THE TERRORISM TO COME
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Terrorism has become over a number of years the topic of ceaseless comment, debate, controversy, and search for roots and motives, and it figures on top of the national and international agenda. It is also at present one of the most highly emotionally charged topics of public debate, though quite why this should be the case is not entirely clear, because the overwhelming majority of participants do not sympathize with terrorism.

Confusion prevails, but confusion alone does not explain the emotions. There is always confusion when a new international phenomenon appears on the scene. This was the case, for instance, when communism first appeared (it was thought to be aiming largely at the nationalization of women and the burning of priests) and also fascism. But terrorism is not an unprecedented phenomenon; it is as old as the hills.

Thirty years ago, when the terrorism debate got underway, it was widely asserted that terrorism was basically a left-wing revolutionary movement caused by oppression and exploitation. Hence the conclusion : Find a political and social solution, remedy the underlying evil — no oppression, no terrorism. The argument about the left-wing character of terrorism is no longer frequently heard, but the belief in a fatal link between poverty and violence has persisted. Whenever a major terrorist attack has taken place, one has heard appeals from high and low to provide credits and loans, to deal at long last with the deeper, true causes of terrorism, the roots rather than the symptoms and outward manifestations. And these roots are believed to be poverty, unemployment, backwardness, and inequality.

It is not too difficult to examine whether there is such a correlation between poverty and terrorism, and all the investigations have shown that this is not the case. The experts have maintained for a long time that poverty does not cause terrorism and prosperity does not cure it. In the world's 50 poorest countries there is little or no terrorism. A study by scholars Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova reached the conclusion that the terrorists are not poor people and do not come from poor societies.

A Harvard economist has shown that economic growth is closely related to a society's ability to manage conflicts. More recently, a study of India has demonstrated that terrorism in the subcontinent has occurred in the most prosperous (Punjab) and most egalitarian (Kashmir, with a poverty ratio of 3.5 compared with the national average of 26 percent) regions and that, on the other hand, the poorest regions such as North Bihar have been free of terrorism.

In the Arab countries (such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but also in North Africa), the terrorists originated not in the poorest and most neglected districts but hailed from places with concentrations of radical preachers. The backwardness, if any, was intellectual and cultural — not economic and social.

These findings, however, have had little impact on public opinion (or on many politicians), and it is not difficult to see why. There is the general feeling that poverty and backwardness with all their concomitants are bad — and that there is an urgent need to do much more about these problems. Hence the inclination

to couple the two issues and the belief that if the (comparatively) wealthy Western nations would contribute much more to the development and welfare of the less fortunate, in cooperation with their governments, this would be in a long-term perspective the best, perhaps the only, effective way to solve the terrorist problem.

Reducing poverty in the Third World is a moral as well as a political and economic imperative, but to expect from it a decisive change in the foreseeable future as far as terrorism is concerned is unrealistic, to say the least. It ignores both the causes of backwardness and poverty and the motives for terrorism.

Poverty combined with youth unemployment does create a social and psychological climate in which Islamism and various populist and religious sects flourish, which in turn provide some of the footfolk for violent groups in internal conflicts. According to some projections, the number of young unemployed in the Arab world and North Africa could reach 50 million in two decades. Such a situation will not be conducive to political stability; it will increase the demographic pressure on Europe, since according to polls a majority of these young people want to emigrate. Politically, the populist discontent will be directed against the rulers — Islamist in Iran, moderate in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, or Morocco. But how to help the failed economies of the Middle East and North Africa? What are the reasons for backwardness and stagnation in this part of the world? The countries that have made economic progress — such as China and India, Korea and Taiwan, Malaysia and Turkey — did so without massive foreign help.

All this points to a deep malaise and impending danger, but not to a direct link between the economic situation and international terrorism. There is of course a negative link: Terrorists will not hesitate to bring about a further aggravation in the situation; they certainly did great harm to the tourist industries in Bali and Egypt, in Palestine, Jordan, and Morocco. One of the main targets of terrorism in Iraq was the oil industry. It is no longer a secret that the carriers of international terrorism operating in Europe and America hail not from the poor, downtrodden, and unemployed but are usually of middle-class origin.

The local element

The link between terrorism and nationalist, ethnic, religious, and tribal conflict is far more tangible. These instances of terrorism are many and need not be enumerated in detail. Solving these conflicts would probably bring about a certain reduction in the incidence of terrorism. But the conflicts are many, and if some of them have been defused in recent years, other, new ones have emerged. Nor are the issues usually clear- cut or the bones of contention easy to define — let alone to solve.

If the issue at stake is a certain territory or the demand for autonomy, a compromise through negotiations might be achieved. But it ought to be recalled that al Qaeda was founded and September 11 occurred not because of a territorial dispute or the feeling of national oppression but because of a religious commandment — jihad and the establishment of shari'ah. Terrorist attacks in Central Asia and Morocco, in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and partly in Iraq were directed against fellow Muslims, not against infidels. Appeasement may work in individual cases, but terrorist groups with global ambitions cannot be appeased by territorial concessions.

As in the war against poverty, the initiatives to solve local conflicts are overdue and should be welcomed. In an ideal world, the United Nations would be the main conflict resolver, but so far the record of the U.N. has been more than modest, and it is unlikely that this will change in the foreseeable future. Making peace is not an easy option; it involves funds and in some cases the stationing of armed forces. There is no great international crush to join the ranks of the volunteers: China, Russia, and Europe do not want to be bothered, and the United States is overstretched. In brief, as is so often the case, a fresh impetus is likely to occur only if the situation gets considerably worse and if the interests of some of the powers in restoring order happen to coincide.

Lastly, there should be no illusions with regard to the wider effect of a peaceful solution of one conflict or another. To give but one obvious example: Peace (or at least the absence of war) between Israel and the Palestinians would be a blessing for those concerned. It may be necessary to impose a solution since the chances of making any progress in this direction are nil but for some outside intervention. However, the assumption that a solution of a local conflict (even one of great symbolic importance) would have a dramatic effect in other parts of the world is unfounded. Osama bin Laden did not go to war because of Gaza and Nablus; he did not send his warriors to fight in Palestine. Even the disappearance of the "Zionist entity" would not have a significant impact on his supporters, except perhaps to provide encouragement for further action.

Such a warning against illusions is called for because there is a great deal of wishful thinking and naïveté in this respect — a belief in quick fixes and miracle solutions: If only there would be peace between Israelis and Palestinians, all the other conflicts would become manageable. But the problems are as much in Europe, Asia, and Africa as in the Middle East; there is a great deal of free-floating aggression which could (and probably would) easily turn in other directions once one conflict has been defused.

It seems likely, for instance, that in the years to come the struggle against the "near enemy" (the governments of the Arab and some non-Arab Muslim countries) will again feature prominently. There has been for some time a truce on the part of al Qaeda and related groups, partly for strategic reasons (to concentrate on the fight against America and the West) and partly because attacks against fellow Muslims, even if they are considered apostates, are bound to be less popular than fighting the infidels. But this truce, as events in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere show, may be coming to an end.

Tackling these supposed sources of terrorism, even for the wrong reasons, will do no harm and may bring some good. But it does not bring us any nearer to an understanding of the real sources of terrorism, a field that has become something akin to a circus ground for riding hobbyhorses and peddling preconceived notions.

How to explain the fact that in an inordinate number of instances where there has been a great deal of explosive material, there has been no terrorism? The gypsies of Europe certainly had many grievances and the Dalets (untouchables) of India and other Asian countries even more. But there has been no terrorism on their part — just as the Chechens have been up in arms but not the Tartars of Russia, the Basque but not the Catalans of Spain. The list could easily be lengthened.

Accident may play a role (the absence or presence of a militant leadership), but there could also be a cultural-psychological predisposition. How to explain that out of 100 militants believing with equal intensity in the justice of their cause, only a very few will actually engage in terrorist actions? And out of this small minority even fewer will be willing to sacrifice their lives as suicide bombers? Imponderable factors might be involved: indoctrination but also psychological motives. Neither economic nor political analysis will be of much help in gaining an understanding, and it may not be sheer accident that there has been great reluctance to explore this political-intellectual minefield.

The focus on Islamist terrorism

To make predictions about the future course of terrorism is even more risky than political predictions in general. We are dealing here not with mass movements but small — sometimes very small — groups of people, and there is no known way at present to account for the movement of small particles either in the physical world or in human societies.

It is certain that terrorism will continue to operate. At the present time almost all attention is focused on Islamist terrorism, but it is useful to remember from time to time that this was not always the case — even less than 30 years ago — and that there are a great many conflicts, perceived oppressions, and other causes calling for radical action in the world which may come to the fore in the years to come. These need not even be major conflicts in an age in which small groups will have access to weapons of mass destruction.

At present, Islamist terrorism all but monopolizes our attention, and it certainly has not yet run its course. But it is unlikely that its present fanaticism will last forever; religious-nationalist fervor does not constantly burn with the same intensity. There is a phenomenon known in Egypt as "Salafi burnout," the mellowing of radical young people, the weakening of the original fanatical impetus. Like all other movements in history, messianic groups are subject to routinization, to the circulation of generations, to changing political circumstances, and to sudden or gradual changes in the intensity of religious belief. This could happen as a result of either victories or defeats. One day, it might be possible to appease militant Islamism — though hardly in a period of burning aggression when confidence and faith in global victory have not yet been broken.

More likely the terrorist impetus will decline as a result of setbacks. Fanaticism, as history shows, is not easy to transfer from one generation to the next; attacks will continue, and some will be crowned with success (perhaps spectacular success), but many will not. When Alfred Nobel invented dynamite, many terrorists thought that this was the answer to their prayers, but theirs was a false hope. The trust put today in that new invincible weapon, namely suicide terrorism, may in the end be equally misplaced. Even the use of weapons of mass destruction might not be the terrorist panacea some believe it will be. Perhaps their effect will be less deadly than anticipated; perhaps it will be so destructive as to be considered counterproductive. Statistics show that in the terrorist attacks over the past decade, considerably more Muslims were killed than infidels. Since terrorists do not operate in a vacuum, this is bound to lead to dissent among their followers and even among the fanatical preachers.

There are likely to be splits among the terrorist groups even though their structure is not highly centralized. In brief, there is a probability that a united terrorist front will not last. It is unlikely that Osama and his close followers will be challenged on theological grounds, but there has been criticism for tactical reasons: Assuming that America and the West in general are in a state of decline, why did he not have more patience? Why did he have to launch a big attack while the infidels were still in a position to retaliate massively?

Some leading students of Islam have argued for a long time that radical Islamism passed its peak years ago and that its downfall and disappearance are only a question of time, perhaps not much time. It is true that societies that were exposed to the rule of fundamentalist fanatics (such as Iran) or to radical Islamist attack (such as Algeria) have been immunized to a certain extent. However, in a country of 60 million, some fanatics can always be found; as these lines are written, volunteers for suicide missions are being enlisted in Teheran and other cities of Iran. In any case, many countries have not yet undergone such first-hand experience; for them the rule of the shari'ah and the restoration of the caliphate are still brilliant dreams. By and large, therefore, the predictions about the impending demise of Islamism have been premature, while no doubt correct in the long run. Nor do we know what will follow. An interesting study on what happens "when prophecy fails" (by Leon Festinger) was published not long after World War ii. We now need a similar study on the likely circumstances and consequences of the failure of fanaticism. The history of religions (and political religions) offers some clues, as does the history of terrorism.

These, then, are the likely perspectives for the more distant future. But in a shorter-term perspective the danger remains acute and may, in fact, grow. Where and when are terrorist attacks most likely to occur? They will not necessarily be directed against the greatest and most dangerous enemy as perceived by the terrorist gurus. Much depends on where terrorists are strong and believe the enemy to be weak. That terrorist attacks are likely to continue in the Middle East goes without saying; other main danger zones are Central Asia and, above all, Pakistan.

The founders of Pakistan were secular politicians. The religious establishment and in particular the extremists among the Indian Muslims had opposed the emergence of the state. But once Pakistan came into being, they began to try with considerable success to dominate it. Their alternative educational system, the many thousand madrassas, became the breeding ground for jihad fighters. Ayub Khan, the first military ruler, tried to break their stranglehold but failed. Subsequent rulers, military and civilian, have not even tried. It is more than doubtful whether Pervez Musharraf will have any success in limiting their power. The tens of thousands of graduates they annually produce formed the backbone of the Taliban. Their leaders will find employment for them at home and in Central Asia, even if there is a de-escalation in tensions with India over Kashmir. Their most radical leaders aim at the destruction of India. Given Pakistan's internal weakness this may appear more than a little fanciful, but their destructive power is still considerable, and they can count on certain sympathies in the army and the intelligence service. A failed Pakistan with nuclear weapons at its disposal would be a major nightmare. Still, Pakistani terrorism — like

Palestinian and Middle Eastern in general — remains territorial, likely to be limited to the subcontinent and Central Asia.

Battlefield Europe

Europe is probably the most vulnerable battlefield. To carry out operations in Europe and America, talents are needed that are not normally found among those who have no direct personal experience of life in the West. The Pakistani diaspora has not been very active in the terrorist field, except for a few militants in the United Kingdom.

Western Europe has become over a number of years the main base of terrorist support groups. This process has been facilitated by the growth of Muslim communities, the growing tensions with the native population, and the relative freedom with which radicals could organize in certain mosques and cultural organizations. Indoctrination was provided by militants who came to these countries as religious dignitaries. This freedom of action was considerably greater than that enjoyed in the Arab and Muslim world; not a few terrorists convicted of capital crimes in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria were given political asylum in Europe. True, there were some arrests and closer controls after September 11, but given the legal and political restrictions under which the European security services were laboring, effective counteraction was still exceedingly difficult.

West European governments have been frequently criticized for not having done enough to integrate Muslim newcomers into their societies, but cultural and social integration was certainly not what the newcomers wanted. They wanted to preserve their religious and ethnic identity and their way of life, and they resented intervention by secular authorities. In its great majority, the first generation of immigrants wanted to live in peace and quiet and to make a living for their families. But today they no longer have much control over their offspring.

This is a common phenomenon all over the world: the radicalization of the second generation of immigrants. This generation has been superficially acculturated (speaking fluently the language of the host country) yet at the same time feels resentment and hostility more acutely. It is not necessarily the power of the fundamentalist message (the young are not the most pious believers when it comes to carrying out all the religious commandments) which inspires many of the younger radical activists or sympathizers. It is the feeling of deep resentment because, unlike immigrants from other parts of the world, they could not successfully compete in the educational field, nor quite often make it at the work place. Feelings of being excluded, sexual repression (a taboo subject in this context), and other factors led to free-floating aggression and crime directed against the authorities and their neighbors.

As a result, non-Muslims began to feel threatened in streets they could once walk without fear. They came to regard the new immigrants as antisocial elements who wanted to change the traditional character of their homeland and their way of life, and consequently tensions continued to increase. Pressure on European governments is growing from all sides, right and left, to stop immigration and to restore law and order.

This, in briefest outline, is the milieu in which Islamist terrorism and terrorist support groups in Western Europe developed. There is little reason to assume that this trend will fundamentally change in the near future. On the contrary, the

more the young generation of immigrants asserts itself, the more violence occurs in the streets, and the more terrorist attacks take place, the greater the anti-Muslim resentment on the part of the rest of the population. The rapid demographic growth of the Muslim communities further strengthens the impression among the old residents that they are swamped and deprived of their rights in their own homeland, not even entitled to speak the truth about the prevailing situation (such as, for instance, to reveal the statistics of prison inmates with Muslim backgrounds). Hence the violent reaction in even the most liberal European countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark. The fear of the veil turns into the fear that in the foreseeable future they too, having become a minority, will be compelled to conform to the commandments of another religion and culture.

True, the number of extremists is still very small. Among British Muslims, for instance, only 13 percent have expressed sympathy and support for terrorist attacks. But this still amounts to several hundred thousands, far more than needed for staging a terrorist campaign. The figure is suspect in any case because not all of those sharing radical views will openly express them to strangers, for reasons that hardly need be elaborated. Lastly, such a minority will not feel isolated in their own community as long as the majority remains silent — which has been the case in France and most other European countries.

The prospects for terrorism based on a substantial Islamist periphery could hardly appear to be more promising, but there are certain circumstances that make the picture appear somewhat less threatening. The tensions are not equally strong in all countries. They are less palpably felt in Germany and Britain than in France and the Netherlands. Muslims in Germany are predominantly of Turkish origin and have (always with some exceptions) shown less inclination to take violent action than communities mainly composed of Arab and North African immigrants.

If acculturation and integration has been a failure in the short run, prospects are less hopeless in a longer perspective. The temptations of Western civilization are corrosive; young Muslims cannot be kept in a hermetically sealed ghetto (even though a strong attempt is made). They are disgusted and repelled by alcohol, loose morals, general decadence, and all the other wickedness of the society facing them, but they are at the same time fascinated and attracted by them. This is bound to affect their activist fervor, and they will be exposed not only to the negative aspects of the world surrounding them but also its values. Other religions had to face these temptations over the ages and by and large have been fighting a losing battle.

It is often forgotten that only a relatively short period passed from the primitive beginnings of Islam in the Arabian desert to the splendor and luxury (and learning and poetry) of Harun al Rashid's Baghdad — from the austerity of the Koran to the not-so-austere Arabian Nights. The pulse of contemporary history is beating much faster, but is it beating fast enough? For it is a race against time. The advent of megaterrorism and the access to weapons of mass destruction is dangerous enough, but coupled with fanaticism it generates scenarios too unpleasant even to contemplate.

 Enduring asymmetry

There can be no final victory in the fight against terrorism, for terrorism (rather than full-scale war) is the contemporary manifestation of conflict, and conflict will not disappear from earth as far as one can look ahead and human nature has not undergone a basic change. But it will be in our power to make life for terrorists and potential terrorists much more difficult.

Who ought to conduct the struggle against terrorism? Obviously, the military should play only a limited role in this context, and not only because it has not been trained for this purpose. The military may have to be called in for restoring order in countries that have failed to function and have become terrorist havens. It may have to intervene to prevent or stop massacres. It may be needed to deliver blows against terrorist concentrations. But these are not the most typical or frequent terrorist situations.

The key role in asymmetric warfare (a redundant new term for something that has been known for many centuries) should be played by intelligence and security services that may need a military arm.

As far as terrorism and also guerrilla warfare are concerned, there can be no general, overall doctrine in the way that Clausewitz or Jomini and others developed a regular warfare philosophy. An airplane or a battleship do not change their character wherever they operate, but the character of terrorism and guerrilla warfare depends largely on the motivations of those engaging in it and the conditions under which it takes place. Over the past centuries rules and laws of war have developed, and even earlier on there were certain rules that were by and large adhered to.

But terrorists cannot possibly accept these rules. It would be suicidal from their point of view if, to give but one example, they were to wear uniforms or other distinguishing marks. The essence of their operations rests on hiding their identities. On the other hand, they and their well-wishers insist that when captured, they should enjoy all the rights and benefits accorded to belligerents, that they be humanely treated, even paid some money and released after the end of hostilities. When regular soldiers do not stick to the rules of warfare, killing or maiming prisoners, carrying out massacres, taking hostages or committing crimes against the civilian population, they will be treated as war criminals.

If terrorists behaved according to these norms they would have little if any chance of success; the essence of terrorist operations now is indiscriminate attacks against civilians. But governments defending themselves against terrorism are widely expected not to behave in a similar way but to adhere to international law as it developed in conditions quite different from those prevailing today.

Terrorism does not accept laws and rules, whereas governments are bound by them; this, in briefest outline, is asymmetric warfare. If governments were to behave in a similar way, not feeling bound by existing rules and laws such as those against the killing of prisoners, this would be bitterly denounced. When the late Syrian President Hafez Assad faced an insurgency (and an attempted assassination) on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood in the city of Hama in 1980, his soldiers massacred some 20,000 inhabitants. This put an end to all ideas of terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

Such behavior on the part of democratic governments would be denounced as barbaric, a relapse into the practices of long-gone pre-civilized days. But if

governments accept the principle of asymmetric warfare they will be severely, possibly fatally, handicapped. They cannot accept that terrorists are protected by the Geneva Conventions, which would mean, among other things, that they should be paid a salary while in captivity. Should they be regarded like the pirates of a bygone age as hostes generis humani, enemies of humankind, and be treated according to the principle of a un corsaire, un corsaire et demi — "to catch a thief, it takes a thief," to quote one of Karl Marx's favorite sayings?

The problem will not arise if the terrorist group is small and not very dangerous. In this case normal legal procedures will be sufficient to deal with the problem (but even this is not quite certain once weapons of mass destruction become more readily accessible). Nor will the issue of shedding legal restraint arise if the issues at stake are of marginal importance, if in other words no core interests of the governments involved are concerned. If, on the other hand, the very survival of a society is at stake, it is most unlikely that governments will be impeded in their defense by laws and norms belonging to a bygone (and more humane) age.

It is often argued that such action is counterproductive because terrorism cannot be defeated by weapons alone, but is a struggle for the hearts and minds of people, a confrontation of ideas (or ideologies). If it were only that easy. It is not the terrorist ideas which cause the damage, but their weapons. Each case is different, but many terrorist groups do not have any specific idea or ideology, but a fervent belief, be it of a religious character or of a political religion. They fight for demands, territorial or otherwise, that seem to them self-evident, and they want to defeat their enemies. They are not open to dialogue or rational debate. When Mussolini was asked about his program by the socialists during the early days of fascism, he said that his program was to smash the skulls of the socialists.

Experience teaches that a little force is indeed counterproductive except in instances where small groups are involved. The use of massive, overwhelming force, on the other hand, is usually effective. But the use of massive force is almost always unpopular at home and abroad, and it will be applied only if core interests of the state are involved. To give but one example: The Russian government could deport the Chechens (or a significant portion), thus solving the problem according to the Stalinist pattern. If the Chechens were to threaten Moscow or St. Petersburg or the functioning of the Russian state or its fuel supply, there is but little doubt that such measures would be taken by the Russian or indeed any other government. But as long as the threat is only a marginal and peripheral one, the price to be paid for the application of massive force will be considered too high.

Two lessons follow: First, governments should launch an anti-terrorist campaign only if they are able and willing to apply massive force if need be. Second, terrorists have to ask themselves whether it is in their own best interest to cross the line between nuisance operations and attacks that threaten the vital interests of their enemies and will inevitably lead to massive counterblows.

Terrorists want total war — not in the sense that they will (or could) mobilize unlimited resources; in this respect their possibilities are limited. But they want their attacks to be unfettered by laws, norms, regulations, and conventions. In the terrorist conception of warfare there is no room for the Red Cross.

Love or respect?

The why-do-they-hate-us question is raised in this context, along with the question of what could be done about it — that is, the use of soft power in combating terrorism. Disturbing figures have been published about the low (and decreasing) popularity of America in foreign parts. Yet it is too often forgotten that international relations is not a popularity contest and that big and powerful countries have always been feared, resented, and envied; in short, they have not been loved. This has been the case since the days of the Assyrians and the Roman Empire. Neither the Ottoman nor the Spanish Empire, the Chinese, the Russian, nor the Japanese was ever popular. British sports were emulated in the colonies and French culture impressed the local elites in North Africa and Indochina, but this did not lead to political support, let alone identification with the rulers. Had there been public opinion polls in the days of Alexander the Great (let alone Ghengis Khan), the results, one suspects, would have been quite negative.

Big powers have been respected and feared but not loved for good reasons — even if benevolent, tactful, and on their best behavior, they were threatening simply because of their very existence. Smaller nations could not feel comfortable, especially if they were located close to them. This was the case even in times when there was more than one big power (which allowed for the possibility of playing one against the other). It is all the more so at a time when only one superpower is left and the perceived threat looms even larger.

There is no known way for a big power to reduce this feeling on the part of other, smaller countries — short of committing suicide or, at the very least, by somehow becoming weaker and less threatening. A moderate and intelligent policy on the part of the great power, concessions, and good deeds may mitigate somewhat the perceived threat, but it cannot remove it, because potentially the big power remains dangerous. It could always change its policy and become nasty, arrogant, and aggressive. These are the unfortunate facts of international life.

Soft power is important but has its limitations. Joseph S. Nye has described it as based on culture and political ideas, as influenced by the seductiveness of democracy, human rights, and individual opportunity. This is a powerful argument, and it is true that Washington has seldom used all its opportunities, the public diplomacy budget being about one-quarter of one percentage point of the defense budget. But the question is always to be asked: Who is to be influenced by our values and ideas? They could be quite effective in Europe, less so in a country like Russia, and not at all among the radical Islamists who abhor democracy (for all sovereignty rests with Allah rather than the people), who believe that human rights and tolerance are imperialist inventions, and who want to have nothing to do with deeper Western values which are not those of the Koran as they interpret it.

The work of the American radio stations during the Cold War ought to be recalled. They operated against much resistance at home but certainly had an impact on public opinion in Eastern Europe; according to evidence later received, even the Beatles had an influence on the younger generation in the Soviet Union. But, at present, radio and television has to be beamed to an audience 70 percent of which firmly believes that the operations of September 11

were staged by the Mossad. Such an audience will not be impressed by exposure to Western pop culture or a truthful, matter-of-fact coverage of the news. These societies may be vulnerable to covert manipulation of the kind conducted by the British government during World War ii: black (or at least gray) propaganda, rumors, half-truths, and outright lies. Societies steeped in belief in conspiracy theories will give credence to even the wildest rumors. But it is easy to imagine how an attempt to generate such propaganda would be received at home: It would be utterly rejected. Democratic countries are not able to engage in such practices except in a case of a major emergency, which at the present time has not yet arisen.

Big powers will never be loved, but in the terrorist context it is essential that they should be respected. As bin Laden's declarations prior to September 11 show, it was lack of respect for America that made him launch his attacks; he felt certain that the risk he was running was small, for the United States was a paper tiger, lacking both the will and the capability to strike back. After all, the Americans ran from Beirut in the 1980s and from Mogadishu in 1993 after only a few attacks, and there was every reason to believe that they would do so again.

Response in proportion to threat

Life could be made more difficult for terrorists by imposing more controls and restrictions wherever useful. But neither the rules of national nor those of international law are adequate to deal with terrorism. Many terrorists or suspected terrorists have been detained in America and in Europe, but only a handful have been put on trial and convicted, because inadmissible evidence was submitted or the authorities were reluctant to reveal the sources of their information — and thus lose those sources. As a result, many who were almost certainly involved in terrorist operations were never arrested, while others were acquitted or released from detention.

As for those who are still detained, there have been loud protests against a violation of elementary human rights. Activists have argued that the real danger is not terrorism (the extent and the consequences of which have been greatly exaggerated) but the war against terrorism. Is it not true that American society could survive a disaster on the scale of September 11 even if it occurred once a year? Should free societies so easily give up their freedoms, which have been fought for and achieved over many centuries?

Some have foretold the coming of fascism in America (and to a lesser extent in Europe); others have predicted an authoritarian regime gradually introduced by governments cleverly exploiting the present situation for their own anti-democratic purposes. And it is quite likely indeed that among those detained there have been and are innocent people and that some of the controls introduced have interfered with human rights. However, there is much reason to think that to combat terrorism effectively, considerably more stringent measures will be needed than those presently in force.

But these measures can be adopted only if there is overwhelming public support, and it would be unwise even to try to push them through until the learning process about the danger of terrorism in an age of weapons of mass destruction has made further progress. Time will tell. If devastating attacks do not occur, stringent anti-terrorist measures will not be necessary. But if they do happen, the

demand for effective countermeasures will be overwhelming. One could perhaps argue that further limitations of freedom are bound to be ineffective because terrorist groups are likely to be small or very small in the future and therefore likely to slip through safety nets. This is indeed a danger — but the advice to abstain from safety measures is a counsel of despair unlikely to be accepted.

There are political reasons to use these restrictions with caution, because Muslim groups are bound to be under special scrutiny and every precaution should be taken not to antagonize moderate elements in this community. Muslim organizations in Britain have complained that a young Pakistani or Arab is 10 times more likely to be stopped and interrogated by the police than other youths. The same is true for France and other countries. But the police, after all, have some reasons to be particularly interested in these young people rather than those from other groups. It will not be easy to find a just and easy way out of the dilemma, and those who have to deal with it are not to be envied.

It could well be that, as far as the recent past is concerned, the danger of terrorism has been overstated. In the two world wars, more people were sometimes killed and more material damage caused in a few hours than through all the terrorist attacks in a recent year. True, our societies have since become more vulnerable and also far more sensitive regarding the loss of life, but the real issue at stake is not the attacks of the past few years but the coming dangers. Megaterrorism has not yet arrived; even 9-11 was a stage in between old-fashioned terrorism and the shape of things to come: the use of weapons of mass destruction.

The idea that such weapons should be used goes back at least 150 years. It was first enunciated by Karl Heinzen, a German radical — later a resident of Louisville, Kentucky and Boston, Massachusetts — soon after some Irish militants considered the use of poison gas in the British Parliament. But these were fantasies by a few eccentrics, too farfetched even for the science fiction writers of the day.

Today these have become real possibilities. For the first time in human history very small groups have, or will have, the potential to cause immense destruction. In a situation such as the present one there is always the danger of focusing entirely on the situation at hand — radical nationalist or religious groups with whom political solutions may be found. There is a danger of concentrating on Islamism and forgetting that the problem is a far wider one. Political solutions to deal with their grievances may sometimes be possible, but frequently they are not. Today's terrorists, in their majority, are not diplomats eager to negotiate or to find compromises. And even if some of them would be satisfied with less than total victory and the annihilation of the enemy, there will always be a more radical group eager to continue the struggle.

This was always the case, but in the past it mattered little: If some Irish radicals wanted to continue the struggle against the British in 1921-22, even after the mainstream rebels had signed a treaty with the British government which gave them a free state, they were quickly defeated. Today even small groups matter a great deal precisely because of their enormous potential destructive power, their relative independence, the fact that they are not rational actors, and the possibility that their motivation may not be political in the first place.

Perhaps the scenario is too pessimistic; perhaps the weapons of mass destruction, for whatever reason, will never be used. But it would be the first time in human history that such arms, once invented, had not been used. In the last resort, the problem is, of course, the human condition.

In 1932, when Einstein attempted to induce Freud to support pacifism, Freud replied that there was no likelihood of suppressing humanity's aggressive tendencies. If there was any reason for hope, it was that people would turn away on rational grounds — that war had become too destructive, that there was no scope anymore in war for acts of heroism according to the old ideals.

Freud was partly correct: War (at least between great powers) has become far less likely for rational reasons. But his argument does not apply to terrorism motivated mainly not by political or economic interests, based not just on aggression but also on fanaticism with an admixture of madness.

Terrorism, therefore, will continue — not perhaps with the same intensity at all times, and some parts of the globe may be spared altogether. But there can be no victory, only an uphill struggle, at times successful, at others not.

The terrorism to come. Adjust. Share.Ä From the Archive. Timeless stories from our 170-year archive handpicked to speak to the news of the day. Email address. Sign Up. Lapid told Raab the world needs to come up with a strong response. â€œIran is not just an Israeli problem, but an exporter of terrorism, destruction and instability that harms us all. The world must not be silent in the face of Iranian terrorism that also harms freedom of shipping,â€ Lapid said in a statement. The Liberian-flagged tanker Mercer Street, operated by the Israel-based Zodiac Maritime company, came under attack late on Thursday. Initially reported as a piracy incident, the assault killed two crewmembers â€“ a British and a Romanian national. It remains unclear what exactly happened to t... To evaluate the terrorism threat in the United States, CSIS compiled a data set of 61 incidents that occurred in the country between January 1 and August 31, 2020. (The link to the methodology can be found at the end of the brief.) These incidents included both attacks and plots.Â During his second inaugural address, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln said it best in encouraging Americans to come together during divisive times: With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nationâ€™s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphanâ€”to do all which may achieve and. Within terrorism lies the word terror. Terror comes from the Latin terrere, which means â€œfrightenâ€ or â€œtremble.â€ When coupled with the French suffix isme (referencing â€œto practiceâ€), it becomes akin to â€œpractic-ing the tremblingâ€ or â€œcausing the frightening.â€ Trembling and frightening here are syn-onyms for fear, panic, and anxietyâ€”what we would naturally call terror. The word terror is over 2,100 years old. In ancient Rome, the terror cimbricus was a state of panic and emer-gency in response to the coming of the Cimbri tribe killers in 105 BCE. This description of terrorism as being rooted in...