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Does Terror Have an Urban Future?

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Summary. This article was written and submitted before the 11 September terrorist attack on New York City. Minor revisions were made to the text and a post-script added in order to bring it up to date, but the original data, themes and findings have been left intact. Our study examines the occurrence of terror in 40 cities across the globe. We survey incidents, fatalities, injuries and damage due to terror between 1993 and 2000. We also encapsulate these statistics in a terror score for each city. We conclude that terror is more common in cities and we explain why this might be the case. In explaining urban terror, we rely on three factors: social breakdown, resource mobilisation and target-proneness. Essentially, we argue that cities with high cumulative standing on these factors also incur high levels of terror. We are able to explain terror in the remaining cities with high 'terror scores' by showing that terror is often 'exportable'. That is, terror originates in places with high social breakdown and resource mobilisation, but is often transmitted to globally oriented, target-prone cities. These cities are located in what we have labelled an International Message Category. Among others, the leading 'candidates' for terror attack have been listed as New York, London, Paris, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Athens and Istanbul.

Tourism versus Terrorism

Yasser Arafat's formal conversion from a terrorist/guerrilla to a conventional leader was supposed to be an auspicious occasion. He announced that decision in 1988 at a carefully choreographed news conference in Geneva. Arafat was about to shed his reputation as an international criminal and take the first steps towards peace with Israel. Journalists and diplomats waited with bated breath, hoping to capture the historic moment on tape recorders. Arafat came up to the podium and began to utter what were supposed to be historic words. Proudly and resolutely he declared

> I totally and absolutely renounce all forms of tourism (*The Economist*, 1 May, 1999, p. 58).

The mispronunciation was laden with more meaning than most people realised. Tourism and terrorism may be different sides of the same urban coin. These very different images are not mutually exclusive. On one side is an image of a prosperous city showing off its

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attractions to visitors. This scenario conjures up a picture of rejuvenated waterfronts, luxurious hotels and fancy boutiques. On the other side, we find a darker image of a dangerous, forbidding and half-vacant city. This scenario suggests drive-by shootings, panicked pedestrians, hidden bombs blasting buildings and rampant kidnappings.

There are signs that a co-existence of positive and negative urban images has come to pass. Images of a 'dual city' filled with affluence and misery are portrayed simultaneously. By now, we are familiar with the first, happier image and scholars have long written about the second, less contented version of the city. The literature is replete with contrasts of booming downtowns not far from depressed ghettos; high-income earners versus those who barely subsist; gentrified neighbourhoods juxtaposed against abandoned, neglected ones (Laska and Spain, 1980; Smith and Williams, 1986; Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991). More recently, scholars have noted the rising fortunes of outward-looking 'tourist cities', while others see insular cities immersed in ethnic conflict (Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Bollens, 1994, 2000; Fainstein *et al.*, 1992). Incongruous as it may seem, the surrealist vision of tourism mixing along with terrorism may already be upon us. Jerusalem stands as a ready case of that unfortunate combination. Despite the breadth of these themes, very little has been written about cities as targets of terror or about how cities compare with one another relative to the rising incidence of purposeful attacks on mass populations.[1]

And yet an unmistakable transition has occurred in which cities have become the central venues of terror. Not only has terrorism taken on a global cast with international linkages, it is also apparent that cities have become the stage on which this tragic drama is played. There are many reasons why this has occurred. For one, the assets of cities make them rich targets. Densely packed and heterogeneous with a great mix of industrial and commercial infrastructure, cities are the wellsprings of prosperity and economic growth (Prud'homme, 1994; Savitch, 1996). This is not just true of the post-industrial world, but also of less developed nations. Research shows that, amongst the poorest nations, cities remain their major source of hope. The migration from the countryside to the urban *favelas* of Latin America and shanty-towns of Africa provides ample evidence of a search for economic survival in cities (Fuchs *et al.*, 1994).

Secondly, cities have become 'nodes' for a vast international network of communications. Economic complexity and global interdependence have converted cities into powerful command centres, directing billions of dollars in investment, managing millions of people and controlling thousands of work sites around the globe (Friedmann and Wolff, 1982; Meyer, 1986). This may be an enormous sign of power, but it is also a very visible sign of vulnerability. A well-placed explosion can produce enormous reverberations and paralyse a city. This, in fact, was the motive behind the bombing of New York's World Trade Center in 1993 and 2001. The simple idea of collapsing two buildings in a highly populated, densely built, 'global city' not only damages people and property, but also creates a contagion of fear and economic rupture.

Thirdly, urban heterogeneity puts different social groups in close proximity to one another. While social pluralism provides rich synergies, under certain condition it can be a nesting-ground for terrorist organisations. A sense of relative deprivation sharpens as different groups come into closer proximity. Word gets around more quickly and socialisation proceeds more rapidly in densely packed environments. This kind of environment provides an abundant source of recruitment for potential terrorists. Beirut provides a ready example of how different groups living under conditions of hopelessness and in proximity to one another can engage in mutual attack. Similar ecologies of terror also pervade Belfast, Sarajevo and Hyderabad. Rather than directed from lower classes upwards towards élites, terror and conflict occur between groups operating at the same level—Hindus fighting Muslims in Bombay

or rival criminal gangs in Bogota. Religious groups or underworld gangs simply battle it out.

Lastly, cities have considerable symbolic value. They are not only dense agglomerations of people and buildings, but guardians of national prestige and assets. They hold the tangible symbols of military, political and financial power for great national powers. A blast in a mountain town or in the countryside may arouse local concern, but is generally of little or no consequence for the rest of the world. But an attack on Wall Street, a massacre in Piccadilly Circus, the bombing of the Eiffel Tower, or poison gas in a Tokyo metro arouses international alarm. Any such event will be instantly telegraphed to a larger world and will provoke a much larger audience. If terrorists thrive on anything, it is media attention and widespread recognition. Graphic images of terror can be used both to intimidate the public and to enlist its sympathy. Publicity acquired through less violent means also serves the terrorists' cause—not just because it introduces them to the world, but also because it induces a sense of vulnerability into the population at large. There are two sides to this tactic. On the one side, vulnerability entails the dread of attack and mass fear. On the other side, it softens up the opposition, predisposing it to try to 'understand' the terrorist cause. Liberal societies, accustomed to tolerance, are apt to wonder why individuals would resort to such brutal, impersonal acts and even blame themselves for provoking terrorism. Broadcasting the other side's position makes the public sensitive to the grievances that motivate terrorists, enabling potential sympathisers to come to the fore. Media attention and constant publicity also impart terrorist causes with quasi legitimacy. The more one hears about a set of grievances, the greater the chance it will gain a place on the public agenda and become part of a wider discourse.

Finally, media attention strengthens the bargaining hand of those who resort to violence, by allowing quasi terrorist organisations and their allies to identify alternative paths to reconciliation. During the 1970s and 1980s, Palestinian terrorists hijacked planes demanding that authorities negotiate directly with them. By the 1990s, a substantial part of that movement had managed to portray themselves as a non-violent alternative to more radical 'rejectionists'. In effect, the cessation of terror became a bargaining chip, based on the idea that people would prefer to deal with more moderate and predictable elements than face 'uncontrollable consequences'.

This paper explores the extent to which cities have become the targets of terror and the tactics involved. More theoretically, we address the issue of whether there is something intrinsic to cities in a newly globalised world and something unique in their role as nerve-centres of an international economy that puts them at higher risk. We also examine the question of what kinds of cities are most vulnerable to terror. Put simply, we ask whether terror has shown a disproportionate and rising presence in cities, where has this occurred and what best explains this occurrence.

Cities as Targets for Terror

Researchers well know that rising urbanisation is also accompanied by an increasing gross national product (UNCHS, 1996; Davezies and Prud'homme, 1994). The logic behind this suggests that cities convert surplus products into other uses and operate more efficiently to make wealth possible (Jacobs, 1969). But what might be the association between urbanisation and terror? Does terror or do more collective forms of violence occur in conjunction with rising urbanisation? A number of scholars have suggested that there is no causal relationship between cities and terror (defined more broadly to include all types of security such as crime and public safety). They claim that there are few clear linkages between urbanisation and most dimensions of security (Nelson, 1999; Gilbert, 1998).

There is a point to this position. Using a narrow definition of insecurity as acts of terror, we find no correlation between levels of urbanisation and incidents of terror. In

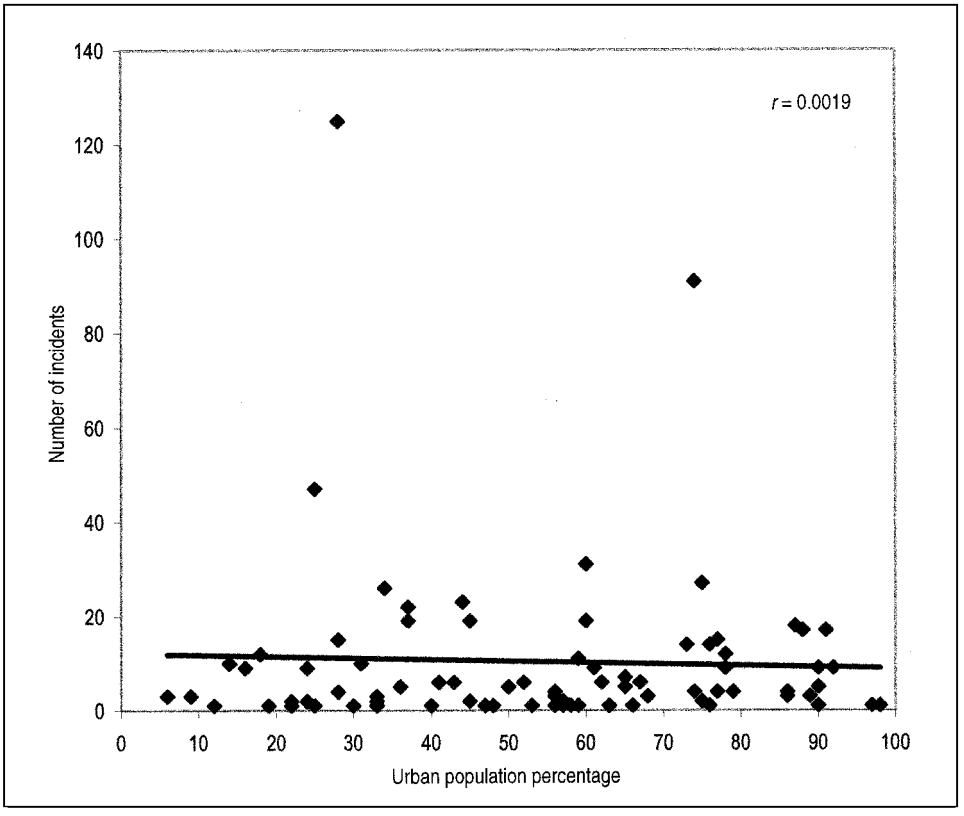

Figure 1. Urbanisation and incidents of terror, 1993–2000. *Sources:* US Department of State (1993–2000) and http://www.un.org/Depts/unsd/social/humset.htm.

fact, a simple bivariate analysis shows no rising curve between these variables. Figure 1 shows a scatterplot of results from 78 nations. The data points are plotted according to a nation's level of urbanisation, defined as a percentage of residents living in statistically designated metropolitan areas. As we can see, there is no correlation—the regression line is flat.

Still, we should be cautious about quick conclusions. The scatterplot could present too deceptive a picture because urbanisation covers a host of different human settlements. Urbanisation is a very broad category, encompassing a move from the countryside to more densely populated, predominantly non-agricultural areas. This could include movements to the peripheries of metropolitan areas, emigration to suburbs, small towns and villages. Levels of urbanisation vary immensely in these 78 nations and mixing them introduces a number of factors ('distortor' or 'suppressor' variables) that confound any meaningful relationship. Besides, few people would claim, *a priori*, that urbanisation causes terrorism.

More important, trying to determine whether rising levels of urbanisation are related to terror is not the same as examining whether cities are more or less vulnerable to terror. The proposition that urbanisation is not strongly related to terror or collective violence may be true. But its converse, that terror or collective violence is related to concentrated urban environments may also be true. Not all cities are ripe for terror, but some cities may be especially susceptible to terror.

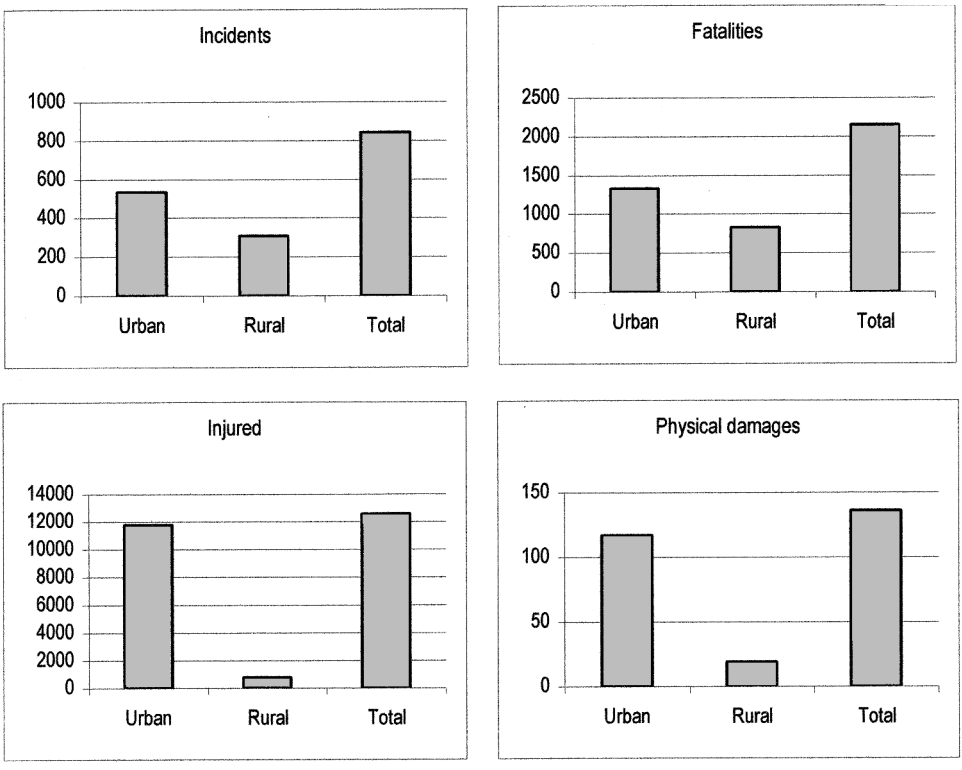

Figure 2. Terror and urban–rural cleavage, 1993–2000. *Source:* US Department of State (1993–2000).

Terror and the Urban–Rural Dichotomy

As defined here, terrorism consists of international, violent attacks upon people and property, often with little discrimination, in order to intimidate them and instil widespread fear. In order to expand the sphere of intimidation, terrorists show that anyone can be vulnerable to attack. Richardson (1998) puts an accent on the symbolic character of terrorist targets and describes terrorist acts as a method "to communicate a message to a broader audience". For all these reasons, terror is associated with acts of random violence, aimed at almost any segment in a given society (Turk, 1982; Laquer, 1996). Most people can be struck by it, regardless of whether they are non-combatants, children, teenagers or the elderly. This randomness puts everyone in a target area at risk and heightens the capacity for intimidation. The governmental literature on terrorism provides complementary definitions. The US Department of State defines terrorism as

> pre meditated, politically motivated violence, perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence a wider audience (US Department of State, 1999).

Here the emphasis is also put on 'sub-national groups' or 'clandestine agents', and this has become an increasingly prominent characteristic of terror. During the past 30 years, terror has often been carried out by secret groups lacking an address, rather than by states that can be held accountable. To be sure, some states like Libya, Syria, Iran and North Korea conduct state-sponsored terrorism.[2] However, international condemnation exerts substantial pressure and most of these

Table 1. Terrorist incidents, 1993–2000

	Total incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Physical damage
Urban	534	1326	11 762	117
Rural	306	829	769	19
Total	840	2155	12 531	136

Source: US Department of State (1993–2000).

states are anxious to erase that mark of disrepute (US State Department, 1999).

We proceed with the simplest dichotomy between 'urban' and 'rural' areas. Figure 2 displays incidents of terror within each of these distinct areas. Incidents are broken down according to outcome (people killed, injured, or incidents of property damage).[3]

Within a span of just 8 years, cities incurred over 500 such incidents and over 13 000 casualties. More than 250 cities across the globe experienced at least 1 terrorist act. Note, too, a higher incidence of terror in cities than occurred in rural areas. The total number of urban incidents is more than a third higher than elsewhere. The number of persons killed in cities constitutes 61 per cent of total fatalities, while the proportion of people injured zooms to 94 per cent of total injuries. Not surprisingly, urban terrorism takes more than six times the toll in physical damage.

With just a few exceptions, these data hold up—regardless of country or region. Even relatively rural nations or regions have a propensity to attract terror into urban cores. Table 2 shows a sampling of nations according to levels of terror. In order to evaluate better that level of terror, we have constructed a 'terrorism score'. The score is a composite of all casualties and damage, calculated for each city, and is weighted in order to account for the propensity of a city to incur terrorism (incidents), the severity of attack (killed and injured) and the extent of the attack (physical damage). This score is compiled for 40 nations or regions and according to urban *vis-a-vis* non urban areas.[4]

Boiling down these differences to specific countries, we find that the cumulative effect of terror is higher in urban environments. India incurred 2.5 times the level of terror in its cities compared with its countryside; Greece 23 times as much; Turkey and Pakistan twice as much; Israel and Egypt one-third as much. Of the 40 nations or regions listed, only 4 (Colombia, Yemen, Nigeria and Angola) experienced a predominance of terror in rural areas, while 3 (Uganda, Russia, Iraq) showed a near tie.

Terror, then, does have a distinct urban address, and this brings up corollary questions. Exactly what kinds of city are affected? Which cities have been the most affected and how does this fit with some of our theoretical observations on the propensity of cities to incur terror?

A Profile of Cities Subject to Terror

We find an enormous range of cities subject to terror and neither industrial, demographic or geographical patterns readily emerge. The pattern varies from cities in less developed nations to advanced countries, from densely populated, close-knit cities to those resembling townships and from cities in western Europe to others in Africa and Asia. Putting this in more specific terms, Srinagar (India), Athens, Sanaa (Yemen), Paris, Istanbul and Lima led the list, followed closely by Jerusalem, Algiers and Dushanbe (Tajikistan). The largest number of fatalities occurred in Nairobi (291 killed in 1 incident). Following Nairobi are Colombo (108 killed in 3 incidents) and Jerusalem (77 killed in 9 incidents). Injuries are another story and

Table 2. Urban–rural terror in nations, 1993–2000

Country	Urban	Other
India	411	157
Colombia	125	178
Turkey	74	35
Algeria	73	54
Greece	71	3
Yemen	65	87
Pakistan	65	23
Germany	59	5
France	58	0
Israel	54	32
Egypt	53	32
Peru	49	10
Sierra Leone	47	29
Angola	43	59
Tajikistan	41	21
Venezuela	37	28
Ethiopia	35	15
United Kingdom	35	3
Spain	32	0
Iraq	31	29
Sri Lanka	27	17
Namibia	27	13
Nigeria	26	47
Philippines	25	11
Georgia	23	9
Uganda	22	22
Yugoslavia	22	4
South Africa	22	0
Russia	21	20
Iran	21	0
Italy	17	3
United States	17	0
Bosnia	16	7
Austria	16	0
Lebanon	15	5
Chile	15	0
Jordan	15	0
Saudi Arabia	14	0
Netherlands	12	0
Northern Ireland	12	0

Source: US Department of State (1993–2000).

Nairobi (with 5019) accounts for nearly half the total. Next are Colombo (1510 injuries), New York (1004 injuries in 8 incidents) and Jerusalem (584 injuries).[5]

Table 3 presents a list of the most affected cities. In addition to standard sub-categories for evaluating terror, we have listed these cities according to their 'terror score' (explained earlier). Last, we couple this picture to a longitudinal view of terror. Figure 3 takes a glimpse of the evolution of terror during the past decade. The line graph in that figure shows this for urban areas according to incidents, casualties (killed and injured) and physical damage.

In just 8 years, the number of incidents and physical damage more than doubled. Casualties also rose, although the trajectory is more irregular and with the high point occurring in 1998. We estimate that 64 per cent of the brunt of terrorism is absorbed by cities.[6] Whether or not there is a causal pattern to this kind of violence is not as significant as the consistent disproportion of urban incidents over the years.

What can we make of both the salience of terror in certain cities and its overall growth? Clearly, the symbolic value and strategic composition of cities have put them at the forefront of confrontation. While our analysis does not allow for prediction, we believe this is likely to continue. Harking back to our initial observations, there are other reasons why cities are so vulnerable. Cities are the media centres for the world. They contain international newspapers, news organisations, television and radio broadcasting studios. A terrorist attack in a strategic urban core is a shot heard instantly around the world. As one terrorist in Algeria expressed it

> Is it preferable for our cause to kill ten enemies in an *oued* (dry river bed) of Telergma when no one will talk of it … or [is it better to kill] a single man in Algiers, which will be noted the next day in the American press? (Hoffman, 1998, p. 61).

This logic explains why Paris, London and New York would be on the list. These cities are of a global class and central components in the world's media networks. It might also explain the role of 'secondary world cities' like Athens, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Rome, Berlin and the like. For various reasons (geographical junctures between continents, religious centres, national capitals), these cities are vital links in the chain of international

Table 3. Terror in 40 cities, 1993–2000

Country	City	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Physical damage	Score
India	Srinagar	28	54	187	8	88
Greece	Athens	15	2	3	9	48
Yemen	Sanaa	12	5	26	0	38
France	Paris	11	17	199	2	37
Turkey	Istanbul	11	22	83	3	36
Peru	Lima	11	7	70	7	36
Algeria	Algiers	9	14	2	1	30
Israel	Jerusalem	9	77	584	0	30
Egypt	Cairo	8	37	72	0	26
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	8	14	79	0	26
United Kingdom	London	6	2	121	1	22
India	Anantnag	6	12	135	0	21
Sierra Leone	Freetown	5	3	2	1	18
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	5	15	41	0	17
Colombia	Bogota	5	1	0	1	17
Sri Lanka	Colombo	4	112	1533	3	17
Pakistan	Karachi	4	9	2	0	14
Colombia	La Victoria	4	4	2	0	14
Chile	Santiago	4	0	0	3	13
South Africa	Cape Town	3	1	24	3	12
India	New Delhi	3	2	38	3	12
United States	New York	3	8	1004	0	12
Austria	Vienna	4	0	0	0	12
Uganda	Kampala	3	5	9	0	11
Italy	Rome	3	1	1	0	11
Georgia	Sukhumi	3	0	4	1	11
Iran	Tehran	3	0	1	1	11
Jordan	Amman	3	0	3	0	10
Lebanon	Beirut	3	2	0	0	10
Colombia	Cali	3	0	0	1	10
Nigeria	Lagos	3	2	0	0	10
India	Shopian	3	0	63	0	10
Angola	Cabinda	3	0	0	0	9
India	Gulmarg	2	2	10	1	9
Pakistan	Islamabad	2	16	62	2	9
Bahrain	Manama	2	4	3	1	9
Iraq	Sulaimaniyah	2	3	6	1	9
Kenya	Nairobi	1	291	5019	1	8
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	2	7	42	0	8
Israel	Tel-Aviv	2	20	75	0	8

Source: US Department of State (1993–2000).

urban centres. Thus they too would yield big pay-offs for ambitious terrorists. But what explains terror in so many other cities? Why would cities like Srinagar, Sanaa, Lima and Dushanbe find themselves high on the list? By the standards of the International Monetary Fund, 9 or 22.5 per cent of the listed cities are classified as advanced economies (Paris, Athens, New York, Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, London, New York, Rome, Vienna). Many other terrorised cities are in developing or transitional economies (Sanaa, Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Lagos) (IMF, 2001). Reconciling and explaining these differences require a broader framework and we now turn to that task.

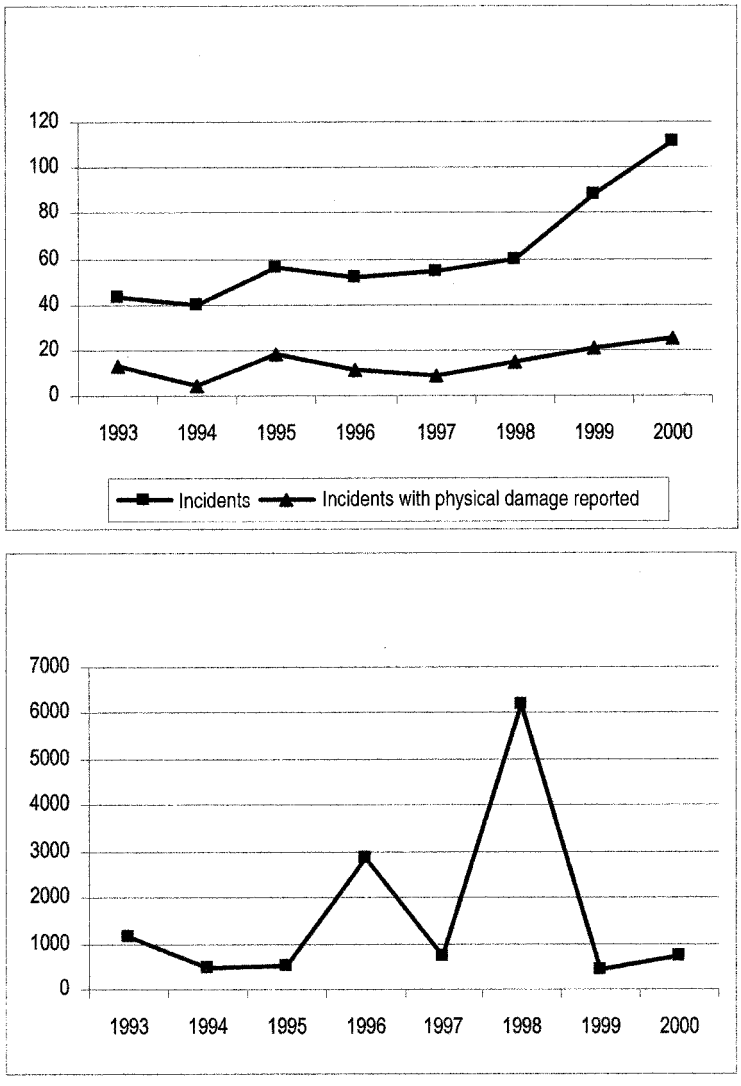

Figure 3. The evolution of terror in urban areas, 1993–2000: *above:* terror incidents and physical damage; *below:* casualties. *Source:* US Department of State (1993–2000).

Social Breakdown, Resource Mobilisation and Target-proneness

As we see it, three factors contribute to the rise of urban terror. These factors are: social breakdown, resource mobilisation and target-proneness. Two of these factors—social breakdown and resource mobilisation—are directly drawn from the literature on collective violence and modified for our purposes (Oberschall, 1973; Spilerman, 1976; Useem, 1998). The third factor—target-proneness—is drawn from our own analysis of terror. These factors operate, both singularly and cumulatively, to lubricate, feed and steer urban terror. Essentially, we argue that cities with high cumulative standing on these factors also incur high levels of terror. These levels of terror are encapsulated in the terror score for each city. Taken in conjunction with our earlier discussion on the vulnerability and susceptibility of urban environments to terror, these factors help to explain its predominance in particular kinds of city.

While the cumulative nature of these factors may not account for all cities experiencing terror, they do account for much of it. Finally, we speculate that past patterns of terror are likely to continue. We begin with the first of our factors, social breakdown, and adumbrate its relationships with the general category of collective violence.

The research on collective violence encompasses a broad range of mass action including riots, strikes, rebellions, coups, mutinies, assassinations and demonstrations (Gurr, 1968a; Tilly *et al.*, 1975; Tarrow, 1994). Collective violence—especially urban rioting—bears some resemblance to terrorism and this may provide some clues in furthering our investigation. In fact, sometimes the line between mass rioting and terror can be porous and it may be difficult to distinguish where one begins and the other leaves off. For instance, the Los Angeles riots of 1992 showed that rioting began spontaneously on the streets of the South Central area and later grew into a somewhat more organised form of terror against Korean merchants (arson, explosion).

We employ social breakdown to refer to conditions that bring about a collapse of institutional or group control. Breakdown can be described as a passive condition where stress or hardship erodes legitimate institutions (family, civic associations, government) or tears at accepted forms of behaviour (lawful conduct, social restraint and mutual respect). Conditions such as poverty, unemployment, sub-standard housing or environmental hazards often contribute to social chaos. Rampant crime is a key to understanding social breakdown because it creates a climate of fear, threat and uncertainty. Crime also loosens social bonds as well as collective and individual restraint. Political barriers also contribute to institutional breakdown by depriving people of democratic rights or delegitimising their aspirations. When institutions neither hold the respect nor the loyalty of their subjects, societies are more likely to face some form of collective violence. Traditional theorists like Emile Durkheim long argued that erosion of a society's moral unity was a critical factor in accounting for the outbreak of collective violence (Gizewski and Homer-Dixon, 1995).

Our second factor—resource mobilisation—differs from social breakdown. Resource mobilisation is more of a movement than a condition of atrophy. It works actively against the social order by building organisations capable of intimidating or destroying existing bonds. Resource mobilisation is a dynamic force, which stresses how groups recruit assets and maximise their position in order to gain power. Simply put, resource mobilisation is politics carried out by building and applying the capacity for violence (Gamson, 1990; Useem, 1998). To accomplish this, requires alternative norms and avenues of support. Religion and religious organisations can be relied upon to furnish these norms, but so too can a secular revolutionary ardour.

Resource mobilisation is difficult to assess in quantifiable terms. Its indicators tend to be broad and historical in nature and assessments are best made from a qualitative perspective. The presence of fundamentalist religion or radical ideology along with their organisational counterparts can be important. Chiliastic religion not only provides fervour, but hope for a better future. Para-military organisations or militias and fringe political parties may also furnish normative justification. Another attribute of resource mobilisation is the availability of firearms or explosives. The impact of the spread of weapons can be difficult to ascertain because it has multiple effects. When weapons are distributed within legitimate organisational frameworks (Switzerland's militia or Israel's Tsahal) criminal behaviour remains low. On the other hand, when weapons are obtained anonymously and easily by individuals, the practice can lead to disasters. Instances of mass killing like those in Littleton, Colorado, and Port Arthur, Tasmania, bring the dangers of rampant, unregulated firearms to our attention. Renner shows that these weapons can

> filter through all levels of society—from armed opposition groups, drug traffickers,

> organized crime, terrorists, private security forces, paramilitary groups and vigilante squads. (Renner, 1998, p. 15)

He cites estimates of the number of military-style firearms at 500 million and points out that over 300 companies in 52 nations manufacture this equipment.

Crime is a double-edged sword. It is not only used to create social breakdown, but also can be turned towards a more aggressive goal of resource mobilisation. There is some evidence that criminal behaviour creates a precedent for collective acts of aggression (Gurr, 1968b). Former convicts were major antagonists in the US nationwide riots of the 1960s. Among those who were convicted in the Los Angeles riot of 1992, 60 per cent had criminal records and half of these were repeat offenders (Morrison and Lowry, 1994). Imprisoned populations are especially ripe for resource mobilisation and high rates of recidivism would indicate a propensity to join groups that advocate violence. This may be cause for alarm in the US; with over 1 million inmates, the US has one of the highest prison populations in the world.

Finally, an important stimulus for resource mobilisation is the existence of a proximate 'enemy', whose presence brings about constant friction. Socially segregated *casbahs* and townships are ripe for recruitment and action. It is well known that low-status social classes hold animosity towards those who are more marginal and vice versa. Frequently, the discontent of the more powerful group is focused onto the weaker group with resulting violence. Gurr (1968b) and others have referred to this as 'object generalisation', which can be manifested in extreme acts of violence such as vigilante executions. Studies show a positive relationship between distressed economic conditions of poor whites and lynching of their black neighbours in the American South. Recent evidence from Bosnia suggests that Serb militia units were recruited from large pools of unemployed and unskilled men displaced by the war economy. They resented their Muslim neighbours and were predisposed towards violence (Oberschall, 1997).

Large-scale migration into the peripheries of Latin American and African cities could also be a source of resource mobilisation (White, 1998, Brennan, 1999). Cities can become impacted with large numbers of impoverished, unemployed squatters who settle in shanty-towns on the urban periphery. Rising urban populations do not always bring economic development and the combination of low living standards and rising expectations can be volatile. The *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro are notorious places where social wounds fester and insurrectionist ardour can burst out.

While social breakdown and resource mobilisation explanations have been interpreted as competitive theories, they can be complementary. Resource mobilisation can feed on social breakdown and supplant it in dysfunctional ways. Once the social and political fabric begins to atrophy, people will seek alternative means of integration. Most will turn to a renewed religious faith, to legitimate opposition political parties or to kinship. But some will turn to an alternative means of malintegration. They will join criminal gangs that deal in drugs or other contrabands (Bogota, Cape Town) or form extremist terrorist cells (Algiers, Jerusalem).

Malintegration goes beyond opposition and is an anti-social process which sustains terror, subversion or revolution. It is essentially a type of recruitment based on opposition to the social order and a willingness to destroy it. While most forms of integration create both vertical and horizontal links through the social order, malintegration relies exclusively on horizontal relationships—usually between like organisations or group cells. These relationships operate to split society and pit one social class against another. The prevalence of malintegrated populations is fuel for organisations that carry out collective or group violence, and this puts cities at risk.

We label our third factor 'target-proneness' and define it as the incentives or values within a city that make it attractive to attack.

Targeted cities have a high value for terrorists; either because they are global centres, and terrorists want to transmit an international message, or because they are proximate to conflict (availability) and terrorists are more concerned about conveying a localised (i.e. national) message. Although their means are brutal, terrorists are often 'rational actors' willing to take risks in order to achieve highly valued ends. While different cities may be target-prone in different ways, all major cities offer the common advantage of high visibility and substantial resonance.

Global centres like Paris, London or New York possess enormous resources (stock exchanges, banks, embassies, news media, political capital, etc.). These are ideal cities that can be used to export the terrorist message, thereby gaining larger sympathy. Religious fundamentalists were anxious to use Paris as the object of attack because it was the visible seat of the French government and because of its international standing. Similarly, Irish Republican extremists used London because it embodied what was left of imperial Britain. In much the same way, Islamic fundamentalists first chose in 1993 and subsequently in 2001 New York's World Trade Center. More than anything else, the World Trade Center personified the might of US capitalism, its global reach and the sheer material prosperity of the West. The very severe attacks in Nairobi and Aden were ways of violently assailing US territory (respectively by bombing the embassy and exploding a warship).

At another extreme of target-proneness, we find cities like Srinagar, Lima and Dushanbe. Terrorists choose these cities because they are most available and because their audience is localised—that is, for reasons of their own, terrorists have little motive to export their message to an international audience. These cities can be viewed as the nearest urban target and they can be seen as valuable hostages. Srinagar is at the seat of conflict between Islamic separatists and the Indian army over the fate of Kashmir. Terror cells are rooted in that city and operate against the Indian army on a constant basis. Control over Srinagar also symbolises dominance over the larger area of Kashmir. Lima is a prize sought by revolutionaries. The Peruvian struggle is largely confined to an insurrection carried out by the 'Shining Path'—an organisation that is as much involved in criminal activities as in political revolution. In Dushanbe, religious extremists are also connected to international drug-trafficking. These organisations finance efforts to destabilise the region, stop democratic reforms and overturn secular regimes. Terrorist attacks aimed at establishing Islamic religious rule in Tajikistan are initiated from the northern parts of the republic that are beyond governmental control, yet they are most often carried out in Dushanbe (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 13 March 2001; *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 8 June 2001).

A remaining group of target-prone cities combines elements of both high value and availability. In a sense, they are hybrids whose value may not be as high as world-class cities, but whose availability and importance to more localised conflicts are immense. Athens, Istanbul and Jerusalem fall into this category. There are geopolitical reasons for this. These cities are located at the junctures of two worlds—West and East. They are major cities with high target value and all three are not just national capitals but have enormous significance as historic-symbolic sites. Athens is the seat of Western civilisation; it has a substantial economic base; and it is a transport cross-roads for western Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East. Few cities better combine international visibility with being proximate to localised conflicts. Istanbul literally occupies two continents. It too has a substantial economic base and it occupies a similar position in the midst of localised ethnic and religious conflict. The last member of this urban triumvirate, Jerusalem, speaks for itself. It is amongst the world's best-known religious symbols; it is the seat of a vibrant economy and has an Anglophone media. Jerusalem also exemplifies the very essence of the Arab–Israeli conflict.

Explaining the Prevalence of Urban Terror

Our emphasis is on an explanation of urban terrorism and on locating its general realm of occurrence, rather than on making specific predictions. There are good reasons for this. First, terrorism relies on surprise and is delivered by erratic or mixed methods. That is why predicting where it will next arise is difficult, if not impossible. Secondly, terrorism is the product of particular circumstance, opportunities that arise over time and choices about numerous targets. Thus, predictability is antithetical to its very nature. Notwithstanding these limitations, terrorism does leave a trail that can be useful to researchers. It is characterised by purposeful action, so that one can spot fragments of patterned behaviour before it is completely manifested. Moreover, terrorists are keenly aware of their victims' vulnerability and this makes some cities more likely to incur terror than others. This makes it possible to winnow down probable 'candidates' for attack.

We begin that explanation with a reminder that terrorists are rational actors who seek maximum pay-offs for their actions. Experience tells us that terrorists can plan, co-ordinate and execute random violence with considerable success. It stands to reason that not only would terrorists select urban targets, they would also pay attention to special kinds of target. The criteria used for that selection depend upon social breakdown (furnishing the conditions under which terrorists thrive), resource mobilisation (providing the agents for terrorist action) and target-proneness (supplying the objects of terror).

Figure 4 illustrates how these factors relate to one another and how they sometimes combine. The figure takes our 40 cities with the highest terrorist scores and sorts them by social breakdown, resource mobilisation and target-proneness (international/hybrid messages and localised messages). The figure lists these cities from highest to lowest for each category, so that readers can discern possible overlaps. For each category, we put these cities into ordinal groupings, ranging from highest to lowest. Thus, cities with the highest social breakdown and resource mobilisation can be found in a group at the top of the list. The target-prone cities also vary from most to least susceptible and are placed in groups within two separate categories (international and local message).[7]

The highest social breakdown cities include Srinagar, Sanaa, Lima, Algiers, Dushanbe and others. Cities highest in resource mobilisation include Srinagar, Sanaa, Lima, Algiers, Jerusalem, Cairo and others. The most target-prone cities on the international message side are New York, London, Paris, Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Athens and others. On the local message side, they are Srinagar, Sanas, Lima, Algiers, Dushanbe and others.

Next, we trace some possible overlap among cities by taking a stratum of the top cities in each category.[8] Basically, we define this stratum as consisting of approximately 12 cities in each category. Using cluster analysis, we show the results in Figure 6. The figure begins with a grouping of 12 cities. It then narrows these down to just 5, based on the extent to which they overlap on all our variables. Emerging as cities with the most overlap are Srinagar, Sanaa, Lima, Algiers, Anantnag and Dushanbe. All of these cities have high terror scores as previously shown in Table 3. In that table, Srinagar has the highest score of 88, while Sanaa had the third-highest score of 38; Lima is sixth with a score of 36, followed by seventh-place Algiers whose score is 30. Further on, we find tenth-place Dushanbe with 26 and twelfth-place Anantnag with a score of 21.

All told, 6 of the highest 12 cities are accounted for by the cumulative impact of social breakdown, resource mobilisation and terror-proneness. All of these cities are not just found within the collective violence variables (social breakdown and resource mobilisation), but all are uniquely situated on the local message side of terror-proneness.

These six local message cities incurred consistent and severe terror over a sustained period of time. Indeed, three of them—Srinagar, Sanaa and Lima—are at the very top of the list and experienced a disproportionate

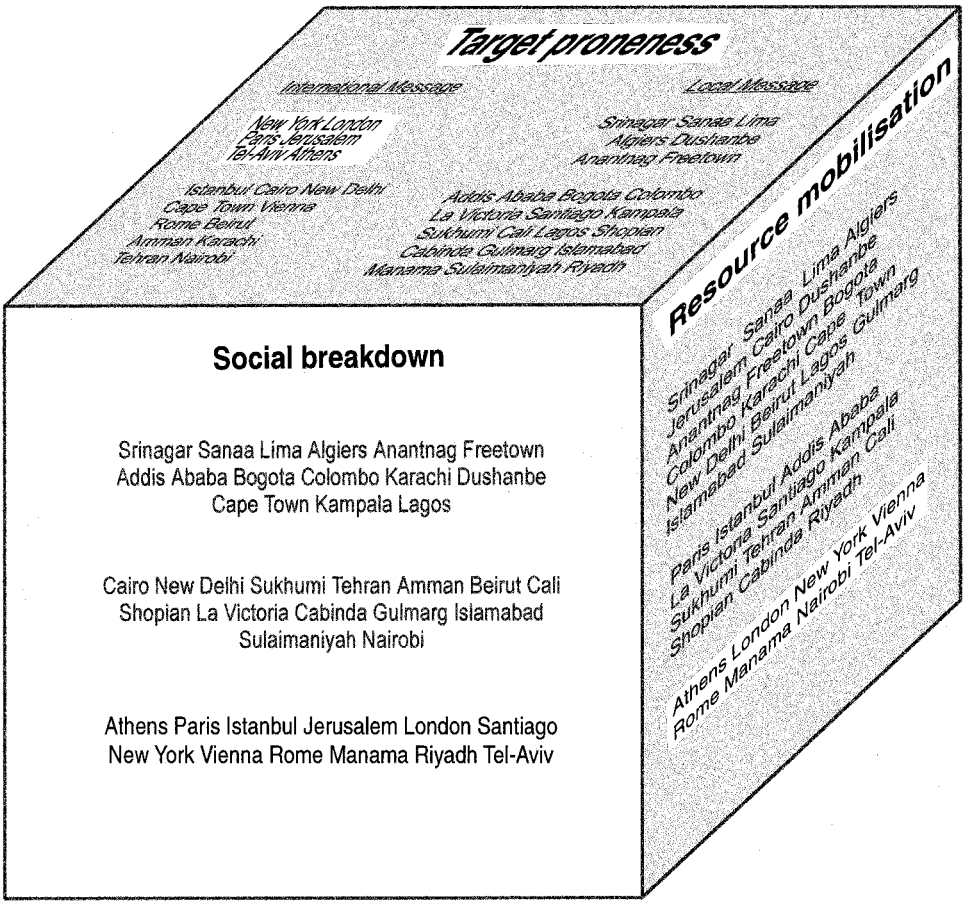

Figure 4. Social breakdown, resource mobilisation and target-proneness in 40 cities.

share of incidents. Cities like these, in the local message category, rarely receive international notoriety as objects of terror. No matter how severe or sustained terror might be in the neighbourhoods of Srinagar or on the streets of Dushanbe or the marketplaces of Lima, it is not likely to evoke worldwide attention. India has long claimed that attacks in Srinagar (New Delhi or Bombay) could spread elsewhere, but its pleas have gone unheeded. Even when little-known Dushanbe (located in remote Tajikistan) was targeted by the internationally notorious Taliban, the fate of that city did not arouse great concern. This disregard continued, despite Russian reports that terror in Dushanbe was tied to an international network. Few people were willing to concede that terror could shift targets. Yet terror does not always have a single venue.

The Magnification of International Message Cities

Our analysis has its shortcomings. Our reliance on sorting cities by overlap on key variables did not take account of the disproportionate weight held by cities located in the international message category. As mentioned, terror is more volatile, and consequently more attractive, when transmitted through an international message. Cities capable of an international message magnify the conflict; they broaden its meaning; and they engulf more participants. This is exactly what terrorists seek.

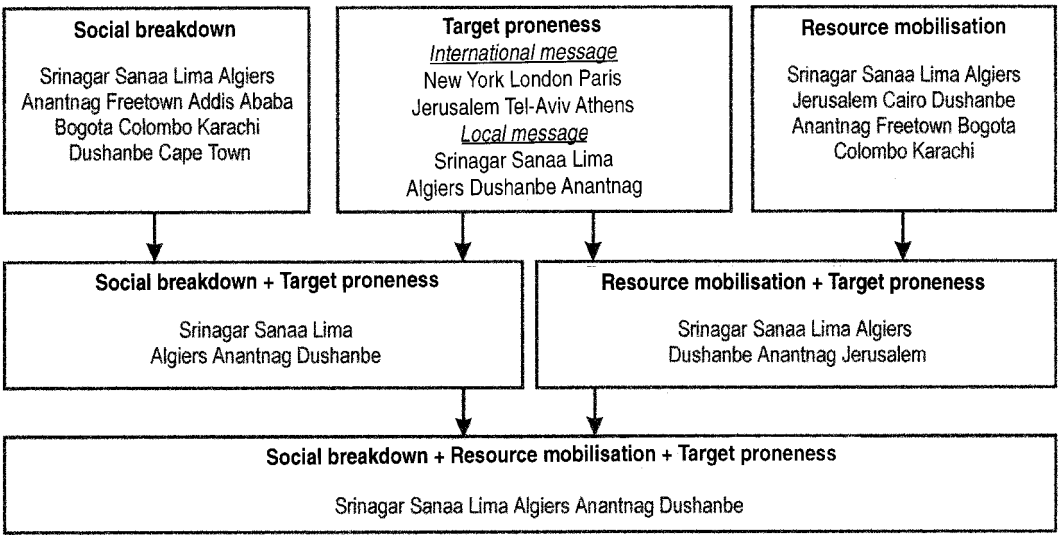

Figure 5. Sorting cities by degree of overlap.

At least half of our international message cities lie at the global nerve-centre of the new economy. These include New York, London and Paris. A strike at any one of these has ramifications throughout the world. Any such attack could upset the flow of international finance, the value of capital equities and the management of multinational corporations. Two of the other cities in this category, Jerusalem and Athens, are flashpoints of international tension—respectively holding sacred religious sites and/or a unique geopolitical proximity to the source of conflict. Further down the line, Istanbul, Cairo, Vienna and Rome also magnify the pay-off for terrorists. While not as deadly for international traffic, a strike in any one of these cities could be contagious, setting off waves of panic and military action.

All this highlights the fact that terror is exportable from socially deprived areas to socially privileged cities. Egyptians and Lebanese gravitate to New York. Algerian terrorists make their case in Paris. Irish Republican terrorists pronounce their wishes in London. Chechens are alleged to do the same in Moscow. The existence of transnational communities in these cities is an important component for successful attack because terrorists require some base of local support. Also, the contrast between the great, burgeoning wealth in these cities and the dire, unrelenting poverty of their fellow-nationals gives terrorists a rationale for retribution. While justifying terrorist brutality may not be easy, furnishing a reason for it is feasible. And a cogent rationale can bolster terrorist claims over issues of national rights (Albanians), economic inequity (radical Muslims) and social polarisation (Irish Catholics).

Finally, international message cities play a paramount role in the new 'borderless world'. These cities have begun to act as mini sovereignties, moving about to compete for the Olympic Games, court multinational corporations or sell their products abroad. Here we find ironies in how great cities have begun to refract the twin pressures of global economics and global warfare. While cities are increasingly free-floating and delinked from their national economies, so too has terrorist warfare become 'borderless', similarly transcending national locations (Lever, 1996). Further, as globalisation evolves and cities attain a strategic niche in a fluid, market-driven world economy, terror too has been able to find its place in a new type of inchoate, formless warfare.

Conclusions

We find that contemporary acts of terror have been directed towards urban environments. Terror is not only more prevalent in cities than in rural areas, but incidents and physical damage of this kind of violence have steadily risen over the past eight years. By constructing a terror score derived from a combination of incidents, fatalities, injuries and physical damage, we are able to designate terror more precisely and we find that certain types of city are more susceptible to terror than others. We also find that three factors or variables (social breakdown, resource mobilisation and target-proneness/local message) help to explain why some cities are more susceptible to terror attacks.

Those cities not readily explained by all three variables, did register as unusually prominent target-prone cities whose message was international rather than local. We are able to account for these remaining cities by showing that terror is often 'exportable', and that international message cities are able to magnify the terrorist message. That is, terror originates in places with high social breakdown and resource mobilisation, but is often transmitted to high-value, globally oriented cities. The evolution of globalisation and new forms of warfare also emphasises the importance of international message cities.

A Post Script on Urban Terror[9]

In July 2001, a former counter-terrorism expert for the US State Department wrote an essay for *The New York Times* entitled "The declining threat of terrorism". The article was written by Larry C. Johnson and began with the statement

> Judging from news reports and the portrayal of villains in our popular entertainment, Americans are bedeviled by fantasies about terrorism. They seem to believe that terrorism is the greatest threat to the United States, and that it is becoming more widespread and lethal (Johnson, 2001, p. A19).

Johnson conceded that, while incidents of terror were on the rise, Americans were subject to fewer of them and these were largely local affairs.

After submitting this paper, we had begun to answer Johnson's contentions by emphasising the rising urban component of terrorism, its portability and its international dimension. Unfortunately, the tragic events of 11 September spoke more loudly than a multitude of statistics and evidence. On that day, four airplanes carrying hundreds of passengers were separately commandeered by terrorists. Each aircraft was turned into a guided missile. Two of them were flown directly into the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center; another was targeted into the Pentagon, located in the Greater Washington area; while the last aircraft never reached its intended target and crashed onto a rural field in Pennsylvania.

Within the short span of an hour on that fateful morning, a part of New York's central business district was devastated and Washington DC was considered too dangerous for the President of the United States to inhabit. New York suffered by far the worst loss. The twin towers were turned into a blazing inferno and caught in a blizzard of cement, steel and glass. The immense buildings that once towered more than a thousand feet into the city's skyline soon collapsed. A chasm was left in downtown Manhattan and its once-fabled skyline suddenly shrunk. America had suffered its deepest devastation from attack since the Civil War.

All told, the terrorists had killed more than 5500 people; they injured many more thousands and they wrought incalculable damage. The widespread panic which the terrorists had intended did not materialise, although they managed to shut down the stock market for the longest period in its history. For a time, Lower Manhattan was left without telephone service and without water, gas and electric power. The nation's air transport was paralysed and pushed to the brink of bankruptcy; stock markets around the world accelerated their downward spiral and economies faltered. The President of the United States declared the attack to be 'an act of

war' and mobilised military forces for action abroad.

In the immediate run, the attack on New York accomplished terrorist objectives. Urban terror was made possible through a kind of armed ju-jitsu—apply intense pressure, precisely, to a limited area and watch the larger body-politic twist into convulsions. The attack on just 16 acres of one of the world's greatest cities made this possible and its shock waves changed the course of international events.

Nineteen hijackers flew unhampered along America's busiest urban corridor and, with extraordinary co-ordination, attacked urban targets. While investigations are still underway and the evidence is yet to be weighed, it seems apparent that these men relied on extensive global networks to carry out their work. The networks may be more extensive than most people realise and may cover an arc stretching from the southern Philippines up through Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Arab Middle East and into Turkey. Terrorist cells connected to the attack are also thought to be operating in key European cities like Hamburg and Paris. Just a day before New York's deadly experience, a suicide bomber in Istanbul blew himself and two police officers to bits. Scores of people were injured. Within weeks afterward terrorists in Srinigar blew up the state parliament building, killing 34 people and injuring another 40. While the incidents in Istanbul and Srinigar paled in comparison with New York, they stood as two ominous harbingers of urban terror and they bore a striking familiarity with earlier patterns described in this article.

Notes

1. There are some exceptions to this, notably Gizewski and Homer-Dixon (1995).
2. Nor is it the case that states cannot inflict terror. The French Revolution's Committee on Public Safety conducted the 'Great Terror' against real and imagined enemies and killed an estimated 17 000 people (see Anderson and Sloan, 1995). In this century, Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia committed atrocities against 1.7 million people (Cambodian Genocide Programme, available at http://www.yale.edu/cgp/).
3. All incidents of terror, damage and casualties are drawn from reports by the US Department of State (1993–2000). Terrorism includes murder, armed attack, shootings, explosions, bombings, arson, kidnapping, hostage-taking, hijacking and property destruction. While monetary values were not specified, reported damage was scored as "1" and where no damage was reported the score was "0" per incident.
4. The terrorism score is weighted by category and calculated as: Incidents by 3: Fatalities $0 = 0$, $1–99 = 1$, $>100 = 2$; Injuries $0 = 0$, $1–99 = 1$, $>100 = 2$; Damage $0 = 0$, $1 = 1$.
5. Not included in the New York total are more than 5500 killed in September 2001.
6. This estimate is based on a larger sample of 78 nations. We calculated a terrorism score for each nation and used the total. The total score is 3190, broken down as urban 2060 and rural 1130.
7. Ordinal rankings for Figure 4 were derived from Global Urban Indicators Database, Global Urban Observatory and Statistics, Urban Secretariat, UNCHS (Habitat). Consult http://www.urbanobservatory.org/indicators/. For social breakdown we use level of poverty, housing condition and incidence of crime. For resource breakdown we have relied on qualitative assessments on the recruitment and existence of terror organisations. For target proneness we use rankings on the prominence of cities, their role in the global marketplace and whether they are national capitals. Consult J. T. Martin, I. Ness and S. T. Collins, *Book of World City Rankings* (New York: Free Press, 1986) United Nations Population Fund *Statistical Administrative and Graphical Information on Major Urban Areas of the World* (United Nations, New York, 1986) and *Market Profiles* (Urban Land Institute; Washington, DC, 1997).
8. The logic supporting this approach is that these cities have substantial incidents, casualties and damage and best represent patterns of terror. This stratum represents approximately a third of the total. The incidence and extent of terror beyond this stratum fall markedly as one goes down the list and are more likely to be a product of happenstance than of traceable factors.
9. This post script was written to take account of events since the terrorist attack on New York City. Minor revisions were made to the text in order to bring it up to date, but the original data, themes and findings have been left intact.

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