For three decades, the United Nations has been trying to negotiate a consensus definition of terrorism.  Assume that the United Nations has convened a Diplomatic Conference to adopt a universal definition of terrorism, and you are a delegate to the Diplomatic Conference.  The working draft provides:

**“Terrorism is the intentional use of, or threat to use violence against civilians or against civilian targets, in order to attain political aims.”**

You are invited to provide a short on-line submission that critique this definition and proposes alternative language to improve it from the perspective of your assigned country as set forth below.

**Group A** will represent States that have been the target of international terrorism: The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, India, Japan, and Israel.  Pick any state from this list.

**Group B** will represent States that are known to have terrorist groups active within their territory, or which have been accused of supporting terrorists:  Afghanistan (al Qaeda), Pakistan (al Qaeda), Yemen (al Qaeda), Lebanon (Hizballah) Somalia (al Shabab), Spain (ETA), Columbia (FARC), Turkey (PKK), Iran (State sponsor of Islamic terrorist groups), Syria (State sponsor of Islamic terrorist groups).  Pick any state from this list.

I am part of Group B and choose Lebanon. I reiterate what we were told in the lecture video what the definition of terrorism was given by the Lebanon Tribunal, noting that one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter. Judge Antonio Cassese, who sat on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in the Netherlands in the Hague, 2009, made up of the Security Council and government of Lebanon, had jurisdiction over former bombing attack of Lebanon’s Prime Minister, Mr. Hariri, where 22 people died and the bomb felt 300 miles away. Although Judge Antonio Cassese is deceased now, before he died, he came up with a key decision called “joint criminal enterprise liability”. In this context, he noticed that the world was having trouble defining terrorism, with only some narrow treaty type definitions which defined types of terrorist acts, but he felt that there was enough evidence out there to come up with an umbrella definition.

The Lebanon Tribunal’s Definition of Terrorism, where Judge Antonio Cassese was President at the time of the definition in 2009, stated that:

Terrorism consists of “the following three key elements:

1. The perpetration of a criminal act (such as murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, arson, and so on), or threatening such an act;
2. The intent to spread fear among the population (which would generally entail the creation of public danger) or directly or indirectly coerce a national or international authority to take some action, or to refrain from taking it;
3. When the act involves a transnational element.”