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SRA 211
Prof. Graham
Exercise III

Terrorism

National Strategy for Homeland Security, July 2002

Any premeditated, unlawful act dangerous to human life or public welfare that is intended to intimidate or coerce civilian populations or governments.¹

FBI, Terrorism in the US, 1998

Domestic terrorism is the unlawful use, or threatened use, of force or violence by a group or individual based and operating entirely within the United States or Puerto Rico without foreign direction, committed against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives.

International terrorism involves violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the US or any state, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the US or any state. These acts appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping. International terrorist acts occur outside the US, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear to coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum.²

DoD Instruction 2000.14

Antiterrorism (AT): Defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerabilities of individuals and property to terrorist acts, to include limited response and containment by local military forces.

Counterterrorism (CT): Offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism.

Combating Terrorism: Actions, including AT and CT, taken to oppose terrorism throughout the entire threat spectrum.³

Digital Crime and Digital Terrorism

The actual or threatened use of violence by an individual or group motivated by ideological or political objectives.⁴

Digital Crime and Digital Terrorism

Cyber-terrorism-a premeditated, politically or ideologically motivated attack or threat of attack against information, computer systems, computer programs, and data that can result in violence against civilian targets. According to Barry Collin of the Institute for Security and Intelligence, cyber-terrorism is “hacking with a body count.”⁵

Personal Definition

Terrorism – any premeditated act that causes or is intended to cause violence, death, fear, or harm welfare of people anywhere in the world, usually fueled by political or religious beliefs, and normally intended to get a point across, initiate fear, influence politics, or recruit new members.

Crime

Personal Definition

The act of, or intention to, break a law.

Questions:

1. Do the definitions change when coupled?

I do not believe that the definitions of these two terms are changed when used together. Terrorism is a type of crime and crime is a part of terrorism. The two terms go along together, without meaning the same thing. My belief is that crime is when you break a law. Terrorists break laws when carrying out terrorist acts. However, a criminal is not necessarily a terrorist. Criminals may initiate fear, but they do not have political or religious motives. A terrorist may initiate fear, without being a criminal. Speeches, video tapes, and beliefs themselves can make a person, or a group, terrorist. None of those things are illegal, but do cause fear. The two terms, terrorist and crime, are intertwined with each other, but do not always have the same meaning.

2. Bias

The defining of the word terrorism is laden with bias. Every person in the world has their own view, and definition, of the word. For example, the US view al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas, etc. as terrorists. However, those groups view the US as terrorists. The governmental bias when defining the term comes into play when you look at how the definition is always based on the safety of people’s welfare. Every definition of a terrorist involves the accused party of putting our way of life in danger. This may not be the view of, say, North Korea. They may define terrorism as any act against Kim Jong-Il, or their way of life.

3. Biggest Influence

The biggest influence when defining terrorism is the well-being of the country who is defining the term's way of life. Another major influence would be the safety of that country's citizens. There is no universally accepted definition to the term, and there may never be. This can be contributed to the vast differences in each country's mindset and governmental and religious beliefs.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

There is no single definition of terrorism. The FBI defines terrorism as, "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."

The FBI further describes terrorism as either domestic or international, depending on the origin, base, and objectives of the terrorist organization.

- Domestic terrorism involves groups or individuals who are based and operate entirely within the United States and Puerto Rico without foreign direction and whose acts are directed at elements of the U.S. Government or population.
- International terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence committed by a group or individual, who has some connection to a foreign power or whose activities transcend national boundaries, against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.

The FBI divides terrorist-related activity into three categories:

- A terrorist incident is a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state, to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.
- A suspected terrorist incident is a potential act of terrorism in which responsibility for the act cannot be attributed at the time to a known or suspected terrorist group or individual; and
- Terrorism prevention is a documented instance in which a violent act by a known or suspected terrorist group or individual with the means and a proven propensity for violence is successfully interdicted through investigative activity.⁶

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

The Intelligence Community is guided by the definition of terrorism contained in Title 22 of the US Code, Section 2656f(d):

- The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents.
- The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving the territory or the citizens of more than one country.
- The term "terrorist group" means any group that practices, or has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.⁷

Questions

As stated before, I believe that defining the word terrorism is laden with bias. As American's we view terrorists as people with radical ideas and a common goal to kill our people and our way of life. In contrast, other nations have other beliefs. As the war on terrorism progresses, these definitions will become more focused and clearer. In the grand scheme of things, the definition means next to nothing. It is the ideal that we are trying to irradiate. Just like our previous war on Communism, we now find ourselves facing an enemy that has deep roots, a strong following, and an unwavering mind. Ridding the world of terrorism will not be easy or quick and approaching the problem with an unbiased, determined mind will be critical to success. The definition, however, will always have a bias, because humans are defining it. This war and these definitions are young, as time progresses and the world sees more of this threat, thoughts and biases may change; only time will tell.

Works Cited:

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- ² White, Richard, and Kevin Collins, eds. The United States Department of Homeland Security: an Overview. Boston: Pearson Custom, 2006. 47.
- ³ White, Richard, and Kevin Collins, eds. The United States Department of Homeland Security: an Overview. Boston: Pearson Custom, 2006. 84.
- ⁴ Taylor, Robert W., Tory J. Caeti, D. Kall Loper, Eric J. Fritsch, and John Liederbach. Digital Crime and Digital Terrorism. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Inc., 2006. 21.
- ⁵ Taylor, Robert W., Tory J. Caeti, D. Kall Loper, Eric J. Fritsch, and John Liederbach. Digital Crime and Digital Terrorism. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Inc., 2006. 23.
- ⁶ "Counterterrorism." FBI. 3 May 2001. 2 Feb. 2008 <<http://jackson.fbi.gov/cntrterr.htm>>.
- ⁷ "Terrorism FAQs - Central Intelligence Agency." CIA. 16 Nov. 2007. 2 Feb. 2008 <<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/terrorism-faqs.html>>.