



NEWSLETTER | Volume 1, Number 2, 2008

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This newsletter marks the close of the second year in existence for the Society for Terrorism Research (STR). I reflect on this past year with excitement and great enthusiasm about our many successful accomplishments as an organization. I also reflect on the need to even have an organization like STR, and what this represents. According to the April 2008 National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) report, there were roughly 14,000 terrorist attacks



occurring across the globe in 2007, which resulted in approximately 22,000 fatalities. While the number of attacks remained roughly the same as the preceding year, there was an increase (approximately 9%) in the rate of deaths associated with these attacks. These statistics suggest that terrorism and political violence continue to be a category of violence that needs to be addressed more effectively, and in some ways a reminder that it is becoming more lethal in quality.

As with other categories of violence, there has been a recent push to understand issues of terrorism in complex, multi-dimensional, and interdisciplinary terms. There is no one perspective or discipline to

frame or understand issues of terrorism. If we are to truly develop a thorough understanding of these problems, we must be willing to reflect on these issues using lenses other than our own. Perhaps even more important, we must begin to sit with and entertain perspectives and viewpoints that conflict with our own pre-held beliefs. Only with this kind of integration and synthesis will we begin to unpack, and ideally address terrorism and political violence as a complex phenomenon. On the flipside, as long as we continue to think about, frame, and understand these issues one-dimensionally using frameworks that are inherently laden with specific political or religious (or other) kinds of ideology, we will only perpetuate this category of violence and the variables that fuel it. The mission of STR is to provide a catalyst and vehicles for this process.

Some may argue that using a term such as "Terrorism" in the title of an organization is in itself politically value-laden. I would argue against this for several reasons. First, and perhaps most important, to not use such a term would be to deny its meaning to a large body of people across the planet. Terrorism is understood by many to be an act of violence, typically targeting non-combatants, with the underlying goal of instilling fear as a means of altering some existing political or social reality. Because this type of violence may be understood as an act of war by another individual or group does not preclude its meaning for the target/victim as an act of terror. Second, one of the primary underlying intentions of using terrorist tactics is to instill terror in a target as a motivating

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agent towards some end. This fear, or terror as it were, impacts individuals and groups long after the attacks have been perpetrated, and in a sense may be understood as a separate tactic. That is, there is immediate fallout following discrete attacks, but also a prolonged sense of fear and terror of future attacks that embeds within the population long after the attacks – the latter of which differentiates terrorism from other forms of violence. Therefore, using the term “terrorism” is by definition accurate to describe a distinct set of tactics that are unique to other forms of violence. Finally, the problem with debating such a relativist term is that it stalls subsequent progress or movement towards eradicating it. That is to say, energy that goes into deriving a definition that is acceptable to everyone is energy taken away from finding solutions for it as a complex social phenomenon. Thus, part of the motivation for using the term “terrorism” in the title is to be provocative and get people moving in a direction towards understanding and more effectively addressing the issue. This process would ideally include perspective from individuals and groups who understand these terms differently, and who take issue with such definitions. This process is critical to deepening our understanding of these issues.

The Evolution of STR

The last twelve months have seen rapid developments, and it is with great pleasure that I write about our busy year, numerous accomplishments, and organizational transitions. First, under the direction of Drs. Malgorzata Kossowska, Tali Walters, and Martin Ramirez, the second annual CICA-STR conference was held in Zakopane, Poland in July 2008. Roughly 70 participants attended and presented from across the globe. They came together to discuss ideas, theories, and new models for understanding issues of terrorism and political violence. Feedback received indicates it was an amazing success, similar in quality to the inaugural conference held in Miraflores, Spain the previous year. Planning is currently underway to convene our third annual meeting in Northern Ireland in September 2009 under the direction of Dr. Rachel Monaghan, University of Ulster. Please visit our website for upcoming conference information: www.societyforterrorismresearch.org.

Second, it is with great excitement that I announce the launch of Interdisciplinary Research on Terrorism and Political Violence (IRTPV), the flagship journal of STR. IRTPV will be published by Taylor and Francis/Routledge, and is estimated to publish its first issue in January 2009. Dr. Daniel Antonius and I will serve as the inaugural Editors of the journal, and will work with our team of 8 Associate Editors and roughly 80 reviewers to produce a high-quality reference work that will disseminate cutting edge theory and science addressing complex issues of terrorism and political violence. You may read more about the journal at the publisher’s website: www.informaworld.com/irtpv.

Other significant developments within the organization include the development of the STR Logo, which you see on the upper left corner of the front cover of this newsletter. We are honoured to have had the chance to work with Mr. Wilfried Haest in developing the logo, and want to publicly thank him for the time, effort, and artistic skill he brought to the design. The logo was recently uploaded to our website, and will also appear on the cover for the forthcoming STR journal.

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Finally, I have several announcements to make. I am proud to announce that Dr. Antonius was the 2008 recipient of the Dr. Chris Hatcher Memorial Scholarship Award, presented to him during the annual meeting of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) in August. Dr. Antonius' work was nationally recognized as being reflective of excellence in forensic studies. Second, it is my pleasure to announce that one of our own, Kendall McKay, will begin an internship at the Potomac Institute this fall, under the direction of Dr. Yonah Alexander. We are quite proud of both of them! Additionally, after 18 months of service, Dr. Alice LoCicero stepped down in late 2007 from the Governing Board for the organization. We are honored to have worked with her and thankful for her time and service. We want to welcome a new member of the STR Board, Dr. Kimberly Bistis. Among other things, Dr. Bistis will be managing membership for the organization. Finally, we also welcome Dr. Gary LaFree to the STR Advisory Board. Dr. LaFree is the Director of the START Center (Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism) at the University of Maryland.

Future Mission

The mission of the STR has been and continues to be to promote and disseminate new theory and science in the areas of terrorism and political violence research. We have worked extremely hard over the past 12 months to expand this platform further, and develop new mediums to distribute this science. This will continue to be our primary mission moving forward, and we are very excited about the coming year with a new journal launch and annual meeting.

The Governing Board for STR recently met in Boston during the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in August, and discussed specific plans for the coming year. In keeping with the organizational mission of STR, our focus will be on convening the 2009 annual meeting in Northern Ireland and launching the forthcoming STR journal (January 2009). Outside of these immediate tasks, the Governing Board discussed topics including expanding membership, developing a curriculum for the interdisciplinary study of terrorism (potentially to be taught by members of STR at local universities), and developing an organizational research agenda. With respect to the latter, discussions are underway to design research frameworks to produce science, as opposed to simply disseminating it. We are interested in any and all perspectives on this, including potential opportunities for collaboration. All discussions continue to be underway, and we will keep making updates regarding our progress in these areas.

In closing, there continues to be rapid developments within STR, and we are quite pleased of the progress made over the last 12 months. We are also very appreciative of the people who continue to support the mission and functions of STR through membership, collaboration, and other ways. We hope interest in and membership with STR continues to grow.

Sincerely,

Samuel Justin Sinclair, Ph.D.
September 1, 2008
Boston, Massachusetts

SOCIETY FOR TERRORISM RESEARCH GOVERNING BOARD

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Message from the Editor

Welcome to another STR *Newsletter*, the second of 2008. Since the last *Newsletter* came out, several new and exciting things, as pointed out by STR President Dr. Sinclair, have taken place, including another successful CICA-STR Conference, and the start of a collaboration with Taylor and Francis in publishing STR's flagship journal *Interdisciplinary Research on Terrorism and Political Violence*. This progress is important in serving STR's mission of disseminating theoretical and empirical material from interdisciplinary and cross-national perspectives, as well as advancing our understanding of the underlying processes of terrorist acts and political violence.

In this issue of the *Newsletter*, in addition to STR President Dr. Sinclair's *President's Message*, Dr. Walters gives us a summary of the 2008 CICA-STR Conference, which took place in Zakopané, Poland. The article highlights the incredible academic contribution of this year's Keynote Speakers, as well as emphasizing the various reasons why this conference is such a success in only its' second year of existence. In another article, Dr. Walters gives us an insight into one of the brilliant minds of aggression and terrorism research, Dr. J. Martin Ramirez, who also happens to be Dr. Walters' co-Planning Director, and Director of CICA. Our newest *Newsletter* staff member, Kendall McKay discusses *Terrorism in the 21st Century: How Serious is the Threat?*, and she gives the readers a somewhat different perspective on the threat of terrorism and political violence. Miss. McKay contributed to the *Newsletter* with a new section called *Research Roundup*, in which new and interesting studies are summarized for the readers.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous work of Kristin Fontaine, the *Newsletter's* layout designer. Miss. Fontaine's graphic design skills have been invaluable in creating the current *Newsletter* design and layout. Without her dedication and help, the *Newsletter* would have had a very different look. I should also mention that she functions as the STR Webmaster, and is the person who designed and set up STR's new Website. All of us at STR are grateful for her work, and would like to thank her.

I hope that you all will find the articles in this issue of the STR *Newsletter* interesting. As always, I encourage those of you with comments about the *Newsletter*, or comments to specific articles, to write me. Also, for those of you interested in contributing to the *Newsletter*, either with a Letter-to-the-Editor or a full article, please send me an email. The same goes for readers, including students, interested in getting involved in the *Newsletter*. I can be contacted at danantonius@gmail.com, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
Daniel Antonius, Ph.D.
Editor

The 2008 CICA/STR Conference: Another Conference Success

By Tali K. Walters, Ph.D.
Vice President – Society for Terrorism Research

In August 2006, Drs. Sinclair and LoCicero joined forces to create the Society for Terrorism Research. They had a vision to promote the interdisciplinary study of this most relevant, important, and difficult to empirically research subject, as well as wanting to positively impact global peace. They did not know, although they hoped, that their efforts would quickly and effectively touch so many colleagues who shared their interests. The success of the second annual CICA/STR conference, held in July 2008 in Zakopane, Poland, demonstrates the significance of their important decision to form STR.

Over 60 participants from the USA, Canada, Bulgaria, England, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, the UAE, and Australia attended the 2008 CICA/STR International Conference on Aggression, Terrorism, and Human Rights in Zakopane, hosted by the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. These colleagues represented a broad interdisciplinary spectrum – Psychology, Social Psychology, Nuclear Sciences, Journalism/Media/Communication, Statistics, Counter-terrorism Studies, Criminology, Law, Nuclear Science, Medicine, Social Science, Psychobiology, and Organizational Psychology. Participants were researchers, practitioners, policy makers, Fulbright Scholars, members of Nobel Peace Prize organizations, and students. Many attendees to our first conference in Miraflores, Spain, returned.

The conference was honored to host four esteemed leaders in the fields of terrorism and aggression: Drs. Art Kendall, Yonah Alexander, Gary LaFree, and Adam Fraczek. The themes of their

keynote speeches addressed issues of human rights, trends in the manifestation of super-terrorism, the importance of data driven policy making, and the use of aggression research in the analysis of an individual terrorist.

This year's conference honored the 60th Anniversary of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In his keynote speech, Dr. Kendall, member of the STR Advisory Board, raised participants' awareness that it is important to incorporate issues of human rights in our teaching, research, writing, and mentoring. In his ongoing work towards this end, Dr. Kendall works with the AAAS Coalition on Human Rights Program and is collecting examples of the interface between scientists and human rights issues. He invites you to contact him at HumanRights@DrKendall.org.

In his keynote address, Dr. Alexander, Senior Fellow at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, and Senior Fellow at the Homeland Security Policy Institute, offered insights into the issues of immediate consideration regarding the management of super-terrorism. He discussed proliferation trends, tendencies in terrorism, impact and cost of super-terrorism, current responses to super-terrorism, and requirements for the future national, regional and global defense against super-terrorism. Dr. Alexander reached out to all participants at the conference, especially the students and younger colleagues, offering his extensive knowledge in the field, leadership, study and collaboration opportunities, and his wisdom.

Dr. LaFree, Director of the National Center for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, discussed the dilemma inherent in the study of terrorism resulting from a primary purpose of terrorist acts – the evocation of strong negative emotion, namely fear. Thus, effective policy related to the reduction of terrorism and its impact is particularly dependent on hard data and objective analysis. Dr.



Conference participants during a rare moment of sunshine in Zakopane



Presenters participated in panel discussions after each session: Tom Kubik, Javier Martin-Peña, Anja Zimmerman, Alica LoCicero and Kinga Williams



Art Kendall honoring the 60th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights



Jonah Alexander talked about Super-Terrorism



General Guillermo Velarde of Spain, Peter Tikuisis of Canada, and Yonah Alexander of the USA

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LaFree presented information from the START Center's extensive collection of open source data on terrorism. He also examined trends in terrorist attacks and geographical distribution of terrorism over the past 35 years. With his broad base of research associates, Dr. LaFree brought to the conference not only his own professional knowledge, but also data from research conducted by dozens of scientists, groups, and programs that study all aspect of terrorism and responses to terrorism.

Using a theoretical approach, keynote speaker Dr. Fraczek tied together the field of aggression studies with issues related to individuals participating in terrorist action. He discussed a model of a developmental pathway to the implementation of terrorism that involved socio-cultural and family background, instrumental training in the use of violent behavior, and specific beliefs and ideas of the individual.

While the keynote speeches expanded our understanding and opened new avenues for discussion, the individual presentations represented work being done in the trenches by students, professors, and practitioners. I mention the following presentations as a representative sample of the wonderfully diverse and relevant work presented at the conference. Malgorzata Kossowska, professor at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, presented findings from her multi-national study of terrorism threat and anxiety. Sam Mullins, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wollongong in Australia, presented research to support the terrorist-as-criminal hypothesis. Steve Thompson, Ph.D. candidate in Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design at Clemson University in the USA presented data and discussion about the impact of terrorism on freedom of speech in the media. Sahnzad Shafqat, Pakastani psychology graduate student at Cambridge University, presented his research on threat, extremism, and terrorism. Vivan Salima, journalist stationed in the United Arab Emirates, discussed how terrorists use the media to disseminate their message. Albert Jongman, Strategic Analyst with the Dutch Ministry of Defense, discussed the reasons and logic behind, as well as the methods, regarding the exponential growth of suicide terrorism. Alice LoCicero, Ph.D., Chair of the Social Science Department at Endicott College and past-president of STR, presented data on her in-country study of children in Sri Lanka who become terrorists.

In feedback from participants, we heard that the program was "very educational and inspiring" and that the conference was "stimulating, informative, and fun." The "personalized attention during and after the conference has been exemplary." A keynote speaker wrote, "I was impressed with the organization of the event and the high quality of the presentations." A frequent comment heard at the conference, particularly poignant from keynote speakers, was that all of the presentations were relevant to the efforts to reduce global terrorism and political violence. We received very positive feedback from participants as well, regarding the scientific program. One participant commented, "Your choice of keynote speakers was excellent, as were the other presenters. It was amazing how many good speakers and presentations were packed into such a short time." The research represented the highest quality and, because of the fine organization of the Polish organizing committee, the conference schedule made all presentations accessible to all participants. Looking to the future, a participant wrote, "I really enjoyed the variance of perspectives on this important topic and hope we'll keep on ... tackling it."

Not all was work in Zakopane! In an alpine town famous for its skiing and world class long jump competitions, there was also plenty of opportunity to socialize. Malgorzata Kossowska and her Polish organizing committee hosted a first night wine party to give us the opportunity to wind down from our long journeys to the Tatre Mountains. Although there was no formal event, many conference participants also used the second night for dining and socializing in Zakopane. The third night was special. We were treated to an authentic Tatre Mountain feast, with music, costume, vodka, and flaming meat!

Through interdisciplinary and multinational collaboration, the impact of theory building and research on international terrorism and counter-terrorism policy is multiplied. The work of those who participated in the conference will have a world wide impact. The conference underscored the need to collaborate across disciplines and across borders, to contribute to the research literature, to share ideas and findings, to pass on wisdom and knowledge through teaching and mentoring, and encourage colleagues and students to join in this effort.



Gary LaFree presented data from the START program's extensive database

Terrorism in the 21st Century: How Serious is the Threat?

By Kendall McKay

The second annual CICA-STR conference in Zakopane, Poland, hosted a group of presenters representing many different countries and professions. Although a lot of time was devoted to discussions on human rights and different perspectives on terrorism, one of the central themes that emerged at the conference centered on the possible reality that the terrorist situation is only going to get worse and that another large-scale attack is very likely in the near future.

The information presented at the conference shed new light on developing issues that are demanding international attention. Increasing numbers of the elderly, handicapped, disabled, and even children are being deployed in suicide attacks. Jihadists are utilizing web-based outlets like the internet, radical Islamic websites, and chat rooms to strengthen and expand their seemingly impenetrable network. Terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Al Qaeda continue to seek nuclear and other unconventional weapons that would give them a clear tactical advantage over most of the world. These issues are not only real and frightening, but they present a growing concern to the security community of the world.

According to polls, the international community feels more vulnerable than ever before to the threat of international terrorism. But are these feelings justified? Is the threat of global terrorism really as overwhelming and impenetrable as it may seem?

Studies present conflicting data. Public opinion polls conducted in 2006 by CBS News, The New York Times, CNN, and USA Today, among others, conclude that only a small portion of those polled believe another terrorist attack is not at all likely (Bowman, 2005). Many people do not think about the threat of terrorism every day, but when one enters the subway or goes through airport security, feelings of fear are often amplified.

The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) came out with a 2007 Report on Terrorism chronicling statistical data from the past year as it relates to terrorism and terrorism-related incidents. The NCTC reported that terror attacks in 2007 increased in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but declined by 57 percent in Iraq (National Counterterrorism Center, 2008). Approximately 14,000 terrorist attacks occurred in various countries during 2007, resulting in over 22,000 deaths (National Counterterrorism Center, 2008). Although death tolls increased by nine percent from 2006 to 2007, the total number of terrorist attacks worldwide have remained approximately the same during that same time (National Counterterrorism Center, 2008).

Several government-funded agencies, such as the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terror (MIPT) and the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), have reported drastic increases in terrorist attacks and fatalities resulting from

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them (Zakaria, 2008). Other studies, on the other hand, like one done by the University of Maryland and another analysis conducted by Canada's Simon Fraser University, report significant declines in terrorist related violence (Zakaria, 2008). The seemingly infinite amount of statistical data and study analyses relating to this topic is somewhat overwhelming, and trying to make sense of the conflicting conclusions is an equally daunting task. Albert Jongman, a strategic analyst at the Dutch Ministry of Defense, commented on this very problem: "We still don't have a good and reliable database on terrorism. As a result, you can hold any position and illustrate it with statistics depending on the database you chose" (Jongman, 2008).

What we have seen is not a decrease in terrorism, but rather a change in its organization. The U.S. counterattacks following 9/11, for example, greatly disrupted Al Qaeda's centralized command. Recruitment camps in Afghanistan were shut down, many of the leaders were captured or killed, and the rest fled to Pakistan with their Taliban allies (Bunker, 2008). It took about a year for Al Qaeda to adapt to the offensive launched by America and its allies. The threat has since mutated. What we have begun to see now is the reorganization of much more decentralized and clandestine terrorist cells. Although numerous terrorist plots have been uncovered and thwarted, jihadist networks have been disrupted not eliminated. According to the NCTC, "The threat now is a diffuse and diverse group of 'micro' cells implanted both in diasporas in countries where Muslims are in the minority (Spain and Britain, for example) and in majority Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia" (National Counterterrorism Center, 2008). Although small, these groups are capable of executing powerful and multiple attacks.

Political discourse has been dominated by international terrorism and the clear security threat that countries like Iran pose to world security. However, many experts are equally concerned on what is going on in the U.S. In a recent issue of *Foreign Policy*, a collaborative survey was conducted in conjunction with the Center for American Progress that polled more than 100 top U.S. foreign policy experts as part of the 2008 Terrorism Index. Seventy-one percent said that an attack on the scale of 9/11 is likely or certain within the next decade and 85 percent predict a smaller attack in the next ten years. Strategic analyst Albert Jongman agrees: "When it comes to an attack on the U.S., it probably is going to be something worse than 9/11. The question is timing" (Jongman, 2008). Al Qaeda is known for its creativity and large scale attacks, and experts are now discussing whether Al Qaeda will attempt to influence the outcome of the U.S. presidential election in a way that would create the most advantageous result for them.

The jihad doctrine is drawn from religion. Passages from the Koran are distilled to support terrorist ideology and violence. One expert

on the modern phenomenon of terrorism commented that "Jihadist ideology is not synonymous with Islam, but it is hard to separate the two" (Jenkins, 2007). The only absolute solution to terrorism is to fight its doctrine, a feat which is strategically and ideologically impossible. Clearly, there are limited options to fighting suicide terrorism, but the most effective action is to counter the death culture that exists in several regions of the world.

For the first time since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, national security issues are no longer dominating political discourse and public interest. The struggling economy, rising energy costs, and other domestic vitals have dominated the national agenda. A recent issue of *Foreign Policy* cited that, "In a recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Americans ranked terrorism as the country's 10th-most important priority—behind healthcare, education, and the federal budget deficit" (The Terrorist Index, 2008). Regardless of where the war on terror stands in the minds of Americans, there is no doubt that it rages on.

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STR Special Portrait: J. Martin Ramirez, M.D., Ph.D., J.D.

Conference Collaborator with STR, Founded CICA (Coloquios Internacionales sobre Cerebro y Agresión)

By Tali K. Walters, Ph.D.

Vice President – Society for Terrorism Research

Soon after STR officially launched in August 2006, one of the immediate goals of the organization was to provide a means by which researchers and thinkers in the field of terrorism studies could gather to share their ideas and research. Due to the good fortune and serendipitous timing of sabbaticals, Jesus Martin Ramirez, Ph.D., physician, psychologist, and professor at Universidad de Complutense, Madrid, arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts that month to spend six months at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Being a master of organizing such collaboration efforts, Dr. Ramirez and Alice LoCicero, Ph.D., then President of STR, began discussions that since have culminated in two highly successful collaborations – the first CICA/STR Conference on Interdisciplinary Analyses of Aggression and Terrorism in Miraflores, Spain in 2007 followed by the second CICA/STR International Conference on Aggression, Terrorism, and Human Rights in Zakopane, Poland in 2008.



J. Martin Ramirez, MD, Ph.D., JD, Director of CICA

Dr. Ramirez, born in Madrid, has devoted his professional life to the study of human beings and aggression, sharing his findings, and mentoring others in his wake. He told me, “I’ve always been interested in understanding humanity better, and this leads you to a quite multifaceted prospective. This explains the apparently so different studies I have done.” Dr. Ramirez not only studied and received a Ph.D. in Medicine and Surgery (Neurosciences), specializing in neuroscience and the enervation of the brain vessels, at the Institute für Neuropathologie in the Free University of Berlin, he also has advanced degrees in Philosophy and the Art and in Law from the University of Navarra, and Pedagogics on Comparative Education from the European Schools of the European Union.

In 1983, Dr. Ramirez, along with “a few neuroscientists from Europe and America” started an organization known as CICA (Coloquios Internacionales sobre Cerebro y Agresión). The beginning of this organization was “rather unplanned” as six participants from Europe, the USA and Mexico gathered in Fes, Morocco, then crossed the Gibraltar Strait and traveled to Seville, Spain where they discussed the links between the brain and aggression. Thus was held the first of 25 CICA colloquia. The first 10 meetings were held in Seville, attended by participants across the globe, discussing multiple aspects of aggression from a multi-cultural, interdisciplinary perspective. CICA began to address the issue of terrorism in its annual meetings in 1988, long before it became a world-wide subject of interest and concern. Later that year,

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Dr. Ramirez took CICA international, holding its first colloquia outside Seville in Santiago, Chile, making these most important discussions more accessible to South American colleagues. Since then, CICA meetings to study aggression, terrorism, and political violence occurred around the world, in North America, Africa, Europe, Asia (Sri Lanka), and Central America, on an almost yearly basis. CICA meetings are intentionally small and personal, “in an atmosphere of friendship and goodwill.”

The Coloquios Internacionales sobre Cerebro y Agresión is “a rather loose organization,” says Dr. Ramirez. Asked the mission of CICA, Dr. Ramirez responded, “Humans are concerned about violence. Preparing responsible citizens demands attention to the causes and consequences of violent action. But reducing and preventing violence requires an understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon and recognition of the multiple causes of such harmful behavior. Such a basic understanding is necessary if we are to propose positive remedies and point out ways toward peaceful solutions and non-violent alternatives. Major scientific research programs have to address this complex problem. The present social circumstances add a quite timely politically-charged consideration of possible peaceful alternatives to it. A knowledge of aggression is not only a window to understand humanity better, but it also shows that violence involves an intensely emotional individual experience for perpetrators, victims, and for witnesses as well. As part of its effort to focus an interdisciplinary attention on this important individual and societal issue, the CICA [meetings] address different aspects of this topic by scholars from multiple disciplines.”

Dr. Ramirez told me that all participants from past congresses are entitled to become members of the CICA organization. There are no fees. There is “an absolute respect to the ideologies of each member,” thus opening its membership to a truly global community dedicated to the study of aggression, terrorism, and political violence. The International Scientific Council of CICA is comprised of the members who take the initiative to organize and host CICA meetings. Through this “loose organization,” autonomous national groups of CICA continue the mission of the international body.

CICA is proud to have authored the 1986 Seville Statement on Violence, endorsed by the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris and disseminated throughout the world. This statement, (which can be found in its entirety at http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3247&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_

[SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3247&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)) counters the myth that war is part of human nature. The Statement concludes that:

“Biology does not condemn humanity to war, and that humanity can be freed from the bondage of biological pessimism and empowered with confidence to undertake the transformative tasks needed in this International Year of Peace and in the years to come. Although these tasks are mainly institutional and collective, they also rest upon the consciousness of individual participants for whom pessimism and optimism are crucial factors. Just as ‘wars begin in the minds of men,’ peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us.”

Given his interest in aggression research, and his intense quest for knowledge, Dr. Ramirez went on to receive a Diploma in High Studies on Defense from the Spanish military university, Centro Superior de Estudios de la Defensa Nacional (CESEDEN). In Fall and Winter 2006, Dr. Ramirez gained expertise in International Security and Terrorism studies through the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He departed Cambridge for Paris in January 2007 where he finished the academic year working on categorizing aggression and sex differences as a “Résident-chercheur“ at the Laboratoire de Psychologie Sociale, Université René Descartes, Paris.

Dr. Ramirez embodies the interdisciplinary philosophy and goals of STR. In his research and teaching in the field of aggression, he approached his studies from an interdisciplinary, multicultural, cross species perspective. His research spanned Europe, Iran, Japan, Southern Africa, and Canada, with subjects “from birds to primates” and humans, on the individual, interpersonal, and international levels, most recently focusing on the war on terrorism. As the reader can well imagine, Dr. Ramirez has disseminated his finding through numerous publications in books, chapters, and professional journals.

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Research Roundup

By Kendall McKay

Iran, Terrorism, and Weapons of Mass Destruction

Daniel Byman
Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
Vol. 31, Issue 3, 2008; pages 169-181

After providing a detailed history of Iran's support for terrorist groups and its tumultuous relationship with the U.S., the author provides a complete list of possible solutions to ensure that Tehran does not provide unconventional weapons to terrorists in the future and recommends steps that the U.S. take in order to decrease Tehran's support for terrorism in general. While Iran has become more cautious in its backing of terrorists in recent years, any major escalation in its support for terrorism would invite U.S. hostility and international condemnation. Although Iranian terrorism remains a threat, Tehran is not likely to provide chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons to terrorists.

Terrorists and Laser Weapons Use: An Emergent Threat

Robert J. Bunker
Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
Vol. 31, Issue 5, 2008; pages 434-455

The clear tactical and operational advantages that laser weapons offer over conventional weapons, along with their decreasing price, has encouraged an alarming number of criminals, criminal soldiers, and foreign militaries to utilize laser devices for counter-optical purposes. According to this trend, the author predicts that it is only a matter of time before terrorists are either exposed to laser weapons from others or develop them internally on their own. Scenarios like these would result in a new degree of threat to national security and world peace.

Circles Drawing Toward High Risk Activism: The Use of Usroh and Halaqa in Islamist Radical Movements

Frank Hairgrove & Douglas M. Mcleod
Studies in Conflict & Terrorism
Vol. 31, Issue 5, 2008; pages 399-411

This article discusses the importance of Islamic religious study groups, called halaqa and usroh, and their strategic use in yielding high-risk activism and radical mobilization. In examining why recruits participate in high-risk behavior without receiving tangible personal rewards, the authors study three Islamic groups, the Muslim Brotherhood, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Hizbut Tahrir, which defy resource mobilization theory. The authors conclude that ideological indoctrination of small groups has been instrumental in explaining this phenomenon.

The Drama of Media Coverage of Terrorism: Emotional and Attitudinal Impact on the Audience

Anat Shoshani & Michelle Slone
Studies in Conflict and Terrorism
Vol. 31, Issue 7, 2008; pages 627-640

Terrorist organizations strategically use media coverage of their attacks as a form of psychological warfare to communicate their capability and create an illusion of magnified strength. A study, conducted on 300 people, measured anxiety, anger, enemy perception, and stereotype attribution after exposing the participants to two 7-minute movie clips. The findings emphasize the emotional and cognitive effects of media portrayals of terrorism on the audience.

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