided the police in intelligence collecting, such as by calling tips into the police station when they noticed anything suspicious.

The police were also highly effective in arresting Aum members, even when they could not be charged with murder or the attack on the Tokyo Subway. They had the background and skills to investigate and make arrests based on activities such as drug sales, money laundering, tax evasion, etc. Aum had what seemed to be unlimited resources, and those resources often came from illegal activities.¹¹⁹ The police were able to apprehend many Aum members based on alternative charges connected with Aum's

¹¹⁷ Louise Richardson, **Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past**, p. 17.

¹¹⁸ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 55.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

financial activities. These explanations show how police work was extremely effective. The police were able to work with other government and law enforcement institutions, as well as civilians to weed out the terrorists.

A military approach would not have been able to do as well as the police without creating more damage. The military could have done more harm than good by initiating large scale attacks on Aum, or by appearing to threaten freedom in exchange in Japanese security. Military forces also do not possess the investigative skills and authorities needed in this case.

Politicization would not have been possible either, because of the nature of Aum's motivations. Their goals were neither narrow (in Jones' and Libiki's language) or temporal (in Richardson's language). Because the organization was based on a religious belief that motivated members to go so far as to kill others, they would not have sacrificed their beliefs for the sake of negotiation and compromise, short of being given control of the Japanese government. Policing was the most effective counterterrorism policy.

Al-Qaeda in al-Anbar Case Study

Background

Historical

After invading Iraq in 2003, American troops faced multiple threats. After the fall of Saddam Hussein, the insurgency consisted of groups with various allegiances – Ba'athists, Salafist-jihadists, assorted nationalists, sectarian militant groups, criminals,

and extremists such as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).¹²⁰ For years the United States fought local tribes and other insurgent organizations that had joined forces with al-Qaeda in Iraq. These insurgents fought against the U.S. occupation and the Iraqi government. They saw the new Iraqi government as illegitimate and Americans as invaders. Though al-Qaeda and the insurgents of Iraq had different long-term goals, they used each other to gain certain short-term goals; in particular, to end the U.S. occupation and the occupation of Muslim land by Christians. Furthermore, the insurgents and al-Qaeda were Sunni, and the Americans were helping the Shi'a-led government. This shows that insurgent-AQI cooperation was in many cases an alliance of convenience; they shared a common enemy.¹²¹ While insurgents and AQI worked side by side, AQI quickly rose in prominence and power and became the dominant group in the alliance under Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.¹²²

Tribesmen eventually grew tiresome of al-Qaeda's growing control of their territories, their intimidation, assassinations of their family members, and their monopoly on the tribe's economic resources. Many al-Anbar tribal leaders' primary source of funding was illegal activities, which AQI began to make inroads into. Al-Qaeda also started kidnappings, assassinations, torture, and decapitation of sheikhs and their family members who tried to prevent al-Qaeda from wresting both financial and tactical control from tribal leaders.¹²³ Insurgent and AQI interests divided because AQI did not have the

¹²⁰ These categories are not mutually exclusive.

¹²¹ John McCary, "The Anbar Awakening: An Alliance of Incentives" *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 32, no.1. January 2009, p. 43.

¹²² D. Hazan, "Sunni Jihad Groups Rise up Against Al-Qaeda in Iraq," *The Middle East Media Research Institute*, 22 March 2007.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Iraqis' interests in mind so much as it did al-Qaeda's extremist doctrine as applied by al-Zarqawi. The alliance between the insurgents and al-Qaeda made up the Mujahideen Shura Council (MSC). The MSC further transformed into the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) with the induction of other insurgent groups. This was al-Qaeda's first step in trying to create a caliphate with its seeds in Iraq. In reality, the ISI was never much more than a propaganda move – it never governed territory or performed any of the functions of a state (other than trying to impose Sharia law in areas where it had a significant presence).

The Awakening movement followed shortly after the creation of the ISI. Tribes began to lose their individual identities to al-Qaeda in Iraq.¹²⁴ Al-Qaeda's campaign of intimidation was successful to this point, as much of al-Anbar was considered "no-go" zones (e.g., much of Ramadi and Fallujah). Security forces and police were ineffective. Less than a hundred Iraqi police showed up for work at any given time, and those who did rarely left the police station.¹²⁵ Attempts by tribes to come together to stop al-Qaeda had failed in the past, such as what happened with the al-Anbar People's Council and other nationalist Iraqi insurgents led by Ibrahim al-Shamari.¹²⁶ This was the tipping point of the insurgents' allegiances, and the beginning of the successes of American outreach and confidence-building measures with tribal leaders. These confidence-building gestures took many shapes throughout the counterinsurgency efforts.

In 2006, Sunni tribal sheikhs began to change their allegiances and approaches – changes that would come to fruition in mid-2007. Tribal leaders began forming secret

¹²⁴ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 88.

¹²⁵ Neil Smith, and Colonel Sean McFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review*, March-April 2008, p. 42.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

alliances with the U.S. military against al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda began to be seen as a threat to the tribal leaders' sense of power in the region, and to their safety. Leaders also began to trust Americans. The major threat to al-Anbar used to be U.S. military, democratization and support for the new Iraqi government, but al-Qaeda proved to be a still greater threat.¹²⁷ To gain the trust of the tribes, the U.S. military sent money to the tribes themselves, which in turn gave Sunni tribal militias funding, arms, and legitimacy and the sheikhs a source of patronage.¹²⁸ Sheikh Sattar, the leader of the tribal awakening before he was assassinated, was responsible for bringing together twenty-five of the thirty-one tribes in al-Anbar against al-Qaeda in what became known as the al-Anbar Salvation Council. Sheikhs of the member tribes encouraged the young men of their tribes to join the police forces in towns such as Ramadi and Fallujah across al-Anbar province (a major change). By December of 2006, police membership had doubled in only a few months.¹²⁹

It was not until this point that the U.S. military had any control whatsoever over insurgent activities. Another change that let the sheikhs' trust Americans was the fact that they were convinced that U.S. forces would eventually leave. Not only did they know that the Americans would leave, but believed that they would not leave until the terrorist threat was ended.¹³⁰ This shows that these sheikhs did not view the U.S. as a competing power, but a complementary one to the tribes. Also, it showed that the Americans were not going to escalate the conflict between the Iraqis and AQI, only to leave them to fend for themselves. The Marines and Army needed not only the Iraqi

¹²⁷ John McCary, p. 44.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 50.

¹²⁹ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 92.

¹³⁰ Neil Smith and Colonel Sean McFarland, p. 44.

Army (IA) and the Iraqi Police (IP) to contribute, but also the populace and local leaders. Otherwise, any counterinsurgency (COIN) victory would be temporary at best. After the area was taken back from AQI, Iraqis were given the responsibility for their home areas so that AQI could not regain ground after the Americans left.¹³¹

Relations between Americans and insurgents were further confirmed when the sheikhs and other militias were given the authority to guard their own areas and neighborhoods. Furthermore, sheikhs were paid directly so that they could distribute the money themselves. This gave sheikhs the ability to distribute patronage, and so regain their legitimacy in their tribes. This helped the populace to fall in line with the sheikhs' decisions. The United States decided on this approach, because trying to force democratization and capitalism was working against U.S. efforts, rather than complementing them. Instead of insisting on direct control, U.S. forces exercised less control and allowed tribal leaders to do business as they saw fit. They accepted the cultural differences, and noticed how important these differences were to the tribes' identity.¹³²

It is important to remember that while the coalition forces were successful in confidence-building with the tribes, this does not mean they are on the same side. They were both working to a common goal, but they were doing so because it was in both side's self-interest.¹³³

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 46.

¹³² John McCary, p. 50.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 51.

Political Factors: Key Players

Major threats that coalition forces faced were elements of the former regime: Ba'athists, Fedayeen Saddam, and intelligence agencies, as well as extremists: terrorist groups, especially jihadists from Saudi Arabia, Syria, or Yemen.

Insurgents

The insurgents were made up of Sunni Arabs who were opposed to an Iraqi government dominated by Shi'a Arabs. They originally fought along side al-Qaeda because of their distain for the American occupation, American aid to and support of the Shi'a and the Iraqi government, and because AQI initially appeared to be a possible "defender of the Sunnis." Once al-Qaeda's extremist nature became evident however, and it started becoming the dominant influence in al-Anbar, tribal leaders sided with the American military in counterinsurgency operations to drive al-Qaeda out of their province.¹³⁴

Violent extremists

AQI led the insurgency under the guise of protecting Muslim countries against foreign domination. There were also many other insurgent groups, that ranged from hard-core jihadists similar to al-Qaeda, to Sunni-nationalist movements that wanted to remove the "occupier." While some insurgents and AQI had different long-term agendas, they both sought, through different means and methods, to expel Americans from Iraq and to bring down the Iraqi government.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Bruce Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, Counterinsurgency in Iraq 2003-2006, (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 2008), p. 25.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Iraqi Police

Under Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, the Iraqi Police (IP) were poorly trained, poorly armed and highly corrupt. After the fall of Saddam, the IP largely dispersed into their region's insurgent groups. Once cooperation between the American soldiers and the insurgents began coalition forces unofficially, and then later officially with the authorization of Ambassador Bremer, trained any young, willing and able men they could find. IP training was brief.¹³⁶ The National Police force – which came into being after the Coalition Provisional Authority had departed, was largely more effective than the local police units. For a long time however the national police force was dominated by Shi'a Arabs, and were a threat to the Sunni local populace.

It was difficult to recruit local police at the onset. This was because the population did not support the government, and because of the threat posed to members of the police and their families in many parts of Iraq, and especially in Anbar. For example, AQI had bombed recruiting centers and targeted police.¹³⁷

The turning point came when the Anbar sheikhs turned against AQI. Once the Sheikhs permitted it, Iraqi police force recruitment provided jobs in the province and helped economically. This was important because the province was very poor, and many AQI recruits were from families in desperate need of money.¹³⁸ This gave them incentive to fight on the side of the coalition forces rather than al-Qaeda.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 49.

¹³⁷ Neil Smith, and Colonel Sean McFarland, p. 51.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

Iraqi Army

Under the Ba'ath regime, the Iraqi Army was largely Shi'a conscripts – but the leadership was mostly Sunni.¹³⁹ The IA oppressed Kurds and Shi'as for a long period of time. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was responsible for the development of the new Iraqi Army with a focus on internal security. The IA however was under funded and under armed. There was a large capabilities gap between U.S. forces and the IA – both of which were going out on the same missions. It was also disorganized, in part because it was composed of Sunnis, Kurds, and Shi'a – few of whom initially cared to cooperate with their ethnic and sectarian colleagues.¹⁴⁰

Threat Analysis

Organizational Structure

Al-Qaeda's structure has taken various shapes since its existence. It transformed from a well-structured terrorist organization with a headquarters and hierarchical structure based in Afghanistan, to a concept that motivates movements made up of fragments of bin Laden's inner circle during and after Operation Enduring Freedom. It is now a collection of various jihadist groups with hardly any command and control from an al-Qaeda "core," but enough influence within the movement to produce a continued capability to operate.¹⁴¹

Before 9/11, al-Qaeda was an organization, with ranks of authority that made up its hard core. This hard core consisted of various high ranking and highly trusted associates of bin Laden. Outside of the hard core was a following of roughly 100 or so

¹³⁹ Under Saddam, al-Anbar was one of the better off provinces in Iraq. With the removal of Saddam and the advent of a Shi'a-led government led by people who had been persecuted by Ba'athists – who were mostly Sunnis – Anbar lost many of the advantages it previously enjoyed.

¹⁴⁰ Bruce Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, p. 51.

¹⁴¹ Angel Rabasa, et. al. p. 26.

members who had pledged *bayat* to the organization. These members were mostly loyalists drawn from around the Muslim world and committed to the jihadist ideology.¹⁴²

The central core was made up of a leadership structure consisting of four layers. First there was bin Laden, whose highest ranking partner, or associate, was Abu Ayoub al-Iraqi. Next was the *shura majlis* (consultative committee). The *shura majlis* was made up of *mujadeens* from the Soviet-Afghan war who had sworn allegiance to bin Laden in 1989 – most notably, Zawahiri and Mohammed Atef. On the next step down, there were four operational committees: military, finance and business, religion and propaganda.¹⁴³

Since 9/11 al-Qaeda's hard core no longer make up the pinnacle of the organization's over all structure. The core had turned into an international organization. With a near and far enemy, the jihad became against all those who deny al-Qaeda's particular version of Islam. With this change, al-Qaeda has been transformed into a cellular level organization, similar to a franchise structure. In this formation, jihadist groups with little if any connection to al-Qaeda leaders act under its name. Some of these groups are distinct from other al-Qaeda affiliates in that they have publicly sworn allegiance to bin Laden and profess to be taking orders directly from al-Qaeda leaders, while others operate with the same ideology, but in their own right. Some extremists have definite ties to al-Qaeda, whether by finance, influence, or leadership associations. But, they do not openly declare their collective loyalty to the organization. Some extremists may have sworn *bayat* to bin Laden and are operating at al-Qaeda's orders.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁴⁴ Angel Rabasa, et.al. p. 73.

Basically, the terrorist threat that we associate with al-Qaeda has transformed into a nebula of Islamic fundamentalists who use terrorism against the near or far enemy for the sake of jihad. Rather than an organization, it has become a global jihadist concept or movement with various levels of membership and association.¹⁴⁵

Al-Qaeda in Iraq is one of the al-Qaeda franchises noted above. It has never been closely tied to al-Qaeda, reporting instead to its local leader. Since the death of al-Zarqawi, AQ central has exerted more control than previously. Nonetheless, day to day decisions are taken in Iraq. AQI is led, for the most part, by foreigners, but its rank and file is almost entirely Iraqi. Within AQI, there are regional commands and a well developed bureaucracy for handling administrative affairs and command and control. Al-Qaeda central does have one major influence on AQI's ability to operate. It is instrumental in funneling international recruits to various areas of the world in which franchises are active. Currently, it seems that most recruits are going to other theaters, thus depriving AQI of the steady stream of suicide bombers it employed so successfully in 2006 and 2007.¹⁴⁶

Motives

AQI has many reasons for being in Iraq. First, the overall al-Qaeda doctrine seeks to expel any foreign presence from Muslim lands. This is true in Iraq, and a priority in other Muslim states such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia. Furthermore, in the big picture, al-Qaeda is working towards developing a caliphate – and it hoped that the Islamic State of Iraq would be a starting point for this effort. It sought to influence the Sunni population in the area to share AQI's version of Islam, and to act in accordance

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁴⁶ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 90.

with its doctrine. Because of these extreme motivations there is little room to negotiate any kind of settlement. Furthermore, with over 1,000 members in force and access to weapons stockpiles, a typical police force alone would be no match for such an insurgency.¹⁴⁷ With the high level of recruits from Sunni tribes, however, enough officers were trained to take back the area and the populace.

Social Factors: Public Support

In 2006, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research estimated that AQI's core membership was in a range of more than 1,000.¹⁴⁸ With suicide bombing being AQI's most commonly used and most efficient tactic, new recruits were constantly ushered in from Iraq and abroad. AQI's operations are predominately Iraq-based, but the group maintains or takes advantage of an extensive logistical network throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Iran, South Asia and Europe.¹⁴⁹

Capabilities

Operationally, AQI seemed to favor suicide and road-side bomb attacks – typically using cars and other motor vehicles. Tactics included suicide bombs, and other intimidation tactics such as video releases of beheadings and torture. Furthermore, AQI has attempted to develop chemical weapons. For example, a facility was found that shows that AQI was trying to develop chlorine bombs. While the American military got to the factory before any of the chemicals were too harmful, it shows that AQI had the

¹⁴⁷ Carter Malkasian, “Did the Coalition Need More Forces in Iraq? Evidence from al-Anbar,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 46, 3rd Quarter, 2007, p. 120.

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Tilghman, “The Myth of AQI,” *The Washington Monthly*, October 2007.

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Country Reports on Terrorism – Chapter 8: Foreign Terrorist Organizations, 28 April 2006.

ball in motion towards chemical weapons.¹⁵⁰ The raid on this factory in Karma captured an arsenal of five vehicles, mortar and artillery rounds, homemade bombs, propane tanks and three 55-gallon barrels of chlorine. Another three barrels in the factory contained nitroglycerine, a chemical used as an accelerant for explosives.

While AQI receives recruits from both Iraq and abroad, the organization also receives material support from the larger al-Qaida nebula. Also, local criminal activities fund many of the AQI's operations. Many of these criminal activities were those formerly dominated by the Sunni tribes for economic resources. The monopolization of these criminal opportunities by AQI was one of the reasons the Sunnis split from AQI.¹⁵¹ AQI also receives funds from donors in the Middle East and Europe, local sympathizers in Iraq, a variety of businesses and criminal activities and other international extremists throughout the world. In many cases, AQI's donors are probably motivated by support for the extreme version of Islam typical of these terrorist groups, rather than affiliation with any specific terrorist group.¹⁵²

Outcome

The U.S. used traditional COIN techniques while developing security forces, and developing human and physical infrastructure.¹⁵³ The U.S. military decided to center attacks on al-Qaeda safe havens and from there have the Iraqis establish a permanent presence to keep the terrorists from returning. Combat outposts were erected in neighborhoods. These were staffed with American troops, Iraqi soldiers and Iraqi police.

¹⁵⁰ There have been several cases in which terrorists tried to use chlorine as part of a bomb in Iraq, but none of these have proven to be very effective. The most common approach involved attaching chlorine canisters to small rockets launched at U.S. facilities.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ For details, see Major Neil Smith, and Colonel Sean McFarland, p. 41

Also, neighborhood watches were created and staffed with tribal militias who were screened to be Provincial Auxiliary Iraqi Police.¹⁵⁴ These positions were legitimated by giving pay, bonuses, uniforms, weapons and the responsibility to their own community.¹⁵⁵ Also to secure confidence from tribal leaders, they were given direct security tasks, such as establishing checkpoints at all chokepoints into the communities. COIN strategy also included intelligence and targeted killing of terrorist leaders. This model has been repeated in other parts of Iraq.¹⁵⁶ Iraqi tribal members helped identify AQI members, and criminals involved in terrorist activities for the United States to target.

What is important in this COIN strategy is that U.S. forces have recently made only small footprints, leaving paramilitary efforts to Iraqi security forces where possible. This is important because local forces have more legitimacy within their regions, and are more accepted by the population. While the U.S. does still engage in combat on many occasions, it is more important that this role be passed off to local forces with American support. In particular, Americans killing Muslims gives the United States less support and influence in Muslim areas. American participation in combat can heighten Muslim grievances towards American presence in their land, and possibly influence terrorist recruitment.¹⁵⁷

Iraqis were originally trained very quickly, and only well enough to do a minimally effective job pushing back AQI. The Iraqis, however, were able to hold their territory on their own once AQI was gone. This is crucial because if they were not

¹⁵⁴ Screening was in counterintelligence efforts to prevent infiltration.

¹⁵⁵ Neil Smith and Colonel Sean McFarland, p. 43.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

¹⁵⁷ Neil Smith and Sean MacFarland, p. 44.

capable of doing so, AQI would retake the territory once American forces left and Iraqis let their guard down. Because the Iraqi security forces became competent in securing their own areas, US troops were able to move on to other areas in order to train new units in counterinsurgency.¹⁵⁸ Iraqi security force training is a job in progress – additional training is continuing to this day.

Intelligence is crucial to any counterterrorism effort. In this case, the Sunni allies were what changed intelligence efforts from an unsuccessful, to an extremely successful, effort against AQI. Because many of the insurgents formerly worked with AQI and shared a community they knew first hand who was and who was not involved in any given organization.¹⁵⁹ Also, the Sunnis working with coalition forces became protectors and guardians of their tribes, which created confidence within the communities where AQI members were likely to try to find safe haven.¹⁶⁰ While infiltrating al-Qaeda is nearly impossible in most cases, it is not so difficult to identify AQI members who are living in the community.¹⁶¹ Also, signals intelligence is important in intercepting phone conversations and emails.¹⁶²

Working with locals in the provinces made intelligence significantly more effective. Because tribes are made up of very strong, close-knit social relationships, locals know full well who is and who is not an insurgent or al-Qaeda member. U.S. forces alone would never be able to distinguish between Iraqis (or even Arabs) well

¹⁵⁸ Carter Malkasian, p. 120.

¹⁵⁹ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 94

¹⁶⁰ Bruce Hoffman, **Inside Terrorism** Second edition (New York: Colombia University Press, 2006), p. 169.

¹⁶¹ Infiltration is often near impossible, because cells or insurgent tribal groups, are made up of tight knit social connections – many of which are grouped together by extended family.

¹⁶² Seth Jones, **Defeating Terrorist Groups: Testimony** (Washington DC: Rand Corporation, 2008), p. 10.

enough to be successful in COIN operations.¹⁶³ Because they had sided with U.S. efforts, it became clear to AQI that its main enemy now was the tribesmen who transformed themselves into anti-AQI paramilitary forces and a police force.

By March 2007, AQI was largely run out of al-Anbar with the exception of Fallujah. Just the year before, al-Qaeda controlled ninety percent of the province.¹⁶⁴ By mid-2008, Fallujah was safe enough for the Marines to turn over their base to Iraqis and take most of their forces out of the area. This was all accomplished quickly due to the alliance between the Anbar tribes and U.S. forces; an alliance that produced the needed intelligence for U.S. and Iraqi forces to act decisively, and leave a large number of minimally trained, under armed, inexperienced, poor, young Iraqi men able to maintain security.

Conclusion

Military action was the best counterterrorism strategy in Iraq. In an insurgency, it is highly unlikely in most cases that police action or politicization are feasible options. This is because insurgencies are often too large in numbers and strong in weapons capabilities. Also, it is not uncommon that they use guerilla warfare along with terrorism tactics of intimidation such as roadside bombs, beheadings and suicide bombs. These are situations that police are usually unable to handle due to the level and pervasiveness of violence. Along with military action, the U.S. and Iraqis working with the U.S. had the upper hand in intelligence collecting as well. Because of the close social structure of the tribes in al-Anbar, al-Qaeda members were easily identifiable, and killed. Also, al-

¹⁶³ John McCary, p. 51.

¹⁶⁴ Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, p. 93.

Qaeda's motives were and are religious. In this case, its religious leaders use Islam as a reason to kill others (and themselves) to achieve their ultimate goal. As in the case of Aum Shinrikyo, their goals could not be accommodated politically. Someone who blows themselves up in order to intimidate and kill others is not likely to be persuaded to stop using violence and compromise as part of a political settlement.

Conclusion

This study illustrates that by thoroughly assessing specific aspects of a terrorist organization and the context in which it operates, particular counterterrorism strategies are indicated. The three most successfully deployed policies are those that are dominated by politicization, policing, and military efforts. Each of these policy themes is either complemented by the others, or sub-policies. Intelligence, for example, is a sub-theme that plays a crucial role in any counterterrorism situation. In each case examined here, the characteristics of the terrorist organization and the situation indicate the appropriate policy option .

Politicization is most successfully deployed when organizations have narrow goals such as regime change, reforms in policy, social change or land reform. Like the experience of the FMLN and the IRA shows, opening up the political arena and engaging in negotiations on these issues was enough to satisfy both parties. One can look at these cases as situations in which people feel that violence is their only way to be heard. If other options – specifically access to the political process – are made available, violence becomes less attractive. In many cases, if members of an organization feel that they can make a change through the political process they will choose politics over violence.

Politicization benefits the state as well. Significant resources, both human and monetary go into combating terrorism which can be better used for other purposes.

Policing is most successful in situations when an organization is unable to be stopped nonviolently, is small enough that the military does not need to be involved and when there is a mature state with a trusted government. Police have many advantages compared to the military in these circumstances. In the Aum Shinrikyo case, the Japanese police could easily gain intelligence on the organization because they were integrated into the community – more so than Aum. Also, police may have records of previous offenses of the members of terrorist groups. This makes it easier to track potential terrorists. Furthermore, police can use the law to their advantage to incarcerate potential terrorists on other charges such as fraud, money laundering, drug trafficking and assault – crimes that almost always go hand in hand with terrorist group activities. Police are already a familiar face in communities. Legislation can also be passed that give the police increased capabilities for search and seizures, surveillance and the criminalizing of other activities that terrorists need to function. Furthermore, the police are less intimidating to the community than the military, and have different skills that are more appropriate for security efforts in free societies.

Lastly, the military option is most effective in the case when terrorists are capable of violence that police cannot handle – as in an insurgency – or when there is not a mature government and police force. For example, as we have seen some experts assert that when the terrorist organization is larger than 1,000 members, military is usually more efficient than police. This is also the case with the type of weapons capabilities of the organization. Like al-Qaeda, many organizations have a wide range of financial, and

human resources. They receive donations, and volunteers and recruits from around the Muslim world. These are often situations that police are not trained to deal with.

Finally, note that the threat posed by terrorists may change over time. Conditions may dictate one policy initially, and another later on. This is the case in al-Anbar, where the initial military response was necessary due to the violent capabilities of al-Qaeda and the nascent capabilities of the police forces. This military policy is now being replaced by a policy that relies more heavily on police, as al-Qaeda's capabilities wane and the police forces grow.

By using a case study to illustrate each of these points it is evident that such an analytical structure works. By assessing each organization based on history, political and social contexts, level of public support and threat analysis, specific truths become evident. This should be viewed however as an indication that such an approach may be useful, but more research would be needed to make the case stronger. By examining only three cases, it is possible that the conclusions are biased by the particular circumstances of each. A thorough examination of more cases would help us gain a deeper understanding of how policy options for countering terrorist organizations are tied to the characteristics of these organizations, and the context in which they operate.

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