



Analysis on Future of Terrorism¹

Shireen M. MAZARI

Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad

Abstract. The manner in which the US has led the war against terror has not only failed in denying political space to the terrorists, it has created more space for them. In order to examine this assertion, this paper begins with an examination of the conduct of the war. An analysis is offered of what constitutes terrorism, and attention is drawn to the OIC's distinction between terrorism and struggles against colonial rule, alien occupation and racist regimes. In concentrating on the international dimension of terrorism, the world community should not overlook the other trends: local and state terrorism. In the future the threat will continue to come, not primarily from the Muslim World, but from within Western societies, as migrant communities feel targeted and/or marginalized. To speak of "Islamic terrorism" is offensive. In a section entitled "The Linkage between Globalization and Terrorism", this paper analyses economic, cultural, and political globalization. The process has to proceed in a manner in which groups and states feel less marginalized, where all have "a level playing field". Finally, the paper addresses the question of what should be done to counter the multi-faceted terrorist threat, and a model for breaking the cycle of violence is presented. The paper appeals for a study of the root causes of the problem, for example, on the political level, the issues of Palestine and Kashmir.

Keywords. Terrorism, definition of terrorism, root causes of terrorism, marginalization, globalization.

Introduction

With war, in the traditional sense of violent conflict between states, gradually losing validity in terms of state policy—except within the context of self-defence—and with the end of bipolarity, states have been increasingly confronted with non-traditional security issues and threats. In fact, since the end of bipolarity, the traditional notion of security in terms of conventional military threats was expanded to a notion of comprehensive security—which included economic and

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environmental issues. However, even here, the state was seen as the primary actor. By the mid-nineties we saw the notion of human security creep into the security paradigm—and this put the individual as a central concern within security strategies. Unfortunately, in many ways, by having an all-inclusive security framework, the notion of security as a distinct concept has tended to be undermined. After all, if we are to include health, education and other such welfare issues within a security paradigm, then how do we distinguish the notion of security from other notions such as justice, social welfare and so on?

This is not to say that issues like poverty do not impact security within states as well as between states, but we need to maintain a certain identifiable notion of security within the language of international relations. In that sense then, while there are non-traditional security issues, I would limit these to issues within states and societies and between states that pose a threat to stability through the use of violent interaction. In other words, when poverty or ethnic differences threaten civil society and state structures, as well as interstate relations, then they enter the realm of security. So, in a sense, then this paper does treat the basic notion of security in terms of absence of violence or a fear of violence. But it also sees states as merely one set of actors within the overall international security paradigm with non-state actors becoming increasingly critical players both at national and international levels. As for the individual, it is still not clear how relevant human security is within international relations since international cooperation still tends to frame rules that undermine individual well-being in poor and developing states—as shown in the WTO arrangements and the policies of state subsidies/support programmes for agriculture in the EU and the US. So, at the end of the day, it is groups, rather than individuals, that have become important players impacting on intra and inter state relations. And many of these groups have transnational linkages in terms of recruitment and financing. This was highlighted most dramatically with the devastating terrorist attacks against US targets on September 11, 2001, which tended to focus on one growing non-traditional security concern—that of terrorism.

Assessment of the Post-9/11 War against Terrorism

Post-9/11, the international war on terrorism was declared, supported by UN resolutions, and since then it has become a priority agenda for almost all member states of the international system. Has the war been successful in containing terrorism? Although one cannot give a definitive answer to this question, especially in terms of long-term assessments, one can answer tentatively, based on the situation prevailing on the ground in terms of acts of terrorism and the fate of the terrorist networks. Within this framework, one can say that, at best, the war on terrorism has reached a stalemate.

While the massive military power of the US, aided by the international community's support for anti-terrorist conventions through the UN, has broken up and scattered the networks of the terrorist organizations; the manner in which the US has led and conducted the war against terror has not only failed in denying political space to the terrorists, it has, in fact, created more space for them. In order to examine this assertion, there is a need also to look at, briefly, the conduct of the war against international terrorism by the US.

Having identified Osama bin Laden (OBL) and his al-Qaeda as the central terrorist enemy, and the Taliban as cohorts in crime for providing sanctuary for al-Qaeda, the US, supported by the

international community, launched the war on terrorism in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. Massive air power sent OBL and al-Qaeda on the run and toppled the Taliban government in Kabul with the surviving Taliban leadership also going underground. A massive haul of prisoners resulted and many were taken to Guantanamo Bay to be incarcerated with no trial or POW protection—as required under the Geneva Conventions. As the war in Afghanistan unfolded in the full glare of the international media, the horror of the “Daisy Cutters” and “Bunker Buster” bombs against a hapless Afghan population first began to create space for the terrorists. The killing of POWs at a camp, Qila Jhangi in Afghanistan, and the death by suffocation and shooting of prisoners incarcerated in containers of trucks added to the tales of horror relating to the conduct of the US-led war in Afghanistan. Gradually, in the face of these developments, the horror of 9/11 was diluted with a growing sense that the US was now actively targeting Muslims, both abroad and within the US. All these factors created space for the terrorists in terms of shelter and even future recruitments. The framing of the terrorist issue within a religious framework—the notion of “Islamic terrorism”—also allowed space to the terrorists on the run.

So the war on terror failed to adopt a basic strategy—that of space denial to the terrorists. After all, the war was an unconventional war with an ill-defined and mobile enemy, so the first goal should have been of military and political space denial, but this was never part of the US strategy. Sheer military power was seen as the counter to the terrorist threat. To make matters worse, the US then dissipated the focus of the war itself on the transnational network of terrorism, by moving into Iraq through an illegal invasion of a sovereign state which had no links to al-Qaeda or OBL. Bush’s invasion of Iraq also added a new dimension to the terrorism issue—that of WMD. The US began its new doctrine of the “axis of evil” and “rogue states” with WMD. That no WMD were found in Iraq has since shown the Iraq invasion for what it was—an effort to enforce regime change and control energy resources.

However, the problem was that the invasion of Iraq, with no legitimation by the UN, allowed the terrorists to expand their operational milieu; and with the US occupation of Iraq, linkages between international terrorism and local groups resisting the invasion became intertwined, with the former feeding on the anger and frustration of the latter. Also, members of the US-led “coalition of the willing” found their nationals and territories being targeted by international terrorists—as in the case of the Madrid bombings. As the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi told *La Stampa*, in March 2004, “Clearly the fight against terrorists cannot be resolved through force. We should remember that the war in Iraq began a year ago ... The results are not good, whether we are talking about Iraq or elsewhere—Istanbul, Moscow and now Madrid.”²

Despite intelligence information to the contrary, President Bush, in his State of the Union address in January 2003 claimed: “Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications and statements by people now in custody reveals that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al-Qaeda.”³ And this claim was persuasive enough to persuade 44% of the

² *La Stampa*, 15 March 2004.

³ Bernard Adam, “United States: Losing the War on Terror: ‘The Harder We Work, The Behinder We Get’”, in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 24, 2004.

US public to believe that some if not all the 9/11 hijackers had been Iraqis and 45% of the public thought Saddam Hussein was behind the 9/11 attacks.⁴ Now, however, it has come to be generally accepted that not only did Iraq have no WMD but that Saddam Hussein had no link to al-Qaeda. Ironically, post-Saddam Iraq is now seeing increasing space for al-Qaeda acting together with disgruntled elements in Iraq as well as those opposed to the US occupation.

The impact of the Iraq war on terrorist recruitment was admitted to by the CIA Director, Porter Goss, before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, in February 2005, when he stated that, “Islamic extremists are exploiting the Iraqi conflict to recruit new anti-US jihadists. ... These jihadists who survive will leave Iraq experienced and focused on acts of urban terrorism. ... They represent a potential pool of contacts to build transnational terrorist cells, groups and networks in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other countries.”⁵ According to Goss, Abu Musab Zarqawi, a Jordanian terrorist who joined al-Qaeda after the US invasion of Iraq, hoped “to establish a safe haven in Iraq” from where he could operate against Western states and certain Muslim governments.⁶ And Vice Admiral Lowell Jacoby, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, admitted to the same Senate panel that US “policies in the Middle East fuel Islamic resentment.”⁷

The massive increase in terrorist counter attacks against American targets finally led the US government actually to abandon the publication of its annual report on international terrorism for the year 2004 which should have come out in early 2005. According to one report, the US government’s main terrorism centre concluded that there had been more terrorist attacks in 2004 than in any year since 1985—the first year covered by its publication entitled “*Patterns of Global Terrorism*”.⁸ Even in 2004, the numbers of incidents for 2003 were undercounted, which led to a revision of the publication in June 2004—two months later. What finally came out was a much higher number of significant terrorist attacks and twice the number of fatalities that had been presented in the original report.⁹

So, clearly by all accounts, international terrorism has been on the increase in the aftermath of the internationally-declared war against terrorism led by the US—both in terms of intensity and operational milieu. Of course, in his acceptance speech at the Republican Convention in 2004, in New York, Bush painted a picture which attempted to show that the war on terrorism was being won. As he put it: “*The government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of al-Qaeda’s key members and associates have been detained or killed.*”¹⁰ At the politico-diplomatic

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Priest and White, “War Helps Recruit Terrorists, Hill Told”, in *Washington Post*, February 17, 2005.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jonathan S. Landay, “Bush Administration Eliminating 19-Year-Old International Terrorism Report, *Knight Ridder*, April 15, 2005. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/terrorwar/analysis/2005/0415elimreport.htm>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ P. Escobar, “Why al-Qaeda Is Winning”, *Asia Times* September 11, 2004

level, there have been a plethora of global and regional conventions and agreements aimed at fighting terrorism, including focusing on the financing of terrorism, as well as a number of UN Security Council Resolutions.

However, on the other side, OBL and his deputy, Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri, as well as Taliban leader Mullah Omar, have neither been captured nor killed. al-Qaeda seems to have “gone global” and Afghanistan has yet to become truly free. Presently not only are there foreign forces controlling security, warlords still reign supreme in many regions and President Karzai, despite being elected, has his security controlled by US guards. Additionally, in Afghanistan, linkages between drugs, organized crime and terrorism have increased. As for Iraq, it is seen as under military occupation by the US and its allies and there is an almost daily increase in the intensity of terrorist attacks. In addition, both Asia and Europe have become more vulnerable to acts of terror and the Arab world is highly destabilized.

As for al-Qaeda, it has become what some have termed a “brand name”, having mutated into a “multi-headed hydra” comprising international leaders and local heads.¹¹ Worse still, with no central command or organization, any group that wishes to come into the limelight selects the al-Qaeda label or “brand”. This ensures publicity which is part of the intent of such groups. New local obscurantist groups have surfaced that have no operational links to OBL and his leadership cadres, but they state an affiliation because this intensifies the context of a specific local act of terror. Using the brand name “al-Qaeda” allows them space for recruitment and support. Equally interesting is the fact that many of the born-again obscurantists are not citizens of Muslim states but are part of first and second generation Muslims belonging to European states. As Pepe Escobar points out, members of al-Qaeda’s new elite were “either born in Western Europe—many hold a legitimate European Union passport—or came to the West while still very young and then became radicalized.”¹²

That is why there is a growing perception amongst European states that a more encompassing strategy is needed to fight international terrorism. The EU’s Romano Prodi argued that the use of military force as the main weapon in the fight against terrorism has not worked—as he put it, “Terrorism is now more powerful than ever before”.¹³ In March 2004 the EU adopted a wide-ranging counter-terrorism policy in which they recognized that they had to deal with the roots of terrorism which they saw as the “social economic and political problems in the Mediterranean and Middle East countries on which Islam fanaticism has built”.¹⁴

So, it becomes clear that, at the very least, there is a stalemate in the war against terrorism and, worse, the terrorist threat seems to be on the increase both in terms of intensity and operational milieu. The causes for this are also clear.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ As cited in Ibid.

¹⁴ “EU counter-terrorism policy”, March 31, *EurActiv.com*

- To begin with, failure to deny space to the terrorists and an almost total reliance on military means to deal with the problem of terrorism have been major mistakes. Simply by using heavy weaponry as a means of reprisal against suspected states and groups will not end the problem. Asymmetrical warfare, if fought in this traditional manner, is ineffective and costly, and merely aggravates the problem.
- Terrorism itself is merely a symptom of deep-seated political and economic problems which is why there has to be a long term multiple-level strategy that includes security measures but also focuses on the root causes of terrorism, which are primarily political. Amongst the recognized causes are unresolved political-territorial disputes affecting Muslim populations—especially the Palestinian problem, Kashmir and Chechnya. A sense of deprivation and injustice creates the necessary space for the terrorists.
- Framing the terrorist issue in religious terms is equally counterproductive since terrorism has political roots. Even al-Qaeda is not proselytizing for Islam, so if the IRA's acts of terrorism were not seen as "Catholic terrorism" why should al-Qaeda's terrorist actions be referred to as "Islamic terrorism"?
- Additionally, at the tactical level, what is being seen as a continuous abuse of Muslims, Islam, its Prophet (PBUH) and its Holy Book in the US and Europe and parts of the Dominion territories, is increasing the divide between Muslims and the West and this is also creating more space for the obscurantists, by exploiting feelings of hatred and victimization that have increased amongst Muslims in Europe and the US post-9/11.
- Linking issues of WMD and regime change-democracy in Muslim states has also diluted the focus of the war against terrorism.

What Constitutes Terrorism?

Separating perpetrators of pathological violence from those who indulge in political violence, the word "terrorist"—denoting the latter—is a term that has been fastened on political enemies since the time of the French Revolution in 1789. If a political movement, which has used terror as a tactic, succeeds then the label of terrorism disappears—with many political "terrorists" of yesteryears transformed into national or revolutionary leaders, once they have succeeded in their aims! Herein lies the problem of defining terrorism on its merits, in a manner that allows it to be a punishable offence through international treaties. Certain terrorist acts have been isolated and deemed punishable by the international community through international conventions. For example, there are the international conventions on hostage taking and hijacking. But there is, as yet, no comprehensive international convention on terrorism itself, despite the ongoing efforts in the United Nations. Also, special UN committees have continuously condemned acts of international terrorism in principle, but no agreeable definition has been forthcoming. There is still no consensus on how to define terrorism.

This is not to say that acts of violent political terror cannot be identified, nor is such terrorism new to the world scene. A German, Johannes Most, pioneered the idea of the letter bomb.¹⁵ Since

¹⁵ Walter Laquer (Editor), *The Terrorism Reader*. Meridian Books, NYC; 1978.

then, many political scientists have sought to define and explain political terrorism. According to one definition, “terrorism involves the intentional use of violence or the threat of violence by the perpetrators against an *instrumental* target in order to communicate to a *primary* target a threat of future violence”.¹⁶ Interestingly, barring the distinction between instrumental and primary targets and the actual use of violence, the difference between terrorism and nuclear deterrence is very fine!

E. V. Walter, in his work on terrorism, refers to a process of terror, which he says has three dimensions: “the act or threat of violence, the emotional reaction and the social effects.”¹⁷ So, three actors are involved—the source or perpetrator of the violence, the victim and the target. The victim perishes and the target reacts to the destruction. Here, there is a distinction between the process of violence on the one hand and, on the other, an act of destruction, which is complete in itself, and not an instrument of anything else. The former—as process—comes within the category of political violence, the latter seems to be closer to the pathological, or what Chalmers Johnson calls the “non-political” terrorism.¹⁸

As long as terror is simply a means directed towards a goal beyond itself, it has to be limited in its dimensions so as to remain a process. Annihilation is not the intent of such terrorism—rather, the intent is to politically and psychologically hurt the enemy. When terror becomes unlimited and crosses the invisible line into irrationality, then it moves on from being a process to simply an end in itself—and then it loses its relevance within the political context. In a similar vein, political scientist Raymond Aron also highlights the distinction between the actual deeds of terrorists and the significance given to these acts by observers remote from the scene.¹⁹ This then brings up the issue of a third target relevant to the act of political terror—the international audience and the international victim. Aron feels that a violent act can be categorized as terrorism if the psychological effects are out of proportion to its purely physical result. However, this leaves the categorization primarily at a subjective level, of measuring the psychological impact and how far it is “out of proportion”.

It is the subjectivity brought to bear on the issue of terrorism that has prevented the international community from formulating an all-encompassing definition of terrorism. Despite the intensity of activities post-9/11 to create laws and conventions against terrorism at the global, regional and national levels, the international community has still not evolved any acceptable definition of what constitutes terrorism. International conventions have found it easier to sidestep the issue, while many of the prevailing conventions that deal with specific acts of terrorism, like the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages and the OIC’s Convention on

¹⁶ Jordan J. Paust, as cited in Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*. Stanford University Press, California, 1982.

¹⁷ E. V. Walter, *Terror & Resistance: A Study of Political Violence*. Oxford University Press, London; 1969.

¹⁸ Chalmers Johnson, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Raymond Aron, *Peace & War*. Garden City, N.Y., 1966.

Combating Terrorism, focus on making a distinction between terrorism and struggles for self-determination against colonial rule, alien occupation and racist regimes.²⁰

Also, the 1973 UN General Assembly Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism makes a similar exemption, and this is further backed up by Article 7 of the General Assembly's 1974 Definition of Aggression, which states:

"Nothing in this definition, and in particular Article 3,²¹ could in any way prejudice the right of self-determination, freedom, and independence, as derived from the Charter, of peoples forcibly deprived of that right and referred to in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, particularly peoples under colonial and racist regimes or other forms of alien domination; or the right of these peoples to struggle to that end and seek and receive support ..."

Beyond the issue of self-determination, there is also the issue of state terrorism. Many states perpetrate violence against the people of other states to send a message to their governments to fall in line "or else". An all-encompassing definition of terrorism would bring the perpetrators of such violence within the ambit of penalties for such acts. When the state in question is a major or even a super power, then the issue will arise as to who will ensure that an act of terror by that state is punished? Also, if deterrence between states fails and the threatened action is undertaken, does that also become an act of terror—especially if the action threatened is against civil society? And what of cases where, in a state of war, the laws of war and the Geneva Conventions are ignored, and massacres and revenge killings become the order of the day? It is all these issues, and the reluctance of states to give up their final right to violence, that has made it almost impossible to evolve an all-encompassing definition of terrorism.

Therefore, within the UN the focus is becoming increasingly on a way to move beyond this problem—indeed to sidestep the issue of definition and simply deal with the specifics of the acts of terrorism and their penalties. The draft (originally floated by India) of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, that continues to be under consideration in the UN, seeks to do this by simply ignoring the issue of defining terrorism specifically. Instead it just links terrorism to any person who commits an offence "unlawfully and intentionally" which is intended to cause either "death or serious bodily injury to any person" or "serious damage to a State or government facility, a public transportation system, communication system...".²² Another major

²⁰ The International Convention against the taking of hostages (came into force June 1983) clearly states that the Convention "shall not apply to an act of hostage-taking committed in the course of armed conflicts ... in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on principles of International Law..." (Article 12). In a similar vein, the Convention on Terrorism adopted by the OIC, in 1999, also confirms "the legitimacy of the rights of peoples to struggle against foreign occupation and colonialist and racist regimes by all means, including armed struggle, to liberate their territories in compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations" (preamble).

²¹ This article gives an inventory of the acts that are regarded as aggression.

²² Article 2 of the Working document submitted by India on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

failing of this draft is that it totally ignores the exemption, internationally recognized, for struggles of self-determination—despite the fact that self-determination is a peremptory international norm.²³

Muslim states have also pointed out that the preamble of this Draft Convention contains no reference to the underlying causes of terrorism and, while there is a reference to “State-sponsored terrorism”, there is no mention of “State terrorism”. In any event, so far the Draft remains in the process of negotiations.

However, one major shortcoming in the way the international community is looking at the issue of terrorism is to focus on what is seen as “international terrorism”. Yet “international terrorism” is simply one form of the trend in terrorism, and one can identify at least two other important trends. One of the problems confronting the war on terrorism is that none of the three trends function totally independently of the others.

I – International terrorism can also be seen as transnational terrorism, with groups having linkages across national borders and subscribing to an international agenda. Included in this are members and sympathisers of al-Qaeda and some of the Taliban leadership. al-Qaeda remnants are thought to be present in the tribal belt of Pakistan, but a number of acts of terror in India also are now being linked to al-Qaeda. Also, Muslim groups fighting in Chechnya and Uzbekistan are also being lumped with al-Qaeda—at least those thought to be sheltering along the Pakistan-Afghan border. Since the US-sanctioned “jihad” against the Soviets in Afghanistan, various Muslim groups seeking political change through violent means are thought to have created linkages with each other since the US recruited Muslim fighters from across the Muslim world to fight in Afghanistan.

Within this mode of terrorism, the US policies in Afghanistan and Iraq are creating breeding grounds for supporters and sympathizers of these groups who are increasingly seen to be challenging US oppression towards Muslims. At the same time, in states like Pakistan, there is a proactive policy to isolate them from their support base. It is this policy which has led the Pakistan army to enter the tribal belt of the country for the first time since Independence. However, after sending a strong message to the tribals in the form of military action, the military has realized the need to adopt a more fruitful policy of pacification through reward and punishment so that the locals hand over the foreigners in their midst. The problem has, however, been aggravated on three counts: one, the local hospitality tradition of the tribes whereby they give sanctuary to anyone seeking it; two, many of the foreigners have been in the area since the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan and have married into local families; and, three, the violations by US forces of Pakistan’s sovereignty through military action on Pakistani territory. This creates a political issue domestically for the Pakistan government and undermines the credibility of the military in the operational area.

II – The second trend in terms of terrorism is the local, sub-national extremist groups that are prevalent across many regions. In Pakistan, for example, there has been the problem of sectarian terrorism and the state had begun outlawing many groups linked to this much before September

²³ This norm (of self-determination) is not only a part of customary international law but is also enshrined as one of the principles of the UN, as laid out in Article 1:2 of its Charter.

11, 2001. However, with a focus on transnational extremist groups, the sectarian problem has tended to take second place with the result that it has become exacerbated once again. Also, al-Qaeda has fed into this problem directly by creating linkages between itself and some of the extremist Sunni groups. The same has happened in Southeast Asia in countries like Indonesia where local terrorist groups have gained a new revival with the al-Qaeda label. In Iraq also one is seeing the linkages between local Iraqi resistance and al-Qaeda.

One of the most violent sub-national, separatist insurgencies was the LTTE movement of the Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka. Initially, the Tamils got support from India but over the years India suffered the backlash of this—culminating in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. While a peace process brokered by the Norwegian government gave some hope that this over 18 years conflict would finally be resolved, at present uncertainty prevails. Over 64,000 civilians, security force personnel, and LTTE cadres have died so far in this conflict—which saw the emergence of suicide bombers as an integral part of the Tamil strategy.

III – The third terrorist trend is that of state terrorism. This has become more acute in the post-9/11 period with the US declaring its pre-emptive doctrine, invading Iraq without a UN resolution and lending support to the Sharon policy of political assassinations. Strong regional powers like India have also claimed for themselves the right of pre-emption. Even before 9/11, the issue of state terrorism dominated the discourse on Palestine and Kashmir. The international community has shown no inclination to deal with this aspect of global terrorism. Yet one of the major factors aggravating the terrorist threat across the globe is the linkage between these three broad trends.

Future Terrorist Threats

It is already becoming clear that terrorism is going to be the new unconventional war to confront the international community. The present effort to deal with terrorism through military means and the curtailment of domestic political liberties has proven to be inadequate—especially in denying political space to the terrorists. Part of the problem is that these policies have been accompanied by aggressive external policies of the US and its allies, especially towards the Islamic world. Furthermore, perceptions within the Islamic World of being targeted by the West have also been growing—especially as a result of developments in Europe and the fallout of the US occupation of Iraq. It is not only at the politico-military level that the civil societies of the Muslim World are sensing a growing targeting of themselves and their religion. At the socio-cultural level also, especially within the migrant communities of Western Europe, there is a growing cleavage between the Muslim immigrants and the indigenous populations. Polarization is becoming more evident in European states with large Muslim migrant populations. Intolerance on the part of many of the right-wing European establishments further aggravates the situation as has been reflected in the blasphemous cartoons' issue.

Within this milieu, the extremists find ready recruits, so one is bound to see the political space of what could be future terrorists increasing, especially in the West itself. As has already been seen, the new Muslim radicals are neither primarily from the Muslim World nor are they madrassah educated. Instead, as the July 2005 London bombings showed, the terrorists were British Muslims. Although efforts have been made to attribute their terrorist leanings to their brief stay in Pakistan, the fact is that they were marginalized within their own British societies. Even the

9/11 terrorists were Western educated. So for the future one will see a growing threat of terrorism coming from within Western societies as their migrant communities feel targeted and/or marginalized. The issue is primarily politico-social and requires an effort to focus on root causes so that potential terrorists never realize that potential and, instead, are coopted into the mainstream. This means that the war on terrorism has to have a new direction and emphasis.

In fact, a more holistic approach is required to deal with the terrorist threat which is going to be with us for the future because of the ease with which destruction can be caused, especially in modern, technologically-advanced societies. In this context it serves no purpose to give religious labels to what are essentially acts of political terror. There is no “Islamic terrorism” just as there was no “Catholic” or “Christian terrorism” when the IRA and Ulster Unionists were carrying out their violent struggles and before the IRA became an accepted political dialogue partner of the British state. After all, al-Qaeda is not proselytizing for Islam. However irrational, theirs is a political agenda which has expanded from getting the US out of Arab lands to a wider conflict with the US. So if the Vatican was not held responsible for the excesses of the IRA in Northern Ireland, then Islam cannot be held responsible for the actions of Muslims using violence to achieve their political goals. In fact, by bringing in Islam into the equation of terrorism, the West itself is merely creating potential new support sources for these groups amongst Muslim communities, just as the UK did for the Catholics of the US—many of Irish descent—who lined up to provide assistance to the IRA for many decades.

The framing of what are basically political struggles in religious terms has hardly helped in dealing with the problems in terms of seeking a sustainable solution. It may make demonization of the enemy easier, but it will hardly create the environment for conflict resolution. And the argument that the “Islamic” terrorists cannot be dealt with rationally because they glorify martyrdom makes no sense, because one of the largest number of suicide bombings have been by Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka, who had committed massive acts of violence against innocent civilians and had been put on the list of terrorist organizations by many countries across the globe.

Nor does it help understand the issue of terrorism better by talking in terms of a “clash of civilizations”, in terms of an Islam versus the rest context. Huntington’s emotive “clash of civilizations” thesis added the intellectual force for this mind-set and 9/11 has provided the final “proof” of this thesis! But the lines were drawn much earlier on. As Sandra Mackey wrote in 1996:

*“The very term ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ was given common coinage at the zenith of the Iranian revolution. Since then it has grabbed and held an American public emotionally scarred by military casualties and civilian hostages in Lebanon; violence inflicted against Westerners by Islamic militants in Algeria and Egypt; fear engendered by the shadowy group that detonated a bomb in New York’s World Trade Center; and anger roused by the endless slogans of Islamic zealots that damn the West. Regardless of the range of grievances and geography of militant Islamic groups, the American mind sees the Islamic Republic of Iran as the fount of Islamic extremism.”*²⁴

²⁴ Sandra Mackey, *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation*, New York: Plume Publishing, 1996. p. 384.

There is a basic flaw in this thesis in that it creates artificial monoliths of an Islamic civilization, a Western civilization and so on. Facts on the ground reveal the contrary. For instance, there is a diversity amongst the Western and Christian worlds. Just as Christian states come in many cultural and geographical dimensions—ranging from Latin America to Europe to Asia—so do Western “secular” democracies. There is a whole political framework now being accepted that Islam has replaced Communism as the major threat to “Western” civilization—especially the underlying concept of “secularism” on which this civilization supposedly rests. Yet the fact of the matter is that this is nothing more than a dangerous myth. So-called Western secularism is simply a reflection of Christian values.²⁵

However, the intent in this paper is not to show the long list of abuse of Muslims at different levels in the international system today. The point is that on the ground it is Muslims who are

²⁵ To begin with, secularism refers to a belief “that the state, morals, education etc. should be independent of religion” (*Chambers English Dictionary*). Yet in most Western states this is not the case—Christian values pervade their legal and moral belief systems even at the level of the state. At a very basic level, all Western states claiming to be secular—be they Northern European or North American—believe this claim when they only declare Christian holidays as national holidays. Even though people of other beliefs can claim their religious holidays, these are seen as special concessions whereas the Christian holidays are for the whole nation/country. Beyond this, the degree of “secularism” really varies from state to state and religious prejudices at the state level come to the fore every time traditional norms are challenged.

Many northern European countries consistently show their Christian credentials in the manner in which the law is applied to other religions—especially the Muslims. Take the case of Britain. Their Queen is the head of the Church of England and for an heir to the British throne marrying even a member of another Christian sect is a road fraught with difficulties, let alone marrying into another faith. More ominous is the fact that the British Blasphemy Law (it still exists) deals only with Christianity. In other words, you may blaspheme all you want against Islam—the law will not apply! Given that there is an increasing Muslim British population, one would have assumed that the British legal system would have begun to treat all its citizens equally! As for France—the whole controversy surrounding the scarf issue revealed the religious bias of the French State. Somehow French “secularism” was not threatened by Christian schoolgirls wearing crucifixes around their necks, but when Muslim schoolgirls wore scarves on their heads, the state’s educational system felt itself threatened! Prejudicial revelations like these show that it is the European psyche that is still so heavily burdened with the legacy of the Crusades that it now finds Islam an easy substitute-threat with the demise of Communism. As for Eastern Europe, their whole struggle against Communism was church-centred, so the aftermath has naturally seen persecution of the Muslims, which reached new heights of barbarity in Serbia. A similar picture was revealed in February 2002 in the Indian State of Gujarat. However, while the persecution of whole ethnic Muslim populations has gained new heights after the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of Communism in Eastern Europe, Muslims in Europe have had to face systematic persecution at the hands of European governments for a while now. For instance, the Greek State aided and abetted Greek Cypriots in their genocidal policy of *Enosis*, which entailed the mass killings of Turkish Cypriots. The remains of mass graves can be seen in what is now the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus. The most recent reflection of this prejudice against Muslims and Islam has been reflected in the US policy towards the Muslims taken prisoners in Afghanistan during the War on Terrorism and kept confined in Guantanamo Bay Cuba. Whereas international law relating to war and prisoners of war was strictly followed even for the Nazis in the Nuremberg Trials and presently in the trial of the Serbian leaders, for the Guantanamo Bay, prisoners no such laws are being accepted by the US government. Even at the micro level, when a criminal in the West happens to be a Muslim, this becomes the central point to be emphasized—as if Islam is responsible for his criminal bent. Yet, if a Christian commits a crime, the religious factor is left out.

under threat because of their religion. But coming to the point of this so-called “clash of civilizations” focusing on Islam. There really is no one monolithic “Islamic” civilization. Islam binds many diverse civilizations together through a religious bond. However, beyond that, which “Islamic” civilization is in clash with the West? After all, Islam ranges from North Africa to East Asia and there is even an OIC member in Latin America—Surinam. Now the civilization of Muslim Nigeria is totally different to the civilization of Pakistan in Southwest Asia or Malaysia further to the East. The Arab world’s cultural and historical legacies, which build its civilizational identity, are different to the Iranian civilization and the Turkish civilization ... and so on. So to talk of a clash of the West with an “Islamic” civilization makes absolutely no sense. In other words, there are many socio-political civilizations that have embraced Islam as a religion in the same way as other equally different civilizations have embraced Christianity. Even Confucianism cannot be confined to China, given the Confucian influence across East Asia. Perhaps the closest that one can talk of monolithic religio-political civilizations are the Hindu and Zionist civilizations—and both have shown an extremism and intolerance of diversities and other religious groupings.

The Linkage between Globalization and Terrorism

A major source of an increasing terrorist threat is the globalization that is taking place today. Globalization has increased the ability of obscure groups to use violence and gain international focus. Communications have allowed groups to link up and the global transfer of funds has allowed the funding of groups in one part of the world by groups in other parts in a matter of hours or days. So just as the international community has come together to share information and strategies to deal with the terrorist problem, extremist groups and fringe elements in different societies have developed the ability to support each other and share information and finances.

Beyond this, globalization itself is a growing source of terrorism, especially by disgruntled elements of different types in differing societies. To understand the impact of globalization, one needs to be clear what one means by the term itself. For the purposes of this paper, Stanley Hoffman’s typology of “globalization” is used, in order to try and understand what the West means by globalization, and to examine what, if any, is the linkage between this phenomenon and Islamism. Stanley Hoffmann has identified three types of globalization: economic, cultural and political.²⁶

The first—*economic globalization*—is a reality in terms of economic interdependence across nations, which is defined by certain rules of the game created by the powerful, but which are enshrined in international institutional frameworks such as the IMF, the IBRD (World Bank) and now the WTO—with other international norms flowing from these agreements. Here the clash, as is being witnessed increasingly, is between the haves and have-nots of the world. It is the economic disparities created by economic globalization that has created great inequalities between and within states, so that the clash has come from those who have suffered deprivation and injustice as a result of the policies and demands of international economics.

²⁶ Stanley Hoffmann, “The Clash of Globalizations”, in *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2002, p. 107.

Hoffmann's second category—*cultural globalization*—is seen as originating from technological and economic globalization which has led to the efforts to uniformize the world civil societies by selling what is basically an American-dominated Western culture as a universal culture—what many refer to as the “McDonaldization” of the world. So, the conflict here comes from those wishing to retain global diversity and local cultures. The clash here again comes from those seeking to resist being overwhelmed by the forces of global economics and “global” culture. Hence one has seen a resurgence of local cultures and languages and a condemnation of efforts at global uniformity as being one more attempt to assert American hegemony.

Which brings one to the third Hoffmann category—that of *political globalization*. This is reflected in the prevalence of one sole superpower—in politico-military terms—that is the US. Post-9/11, this aspect of globalization has come to dominate, with the US embracing economic issues also within a politico-military framework. Also, with the US moving towards increasingly unilateralist interventionism in the world, international norms and treaties created over the decades stand threatened. In many ways, the post-9/11 trend towards political globalization within the US unilateralist mode will threaten economic and cultural globalization—since it will push a global agenda through national power rather than international cooperation.

In all three Hoffman typologies, one can find a link between globalization and terrorism. To begin with, there is now very clearly the growth of transnational terrorism whereby different groups across the globe interact and learn from each other—as well as cooperating with each other. Just as states and civil societies have become more interlinked, so have marginalized groups with political agendas who feel left out of the mainstream processes; or who have reductionist agendas in the era of globalization. Nor are these links new—they have been there for decades, with the Red Brigade in Europe having their liaison with the PLO and so on. Nor was religion the binding force. Rather it was a common perception of struggling against the Establishment and against perceived injustices—all political goals.

So, as the mainstream international system has become more globalized, so has terrorism—especially with the advent of the internet and global electronic media through satellite. This is now the age of “netwar”, a term used by Bruce Hoffman to describe, “an emerging mode of conflict and crime at societal levels, involving measures short of traditional war, in which the protagonists use network forms of organization and related doctrines, strategies, and technologies attuned to the information age.”²⁷ Also, with the technical barriers broken to create global access, the weapon of the weak has become transnational—from the protests that accompany meetings of the powerful states and institutions like the IMF and IBRD to the most extreme form that led to the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Also, the marginalization of many developing states and groups within developed states as a result of the three strains of globalization identified above have created more dissensions in civil societies and states across the globe. Terrorism has been one of the fallouts—as a weapon of the weak. The North-South divide has been further aggravated by global economic developments with the countries of the South being polarized between the haves and have-nots within their own

²⁷ Bruce Hoffman, “Terrorism Trends and prospects”, in Ian Lesser, et al, eds., *Countering The New Terrorism*. Santa Monica, California: RAND, 1999, p. 47.

countries as well as the developed-underdeveloped global divide. From the bread riots of 1976 in Egypt to the anti-IMF riots across continents inhabited by developing states, survival is the major issue for the man in the street. To make matters worse, people in these states see their natural resources being controlled by outside forces and with the state losing control over critical decisions. Nowhere is this clearer than over strategic resources like oil.

Even in developed states, there are groups who feel marginalized and out of the mainstream because they are no longer in control of their economic destinies. Hence the growth of radical, anti-global trends and ideologies both in the West and in the underdeveloped world. Radicalism of multiple types is growing as globalization continues in the direction it is going. This radicalism is not particularly “Islamic” in nature—it finds its expression in neo-Nazi movements in the West, in the rise of fundamentalist forces in countries like India, and in Muslim states turning to religion becomes the norm because religion still continues to play an important part in the lives of people in this part of the world. When that religion is perceived as being abused by groups in states where the governments are not prepared to take legal action against the guilty, then frustration and anger spills over into violence and this rages across national borders.

Add to this the Western control of global communications and the economic anger and frustration is given a cultural expression through the rejection of the trend towards trying to compel global cultural expression in Western terms. When events are also interpreted through a particular prism in terms of news and current affairs language then the dialectical pulls in non-Western societies become further exacerbated.

Finally, the political-military globalization, which in effect is a new type of imperialism, is now reflected most clearly in the new US National Security Strategy that seeks to justify a military preemptive unilateralism on the part of the US across the globe. Mr. Bush proclaimed, at West Point on June 1, 2002, “Our Nation’s cause has always been larger than our Nation’s defense”, reflecting clearly a “no-bounds” global agenda.

What has further aggravated the terrorist threat today is that terrorism has also become the instrument of the powerful states—from the US to Israel to India. And all acts of terror—barring pathological violence—have a political framework not a religious, proselytizing one.

All in all, in the future the problem of terrorism is going to become aggravated because of the growing political space still being available to terrorists. Globalization has also created many levels of the threat with linkages amongst these levels.

What Can be Done to Counter the Multifaceted Terrorist Threat?

Simply barricading oneself against the terrorist threat will not work. In other words, for the developed states to think they can barricade themselves from the rest of the world is unrealistic. Globalization, both economic and in terms of culture and ideas, is increasing movement between goods and people so fundamental liberties need to be maintained and these make all societies more vulnerable. That is why there is a need to focus on the root causes of terrorism, not simply the symptoms. In this, political dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts become essential tools with which to fight terrorism.

Rami Khouri has rightly pointed out that the world needs to accept “three important but uncomfortable facts” if it wants to achieve substantive results against terrorism and not just “feel-good revenge”.²⁸

- First, the Arab-Asian world, primarily Islamic, is the “heartland and major wellspring of the spectacular global terror attacks of recent years.” That is why the reasons for this have to be tackled intelligently. According to Khouri, “*The most important and recurring historical root cause of terror in, and from, the Arab-Asian region is the home-grown sense of indignity, humiliation, denial and degradation that has plagued many of (the) young men and women.*” Because the governments and societies of the region have been unable to come to grips with this, space has been allowed to states like Israel, the US and Britain to send in their armies to deal with the misperceived problems and disastrously faulty analyses.²⁹
- Second, Khouri points out that terrorism is a global phenomenon that also emanates from non-Islamic regions in the world which are not linked to Arab or the Islamic Middle East. That is why local environments and causes have to be understood, rather than linking everything to “a single, global Islamic militant ideology that is fuelled by hatred for America.” There are, in fact, historical causes that have allowed terrorism to emerge over a period of time so it is important to address the different local root causes of terror.³⁰
- Three, the existing Israeli and US policy of fighting terror militarily, which is also being adopted increasingly by other governments, can, at best, have only limited and temporary success. Especially in the case of suicide bombers, you cannot deter someone who wishes to kill himself or herself by threatening to kill them. According to Khouri, the British experience in Northern Ireland is one of the best contemporary examples of how “an intelligent, inclusive political response effectively brought an end to the terror that harsh police and military methods on their own could not stop.”³¹

There is also a need to ensure that just and legitimate liberation and self-determination causes do not become victims of the war against terrorism. After all, so many of yesterday’s “terrorists” are today venerated as freedom fighters and national heroes. That is why the war on terrorism has to be redefined within the issue’s proper political and social milieu—rather than continuing down the path of a narrowly-defined, primarily militaristic operational framework which not only failed to deny space to the terrorists but is creating increasing space for future terrorists.

Also, in an effective war against terrorism, a major prerequisite is to stop talking in terms of “Islamic terrorism”. Otherwise, mainstream Muslims will feel marginalized and victimized because of their religion and the global spread of Islam will then create what one assumes one is seeking to avoid: a clash between Islam and the US and its allies. As Dr Waseem points out, there is a danger of constructing a new collectivity: “*The world of Islam ... is increasingly understood*

²⁸ Rami G. Khouri, “Needed: A Global Strategy to Reduce, Not Increase, Terror”, in *Daily Star* (Beirut, Lebanon), September 8, 2004.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

as a bunch of Muslim states that shared the broadest denominational identity with the terrorist groups. This is a grim indicator of the fact that the contemporary world is passing through the fateful process of the crystallization of an Islamic identity sans culture and tradition, history and geography, language and literature as well as public and private behaviour patterns. Here is the construction of the 'other' going on in a massive way."³² This is a most dangerous reductionism. Just as the West, led by the US, made an expedient use of Islam as a policy instrument, in the 80s, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, so it is now trying to make the same expedient use of "Islamic terrorism" as an instrument of policy.

There is also a very real need to study the root causes of the problem of terrorism. Military power may deal with the immediate problem, but it can only aggravate the long-term threat. At the political level, the issues of Palestine and Kashmir need to be resolved in a manner committed to by the international community. Within this context, where democratization has taken place, the results of that democratization must also be accepted.

At the economic level, globalization has to proceed in a manner in which groups and states feel less marginalized and where more equitable norms apply—so as to give all states a "level playing field". For instance, while Europe and the US continue to subsidize agriculture in different forms, it only creates resentments to have the IMF and IBRD tell developing countries to remove all traces of agricultural subsidies. Again, access to markets is critical for developing states as is freedom of movement of professionals—given that the service sector has been brought under the trade regime.

The problem of marginalization of groups within states and of states within the system needs to be addressed. What is needed is not a forceful attempt at compelling the world to become an artificial monolith economically, politically and culturally. Unfortunately, that is what the US is presently attempting to do through its National Security Strategy in which preemption is justified on many counts ranging from ridding certain states of their weapons of mass destruction and what the US sees as unacceptable governments to imposing the free market economy and capitalism on the world at large. The heterogeneity of the world has to be recognized by the powerful and adapted to.

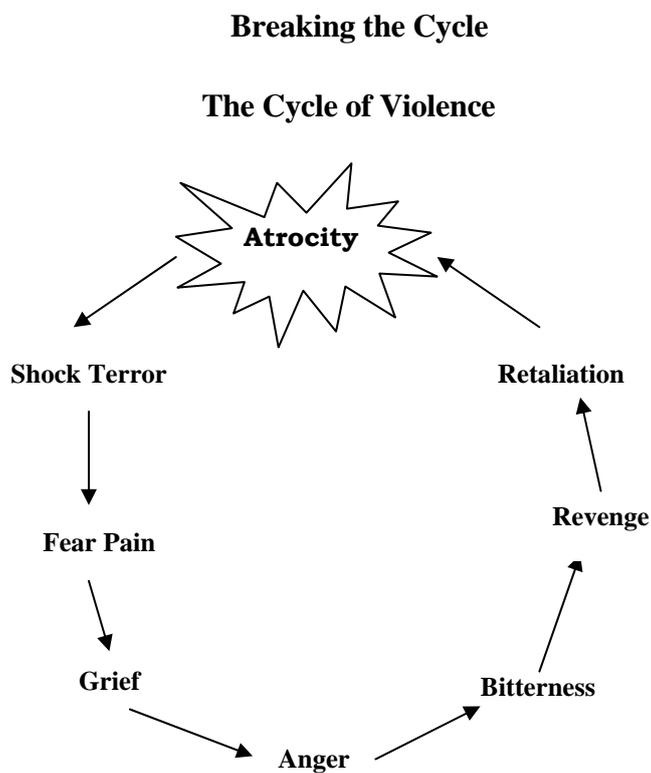
The fear of Islam as a powerful global force has to be replaced by an acceptance of this reality. Just as the world has learnt to live with a military superpower, there is a need for this superpower and its allies to accept the spiritual power of Islam for people across the globe. Cultural and political pluralism have to be accepted with greater force even as economic globalization cannot be stayed. If Islam continues to come under the sort of attack one is seeing in the Western media and amongst Western political circles, then Muslims of all shades will feel under threat and react. In fact, the debate on terrorism has to rid itself of the Islamic context, if it is to get anywhere substantive. The context of terrorism is political and that is the starting point in dealing with the issue. By removing terrorism from this false, religious context, dealing with the terrorists—including isolating them—will become much easier for states, especially Muslim states.

³² Mohammed Waseem, "Observations on the Terrorist Attacks in New York and Washington" at a Symposium on 11 September, 2001, *Terrorism, Islam and the West*, in *Ethnicities*, Vol. 2(2). London: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 139.

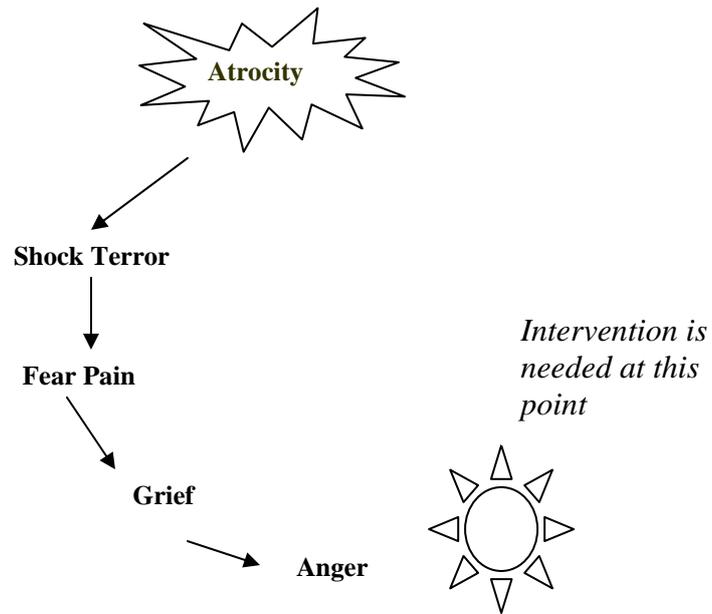
Perhaps the most critical need for dealing with the problem of terrorism is to break the cycle of violence at the correct phase. The Oxford Research Group (ORG), in a Briefing Paper on *The War on Terrorism: 12-month audit and future strategy options* (September 2002), has identified seven stages in the “classic cycle of violence” which they assert has been evident in the Palestine-Israeli conflict as well as in the different Yugoslav regional conflicts. The seven stages begin after the act of terror which leads to “shock terror” and on to “fear pain” then “grief” and on to “anger” and then “bitterness” leading to “revenge” and “retaliation” and the cycle goes on as another act of violence is set in motion (see Figures I & II). The post-9/11 “War on Terrorism” can also be analysed within this classic cycle. The ORG suggests that in order to break this cycle, intervention is needed at the stage of “anger” so that it does not go on to revenge and retaliation. Instead, a peace-keeping or peace-making intervention at the anger stage, followed by a series of other actions to contain violence through protection, de-weaponization, rule of law, bridge building, etc., can help undermine the cycle of violence (see Figure III).

Without adopting a holistic global strategy to deal with the problem of terrorism, which focuses on root causes and politico-social measures to accompany the military means, the international community will allow the terrorists continuing, if not an increasing, political space.

Figure I



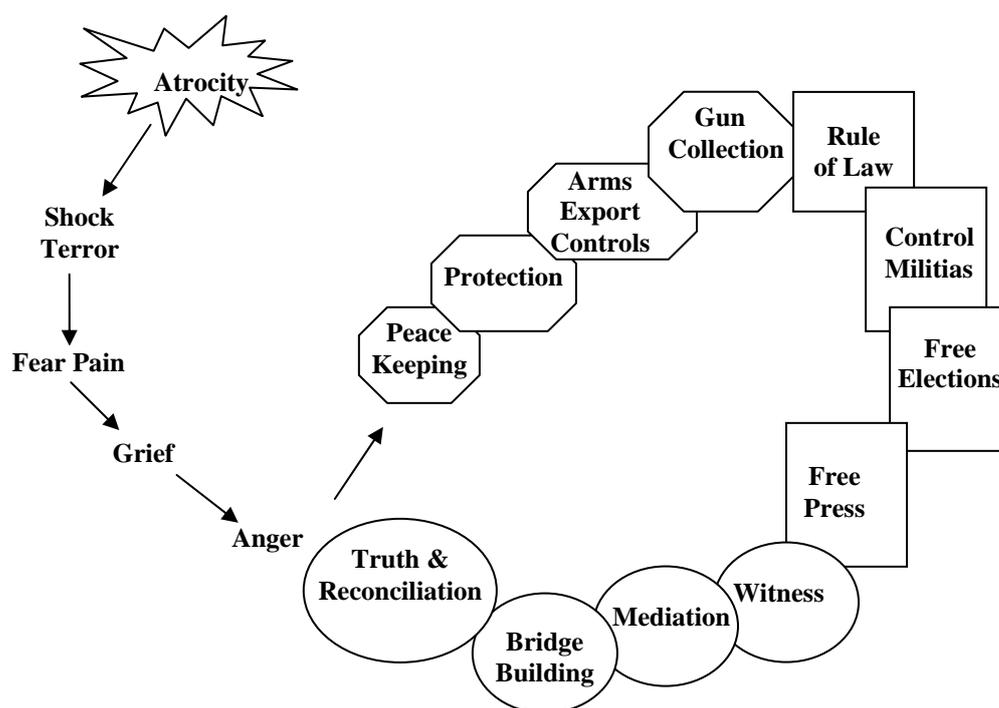
Source: Paul Rogers & Scilla Elworthy, *The 'War on Terrorism': 12-month audit and future strategy options*, Oxford Research Group, Briefing Paper, September 2002.

Figure II

Source: Paul Rogers & Scilla Elworthy, *The 'War on Terrorism': 12-month audit and future strategy options*, Oxford Research Group, Briefing Paper, September 2002.

Figure III

Transforming the Cycle of Violence



Source: Paul Rogers & Scilla Elworthy, *The 'War on Terrorism': 12-month audit and future strategy options*, Oxford Research Group, Briefing Paper, September 2002.

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