


PROSPECTS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS INVOLVING RELIGIOUS
TERRORISTS: AFGHANISTAN, THE TALIBAN, AND STRATEGIC JIHAD

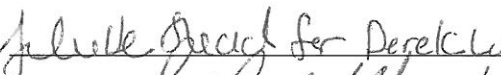
by

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A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Science
Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Master of Arts
Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security

Committee:



Chair of Committee



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Date: 12/5/12

Fall Semester 2012
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
University of Malta
Valletta, Malta

Prospects for Resolving Conflicts Involving Religious Terrorists:
Afghanistan, the Taliban, and Strategic Jihad

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science at George Mason University, and the degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Malta

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Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge my advisor Rich Rubenstein for his guidance and support on this project. This would have been a very different paper without his guidance, and I am pleased with its subsequent outcome. Rich challenged me to question and to pursue answers. I need to acknowledge my mother and father who have been so supportive of my decision to pursue academics and their unconditional belief in my abilities. I especially need to thank my mother who tirelessly believes in my ability to articulate my ideas in a grammatically correct way, especially when I do not.

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Abstract

PROSPECTS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS INVOLVING RELIGIOUS TERRORISTS: AFGHANISTAN, THE TALIBAN, AND STRATEGIC JIHAD

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In the decades following the end of the Cold War, religion has replaced political inequality, exclusion and disaffection as the rallying cry of terrorists throughout the world. In examining the rise of international religious terrorism and its roots in political aspirations, this paper explores methods of combating terrorism as it has developed in the 21st century. In three parts this paper examines the potential for resolving conflicts mired in religious terrorism: first, reviewing the causes and motivation of terrorism; second, the rise of religious terrorism and the function of religion in modern terrorism; finally, a review of the process of negotiation with terrorists as a method to combat terrorism.

In examining the rise of international religious terrorism, essential differences between ethno-national/political terrorism and religious terrorism emerge. Also examined will be the process of imbuing political motivations and aspirations with religious rhetoric to create a holy war. These defining aspects of terrorist organizations alter the practical and

available methods for resolving the conflict. Answering the question how States negotiate with terrorists, the paper examines whether past successful negotiations with non-idealistic, ethno-nationalist terrorist organizations can or cannot be adapted to combat terrorist organizations with nihilistic and otherworldly aspirations. Within this context the current engagement of the Taliban in Afghanistan will be examined as a case study of applying terrorist negotiation strategies to religiously based terrorism. The methods of the current military campaign in Afghanistan as well as wider approaches to conflict resolution are also examined. Critical to this research is the perspective of analyzing strategies of engaging with religious terrorism within the context of examining the prospects of resolving the conflict in which terrorists are embattled, not solely methods to combat terrorism. Through exploring these aspects of religious terrorism this paper addresses the research questions: how possible are resolutions to conflicts involving international religious terrorists; what are the techniques available for resolving those conflicts; what techniques are, or should be, currently employed in combating international religious terrorism?

Author's Note

What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists, is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents.

~Robert F. Kennedy

For young generations in the Western World, terrorism is symbolized by one man. And therefore, his death, and its significance, should not be overlooked. May 2, 2011, has become a day in history, bookending the era that, for many, began on September 11, 2001. The death of Osama bin Laden represents the disturbing relationship that has emerged between terrorism and society. The killing of a man was openly celebrated. What was supposed to end the fear and reduce the threat has done neither; and yet for younger generations it seemed as if the boogeyman had been vanquished. The reality is that 9/11 began neither the age of modern terrorism nor the terrorist threat.

The death of Osama bin Laden was announced late in the evening of May 1, 2011, to the American people and to the World. Within minutes of the announcement young Americans had flocked to the gates of the White House cheering President Obama and celebrating the death of a man. Once the moment had worn off, many reflected upon the revelry with discomfort and with the remarks that death should never be celebrated, no matter the life and its symbolism. This death, and its importance to how success in the ongoing Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) is measured, accentuates the

contemporary international approach to terrorism and how terrorists and terrorism are constructed in society.

The Implications of the covert assassination, and the declaration that this death brought *justice* even as it occurred outside the legal realm, raise questions a generation of Americans will wrestle with. Osama bin Laden's death occurred under a different president, but in an America still ruled by Bush-era laws that subjugated and eroded the principles of the *Nation* in the name of *security*.

For those young Americans joyously waving flags in front of the White House, it would be optimistic to believe that it was not the death of a man they celebrated, but the death of the era of fear into which they had come of age. Bin Laden was a mystery; in their pre-teen and teenage years he had attacked their country. Grappling with the meaning behind the ensuing wars and loss of life, his death was more than the death of a man. This is the man the government had raised them to fear. This is the man on whose account they were told to sacrifice necessary liberties.

All the mystery, the wondering, was over, and yet the threat was not. It was an unremarkable death. Unlike the generation raised in the shadow of a communist/soviet/nuclear threat, no wall fell. There was no crumbling of a crucial symbol. There is only a clandestine death and a body sunk into the oceans to mark the death of the man who changed Americans. And unlike 1989, 2011 did not mark the crumbling of an ideology.

Looking at the death of bin Laden in a positive light, assuming his death as a necessity in the pursuit of ending modern religious terrorism, it is necessary to view it as

the death and ending of the irrational fear which clouded counterterrorist measures of the United States and her allies. This did not mark the victory of one ideology over another. To take it as such would be irresponsible and dangerous. Rather let it mark a new page in the story, one no longer guided by fear, hatred and revenge—emotions undercutting logic and justice.

One of the greatest fears of engaging in talks and negotiations with terrorists is that such relations legitimate violent tactics: they let the terrorist achieve his/her objective. Osama bin Laden achieved his goal; he has made himself immortal, in spite of his anonymous grave. He has realigned the relationship between Islam and the World. Of course, he was not alone in this effort. The framing and direction of the Global War on Terror did as much as bin Laden himself to create the climate of terrorism today. The question remains, what are the options for peace? Is the only way for people to live free of fear is for covert teams of Special Forces to assassinate people in the dead of night? For drones to dominate the skies over countries like Pakistan, Yemen and Afghanistan, taking out terrorists one-by-one and a few civilians as well in the pursuit? Is this the path to peace, and a peace for whom?

Or is there another way to confront global terror? The purpose of this thesis is to examine the nature of religious terrorism in the world today, to reflect on current counterterrorism policies, and to examine the viability of alternatives to violence in counterterrorism. The first step in this study will be to examine the phenomena of terrorism. The second section reviews the rise of what can be loosely classified as “new” religious terrorism and the presuppositions upon which that category of terrorism is

founded. The third section of this study applies the existing literature on negotiating with terrorists—predominantly built upon experiences negotiating with terrorist organizations classified as either ethno-nationalist or political rather than religious—to determine how, if and when an approach is relevant to negotiating with religious terrorists. To the primary body of literature concerning negotiating with terrorists will be added the emerging body of analysis examining the ongoing and evolving negotiations with the Taliban in Afghanistan as a case study. As a comparison to negotiations with the Taliban, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in North Ireland will be used to contrast negotiations of an ethno-nationalist framework with those of a religious dictate.

After ten years and two wars brought about by the hunt for a single man, it is apparent that the effort did not result in a victory for peace and security in the United States; it did not uphold the pillars of democracy, liberty and freedom purported to be the forceful exports of the wars. Aligning this research may alter future reactions to terrorists and terrorism to avoid the futile destruction wrought by this quest for revenge.

Introduction

All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.

~T.E. Lawrence

On August 31, 2012, Reuters reported two separate incidents in Afghanistan allegedly involving the Taliban beheading children. After a decade of war intended to remove the Taliban and their Al Qaeda allies, the country remains terrorized. As the United States and Coalition forces look toward 2014 and the much anticipated withdrawal from Afghanistan—where since 2001 soldiers have been combating an amalgamate of the former Taliban regime, various jihad fighters, and remnants of Al Qaeda—the Taliban remains a threatening force on the ground. Although with less support or control than they once held—having once beaten the Northern-Alliance back and controlled up to 90 percent of the country—the Taliban continue to pose a threat to the security of Afghanistan.

Studying terrorism offers an opportunity to explore some of the most extreme and seemingly inexplicable aspects of human violence. Building upon the ample literature concerning religious terrorists this study seeks to better understand the relationship between religion and terrorism. Islam, the religion of the Taliban, is of particular interest.

This is for two reasons; the first being the simple fact that within this most recent trend of terrorism, Islam has played a unique role in inspiring dramatic acts of violence. The second relates to the way Islam has been, in some spheres, extrapolated from the violent offenders and applied to all Muslims. This, of course, is the rising fear of “Islamism”, a term equally applied to peaceful pious Muslims who organize religiously affiliated political parties as well as to those individuals who choose to commit murder in the name of ideology. It is important to note that the concern with Islam in this paper is not the wide spectrum of practices across the diverse Muslim world. It is specifically focused on a brand of Islam practiced and preached by the Taliban, an isolated group grown in the inaccessible reaches of Central Asia.

Fortunately, terrorism studies has already garnered much attention to the root causes of terrorism, and a decade of war has resulted in counterterrorism policy directed toward targeting the fertile recruiting ground of terrorists: poverty linked with perceived injustices, lack of education systems, and hopeless futures (Chandler, 9). Active strategy in Afghanistan, however, still relies heavily on “direct kinetic action” (Chandler, 14). Jessica Stern addresses the question, which resounded in the aftermath of September 11: Why do they hate us? “It is not just who they are (humiliated—at least in their view—by globalization and the New World Order) and not just who we are (an enviable hegemon), but also, at least in part what we do” (Stern, 294). Examining resolution of conflicts involving religious terrorists requires understanding how religion and terror interact. It requires examining strategies to end a conflict when neither side can take an all out military victory, and it requires examining the relationships that are so fundamentally

damaged they give rise to terror. Looking toward Afghanistan and the enduring Taliban resistance, this study seeks to apply the works of terrorism scholars to identify the possibilities for resolving that conflict.

Research Question

The primary general question this research seeks to answer is: what are the prospects for resolving conflicts involving religious terrorists? In answering this question, the research will also address a more specific question about whether within this category defined as religious terrorist organizations, significant differentiations can be made between organizations, which are truly religious in motivation, and those that would continue to exist in the form of traditional terrorist organizations if the religious aspects were removed. Are there organizations in today's globalization framed as religious movements that are actually political or ethno-nationalist movements whose core functions have been subverted in the name of religion?

In seeking to answer the primary question concerning the prospects for resolving conflicts involving religious terrorists, questions arise about how and when governments succeed or fail in negotiations involving terrorists.

Hypothesis

There will only be success in countering religious terrorism if States acknowledge differences among religious terrorist organizations and adopt strategies that are adapted to the conflict from which the terrorist organization emerged. In widening the perception of the motivations of religious terrorists, resolutions to conflicts involving religious terrorism must be cognizant to the specific aspects of the terrorist organization that are

most vulnerable to be undermined or neutralized. In this context for how resolution will be viewed and achieved, the framework into which terrorist organizations are cast by those seeking to resolve the conflict is equally important as the framework into which the organization casts itself.

Methodology

This research is being prepared on the basis of archival existing published material. The literature that is used consists of books, articles and online resources. All references are secondary sources due to the difficulty in accessing interviewees. Literature studies are a form of qualitative method, and as such, interpretations drawn from the literature studies are subjective. However, a primary purpose of qualitative studies is to provide a foundation for future studies using a quantitative method of research from which generalizations can be made and findings validated. In the absence of quantitative research to support the findings in this thesis, case studies are used.

The research focuses on United States counterterrorism strategies and the U.S. role and consequences of the war in Afghanistan and its extension into the War on Terror and Overseas Contingency Operations. This decision was made because the United States took the lead in this war and has shaped its path more directly than have other nations who contribute to the Coalition. Furthermore, while the focus is the Taliban, Al Qaeda becomes a necessary reference at certain point because of their relationship to Afghanistan, the Taliban and for igniting the war.

Theoretic Framework

“...terrorism is a way of creating power in the hope of seizing from below that which the state wields from on high.”

~Gerard Chaliand

Underpinning this research is the understanding that modern States operate according to “realist” policies. This political framework is in direct opposition with the idealistic, often moralistic, political framework espoused by terrorist organizations (Chaliand, 6). Given the strong opposition between these two political actors, the State and the Terrorist, neither political realism nor studies in the motivations and causes of terrorism can explain how, and why, States and terrorists are able to narrow the gulf between political ideologies to create an integrated system. Moty Cristal, a negotiator at Camp David for the Israeli government, has suggested that governments should shift the terms of the negotiation from the terrorists’ political demands to their personal fates (Neumann, 134). This distinction is helpful in understanding how governments can justify meeting with terrorist organizations and refrain from compromising the integrity of the State. In exploring contemporary approaches to terrorism from a theoretic framework oriented within the field of Conflict Resolution, the study is able to reconcile two systems of understanding conflict in general, and terrorism, specifically.

Given that States are the dominant actors who address, or fail to address, issues of terrorism, this research has to examine a realist perspective and accept this perspective in as much as it is the modus operandi of the modern international system. Simply because this is the way in which most governments perceive the world does not mean that this is the inherent state of international relations. While a realist understanding of world

politics must be understood in order to accurately examine relationships between States and religious terrorist organizations, this research is not conducted within a realist framework. However, a significant portion of the research acknowledges, and accepts as legitimate, approaches to counterterrorism that have emerged from security concerns. Being situated between the fields of International Relations and Conflict Resolution allows for a more encompassing approach to the prospects of resolving conflicts involving religious terrorists. Given this orientation, the research is open to analysis and seeks to examine if, in some cases, a conflict resolution oriented negotiation model is better than a militaristic approach.

Addressing terrorism from a perspective that is oriented in a socio-political or socio-cultural understanding rather than a psychosocial framework creates an important bridge between conflict resolution approaches and realist doctrine. This study builds from examination that explores the psychological studies concerning how and why terrorists act. It uses that grounding to explore the rich landscape of issues concerning culture and identity in approaches to understanding the conflicts in which religious terrorists have emerged, as well as approaches to conflict resolution within these conflicts.

Terrorism represents, along with genocide, the greatest, and at times the most incomprehensible, human atrocities. Terrorism can be traced to antiquity and the progenitors of the modern world. After experiencing centuries of terrorist organizations from all religions and societies, the fear and the unfathomable immorality of the act of

terrorism remains as absolute in 2012 as it was in 1st century C.E. Roman occupied Jerusalem.

In approaching the topic of this study, terrorism is a logical extension of an interest in why people kill; there is almost no other action that appears so indecipherable. From an academic perspective, the subject of terrorism is compelling, because it is one of a handful of human actions today that summons the term “evil” to the lips of those who discuss its perpetrators. This sort of absolutism is intrinsically interesting and creates a personal interest in seeking understanding rather than succumbing to fear.

Islam, the Taliban, and this Study

Religious terrorism is a particularly broad category and includes all the major World religions. The Global War on Terror and its progeny, the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), is oriented toward religious terrorism internationally. Globally, most major ongoing inter-State conflicts involve some form of Islamic terrorism. Given this, and the Taliban’s unique position as having been at one time the government—albeit contested—of Afghanistan, places it as an interesting case study still relevant, if not central, to the interaction between governments and terrorists in the 21st century.

The Taliban has been categorized as part of “new” terrorism since its rise to prominence in the 1990’s. The rise of the Taliban was an unintended consequence of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the 10 years of proxy war that reportedly killed an estimated 1.3 million Afghans and forced another 5.5 million to flee to refugee camps in neighboring Iran and Pakistan (Afsar, 59). Raised in the Madrasas of Pakistan, returning Talib Afghan young men were in many ways as foreign to the nation as the

Arab fighters they were later to ally with. The apparently rapid take over of Afghanistan by a religiously driven ideology was alarming, primarily because dominant ideologies of the era remained polarized between Communism and Capitalism. However, since the end of the Cold War religion has emerged as an influential feature on the geo-political landscape. The Taliban, as a uniquely long-standing organization, offers a richness of analysis regarding a religious terrorism generally considered too absolutist to be negotiable.

The reasons for the non-negotiability of these terrorist organizations is generally related to the apocalyptic or nihilistic nature of “new” terrorist organizations which are imbued with religious aspirations in a manner distinct from that of the relationship between the IRA and Catholicism, for example.

If it is accepted that religion serves a strategic purpose in terrorist tactics, the logical question that must follow is: what is that purpose? In writing about unrest and a looming revolution in Iran, Michele Foucault anticipated what many Western analysts found shocking in the wake of the fall of the Shah: the revolution was Islamic. Considering religion was seen as an outdated revolutionary ideology by most Western governments in the 1970’s, his prophesy of an imminent Islamic Revolution was undoubtedly surprising. However, Foucault accurately identified an aspect of religion, and perhaps Islam more specifically, which makes it an eternal source of revolutionary—as well as potentially violent—fervor and justification.

At the dawn of history, Persia invented the state and conferred its models on Islam. Its administrators staffed the caliphate. But from this same Islam, it derived a religion that gave to its people infinite resources to resist state power. (Foucault)

Islam, as a religion that gives its people “infinite resources to resist state power” offers an instrument with the potential to continue conflict into perpetuity. It provides justification in the face of uncountable setbacks and defeats. Understanding religion as serving this function, it is possible to recognize how religion can be invoked as a tool in the service of secular ends. Difficulty arises when Islam specifically is bound to political ends, because religion and the State have never been fully disentangled in Islamic traditions and teachings; any negotiation with the State requires negotiation with the religion. While seemingly hopeless, especially while accepting the common perspective that religions are non-negotiable, it is worth observing that the opposite is also true: any negotiation with the religion is a negotiation with the political. And politics are negotiable.

The first chapter of the study is devoted to exploring modern terrorism. The second chapter is focused on the relationship between religion and terror and to identifying how and why religion operates as a tool of, or motivation for, terror. The third chapter examines the findings of the first in relation to the limited literature on negotiation with terrorists to identify if, when and how a religious terrorist organization might be counteracted using non-military strategies. Here cases of the IRA and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) are used as comparisons with the ongoing situation in Afghanistan involving the Taliban. The fourth chapter of this research explores the successes of the approaches to terrorism sanctioned in canonical realist and defense doctrines and how the Pentagon enacted them. The case of the Taliban is crucial in exploring ways of mitigating these conflicts. This chapter also concludes the paper by

examining and reflecting on the findings as well as the implications for approaches to counter terrorism and the need for further research.

Chapter 1: Modern Terrorism

In examining the rise of religious terrorism, and the nature of organizations categorized as such, it becomes readily evident that religious terrorism, much like terrorism itself, is not easily definable. The diversity of which suggests that a varied approach to counterterrorism efforts is necessary to realistically respond to terror.

Frequently, terrorism is a symptom of a much larger conflict at play. Indeed, this uniquely situates the field of conflict resolution to advise not only on preventative measures, but also on active counterterrorism strategies. Terrorism studies offers a rich literature examining the psychology of the terrorist mind, undoubtedly spurred by a profound concern over what would cause otherwise normal people to commit such heinous acts of presumably unprovoked violence. Much attention, too, has been paid to the roots and causes of terrorism. Little, outside of security studies, has been proffered on best practices for engaging terrorists once they have begun their offensive. Conflict Resolution is concerned with examining the potential responses to terrorism that exist outside the bounds of “picking them up or picking them off” (Schmitt, 4).

However obvious, it is important to note that terrorism, and the terrorist, do not exist until an act of violence occurs. While the law has expanded to include intentions of committing terrorism, it is nevertheless important to keep distinct the terrorist from the aspirational terrorist. Such a distinction is important as an effort to resist the temptation

to dismiss terrorist actions as those committed by someone who is suffering either from a psychopathy or an “evil”, as 9/11 was framed. The term “evil”, having its own religious associations, can only further serve to alienate resolution and further encourage all actors in an ongoing conflict involving religious terrorists to depict the conflict as that between irreconcilable opposites. Such framing of the conflict is helpful for neither resolution or for analysis. By linking acts of terrorism with “evil”, thus invoking a satanic influence in the world, terrorism is explained as actions beyond the help or influence of men, an idea both inaccurate and dangerous.

A dedicated and honest examination of terrorism must begin with an examination of the concept of evil. Kathleen Norris correctly identified the delicacy of studying phenomena that fall on the darker side of human interactions, “Somehow we believe that an attempt to inform ourselves about what leads to evil is an attempt to explain it away. I believe that just the opposite is true, and when it comes to coping with evil, ignorance is our worst enemy” (Stern, xiii). Rather than using the term evil to excuse examination, those actions labeled evil should attract the deepest examination so to better understand how to counter and prevent their occurrence.

Perhaps “evils” are explained away because an in-depth analysis reveals human susceptibility to committing and justifying acts that are truly and unquestionably morally corrupt. It is as the political theorist Hannah Arendt wrote, “The sad truth is that most evil is done by people who never made up their mind to be good or evil”. Perhaps most disturbing is the everyman quality to the modern terrorist. He/she is not an easily profiled character. A terrorist may be college educated or illiterate; they may be enraged

lunatics or “they...may have decided, like good soldiers, to take unusual risks for a cause they believe in” (Rubenstein 1987, 6). Though only a small group of extremists will become terrorists, they come from a broad section of society and lifestyles (Pape, 344). A terrorist is motivated by any number of influences and is possessed by the radical ideology that violence is the only means by which he can achieve his end.

Accepting terrorism as morally wrong is, in fact, different from dismissing it as evil. Once evil is conflated with the religion of terrorists, it is only a few short steps before the religion itself becomes, in the minds of some, correlated with evil. The very application of the term “evil” to these acts offers all the necessary explanation, for evil as a phenomenon does not require explanation.

Such an application of the term “evil” is conflicting for the same reason Mark Juergensmeyer rejects the labeling of the term “terrorist”.

The implication is that such terrorists are hell-bent to commit terrorism for whatever reason—sometimes choosing religion, sometimes another ideology, to justify their mischief. This logic concludes that terrorism exists because terrorists exist, and if we just got rid of them, the world would be a more pleasant place. (Juergensmeyer, 7-8)

By the same reasoning, conflating the evil actions of the individual who commits terrorism and the individuals themselves—regarding evil as an intrinsic aspect of that individual—hinders a reasonable exploration that would contribute to a larger understanding of the actions and the worldview in which these actions are undertaken. This larger understanding is essential. Removing terrorism from this discussion of evil is important, primarily because in the context of conflict resolution, the framework of evil does not allow for resolution in the same manner as do other forms of violence. Indeed,

by assuming the framework of evil, whether applied to the terrorist or the act of terrorism, the conflict becomes removed from the context in which it arose. And the first step in conflict resolution is the rooting of the conflict within its underlying causes and history. There must be proactions, some more effective than others, which can be taken to mitigate the prevalence of terrorism. Because, historically, civilizations rose and fell alongside terrorism, does not preclude the ability to effectively counter terrorism.

Politics in a Name

The very act of deeming a violent action as terrorism, or an organization as terrorist rather than revolutionary or insurgent, is political. The common phrase that one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter leads to the impression that terror is little more than a matter of opinion. This cliché does accurately highlight the political dimension to the term, in so much as, political action is self-interpretative and terrorism is the execution of an act designed for public interpretation. While, accurately drawing attention to the political uses and potential for abuse of the term terrorist, this dangerously leaves the impression that terrorists rightly claim to represent not only a legitimate cause, but a genuine movement of the masses. This facile depiction of terrorism fails to examine the real distinctions between terrorism and other forms of violence. Terrorism in this research excludes terror perpetrated by the State, not because States do not commit actions that meet the criteria of terrorism, but because in this study the purpose of analyzing terrorism is in locating strategies for resolving conflicts in which terrorists play a role in challenging the State. Another study must be conducted to examine how non-state actors can and should combat State terrorism.

The literature on terrorism identifies terrorism almost universally as a weapon of the weak. While this is mostly true, State terrorism, for example, being a form of terror exercised by the power of the State, at first glance, seems to contradict this “truism”. Although, the real might of a State, forced to such subversive and desperate measures as terrorism, must be questioned. In analyzing terrorism, the primary emphasis, and the focus of this thesis, is non-state terrorism. Here, terrorism is most certainly a weapon of the weak, utilized, as noted by Gerard Chaliand in his book *The History of Terrorism*, as “...a way of creating power in the hope of seizing from below that which the state wields from on high” (Chaliand, 6). Terrorism, as exploited by the terrorist is a tool (Chaliand, 5). I. William Zartman articulates the utilization of this tool: “In their structurally weak position, they seize part of their opponent as their weapon, posing pain to make the powerful adversary give up” (Zartman 2008, 245).

Examining a Definition of Terrorism

Terrorism is an *organized* action of violence, perpetrated against *civilians* by *small groups* claiming to represent the masses, whose psychological effects are *intentionally* out of proportion to its purely physical results.
~Richard Rubenstein¹

There are, as misfortune would have it, as many definitions of terrorism as there are terrorist organizations. Most authors, terrorist authorities like Mark Juergensmeyer and Bruce Hoffman included, begin this task by turning to the English language’s most trusted advisor, the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This definition, with its singular association with the French Revolution, offers more information for etymologists than

¹ Rubenstein, Richard E. *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World*. New York: Basic, 1987. Print. P. xvi

those interested in understanding terrorism and its nature. The word itself came into fruition in reference to the Jacobins and their “Reign of Terror” during the French Revolution. The word terrorism was cemented into the English language because it filled a conceptual gap, articulating the idea of a state of fear created to achieve a political goal. Scholars have been quick to retroactively apply the term to religious organizations, in particular, stretching back to antiquity.

A definition of terrorism must possess several important components. First, it must be broad enough to define more than a single occurrence, organization or person. Second, a definition must convey in a relevant manner the purpose of terrorism, while also encapsulating its unique nature; that is the essence that separates terrorism from warfare, murder and assassination.

In his 1987 Book, *Alchemists of Revolution*, Richard Rubenstein offers the definition of terrorism thus: “...politically motivated violence engaged in by small groups claiming to represent the masses... Terrorism, if you like, is a kind of crime that aspires to become warfare” (Rubenstein 1987, xvi-xvii). Warfare, as Voltaire declares, amounts to socially sanctioned mass violence². Terrorism is socially unacceptable, attempting to be legitimate—an aspiration not entirely unattainable to terrorist organizations.

Rubenstein’s definition of terrorism offers concise criteria by which to determine terrorism, something at which many definitions of terrorism fail. The initial, and most neglected feature of this definition is the specific articulation that terrorism is first, and primarily, political violence. In contrast, contemporary thinking regards political

² “It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.” Voltaire

motivations in terrorism as negligible. In fact many examinations of acts of terrorism obsessively treat religion as the primary motivation for terrorism. A second important feature of this definition is the recognition that terrorists are, in fact, small groups. Violence undertaken by a majority has the revolutionary clout terrorists hope to generate. The size of the organization, and not only its strategic use of violence, has bearing on the categorization and legitimization of the movement.

Those who are convinced of the sincerity with which many organizations currently use terrorism to achieve apparently religious aims will critique Rubenstein's definition in two ways. The first is to observe the time in which it was written. The second is the exclusivity of defining terrorist organizations as political corps. In a trend predicted by Max Weber, most academics in the mid-20th century believed religion to be on its way to obscurity. The Cold War period offered the height of political thinking in which "God was dead" (Hoover, 1-2). It is in the post-Cold War geopolitical order where God has been revealed as a persisting player in the motivation of men. This criticism would be mistaken; indeed, in many cases religion offers a rhetorical cloak in which to disguise the terrorists' objectives. Hindsight offers the clarity that religion never truly faded from politics; it was merely subjugated and suppressed during the sixty-year titanic standoff of political ideologies.

This is not to dismiss the role that religion plays in spurring conflict and terrorism. It is rather to draw attention to the fact that religions, when combined with conflict to create terrorism, is treated as the sole variable in triggering the conflict. Religion undoubtedly plays an important role in defining the nature of terror and war,

and, as such, the particular methods by which religions are used and manipulated require analysis. Frequently it can be found that religion is bound to political aims in a toxic web. It is important to question the method by which all terrorist organizations affiliated with religion are classified. The manner in which religion functions in relation to the terrorism of the Irish Republican Army, the Taliban and Aum Shinrikyo, is different. Treating the groups as similarly defined by religious motivation inhibits an effective response to their acts of terrorism, and in the case of the IRA and the Taliban, limits the possibilities for resolution. Thus a heavy emphasis must be placed on the nature of the relationship a terrorist organization has to a particular religion.

According to the US Code, terrorism “means an activity that... appears to be intended to (i) intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of an assassination or kidnapping” (Chomsky, 16). This is an effective definition for understanding how governments interpret terrorism. However, it does not allow for the in-depth analysis of the nuances of terrorist actions and motivations necessary to determine when it is appropriate to negotiate with terrorists and how that is done. Within the abundance of definitions of terrorism, there are two major theories: those that favor broad encompassing definitions and those that favor very narrow and particular definitions.

Despite the coining of the term “terrorism” in response to the “reign of terror” during the French Revolution, terrorism is not a creation of the 18th century. It is also not a neoteric device of the 21st century. “Terrorism is above all a tool or, if you will, a technique” (Chaliand, 5). For the purpose of this paper, terrorism is best understood—

not as a monolith—as a pluriform. This understanding takes the best from both theories; terrorism as a whole is understood in broad terms and is then systemized. A broad definition of terrorism refers to the tool itself and its qualities, while the specifications relate to how that tool is utilized. When combined with the definition offered by Rubenstein, the definition supplied by philosopher Raymond Aron in his book *Peace and War*, “An action of violence is labeled ‘terrorist’ when its psychological effects are out of proportion to its purely physical results” (Aron, 170), forms the basis of the definition of terrorism used in this paper. Thus, terrorism is an *organized* action of violence, perpetrated against *civilians* by *small groups* claiming to represent the masses, whose psychological effects are *intentionally* out of proportion to its purely physical results.

This is a deliberately broad definition. However, it notably excludes guerilla warfare, which is globally viewed as a legitimate tactic in warfare, and is therefore separate from terrorism. This does not preclude guerrilla forces from using terrorist tactics or vice versa, merely differentiates the two. The first categorization within this definition is to distinguish between State terrorism and what Jeff Goodwin terms “oppositional” terrorism. Oppositional terrorism is non-state terrorism—or anti-state terrorism—meaning the actors are not associated with the State, which uses, “...the strategic use of violence and threats of violence by an oppositional political group against civilians and noncombatants, and is usually intended to influence several audiences” (Goodwin, 2028). These two categories, separating State terrorism from oppositional terrorism create the largest categories of terrorism. Within this research, State terrorism, while acknowledged, is not the primary focus. Primary emphasis focuses upon the

categories of oppositional terrorist movements when combined with religion.

There is general acceptance of the differentiation between State and non-State terrorism, although some political scholars do not count State actions as terrorism. However, within the category of oppositional terrorism, there is much debate whether there are important distinctions, and if so, what those distinctions are. It is paramount to make clear distinction among different types of oppositional terrorist groups for the purpose of identifying not only which terrorist organizations will negotiate, but also how that negotiation process can succeed.

In determining which organizations will, or will not negotiate, it is important to define and outline two more categories: nihilistic terrorism and “traditional” terrorism. Each of these terms can apply to either State or oppositional terrorist movements and are primarily concerned with motivation which—while motivation cannot be known fully in a “true” sense—can be interpreted through action and rhetoric. Nihilistic terrorism is defined as having apocalyptic goals and “for whom violence has become a perverted form of self-realization...” (Neumann, 129). Under this definition it is possible for a government to adopt apocalyptic mentality in the utilization of terror, just as it is possible for oppositional terrorists to have this approach. “Traditional” terrorism refers to organizations that are more political in motivation and view terrorism as the only means to enact the change they seek (Neumann, 129). It is possible for both secular and religious terrorist organizations to belong to the traditional form of terrorism, while it is more likely that a nihilistic organization be spurred by religious ideologies and intentions. For this reason, it is argued in the literature that “traditional” terrorism is the category of

terrorism from which the pool of organizations with whom it may be possible to negotiate is derived. This being stated, it remains possible for an organization to evolve or shift from a nihilistic approach to a “traditional” approach, and of course, the reverse is also true.

New Versus Old Terrorism

Traditional terrorists are assumed to be the groups with whom it is most likely to have successful negotiations, referring to modern terrorist organizations originating before religion became a central inspiration for terrorism. By some accounts, this phase begins with the Iranian Revolution—placing religion back at the forefront of the political sphere—and became more common in the post-Cold War period. In his essay “The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism”, David Rapoport cites modern terrorism as beginning in Russia in the 1880’s. This is an interesting and compelling origin for today’s terrorists. In offering a longer historical period of examination, Rapoport reveals trends in terrorism that contextualize events and escalations which might otherwise appear as having emerged arbitrarily.

Categorizing terrorist organizations is a difficult task. Due to the nature of the phenomenon, terrorist organizations are unique to the conflict in which they emerge. Emphasis is, reasonably, placed upon studying the organization itself. What is lost in this strategy, and offered by Rapoport’s study, is a vision of the larger context of the political climate of the period the terrorist organization occupies. The propensity to examine current events—and to treat them as a novel occurrence—is present in terrorism studies particularly because each attack and each organization is, in a sense, new. Combined

with Rapoport's finding that waves of terrorism last at least a generation (Rapoport, 47), it is easy to recognize why the rise of religious terrorism, culminating in the 9/11 attacks, inspires a theory of the "new" terrorism as distinct from earlier modern terrorists.

The Anarchist wave of terror of the 1880's marks Rapoport's first wave of modern terror because it represents "the first global or truly international terrorist experience in history" (Rapoport, 47). Thus, Rapoport defines the modern age by its globalization—a trend that increases and accelerates with technology. The following three waves—the anticolonial wave, the "New Left" wave, and the religious wave—maintain an international aspect, justifying their categorization in this interpretation of modern terror (Rapoport, 47).

Classification based on waves is credible because it does not require every group within a time period to fit a specific model of terrorism. Indeed, the waves overlap and some organizations are outlived by their wave while others outlast their wave, remaining as a relic in the present. Including the historical nature of modern terrorism allows a perspective of transience in the present: what is occurring today will not remain for perpetuity. A historical grounding also offers a solid framework for interpreting the rise of the current situation in a manner that focusing on individual organizations in individual conflicts does not.

What should be apparent is that each wave of terror is a dark mirror image of the legitimate political struggles of the era. Each wave of terror, beginning with the Anarchist wave, represents a violent outburst of the larger political conflict. That the conflict is in some cases both national and international at the same time is characteristic

of the modern age. For example, the third wave, “New Left”, was spurred by the Vietnam War (Rapoport, 56), and was driven by the transcendent ideologies of the Cold War. Thus, organizations like the Red Brigades in Italy belong to their national struggle as well as to the larger geopolitical debate—war—concerning the order of the political sphere.

In examining contemporary terror it should not be a surprise that terrorism is imbued with religion, not when so many political parties around the globe are running platforms on religious values. It is not only in the minds of terrorists that religion has increased in importance. The process of globalization has accelerated greatly and peoples around the world are experiencing the effects, be they in the ethnic composition of their neighborhood or the acute interconnected nature of their local economy. Religion, as an apparently timeless institution, has the ability to offer, especially in time of radical change, constancy and direction. Because religion is a living practice, it is recreated to fit the needs of the present. Religion exists as people live and experience it; for all the timelessness of the teachings and traditions, each generation interprets them, values them, and lives them anew. In religion individuals may find a source of opposition to what an individual might perceive as negative social institutions.

The promise of security in the face of extreme upheaval, signified by a prophesized Armageddon, combined with the illusion of social freedom attracted certain individuals to Aum Shinrikyo and played a role in encouraging them to accept “truths” they would otherwise have rejected as absurd and dangerous. Mark Juergensmeyer interviewed Takeshi Nakamura, a former member of Aum Shinrikyo. Before joining

Aum, Nakamura had experimented with other religions and been particularly interested in Zen Buddhism (Juergensmeyer, location 2240). Nakamura was drawn to Aum by a promise of change within otherwise uncompromising and rigid Japanese society. Attracted only to spiritual succor, he sought reform and a mode of social change. As a person failing in his personal and professional life within the Japanese system (Juergensmeyer, location 2240), he was willing to welcome the idea of an impending Armageddon. An Armageddon would wipe away society as well as his failures. This illusion would be particularly powerful when combined—as it is in Aum—with the promise of a path to survival in the post-apocalyptic world.

That Islam has played a leading role in religious terrorism does not indicate a more profound violent nature than any other religion. Examined within the context of Islamic societies, which are experiencing tremendous change—and have been long before the advent of the so-called Arab Spring—the rise in violent Islam reflects the high level of uncertainty in the future organization of the Muslim world, and the perception that Islam is being dominated by Western forces.

Emerging among a particular set of political and modern dynamics, Islamism and its extreme and violent cousin, Islamic terrorism, “...can be seen as both a product of modernization and a thoroughly modern critique of modernity” (Gunning, 377). Religion has emerged as an antidote for what is perceived as a corrupt system, because religion offers an escape from sentiments of shame and guilt through purification and ritual (Rubenstein 2003, 148). “The use of terrorism might even be an attempt to use an

idealized past that never existed as an expression of the threat that is felt to be emanating from globalization” (Duyvesteyn, 446).

Another interpretation of modern terrorism begins in 1968, marked by the hijacking of an El Al commercial airliner by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), an organization which, at the time, was one of the six groups forming the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLO) (Hoffman 2006, location 935). This history of terrorism classifies terrorist organizations more by tactics than by motivation and ideology. Although, since this thinking has largely been used by proponents of “new” terrorism as a radically distinct category breaking with terrorism until the 1990’s, a large focus is placed on religious ideology, if not political ideology.

The intent of the El Al hijacking was to barter passengers for imprisoned cohorts of the hijackers (Cooper, 51). This incident differs from terrorist hijackings before July 22, 1968, as well as present day terrorist attacks. First, unlike hijackings prior to the El Al incident, the purpose was not to divert the plane to another destination but rather, as already highlighted, to initiate a negotiation. This distinction breaks the trend of terrorist activity before 1968 and is marked as the inception of a period of terrorist activity that continues to evolve until today (Hoffman 2006, location 935). Secondly, the airline El Al was chosen for specific symbolic reasons (Hoffman 2006, location 942). While the civilians on the plane were unrelated to the source of the grievances leading to the hijacking, the airline itself was representative of Israel and the State the terrorists wanted to both negotiate with and harm. The use of a national symbol for the Israeli State served a third purpose: creating a crisis in which the Israeli government was forced to negotiate

with the terrorists (Hoffman 2006, location 942). Forcing the Israeli State into communication with the organization, against previous statements and policy, resulted in the terrorist organization appropriating more power than it had previously wielded. The relative success of the hijacking, especially in garnering international attention via the media to the plight of the Palestinians, resulted in a shift in the nature of terrorist attacks which constitutes the character of contemporary terrorism.

The choice of a symbolic or “theatrical” target is a break from the strategy utilized by terrorists immediately before 1968. However, with Rapoport’s longer view of history, symbolic targets chosen for their performance value has antecedents in his first wave of terrorism perpetrated by Anarchists (Rapoport, 56). The 1968 hijacking loosely aligns with the start of the New Left wave identified by Rapoport. Symbolic targeting has remained since 1968 a central element to terrorist attacks regardless of the organization. Excluding Rapoport’s anticolonial second wave of terrorism, which lasted from roughly 1920 until the 1960’s (Rapoport, 47), symbolic targeting and an element of performance or theater in terrorism is characteristic of modern terrorism.

The El Al hijacking has three defining characteristics. The first is the deviation from past patterns in hijackings; the second is the development of a strategy for gaining power, as well as attention, through the strategic use of symbolism; the third—creating a forced negotiation—has mostly fallen out of favor in the terrorist play book except for a few isolated incidents, the Belslan school hostage crisis being the most prominent in recent years. Following the El Al hijacking, it is possible to outline three general stages in the evolution of terrorist attacks and their strategies. The first exploited the ability of

the PFLP to drive Israel to the bargaining table. Terrorism in the 1970's was characterized by "events of duration", frequently hostage crises or hijackings which were designed to be negotiated (Cooper, 51). While violent, these attacks were governed by cost-benefit rationality (Cooper, 51). These events escalated by the 1980's, and terrorists no longer used the attack itself as the forum to achieve their goals. These attacks were much quicker and came with little warning: car bombs, and the unreserved bombing of airliners such as Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in 1988. Such events are termed "conclusive events" for their duration is too short to conduct any counterterrorism response to the attack (Cooper, 51).

The 1990's gave rise to terrorism as distinct from the previous two decades due to the creation of alliances and cooperation between terrorist networks and organized crime (Cooper, 51). In these three stages of evolution, two characteristics remain constant: the use of symbolic targets and the increasing use of technology and modernization to create ever more transnational networks. Internationalization of terrorism increased after the El Al hijackings, spearheaded by the PLO (Hoffman 2006, location 955). Corresponding to modern technology, terrorist organizations began to adapt evermore-dramatic tactics in various countries to spread their message and increase their power by threatening a wider range of societies, governments and peoples.

"New" terrorism, as it has been called, is predominantly separated from traditional terrorism as symbolized by the El Al hijacking, for several reasons. The most dramatic characteristic of this new terrorism is its "spectacle" nature designed to entertain the media and touch the world, in addition to being unusually deadly. "New" terrorists

are also allegedly comprised of loosely organized networks that act transnationally, are inspired by religion, and kill indiscriminately and in greater numbers (Duyvesteyn, 443). It is more compelling to identify religious terrorism as merely another “wave” within the era of modern terrorism, thus refraining from treating religious terrorism as radically new. Conceptualizing religious terrorism this way allows for recognition of the trends that remain constant or similar, and those that are unique to the wave.

The break, supposedly separating terrorism pre-1990’s from today, is not a natural distinction to make. Of the characteristics in the 1968 hijacking, the rational choice to use a national symbol, such as a national airline, is not only the most defining characteristic of the event; it is the most enduring. Even after terrorism has ceased to seek negotiations and turned to “conclusive events” (Cooper, 51), the symbolic nature of targets, timing and acts remain central. Claiming that “new” terrorists do not choose their targets for symbolic reasons is inaccurate. The Kasumigaseki subway station in Tokyo is extremely symbolic being located at the heart of the governmental district and near the Imperial Palace (Juergensmeyer, location 2175). Attacking the transportation system so near to the center of the government represents not only an attack on the government itself, but many facets of modern life. As an apocalyptic organization, Aum Shinrikyo believed not only that the government was corrupt, but that the very organization of modern life was depraved. The act was aimed at undermining those pillars of society upon which the layperson relies.

Furthermore, the roots of supranational terrorism are evident beginning in 1968, suggesting that rather than being “new”, transnational terrorist networks are the

culmination of a fusion of both technology and modernization. Societies, governments, and individuals increasingly live in a globalized community; it is not particularly peculiar to observe the same trends in terrorists. A fair interpretation reveals that in a tradition breaking with the political motivations of the 1970's and 1980's; religious incitement to terrorism appears a reasonable characteristic by which to separate terrorists. Defining religious terrorism as "new", however, is misleading, especially because prior to the 19th century, religious ritual was the only justification for terrorism (Cooper, 35). Likewise, religious components have been present in many terrorist organizations, even those predominantly political in their objectives, because religion often overlaps with nationality and or ethnicity (Rapoport, 61). The nature of the increase in severity of terrorist attacks, however, is worth examination. In reaction to the perceived rising death toll of terror attacks, commentators have observed Brian Jenkins' 1975 declaration that "terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening and not a lot of people dead" (Hoffman 2002, 306) to be obsolete in relation to contemporary terror organizations. However, "it is also a truism that the more people are dead, the more will be watching" (Duyvesteyn, 448).

It is from early modern terrorists the phrase "propaganda by deed", emerged to provide a primitive theory of terrorism (Crenshaw, 42). These anarchists, who championed the name "terrorist", began the first stage of the evolution of terrorism by convoluting violence and speech as resistance and inspiration for revolt. Terrorism is distinguished by its intention to influence an audience; the attack is intended to convey a message. It is to whom that message is directed and the reaction it is intended to elicit

which needs to be examined. Media play an important role in the performance of the terrorist act. When terrorists were attempting to negotiate with governments, timing a bombing so that it would headline the evening news served a strategic purpose. Walter Laqueur termed this phenomenon “nuisance terrorism” (Cooper, 34). This term depicts terrorist attacks that were content with merely causing damage, disruption and fear and were content with limited killing and limited goals and risks diminishing the significance of even a single life lost.

These types of terrorists acted within Rapoport’s first three waves of terrorism. The fourth wave, corresponding not only with a rise in religious motivation but globalization and technological advances, appears unsatisfied with limitations of any kind. It is worth asking, “...whether the terrorists have changed or whether the world has changed in which they operate” (Duyvesteyn, 448). As the media have increased to a 24-hour news cycle reaching a global audience, terrorists have expanded their witnesses, but they have also expanded their competition. Making headline news on a global station requires more dramatic spectacle. The increase in violence and killing in terrorist attacks cannot be explained by one motivational factor; indeed there must be many. However, when the objective of an organization becomes supranational, it is reasonable to believe, regardless of the symbolism and location of the target, the audience must be likewise supranational. As a spectacle, designed as a crude unsettling form of entertainment manufactured in a television age, it is as Mark Juergensmeyer observes, “When we who observe these acts take them seriously—are disgusted and repelled by them, and begin to

distrust the peacefulness of the world around us—the purposes of this theater are achieved” (Juergensmeyer, locations 2631-2632).

Examining the reaction intended, it is possible to understand, to some extent, an increase in lethality as part of a strategic choice. If the body count is not necessary to gain attention then why the increase in the death toll? Proponents of the theory of new terrorism claim that part of its distinctive feature is the propensity of “new” terrorists to kill indiscriminately and in larger numbers than traditional terrorists. This theory is fortified with the increasing threat of terrorist exploitation of weapons of mass destruction. Such utilizations have been rare, although that does not preclude use in the future. When rejecting the notion of new terrorism as a significant break in the evolution of modern terrorism, it is necessary to account for increased death toll while cameras were trained on terrorist. Instead of further questioning the role of the media, it is better to ask what can be gained by killing in larger numbers. Envisioning a rational actor rather than what Bruce Hoffman calls an “irrational homicidal maniac” (Cooper, 35), the question emerges, what are the objectives of a terrorist attack? The answer, upon examination is: to illicit a response.

From whom is this response intended to be elicited? Writing at a point of transition between Rapoport’s third and fourth wave of modern terrorism, Rubenstein articulates how terrorists view not only themselves, but also their attacks. Terrorists are would-be revolutionaries who, having lost faith in their ability to persuade the masses to revolt by nonviolent means, turn to violence to incite the revolution (Rubenstein 1987, 10). Recognizing their relatively weak position, terrorists have observed, from the failure

and success of their predecessors, that their attacks alone cannot ignite the masses to meet their intention. The increase in the casualty rate of terror attacks is the result of a shift in the target audience.

The target of the terrorist's rage is a system represented by the people (Rubenstein 1987, 10). "In a sense, they are twice betrayed—first by the ruling class (especially reformers who make radical change within the system seem possible), then by the masses themselves" (Rubenstein 1987, 10-11). The terrorist's task is to awaken the masses and bring them to their cause. "...[I]f small group attacks can provoke powerful governments to retaliate against the terrorist's suppliers, sympathizers, and ethnic brethren, the state itself will accomplish the terrorists' main task" (Rubenstein 1987, xvii). Higher casualty rates can thus be explained by the desire of the terrorist to engage their opponent governments in a conflict in which they were not previously involved. Much like the El Al hijacking forced the Israeli government to negotiate directly with the terrorists, religious terrorists, stunningly exemplified by 9/11, have succeeded in forcing governments of Western democracies onto a field of battle they had previously eschewed in the form of the declaration of the War on Terror. While Osama bin Laden declared war against the United States, that declaration created a one-sided war until President Bush returned the proclamation.

Terrorists need to frame themselves as militants embattled in a war in order to justify their violence. "...[W]ar is not only the context for violence but also the excuse for it" (Juergensmeyer, location 3163). Osama bin Laden passed his fatawa against the United States months before the American embassy bombings (Juergensmeyer, location

3071). His war remained in a purgatory-like state until, in the wake of 9/11; the media and the American president reacted, just as he had hoped. “The assaults themselves were described by the American media not as a criminal act by a small rogue band, but precisely as bin Laden wanted them to be perceived: as an act of war” (Juergensmeyer, locations 3077-3078). The United States was now engaged openly in a war that the terrorists’ had framed, and the US found itself fighting on terrorist terms in Afghanistan.

Mark Juergensmeyer coins the term “cosmic war” to describe a conflict in which the mythology and imagery of the conflict is framed within the context of a metaphysical battle between good and evil (Juergensmeyer, location 3097). The very nature of conflicts that can be characterized by cosmic war makes them particularly intractable, because the conflict transcends the personal and translates to the social and spiritual planes. The war is framed as taking place not only in the militants’ lifetimes, but for thousands of years, past and present. Juergensmeyer applies cosmic war to religious terrorism. While it is certainly a defining aspect of religious terrorism—one which makes religious terrorists particularly difficult to engage with—that “religious images of divine struggle” are used in the pursuit of worldly political battles, the basic idea of cosmic war does not necessarily apply only to religious terrorism. It is possible for politically ideological organizations to frame their conflict as a battle between good and evil without invoking a religion.

Not a prerequisite for cosmic war, religion will easily escalate a conflict onto the cosmic stage. “[E]xtremism in religion has led to violence at the same time that violent conflicts have cried out for religious validation” (Juergensmeyer, locations 3417-

3418). Regardless of the directionality between religion and violence, the two are intertwined; cosmic war results in a dangerously uncompromising position.

Juergensmeyer postulates that warring positions are by nature “all-or-nothing” (Juergensmeyer, location 3143) and “bellicose” (Juergensmeyer, location 3155). It is true that traditional and historical wars between States are fought when political measures fail or are foregone in light of a blind “certitude” in the justness of a cause. Yet, the fact remains that non-cosmic conflicts have ended either in total victory and defeat or through negotiations. A cosmic war by Juergensmeyer’s definition places eternity as the timetable in which good triumphs over evil, intimating that no defeat, regardless of how devastating, will hinder the combatants, because they simply interpret the loss as one in a battle outlasting their lifetime. The Taliban have a phrase encompassing this idea, “The Americans may have the, but we have the time” (Afsar, 64).

The framing of a conflict as a cosmic war has profound implication upon the potential for resolution and the approaches to resolution necessary to de-escalate the conflict. Juergensmeyer outlines three situations where worldly conflicts lead to the invocation of religion and are transformed into cosmic war. In the first situation “the struggle is perceived as a defense of basic identity and dignity”; in the second, the loss of the struggle is perceived as untenable; in the third, a struggle has reached an impasse and cannot be won in “real time or real terms” (Juergensmeyer, locations 3419-3432). Noting the presence of any one or all three potential triggers in a conflict involving religious terrorists, who frame the conflict as cosmic, can help determine the appropriate way to approach the terrorists and resolution.

The orchestrators of 9/11 were clearly not content with the limited killing and limited goals characterized by nuisance terrorism. Regardless of representing an escalation of trends in terrorism present since 1968—or at the very least since the 1990’s began witnessing increasing religious motivation in terror attacks—the events were interpreted by many, including Jessica Stern, terrorism expert at Harvard’s Kennedy School, as distinguishable from other terrorist attacks by belonging to a new order of terror defined by its catastrophic nature (Rubenstein 2003, 141). Stern suggested, “Osama bin Laden’s objectives are really expressive, not instrumental” (Rubenstein 2003, 141)³. In the aftermath of such a tragedy, writing off the actions of Al Qaeda as more expressive than strategic and “difficult to understand” (Rubenstein 3002, 142)⁴ ignores the precedent set by the 1998 embassy bombings and the attack on the USS Cole in 2000. Al Qaeda was an organization with which the American security apparatus was familiar. However, rather than examining the nature and reasoning behind the escalation, experts determined this action may symbolize an organization difficult with which to bargain (Rubenstein 2003, 141). This reasoning argues that an increase in killing corresponds with a decrease in strategic goals. Al Qaeda is an organization formulated around the tenets of a cosmic war. They viewed themselves as at war with Western forces long before the War on Terror was recognized. In war, normal escalation dictates evermore-extreme measures as the war progresses in order to drive the enemy to concede. Increasing deaths, as well as forcing the US into open warfare, are escalations in the

³ Cited from Rubenstein 2003, p. 142. Carter, Ashton. “Understanding Terrorism,” *Harvard Magazine* (January-February 2002):38

⁴ Ibid.

pattern of attacks perpetrated by Al Qaeda. The arbitrariness of deaths in terrorist attacks should not be conflated with arbitrary decisions causing those deaths.

Hoffman asks an important question as to whether all 19 September 11 hijackers knew they were on a suicide mission. While this is an important question for psychological studies, it is relatively unimportant when examining the larger question of how to counter terrorism. Surely, if a mind is unstable, as Barry Cooper suggests in his theory of pneumopathology, it is at risk for manipulation by any force, be that psychopathic or “patriotic”. Understanding the personal level of human violence is indeed important, but no realist attempt to reduce occurrences of terrorism, or the use of terrorism as a political tool, can operate on such a micro scale. It is far more effective to recognize the rational aspect of the terrorist and terrorism strategies.

In his book *Political Religions, or an Analysis of Modern Terrorism*, Cooper offers the example of Manhattan as a modern incarnation of the tower of Babylon. This is offered as proof of the deep religious motivation that spurred the September 11 attacks (Cooper, 8). While the Tower of Babylon is offensive to God in both the Bible and the Koran, and while attaching religious purpose to the hijackings may help to legitimate the actions for a few and give vindication to the pious, the explanation of the destruction of the Twin Towers as a religious gesture to a God who despises the city as a center of licentiousness and hypocrisy is an inadequate explanation. For one, this explanation of the attacks on 9/11 explains only one of the three targets. What then is the purely religious motivation of the attack on the Pentagon or the assumed attempt on the White House? Indeed, hindsight and knowing the religious fanaticism of the organization that

carried out the attacks, makes identifying Manhattan as Babylon straightforward. But would not the skylines of any major city serve? If it were purely a religious motivation, would not the attack have been carried out where the affront to the religion was most immediate? If Osama bin Laden were searching to destroy a modern Babylon, would not a major city in a Muslim country be a more offensive skyline of corruption?

The targets of the 9/11 attacks were of strategic importance, not merely acts of psychotic religious perversion or a random expression of rage. Hatred of America, and the justification for terrorist attacks against its military, embassies and civilians, originate in the perceived desecration of the Holy Land in Saudi Arabia and the presence of the American military. Attacking the Pentagon, while an act of terrorism, remains a strategic target in what is perceived by Al Qaeda as a war. As an economic powerhouse, the World Trade Center was a key symbol of the economic imperialist power of the United States and the West. Thus, detecting religious symbolism, religious fervor in acts of terrorism does not preclude the presence of rational political strategy and thought in the intent. It is possible for more than one purpose to be served in a military strategy, and so it is likewise possible for more than one purpose to be served in terrorist strategy.

Chapter 2: Religion & Terrorism

The act of terrorism is itself political because even in the most extreme religiously driven organizations, such as Aum Shinrikyo, the objective is to influence the Order of Men, that is, to bring about a human order so as to spur or encourage the act of God. There are two world orders: the Kingdom of God, being of the spiritual world, and the Order of Men, being of the political order. Thus, any attempt to influence the Order of Men is a political act with the aspirations of spirituality. Finding religious justification or inspiration for acts of terrorism does not make them legitimate religious actions. Whether motivated by political or religious ideology, attempting to refine the social structures of human life is a political act. Thus terrorism is the most violent of political action in that it seeks to destroy more than it seeks to build.

Islamic terrorism is particularly political because it recognizes no separation of religion and the State. Islam emerged as and combined “temporal and spiritual activity in a single act of imperial-religious founding” (Cooper, 78). The binding of the political and the spiritual orders clashes with the evolution of Western political systems and has sometimes been treated as, “both anathema and inherently threatening” (Gunning, 375). Rather than attempting to stop terrorists after the fact, acknowledging this fusion and its resulting impact on the understanding of Islamic religious terrorist organizations such as

the Taliban can, in fact, offer a better approach to addressing the causes of the conflicts that create terrorism.

To Bring About the City of God

A new and somewhat hideous race of martyrs is now born. Their martyrdom consists in consenting to inflict suffering on others; they become the slaves of their own domination. For man to become God, the victim must abase himself to the point of becoming the executioner...

~Albert Camus, *The Rebel*

Tracing the origins of a positivist Western attitude toward religion and politics, *The City of God* creates the distinction between a spiritual City of God and the material Earthly City. The Christian scholar St. Augustine of Hippo's writings on the City of God respond to the sack of Rome which, as the center of the Christian Church, had profound implications for Christians. In this work Augustine clearly delineates the separation of the rules, laws and order of this "earthly world"—which he calls the perishing world of men—and the eternity of God's city. The effect of this is to separate politics from religions so decisively that political triumphs, or defeats, were not to be seen as reflections on Christianity itself, as Christianity was the domain of the Church, untouched by politics. "...[T]hose Romans were in an earthly city, and had before them, as the end of all the offices undertaken in its behalf, its safety, and a kingdom, not in heaven, but in earth—not in the sphere of eternal life, but in the sphere of demise..." (St. Augustine, locations 4454-4456). Christianity was predisposed to such a separation because its founding had no intention of creating a new political order, but a new way of living within the existing order. Embedded within Christianity is a divide between the things that are Caesar's and the things that are God's (Matthew 22:21). The political

order was respected and necessary, but was not of the same importance or longevity of the spiritual order. Comparatively, “In Islam there was no such painful choice [between God and Caesar]. In the Universal Islamic polity, as conceived by Muslims, there is no Caesar but only God” (Cooper, 79)⁵.

Without a conceptual gap between the two cities, creating a religious order on earth, is not the same as attempting to ascend to a Cosmic world order. It follows the logic that efforts to implement religious order on earth are the fulfillment of the religious destiny of Islam. The early successes of Islam were remarkable and coincided with huge strides in both the arts and the sciences. The successes of the Prophet were viewed as “an intrinsic aspect of Islam...proof of God’s favor” (Cooper, 78). The victories of the Prophet occurring in the earthly world were seen as victories of God (Cooper, 78). Thus, from the beginning Islam has served a dual purpose for its adherence. Here it is worthwhile to reflect on Foucault’s observation of Islam and its relationship to the Persian Empire:

At the dawn of history, Persia invented the state and conferred its models on Islam. Its administrators staffed the caliphate. But from this same Islam, it derived a religion that gave to its people infinite resources to resist state power. (Foucault)

The dawn of history refers to year one in the Islamic era, counted from the *hijra*, the exodus from Mecca to Medina. The start of this new era of human history thus begins with a “theo-pragmatic event” (Cooper, 76). From conception, Islam was both the State and a resistance against the State—as a spiritual connection to the Cosmic. To separate

⁵ Cited from Cooper, 79. Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *Islam in Modern History*, 31. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957

Islamic terrorism from secular terrorists is then inaccurate, because in the very core of the faith is a complicated relationship which involves the subtle and complex binding of religion and politics. Acknowledging this distinction between Islam and its fellow Abrahamic religions, it is possible to understand how the religion can be used and manipulated by terrorists to attempt to bring about the City of God on earth.

In exploring the relationship between religion and violence, René Girard discusses the invariable consequence of religious empiricism. Girard explains the logic that rationalizes radical religious interpretations and turns them into actions.

Whenever man is truly concerned with obtaining concrete results...he abandons abstract speculation and reverts to a mode of response that becomes increasingly cautious and conservative as the forces he hopes to subdue, or at least outrun, draw nearer...

[Religious] empiricism, however, can sometimes reach conclusions so utterly foreign to our own way of thinking and can show itself so narrow, inflexible and myopic in its attitudes that we are tempted to attribute its functioning to some sort of psychological malaise. Such a reaction leads us to regard primitive society as an "ailing" society; beside which our civilized society presents a picture of radiant health.

...On occasion, it is "civilization" that is sick; and because civilized society is the antithesis of primitive society, it now appears that the primitive sphere must be the healthy one (Girard, 32-33).

Modern religious terrorism certainly contains an element of reactions against modernization trends. In particular within Islam, the apparent domination of Western society over the Muslim world can pose a threat to those who interpret literally the Prophet and his spiritual decedents as destined to live the way God dictated and be visibly blessed (Cooper, 80). For those who utilize religion for empiricism, the relative domination of the West over Islamic countries appears incongruent with the spiritual promise. The terrorist is not necessarily the most exploited; the stereotype that he (or she)

is drawn mostly from the impoverished is inaccurate. Today, a terrorist can evolve from any segment of society, including those who at first glance appear to most benefit from interaction with modernized Western society.

Mahamud Abouhalima⁶, a member of the team that carried out the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 elaborated in detail about the misunderstanding Western prosecutors and journalists had about his life and his motivations (Cooper, 22).

“...Like his predecessors and his successors, never made any attempt to experience the spiritual realities of the West. They came to master Western technologies: how to fly airplanes, mix chemicals, or program computer. Such people knew nothing of the evolution of Western culture beyond their own direct experience of a milieu that was monolithic, hegemonic, and alien. Accordingly, their experience in the West was deeply divided. On the one hand, Islam provided them with a sense of spiritual direction and meaning, and Western technology in particular provided them with a means of succeeding in the world. That these two aspects of their life were at odds is indicated by a common myth from the early days of Islam: the Muslim and Arab conquests were evidence of God’s approval; how then, to bear the later success of the West?” (Cooper, 23)⁷

There is no list of the root causes of terrorism. Any grievance can be warped and nursed into a wound so great that, given a sufficient ideology which provides an external enemy—legitimate or imagined—who has perpetrated the initial and subsequent injuries,

⁶ “The soul,” he said, “the soul of religion, that is what is missing.” Without it, Abouhalima said, Western prosecutors, journalists, and scholars like myself “will never understand who I am.” He said that he understood the secular West because he had lived like a Westerner in Germany and in the United States. The seventeen years he had lived in the West, Abouhalima told me, “is a fair amount of time to understand what the hell is going on in the United States and in Europe about secularism or people, you know, who have no religion.” He went on to say, “I lived their life, but they didn’t live my life, so they will never understand the way I live or the way I think” (Juergensmeyer, locations 1517-1522).

⁷ Many Western commentators have been accused of an orientalist view of Islamic cultures in particular and of blending the broad swath of the earth and many people that construct modern Islam. As is evidenced by Abouhalima, and other terrorists, the temptation to view the West from an occidental perspective, exists as well.

can lead to terrorism. Important in understanding the relationship between the rise in religion as that ideology is recognition of the consequences modernization and globalization have on communities of people around the globe. Abouhalima depicts the void he himself experienced during his time in the West and used that as legitimation to destroy lives and society. In a culture he didn't understand he sought to explain it by externalizing the vapidness of the life he felt himself living. Religion for the terrorist promises triumph against whatever worldly problem is seen as oppressing them. Transferring the battle to the Cosmic plane, time, as well as real world success, become irrelevant. The attempt and endeavor itself become the objective. This would seemingly support the idea that religious terrorism does not seek real world change and is entirely preoccupied with the spiritual world. Islamic faith, however, in maintaining the union of religion and worldly governance, is able to wage these battles on earth. Indeed, a large portion of the malaise of the world is interpreted by fanatics as a failure of the world's political organs, particularly in Muslim countries, to follow the teaching properly. The motives of Aum Shinrikyo were transcendent; the motivations of the Taliban are more complexly woven between this world and the spiritual one.

Although this is not a study of how men become terrorists—indeed it is a study of almost the opposite, how to “unmake” terrorists—it is necessary to contemplate the idea of the terrorist as no more than an average person. Indeed, as Rubenstein finds,

Question: who is the terrorist? Answer: someone more like us than we ordinarily care to admit...And they are generally no crazier than you or I might be if some implacable authority robbed us of our land or turned our dream of a better life into ashes. (Rubenstein 1987, 5)

The terrorist is, indeed, a murderer. In examining many of the unquestioned truths surrounding contemporary discourse on terrorism, there is no apology for the leap made from failed political revolutionary to terrorist or the subsequent actions undertaken in pursuit of a radical change. “The reality that terrorists carefully avoid facing is that killing the innocent is inherently illegitimate” (Cooper, 40). The justifications for their actions proffered by terrorists often appear insane. Thus it is easy to understand why the terrorist is commonly thought of as “other”, as outside the majority population. It is as observed by Bruce Hoffman,

The terrorist is fundamentally an altruist: he believes that he is serving a "good" cause designed to achieve a greater good for a wider constituency—whether real or imagined—that the terrorist and his organization purport to represent. (Hoffman 2006, location 615)

The terrorist lives in an “imaginary reality” where his actions are understood in the altruistic, even heroic, context only he and a few others believe (Cooper, 48). The creation of this second reality and the psychological steps necessary to separate from reality and create such an imagined space result in a sort of spiritual disorder, termed by Eric Voegelin and Barry Cooper as “pneumopathology”—a disease of the spirit (Cooper, 40-41). The terrorist is the would-be revolutionary whose mass movement failed to materialize and who failed to quit (Rubenstein 1987, 6). It is in the stages after non-violent political action fails when the second reality justifying violence becomes a necessity and where pneumopathology overtakes the reason and rationality of reality. There is a fine line separating the terrorist from everyone else. It is a line defined by action, for there is no terrorism until the act has been committed. Yet, there is also the leap necessary for a mind to leave reality and construct a false image of the world in

which the murder of innocence is justified. The lines defining innocence and the legitimate uses and perpetrators of violence are likewise unclear and thin political constructions.

Terrorism is not a phenomenon of the modern era. Yet, with increasing globalization, terrorism has emerged as the ascendant national and global security concern of States and of citizens in the post-Cold War geopolitical order. Indeed, the prominence of terrorism as an international threat has produced the Global War on Terror (GWT), which by that name—or in its new incarnation as Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO)—amounts to the same thing: an effort to end terrorism and hunt down terrorists around the world. This has far reaching implications for conflict resolution. Conflicts are the breeding grounds of terrorism; each conflict is unique and each solution is, therefore, equally unique. The idea of treating all, or most, terrorist organizations in the same manner, with the same strategies, is problematic.

That terrorism began to dominate the public sphere and public discourse only after September 11, 2001, does not intimate the sudden appearance or coming of international terror. Nor does the holy veneer of the so-called Islamist terrorist organizations who have routinized suicide bombings on a nearly global scale, amount to a Holy-War in the vein prophesized by Samuel Huntington in his oft-referenced 1996 book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. However, Osama bin Laden himself is known to have depicted his war as a clash of civilizations.

Terrorists seek to bring about a revolution within a society they believe to be corrupt. The religious terrorist finds the answer for his society in the Cosmic order,

frequently determined to utilize violence to achieve spiritual ends. Islam has, however, emerged as the most prominent religion utilized by terrorists in this wave of terrorism. Because of Islam's relationship between the spiritual and the political, the Western delineation between secular and religious motivations do not hold. Indeed, because of the bridge between the City of God and the Earthly City, a war conceived as fought on a Cosmic plane not only has consequences in the real world, it is intended to bring about that religious actualization in the real world. Thus, Islamic terrorism, in as much as it does share aspirations with the other religious terrorists, and as symbolic as its actions frequently are, is also deeply concerned with the political order. The history of Islam is tracked with violence, as most religions are, and it is not toward other religions the violence is primarily directed. The primary source of violence concerns the nature of the political order on earth. "All Muslims agreed that God has chosen Muhammad, but who would choose his successor" (Cooper, 80). From its earliest beginnings, questions of profound religious meaning—who is the rightful leader of the faithful?—have left unanswered important political questions. Approaching Islamic terrorists as solely motivated and spurred by symbolic actions is inaccurate. If the conflict is fought on a cosmic plain, and evidence suggests this is how the "war" is perceived by terrorists, then the same battles which occurred centuries ago are still occurring. They are fought alongside modern conflicts.

"The democratic ideal is inconceivable without a significant measure of secularism" (Rapoport, 65). And in many circles of the more extreme forms of Salafi

doctrine, secular has become a swear word and denigration used against political foes.

Defining Religious Terrorism

This research has the primary objective of understanding the potential for resolving conflicts involving religious terrorists. And while this is not a study of the theoretic categorization of terrorism, the distinctions between religious terrorism—particularly in the conceptualization of a post 1968 context of terrorism, separating the ancestral roots of terrorism in various religions from Judaism to Hinduism from the modern incarnation of terrorism—and ethno-nationalist or political terrorism is important to the methods used to determine feasibility and practical methods of resolving the conflicts in which the terrorists are involved. Religious terrorism is a term generally utilized to describe a distinct category of political violence, violence perpetrated in the name of religion by religiously motivated militants (Gunning, 369).

Although seemingly apparent, the definition of religious terrorism is part of the obstacle to approaching religious terrorism in particular within a conflict resolution perspective. Most sources lump all terrorist organizations with a religious affiliation into the same classification, thus implying that the approach to each of the groups should be similar in as far as the religious aspects of the terrorist organization are concerned.

There are religious terrorist organizations; there are terrorist organizations in which religion plays an important role in the conflict in which they believe themselves to be involved, and there are religious organizations which use religion strategically. Many scholars, Juergensmeyer included, consider the Irish Republican Army to be a religious terrorist organization. While the conflict in Northern Ireland was, and remains, imbued

with religious rhetoric and tensions, careful analysis must observe that religion was but one of many factors in the conflict. Religion and religious rhetoric offer justification and identification. Religion was used as a strategic tool to mobilize and to define groups as well as to excuse violence, but religion was not the spark of the conflict. Conversely, when members of Aum Shinrikyo released sarin gas in the Tokyo subway on 20 March 1995, their explicit intent was to hasten the end of the world. Believing in the end times, members of Aum specifically used terrorism of nihilistic and cosmic purposes (Juergensmeyer, location 2175). The specific religious beliefs of the organization were the cause of the act of terror.

The problem, both conceptual and empirical, with the distinctions typically drawn between religious and secular terrorists is the misleading implications about the motives, and causes of terrorist organizations defined as religious (Gunning, 370). When examining the motivations as well as the actions of terrorist organizations, it is indeed possible to identify separate and distinct groupings of religious terrorists. Separating these organizations allows a more careful approach to resolving the conflicts in which terrorism arises.

Sacralization

The kingdom of God lives in men who live in the world, but it is not of this world. ~Eric Voegelin

The hypothesis has been put forward that a differentiation can be made between terrorist organizations influenced by religion in three ways. First, there are terrorist organizations that commit acts of violence for a religious purpose. These organizations believe that such violence serves a religious purpose and are enacted more as a religious

ritual than implemented as a strategy for gaining power and political influence (Juergensmeyer, location 2589). There are terrorist organizations in which religion plays a significant and important role, culturally, symbolically or in the identity of the combatants within the larger conflict from which terrorism has arisen. And there are terrorist organizations that use religion as a strategic tool in their “struggle” and from which religion can be removed without damaging the intent of the organization. An organization can easily, at different stages, occupy different criteria; the last two types are especially difficult to separate, except perhaps in specific examples. The primary distinction is that between extremism of ends as opposed to extremism of means. Because the means—terrorism—result in extraordinary destruction, it is sometimes assumed that the organization, particularly when it is affiliated with religion, has objectives of pure destruction as its ultimate aim.

The millennialism of Aum Shinrikyo offers an example of the first category of terrorism where violence is perpetrated for the explicit purpose of achieving religious ends. This organization meets the criteria of the definition of nihilistic terrorism, making it a unique category of terrorists. The charismatic leader of Aum, Master Asahara, preached an apocalyptic prophecy that would come to fruition in the form of a violent and destructive World War Three. The year 1997 and the end of the millennium were approximated as the beginning of this cataclysmic event. Key to the terrorist plots carried out by members of Aum, Asahara provided explicit details of how the End would commence. He even cited sarin gas explicitly as part of the attack (Juergensmeyer, location 2347). Separating Aum from other religious groups that await the apocalypse,

Master Asahara sought to change the religious prerequisite belief that “human beings do not have the ability to initiate a worldly apocalypse of history, because, in reality, the language of historical apocalypse is properly part of a speculation of divine rather than human activity...” (Cooper, 26). Asahara sought to abandon the “perishing world of Men” and to act entirely in the realm of the Cosmic, the spiritual. Rather than being satisfied with prophesizing, Asahara had to realize his prophesies (Cooper, 64). His actions then transcended the earthly world as he sought for a plan to initiate the apocalypse he himself prophesized (Cooper, 64). In this initiation, Asahara would directly influence the cosmic order; he no longer operated on the worldly plane. His ultimate aim was to bring about the destruction of the world in the form of an apocalyptic war; his more modest immediate aims were to carry out attacks that would precipitate such an event. For Asahara this was a religious duty and calling. The actions of Aum had no intent to affect worldly political order except perhaps to induce a state of paranoia that might plunge nations into war, and in so doing achieve religious actualization. This intent separates Aum Shinrikyo from a majority of other terrorist organizations that are considered religious.

The second category can be exemplified by the conflict in Northern Ireland, where religion played an important cultural, identity, and political marker in distinguishing the parties. This conflict offers an example of a cultural conflict more than a religious one, so much so that the conflict itself became part of the culture of certain portions of society in North Ireland. Catholicism, for the Republicans, played the role of an identity marker and potentially an identity mobilizer, yet it was not a primary cause of

the conflict. The motivation was not framed as attacking Protestants because Protestantism was unholy. The conflict was not about one religion proving its superiority. The language of that conflict was not religious in the same way in which contemporary religious terrorism is. Certainly—although the history reaches back to, and further than, the experience of the Irish under Cromwell—the violence of the Troubles was not religious in the same way the roots of the conflict were. What occurred from the 1960's through the 1990's in Ireland and England was not a modern incarnation of the European wars of religion. This becomes a primary distinction.

The Good Friday Agreement (GFA), or Belfast Agreement, of 1998 brought an official close to three decades of manifest physical violence, known as The Troubles, in Northern Ireland. In many ways the peace in Northern Ireland represents several successful lessons in conflict resolution, especially the attempts within the government to correct power inequities. Yet, the agreement has not resolved all of the systemic causes of the conflict⁸. The Six Counties continue to experience ongoing low levels of violence

⁸ Celia Cook-Huffman, in her article “The Role of Identity in Conflict”, identifies four main theoretical approaches to understanding the role of identity in conflict (Senehi, 26). Two of the theoretical approaches to identity concern John Burton's Basic Human Needs theory of the roots of protracted conflict. According to this theory, conflict is inevitable when a society fails to meet fundamental and universal needs of the population. Basic human needs are defined as “conditions or opportunities that are essential to the individual if he is to be a functioning and cooperative member of society...essential to the organization and survival of society” (Burton, 38). Identity is categorized as a basic human need and, as such, the denial of that need leads to conflict. Examining identity as a basic human need explains why the Good Friday Agreement has not resolved the roots of the conflict, even while it has met the overt political and economic goals of the communities. Because identity is a universal need, individuals and groups will go to great lengths to satisfy that need (Senehi, 24).

from paramilitaries⁹. This violence stems from the failure of the peace process to redress all of the inequities and polarities that ignited the conflict, particularly the underlying differences in the identities of the parties in conflict. The root of the conflict was, and remains, separate constitutional identities of the parties. There are dichotomous identities: Republicans, who view Northern Ireland as constitutionally part of the Republic of Ireland, and Unionists who view Northern Ireland as constitutionally part of the United Kingdom. Key to the analysis of negotiating with religious terrorists, Northern Ireland allows an examination of a case where negotiations were successful in ending terrorist violence. Of course any peace process must continue long after formal agreements are signed, thus accounting for the residual violence.

The ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland is rooted in the terms of the establishment of the independent Republic of Ireland. The Government of Ireland Act of 1920 ultimately led to the partition of the Irish island into the 26 southern counties of the Irish Republic and the 6 northern counties (Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone and Londonderry) that remained within the United Kingdom (Byrne, 5). The creation of this Irish Free State divided the country into the predominantly Catholic South and the predominantly Protestant North. Clear religious divisions frequently lead to an oversimplification of the conflict as an expression of religious sectarianism. However, the motivation of the violence during The Troubles and the continuation of the conflict in the

⁹ Parade season of 2012 has seen violent riots. As recently as September 2, 2012, up to 350 Loyalists/Unionists were involved in riots protesting a Republican parade. 47 officers were injured in the violence (“More Violence at Carlisle Circus, North Belfast”).

post-Good Friday period results from political motivations based on fundamental discordant political identities.

Political disparity in Northern Ireland stems from the structure of the government in Northern Ireland after the partition of the country was implemented. While officially part of the United Kingdom, the government of Northern Ireland, housed at Stormont, ran without interference from the British Government until 1972 (Byrne, 5). Prior to 1972, the Protestant Unionist majority used religious identity to institute populist policies that reinforced their political, economic and social superiority over the Catholic population of the region (Mac Ginty, 5). The government established discriminatory laws that affected the education, housing and employment of the Catholic population. The policies of the Protestant majority government created unjust systems that became ubiquitous in the lives of Catholics.

These systems created cycles of unemployment, poverty and social deviance such as vandalism and robbery, which later escalated to organized crime, within the mostly working-class Catholic population (Mac Ginty, 5). Thus, the denial of the Republican identity as belonging to the Republic of Ireland and the use of religion as the most salient identity in creating power structures align with dominant identity theory¹⁰.

¹⁰ The organization of Republican Catholics is representative of Ethnic/Communal Conflict outlined by Cook-Huffman. This branch of identity theory seeks to understand “how communal action is mobilized via collective identity for political purposes”(Senehi, 23). In the context of Northern Ireland, the Catholic minority was suffering from a variety of unjust systems that targeted the population because of their Catholic identity. These pressures on the community served to consolidate the Catholic Republican identity in order to mobilize the entire group to press for political change.

This asymmetrical relationship between the Catholic minority and the Protestant majority in which the Protestant government dictates the terms of the relationship between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, spurred the organization of Catholics to pursue a set of specific interests. Inspired by the Civil Rights movement in the United States, Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland began pressing for a redress of grievances they felt subjected to by the Protestant majority and British Government in the 1960's. What initially began as nonviolent nationalist demonstrations devolved into paramilitary warfare between the Catholic and Protestant communities; terrorism and violence became a part of everyday life and culture. The 1972 deployment of British troops to keep the peace aggravated the violence and by the 1990's, the British military was experiencing a mutually hurting stalemate in North Ireland which resulted in a negotiation process culminating in the Good Friday Agreement. Religion's role in North Ireland has been much stronger than just a manipulative strategy. However, its primary function has not been to turn the conflict from a worldly political struggle into an all-encompassing Cosmic battle. As a salient component of culture and identity in the conflict, religion in North Ireland presents an opportunity to examine how to disengage the radical extremism religions can evoke in their followers, particularly when those followers already perceive themselves as bound in conflict.

For illustration of the third category—the use of religion as a strategic tool in a larger conflict—examine the Caucasus region and the transformation of the centuries-old Chechen nationalist movement into an outlet of global jihad. The Chechen Wars of the 1990's disintegrated into Islamic terrorism as religion was utilized to attract foreign

support. When the modern wave of Chechen nationalism began in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was little to distinguish this bid for independence from the efforts in all Soviet and former Soviet countries. Although predominantly Sufi by the late 1980's, decades of Russification created a population that, "rarely followed strictly traditional, let alone fundamentalist, Islam...and few of them knew how to pray" (Bodansky, 20). The first Chechen war, which began in 1995, can be marked as the time when Islam was strategically introduced into the conflict with the explicit intention of luring foreign mujahedin to the side of the Chechens (Bodansky, 25). The co-opting of the Chechen nationalist movement illustrates how, by the 2000's the conflict was inexplicably mired in international terrorism and the perpetration of Jihad around the world. Islam, when first invoked by Chechen leaders, was intended to strengthen their cause against the Russians. While it did swell the ranks of the fighters, it changed the mission of the war altogether. It was in early 1995 that Dzhokar Dudayev, then president of the self-proclaimed Chechen republic, appealed to the Islamic community for assistance in the Chechen struggle against Russia (Bodansky, 25). In framing the war as a jihad, Dudayev was able to attract experienced Afghan and Arab mujahedin to fight (Bodansky, 28). Under the influence of the new fighters, the war in Chechnya increasingly became defined by terrorism. In addition, Chechnya was transformed into a central point for mujahedin drug and weapons smuggling, bolstering a robust crime network in the country (Bodansky, 29).

The Chechen case highlights another side of Islamic terror, one motivated more by money than by religious ideals. Much as the US and Pakistan sought to use the

mujahedin in the Afghan war without foreseeing the consequences, Dudayev did not fully comprehend the allies he invoked. Surely, in fighting to gain control of his country from another government he was not looking to release control to organizations with links to the ISI and Iran. This is, of course, a long view of the conflict in Chechnya. The motivations of individuals is not examined, and it is entirely possible that many actors saw Chechnya as another step in pursuing a global vision of the Islamic Caliphate. The motivations of the individuals who flocked to Chechnya heeding the call of a jihad against Russia—a call that for obvious reasons resonated with those mujahedin who in the wake of a crumbling Afghanistan found themselves increasingly challenged by the rising Taliban—is not as important as the reality. If the individual is motivated by religious inspiration, the long view of Chechnya reveals a strategic opportunity to capitalize on the power of religion to alter geopolitical power structures. Chechnya provided a strategically useful piece to transnational crime in a network that already included Pakistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey (Bodansky 29). There is undoubtedly Islamic flavor to the conflict in Chechnya, one which is not easily separated from the current climate. But it is important for the study of religion and terrorism—Islam and global terror more precisely—to note that jihad, as terrorist networks have invoked it, is not indigenous to the Chechen conflict. For conflict resolution, recognizing this relationship, and distinguishing it from a cause genuinely inspired by religion is central to resolution.

The boundaries between an organization where religion operates as a fundamental component of the conflict—as it does in North Ireland—where it is consciously annexed

as a tool in the ongoing conflict and where religion becomes the *raison d'être* for violence are often blurred. Where there is conflict among groups where religion serves as a salient identity and cultural marker, the conflict is more susceptible to the process of Sacralization—the integration of religion into the conflict causes both sides to begin to view the conflict as Cosmic war (Juergensmeyer, location 3439). Perhaps one of the better examples of how violence, terrorism in particular, can take religion through all three conditional states is the Arab-Israeli conflict, which few could argue in 2012 is not frequently depicted in the strongest Cosmic terms. Prior to the late 1980's this conflict was not described or envisioned by the combatants as particularly religious (Juergensmeyer, 3439).

Reflection on the Rise of Religious Terrorism

Even as terrorism has emerged as a dominant and pressing security concern in the 21st century, the general trend of terror attacks suggests that terrorist attacks themselves are becoming less frequent, even as they become more violent. This trend was attributed to the rise in Islamic religious terrorism and was termed “New Terrorism”. As has been demonstrated, New Terrorism is not as new as the term suggests and religious terrorism, in particular the myriad of Islamic terrorists organizations, is comprised of more complex motivations and causes than religious ideology alone explains. Looking toward religious terrorism, and addressing the conflicts in which Islam is exploited to justify acts of terrorism, it is necessary to observe,

[r]adical Islam has risen on the backs of failed states that have not improved the lots of their people. It festers in societies where contact with the West has produced more chaos than growth and more uncertainty than

wealth. It is, in a sense, the result of failed and incomplete modernization. (Cooper, 19)¹¹

In examining the rise of religious terrorism and the societies which produce it, religion should be treated as any other ideology functioning within that society to move a small group of people ever closer toward terrorism. The role of religion in terrorist organizations should not be treated as a casual one. The relationship between religion and most terrorist organizations categorized as religious is intricate and immensely complex. It is more helpful to recognize religion as, “embedded in institutions, everyday practices and societies, enabling comparison with other forms of embedded, practiced beliefs (Gunning, 383). Conceptualizing religion as an ideology like secularism allows for comparison to be made based upon the actions of the terrorist and the events which gave rise to their organization.

“The causal chain that leads to the commission of acts of terrorism is complex. It can be pictured as a narrowing funnel, a last stage of which is the decision to commit an act of terrorism” (Crenshaw, 5). Much more common than the nihilism of Aum Shinrikyo, religious terrorist organizations are better described as placing religious images of divine struggle “in the service of worldly political battles” (Juergensmeyer, location 3172). Religion might supply a justification for violence, but it is not the cause. Defining religion as the cause confuses the spark with the tinder. Other factors existed which made violence likely, particularly religious violence, before religion was warped into an ideology of terror. Religion’s relationship with terrorism is far more complex

¹¹ This is a quote originally from Fareed Zakaria’s chapter “The Return of History: What September 11 Hath Wrought.” In *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War*. Ed. James F. Hodge Jr. and Gideon Rose. New York: Public Affairs, 2001.

than a causal link. The same factors that would indicate the rise of any form of terrorism must also be present in religious terrorist organizations. This suggests that the ideology used to justify terrorism is far less important than the original grievances that lead to an individual, or many individuals, choosing terrorism as the only possible way to achieve their ends. To this it is also necessary to question some assumptions concerning the scale of violence perpetrated by religious terrorists. Bruce Hoffman depicts the difference between secular and religious terrorism violence thus,

“[w]hereas secular terrorists, even if they have the capacity to do so, rarely attempt indiscriminate killing on a truly massive scale because such tactics are not consonant with their political aims and therefore are regarded as counterproductive, if not immoral, religious terrorists often seek the elimination of broadly defined categories of enemies and accordingly regard such large-scale violence not only as morally justified but as necessary expedients for the attainment of their goals (Hoffman 2006, locations 1297-1300).

Religious terrorist have been responsible for some of the largest terrorist attacks, however, this assertion needs to be tempered with the recognition that technology itself has also evolved, making all forms of violence more effective in killing. Attacks using weapons of mass destruction have in fact been rare. Aum Shinrikyo, which offers perhaps the best example of religious terrorism using such weapons is, as has been shown, a particular and rather uncommon form of religious terrorism that embodies that term in its most pure form. In addition, there is evidence suggesting that right-wing/religious fundamentalism have been less lethal than ethno-nationalist groups (Gunning, 380).¹²

¹² See Daniel Master’s 2008 article *The Origin of Terrorist Threats: Religious, Separatist, or Something Else?*. Masters introduces the concept of terrorist organizations with mixed ideologies. This allows for the acknowledgement that there are very few terrorist organizations whose ideological goals are “pure”. Just as Aum Shinrikyo can exemplify a “pure” religious ideology,

“Both causes and consequences of terrorism can only be understood in terms of interactions among political actors, primarily governments and oppositions, at specific points in history. It is thus well to remember that with the passage of time and the benefit of hindsight, we may be tempted to ascribe a calculated rationality to past actions that is ultimately misleading” (Crenshaw, 5).

Crenshaw’s warning is imperative; the motivations of the terrorist are his alone, and even with access to interview him concerning his thoughts, the researcher is ultimately left with the terrorist designed truth. Many conditions must exist for terrorism to occur; identifying one or two as the primary triggers for small groups of individuals to unitedly undertake terrorism in pursuit of their goals, is a delicate task. However fraught with potential pitfalls, in the process of identifying and unraveling the motivations of terrorists, the most dangerous temptation has become common in the wake of 9/11: to ascribe no motivation at all beyond psychopathy and expression of anger, fear and revenge. Surely the conclusion that terrorists have undertaken complex and detailed steps to execute a destructive and devastating attack without any form of instrumental rationality in the selection of the attack and the target should only be concluded once all other possibilities and rationalities have been explored and rejected.

As has been shown, not only is religion not always the primary motivation for the violence committed by religious terrorists, religion is not always the end purpose.

Religion supplies an ideology that creates and sustains the resolve to perpetrate acts of terrorism.

many terrorist organization “crossover” and mix ideological goals as exemplified by the case in Chechnya, Al Qaeda and the PLO (Master, 402).

Bodies and Minds: The Taliban and Religion

Intellectuals who conceive of themselves as minds in search of bodies generally imagine the masses to be bodies in search of minds.

~Rich Rubenstein¹³

It is true that much of the current terrorist activity is associated in one manner or another with religion, and it is also true that among terrorist organizations, Islam outnumbers other religions. This does not support, however, the conclusions that the dual adoption of more efficient means of killing and a religious fervor result in a loss of political rationality in terror tactics and attacks. The evolution of religion and the State has been the story of human history.

Politics and religion have been at war for centuries. It is the uncomfortable peace established between the two in the West, that of a secular State and domesticated religion, which may unduly hinder the development of a political system in Afghanistan held in place by neither the armies of Russia or of the United States. Seeking peace and an end to the Wars of Religion, Europe resolved to relegate religion to the domestic sphere, and with the Peace of Westphalia further progressed the creation of the modern State. Such divisions never occurred as a solution to the violence within Islam because the religion does not allow for the separation between State and the religion. The perception that “political religions” are threatening (Gunning, 375) originates from a Eurocentric perspective. Approaching the Taliban and the broader threat of Islamic terrorism, the first theory which must be resisted is the idea that any religious or religiously motivated

¹³ Rubenstein, Richard E. *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World*. New York: Basic, 1987. Print. P. 148

political goal must be eradicated. Certainly, if this is the perspective, any nonviolent resolution to the threat of the Taliban in Afghanistan is moot. It is also more likely that the longer the US rejects legitimate political objectives of religious organizations in countries and religions that do not recognize a separation of religion and the State, it will likely force more people toward violence as the only remaining means of expression. This fear of political Islam is irrational especially as the United States—a country that explicitly separates religion from the State—remains mired in a culture war in part fueled by a disagreement over the legitimacy of that very separation.

The most peculiar aspect of religious terrorism in Afghanistan is no one predicted the rise of religion in the political realm as all ideas were pointing toward democratization. Afghanistan became the center of a wheel-like network spreading religious violence around the globe when it had historically been, although deeply religious (Rashid, 24), a nation with marginal religious ideology. "...[T]heocracy was totally alien to Afghanistan; that Afghans fought because they had always opposed foreign domination, but that nationalism had always been their driving force. What General Zia and the CIA and the ISI had done twenty years ago had been to transform an essentially nationalist struggle into a holy war" (Weaver, 251).

The Taliban are frequently discussed as emerging "suddenly" and "from thin air" (Sullivan, 93). A more accurate observation might be to say the Taliban emerged where no one was looking. While the mujahedin struggled against the Soviet invasion, and then in the wake of Soviet withdrawal, against themselves, a collection of Madrassas in Pakistan had been educating and indoctrinating an entire generation of Afghan men in

conservative Islam. In a twist of irony, as the U.S. battled with their great ideological foe, the next challenge to liberal democracy was fermenting and forming out of the wreckage and destruction of that confrontation. The Madrassas were originally established as an alternative to Western-style education in 19th century India (Sullivan, 89). As Talib (students) in these madrassas, young displaced Afghan men encountered Saudi style Sunni Wahhabism combined with Deobandism—a form of Islam radicalized by a former leader of Pakistan’s Jamaat-e-Islami party, the largest fundamentalist political party in Pakistan (Weaver, 38). Both of these forms of Islam place a strong emphasis on literal adherence to a strict interpretation of Sharia (Islamic law) and are opposed to any innovation in interpretation that would allow Sharia to respond and adapt to modern conditions (Sullivan, 98).¹⁴ The adherence to Wahhabism later strengthened the relationship between Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The Taliban conceived themselves coming into Afghanistan from Pakistan as the minds of Islam, and of Pashtuns returning to their birthright. They sought to impose their will on the masses, first in Afghanistan and then, later, they sought to expand.

Wahhabism is a strand of Islamic practice espoused by Muhammad ibn Adb al-Wahhab, an 18th century Arabian born theologian. His ideology is largely inspired by the writings of Taqi al-Din ibn Taymiyya, who after writing his book, simply translated as

¹⁴ In addition to the well-known policies of the Taliban, like the forced full covering of women and the prohibition on representations of human form, the Taliban also are officially antidrug. This however, has proven a hypocritical policy of the Taliban as they have exploited the wealth and power of Afghan heroin. Initially, the U.S. Clinton administration considered the Taliban “a useful force in preventing the spread of Islamic revolution from neighboring Iran, as a potential ally in the international war on drugs, and, most important, as a possible lifeline to the vast oil riches of the landlocked republics of Central Asia...” (Weaver, 27). The early hopes of both the U.S. and Pakistan in exploiting these students could not have been more disappointed as the Taliban evolved into a ruthless force.

“Righteous Rule”, in the 13th century, was largely ignored by Islamic scholars and theologians until al-Wahhab resurrected and modified the teachings (Cooper, 92,97,100). Ibn Tamiyya advocated a Salafi doctrine, which emphasizes a return to the practices of early Muslims, believing them to have lived the purest form of Islam. Al-Wahhab’s reform was inspired largely by what he viewed as the decay and spiritual decline of the Ottoman Empire (Cooper, 98). His answer to this decay was a strict return to the piety and virtue of the early days of Islam to be achieved by a exclusive reliance on the Koran and Sharia, including resurrecting the practice of stoning female adulterers (Cooper, 98-99). As radical religious leaders are wont to do, al-Wahhab incurred a sufficient amount of ire and was expelled from Uyaina, where he had been practicing and proselytizing his new doctrine (Cooper, 99). It was then that al-Wahhab sought refuge with Muhammad ibn Saud, and with the marriage of ibn Saud to the daughter of al-Wahhab the binding of the ibn Saud tribe with Wahhbi Islam was cemented. It is this brand of Islam, originating in the 13th century as an anecdote to the threat of apostolates and pagans, resurrected and remade in the 18th century in response to the threat of rising Western powers, which is now expanding rapidly in the 21st century in response to both the perceived spiritual decline of Islamic countries, as well as the perceived threat of the power of the West and the infidels. Abdelwahab Meddab, in his book *The Malady of Islam*, describes Wahhabism as, “extol[ing] a kind of Islam that is not even traditional but has gone through a series of reducing diets from which it emerges anemic and debilitated” (Cooper, 102).

Perhaps the most critical aspect of Wahhabism as the Taliban and some of the Al Qaeda cells and offshoots practice it¹⁵, is its blatant and fervent anti-intellectualism. The Salafist doctrine of Wahhabism rejects interpretations of the Koran, adopting instead literal application and refuses to accept any adaptations of Koranic teaching to the realities of the modern world. Nowhere is this more important in efforts against terrorism than in the interpretation of jihad. Islamic interpretation of jihad is rich, and the Koran uses the term to denote several different types of struggles. And while Islamic scholars discuss the many distinctions and meanings of jihad, for modern Salafists, "...those who believe in the 'eternal' or 'uncreated' Koran, none of this mere scholarship matters a bit: jihad means war" (Cooper, 111). Given this, the friction between strict adherents to this branch of Islam and modernizing forces is not surprising. The problem however, is not only modernization, but also Westernization. For radical practitioners, such as Taliban fighters and other global jihadi fighters, modernization and Westernization are equally rejected.

The particularities that have made war with the Taliban so difficult can in part be traced to the British Empire. Having successfully expanded into North Western India, the British attempted to expand even farther, and twice invaded the kingdom of Afghanistan (Weaver, 59). Experiencing disastrous defeats on both occasions, British foreign secretary in the colonial government in India, Sir Mortimer Durand, met with the Amir of Afghanistan and demarcated the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan: the

¹⁵ Al Qaeda as a global network exercises much less control over the groups affiliated with it, or claiming affiliation, and so it is not reasonable to claim all Al Qaeda groups practice the same brand of Wahhabism. The core group of Al Qaeda, headed by Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan, certainly ascribed to and exported this particular brand of Islam.

Durand line (Weaver, 59). This line left Afghanistan as a small ungovernable territory pressed between the Russian and British empires; it also split the area known as Pashutnistan (Weaver, 60). The customs of the Pashtun tribes falling on the side of the Durand line that later became part of Pakistan have provided the territory which served as the launching point for both the mujahedin in the 1980's and the resurgence of the Taliban in the wake of their crushing defeat by coalition forces in 2002.

The key to Afghanistan is Pakistan. The British, Russian and Americans have strategically exploited Pakistan. The Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and the American funded mujahedin of the 1980's had already radically realigned Pakistan. The second and heavier presence of American military fighting in Afghanistan has also left its mark on the wayward American ally. During the war in Afghanistan, the political system in Pakistan has unraveled. By 2007 the situation in Pakistan was growing ever more alarming and dangerous as the possibility of a second Afghanistan, one with nuclear weapons, seemed all the more possible. A group styling itself as the Pakistani Taliban, or Tehrik-i-Taliban was emerging in the tribal areas (Schmitt, 106). This organization is distinct from the Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda but maintains close ties with both organizations (Schmitt, 107). The struggle against extremism in Afghanistan and the Taliban forces that led to the 9/11 attacks is now occurring on two fronts: an entrenched insurgency within Afghanistan and from Pakistan itself. The rise of Tehrik-i-Taliban represents the wave of "Talibanization" which has swept out of Afghanistan and into the Central Asian Republics since they took power in 1996 that has struck closest to home for the U.S., in so much as it is undermining a vital, if unruly, ally.

In creating a central training ground and safe haven for Islamic terrorists, the Taliban of the late 1990's was able to expose a generation of Islamic fighters to the Taliban specific brand of radical Islam and send them back to their native countries to fight for pan-Islam (Rashid, 30,32). Taliban support of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the IMU's subsequent implementation of the Taliban's code is only one example of how the Taliban export their ideology (Rashid, 30)¹⁶.

It is this combination of providing sanctuary and training to terrorists and the "Talibanization" it hoped to spread that makes the Taliban a target in the Overseas Contingency Operations. The war in Afghanistan has been closely linked to and occasionally confused with the battle against Al Qaeda. The organizations are quite distinct, even if it was Al Qaeda and their infamous leader Osama bin Laden which first injected the Taliban already radical worldview with pan-Islamic ideology (Rashid, 32).

Within three months of the 9/11 attacks the Taliban had fled Afghanistan (Schmitt, 28). However, as a powerful expression of U.S. might pressed the Taliban out of Kabul and Afghanistan, they fled back into Pakistan, the country from which they had emerged less than a decade earlier. "...[A]s American war planes soared over their deserts and mountains and plateaus en route to Afghanistan...the tribal leaders were opening their arms to hundreds, if not thousands, of Bin Laden's Al- Qaeda fighters and members of the Taliban" (Weaver, 86-87). The most common entry point for those

¹⁶ The Taliban have also exploited Afghan heroin for the cause of other Islamic organizations and not only themselves. The Taliban continued trafficking heroin into China to supply the Uighurs and other Muslim ethnic groups, a practice which began with the mujahedin in 1986 (Rashid, 31).

fleeing Afghanistan and the American bombardment was Balochistan; it was there and in the North-West Frontier Province the Taliban regrouped.

From 1992, when the Communist government fell, until 1996 and the takeover of the Taliban, Afghanistan was embroiled in a civil war which claimed the lives of at least 30,000 Afghans (Weaver, 122). “Even by standards of Afghanistan, chaos and carnage thrived” (Weaver, 122). The Taliban’s success sprung more from the general incompetence of the former mujahedin, now acting as warlords, whose disastrous running of the country meant any organization that could offer any form of “normalization” would be welcome. Arriving in Afghanistan, armed with a vision of extreme Islam and Pashtun supremacy, these sons of Afghanistan quickly gained control over a country they had only ever known from the stories of their teachers (Weaver, 25). The Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in 1994. By 1996 they controlled Kabul and two thirds of Afghanistan, expanding well beyond their Pashtun “homeland” (Sullivan, 103). In May of 1996 Osama bin Laden reemerged in Afghanistan. His needs and Mullah Omar’s were fortuitously aligned. Bin Laden needed refuge and Omar needed cash (Weaver, 27). Shortly thereafter, Kabul fell. It was after that event that bin Laden became the father-in-law of Mullah Omar, the spiritual leader of the Taliban (Weaver, 28). This union cemented the relationship between these two mujahidin of the first Afghan jihad and their respective organizations.

There is no doubt that the Taliban emerged first as an ideology. However, that does not overshadow the fact that the Taliban successfully exploited the collapse of a State and other existing conditions in order to gain control of the majority of Afghanistan

and its poppy fields (Sullivan, 101). Since their resurgence, the Taliban has not expressed any real outline for the future of the country (Barrett). However, they appear intent on continuing to implement their brand of fundamental and radical Islam. This, while not a political platform in the traditional sense, suggests their desire to regain control over political offices. Given Islam's position as a political religion, the implementation of their ideology suggests political goals. It is as inaccurate to state that the Taliban has no political goals, as it is to state they do have secular aims. Indeed, the past has shown their desire for worldly political power, and wealth—even as they glorify simplicity and poverty.

Chapter 3: Negotiating With Terrorists

The fear, one that is a real concern of citizens and States alike, is that in recognizing, de facto legitimizing, terrorist organizations by opening lines of communication through negotiating, disaffected people the world over will be convinced that senseless violence allegedly committed in the name of a population to effect some change is a legitimate political tactic. This image of negotiation with terrorists does not acknowledge the full range of interaction possible between States and terrorist organizations. In the article *Negotiation with Terrorists*, Dean Pruitt, a leading academic on the subject, outlines five strategies for dealing with terrorists. Often these strategies can and do overlap (Pruitt 2006, 373-374). These strategies are: capitulating, combating, isolating, mainstreaming and negotiating (Pruitt 2006, 373-374). Of these five strategies, capitulating is the only one that would truly vindicate terrorism as legitimate means. In contrast, combating is often viewed as the strategy that shows the most resistance to terrorists.

Combating is neither always the most effective approach nor the tactic that most strengthens a society against the corrosive influence of terrorists. Terrorist organizations do not represent the majority; frequently however, counterterrorism measures affect the larger population. Terrorists generally make calls for political change that are extreme for the society in which they operate. The surest way for terrorists to recruit more

sympathizers to their cause is if they can prove the evil of the government they target. Retaliation with violence by a government will prove more detrimental than the terrorist attack itself. Governments can mobilize on a scale that dwarfs the terrorists' potential. Terrorists know that their attack(s) cannot bring about the change they want, but by drawing in the State, terrorists are able to elicit the exact response they hoped for. A massive military intervention in the wake of 9/11, and the eventual demise of Osama bin Laden may have satisfied the American lust for revenge. The explicitly combative measures taken domestically in the United States, like the USA-PATRIOT ACT (United and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism), as well as the military forays in Central Asia and the Middle East have worked not only to divide the United States, but to alienate American allies abroad and create more animosity among populations already suspicious of American global hegemony. Over a decade of war has done far more to weaken the United States both domestically and internationally than those four planes and nineteen men ever did. An over-show of force and a rigid position in strict opposition may not necessarily deliver the unequivocal surrender of the opposition.

Recognized or not, terrorist organizations emerge for a reason. They usually emerge as a symptom of the larger conflict, and as soon as the first attack occurs, governments are forced into a position of confronting that conflict. Those who would work to unravel the foundations of a terrorist organization must turn their attention to the factors which gave rise to a situation so politically restricted violent ideologies took root.

When the ideologies are religious, the conflict appears exponentially more convoluted and irreparable. The question, as phrased by Mark Juergensmeyer, "...not why bad things are done by bad people, but rather why bad things are done by people who otherwise appear to be good—in cases of religious terrorism, by pious people dedicated to a moral vision of the world" (Juergensmeyer, 7) seems unanswerable. However, often a rationale can be found in the use and implementation of religion as a terrorist ideology. In separating religious terrorist organizations according to an organization's relationship to religion, it is shown that religious terrorism represents a wide range of groups that, to a greater or lesser degree, can be integrated into a resolution to the conflict.

While many of the studies focus on comprehending the individual, this analysis extracts data from the studies which can be oriented within the context of conflict resolution to examine what can be done to reconcile the social, political and cultural factors which create this internal rift. Barry Cooper develops and explores the concept of pneumopathology, a disease of the spirit, as a way to explain the tremendous horror religious terrorists, in particular, are able to morally justify. While this analysis is helpful in creating a certain understanding of the mind of the terrorist, it is not helpful in understanding the factors that pushed this individual to such a psychological state, nor does it offer any methods for pulling the mind back. When engaging with a model that includes both the options for traditional hunt and grab approaches to stopping terrorists and negotiations, a critical analysis is necessary to determine the external factors that led to the deliberate decision to adopt terrorism as the only means of expression. By creating

a model where culture, identity and politics are conceptualized as equally important as the state of mind of the individual in determining the occurrence of terrorism, persons engaged in working to prevent, resolve or stop terrorism are given agency. Terrorism becomes something which may have to be approached by force, but it also becomes something which can be negotiated; not by giving in to the terrorist—thus encouraging terrorism—but by creating an atmosphere where the legitimacy of terrorist action becomes incomprehensible to those who purported, it because they are given a stake in the sanctioned political process.

As a premise in their paper “Negotiating the Non-Negotiable: Dealing with Absolutist Terrorists”, Hayes, Kaminski and Beres include relations with States that support terrorism as a form of negotiating with terrorists. In this understanding any engagement with the systems of interaction between terrorists and wider society becomes a form of negotiation. Within the context of conflict resolution, this conceptualization of negotiations is unhelpful primarily because it draws from an understanding of terrorism that treats terrorism as the conflict itself. In examining a more holistic approach to the conflict, terrorism is revealed as a violent symptom of the larger conflict. A concept of negotiations with terrorists is drawn from Dean Pruitt and coupled with I. William Zartman’s ripeness theory in order to assess the possibilities of negotiating with religious terrorist organizations such as the Taliban.

Negotiation Theory: Talking With Terrorists

Religious terrorism provides a particularly enigmatic array of organizations dedicated to violence as expression and means. Understanding the complexity of the

overlapping motives of religious terrorists highlights the difficulty in effectively combating that particular branch of terrorism. Dean Pruitt, who discusses the practicality and methodology of negotiating with terrorists, argues terrorist organizations can be categorized according to how ideological they are and how representative they are of the larger population over which they claim representation (Pruitt 2006, 373). His findings suggest organizations that are more representative and more ideological are increasingly difficult to negotiate with and to defeat. The former, are difficult to defeat because they have more or less “popular” support and therefore recognize no need to negotiate and risk compromise. The latter, are unlikely to negotiate because they are more extreme in their demands and unlikely to compromise their ideologies (Pruitt 2006, 373). This distinction is useful and compelling. However, rather than viewing organizations on an ideological scale, it is helpful in this study to view the role of the ideologies in the larger conflict.

The organizations Pruitt identifies as more representative and less ideological—IRA, PLO as examples—generally align with the more successful organizations from Rapoport’s third wave (New Left) of terrorism. Those organizations that are both more ideological and less representative by Pruitt’s scale—Red Brigades and Aum Shinrikyo as examples—represent both the third and fourth waves and are not successful examples of terrorist tactics achieving their ends. Pruitt’s typology allows terrorist organizations to be categorized, not by the ideology they espouse, but by their devotion to that ideology. This is an important factor in breaking from the idea that it is an old versus new terrorism or religious versus secular terrorism determining the potential for negotiating with terrorist organizations.

This suggests that in determining strategy to combat terrorists, the organization's relationship to its ideological needs must first be analyzed. The more ideological organizations such as the Red Brigades, as part of the New Left wave, formulated their struggles as taking place within the larger Cold War—Communism defeating Capitalism. The IRA, comparatively, has an acknowledged Leftist-Socialist tendency, which as Pruitt states was, “so weak that it was dropped at the outset of formal negotiation” (Pruitt 2006, 372). For the IRA the socialist cause was secondary to the anti-British, anticolonial struggle tracing back hundreds of years and gaining its momentum initially during Rapoport's anticolonial period. The IRA as a terrorist struggle asserted itself in 1968 with the start of the Troubles. Beginning with a civil rights platform, the socialist ideology of the era became integrated into the struggle, but was never the impetus for the conflict or terrorism. This is the key distinction between groups categorized by Pruitt as less ideological; their ideologies are secondary to the central conflict and the motivation to turn to terrorist violence.

The relationship between ideology and the terrorist organization is fundamental to the manner in which terrorist actions are interpreted. As was shown in Chapter 1, organizations emerging in the post-Cold War era that have religious components are viewed as more “catastrophic” and “expressive” than “strategic”. This delineation is more often than not based on the religious factor rather than the function that religion as an ideology performs for the organization. Thus, religious terrorists frequently are defined by interpretations that view their means (terrorism) as the ends in and of themselves, rather than strategic acts designed to achieve both immediate and ultimate

goals of varying worldly and Cosmic natures. “As long as terrorism is conceptualized as extremism of ends rather than means, the concept cannot be relieved of its ideological baggage” (Duyvesteyn, 450)¹⁷. Religious terrorism epitomizes the interpretation that the act alone, and its consequences, was the only intended purpose of the terrorism.

Interestingly, Pruitt does not identify ethno-nationalist struggles as an ideology. This suggests that ethno-nationalist terrorism has been relieved of its ideological baggage. Ethno-national struggles have been supported in the 20th century as part of a politically legitimate movement of promoting self-determination for colonial countries. The ethno-nationalist terrorist is then seen as using discredited means (terrorism) to achieve an end that is clearly understood and legitimate in the geopolitical order even if there is not widespread support for the movement itself. If a political goal is an ideology because it challenges the prevailing political trends, it is clear how greatly terrorism is interpreted as a matter of both the political perspective and the era in which it occurs.

Religion becomes an ideology when it is tied to earthly struggles (Gunning, 375). Religion offers—as an ideology—certainty and promise in the cosmic order in the face of the uncertain and confusion in the worldly order. This does not preclude a religious ideology from having a political goal. It is the legitimacy of the political goal to which service religion has been rendered that should be examined to determine the legitimacy and not the ideological spark of terrorism. Religion becomes an ideology like any other; the more radical the ideology, the less compromising its adherents. It is also true that

¹⁷ Cited from Duyvesteyn, 450. Schmid, Alex Peter., and A. J. Jongman. "Terrorism and Related Concepts: Typologies." *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories, and Literature*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub., 1988. 39-60. Print.

there are generally fewer followers and supporters of highly ideological organizations, because they are too extreme for their target populations. This suggests that moderating the goals of the Taliban may not be effective, but isolating them may be a legitimate tool in forcing them toward negotiations.

The Taliban does have religious ideology as its central component, but it is also born of an ethno-nationalist struggle and draws strength from cultural attitudes that oppose foreign domination. This suggests that if the Taliban and, perhaps more importantly, their active and passive supporters can be approached on an ethno-nationalist level, the ideological aspect becomes less important, and there is more potential for progress. Where the Taliban succeeded was in stemming the chaos that erupted in the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal and the even more, if possible, disastrous civil war that came in the wake of the collapse of the Communist government. They resonated initially with their Pashtun kinsmen and spouted a vision of a "...created memory of a homeland passed down by the elder Mujahedin fighters and by visions of an ideal Islamic state passed on by madrasa teachers" (Sullivan, 98). Approaching the conflict on the ethno-nationalist level will realign the perception of the Taliban. The Taliban also appeal to the cultural pride Afghans have in repelling foreign forces and as the unofficial graveyard of empires. Osama bin Laden worked hard to define the wars America is currently embroiled in as the West against the Muslims. "This is a matter of religion and creed; it is not what Bush and Blair maintain, that it is a war against terrorism," bin Laden declared in a videotaped broadcast aired on *al Jazeera* (Hoffman 2002, 308). Attacking the Taliban, for their ideology only further places the conflict in

the framework of ideology versus ideology. The more extreme fringes of the Taliban may never be drawn into a legitimate peace process, but by providing real solutions to the problems that affect and concern the more moderate and cautious supporters of the Taliban those dissenters will cease to control enough power and fear to hold the country hostage.

Important to Pruitt's work concerning negotiating with terrorists is effecting change within the populations that surround and, willingly or not, provide support for terrorists. As previously observed, terrorists are small groups and not representative of the masses. However, they live in communities, and their success is often dependent upon the communities' attitudes toward them. Of Pruitt's five strategies, isolating, mainstreaming and negotiating work together with the most fluidity, sometimes overlapping. Isolating is a strategy that can be employed alone or in tandem with combative measures to push the larger conflict toward "ripeness" for negotiations.

Pursuing negotiations as a path to long-term peace by no means ensures success, nor should they be viewed as a one-time opportunity. The peace in Northern Ireland, far from perfect, at least maintains a level of stability. It took over a decade of treaties, backchannel talks, negotiations and several setbacks before the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement came into fruition. The most recent attempt at talks with the Taliban was suspended in March 2012 when the Taliban withdrew in protest over American refusal to release two of five prisoners whose release was intended to signal good will and would have ideally resulted in the Taliban then releasing Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl—the only U.S. soldier in Taliban custody (Barrett). There are several signs that reveal Afghanistan

as ready for a more formal and inclusive peace process. Integrating Pruitt's outline for isolating terrorists with Zartman's ripeness theory will expose how mainstreaming the Taliban can become a feature of the future plans for a new political process in Afghanistan.

Because organizations with a broad support base are more difficult to negotiate with (Pruitt 2006, 373), reducing that base is a first step toward pushing terrorists to negotiations. Applying Pruitt's onion model to the Taliban and Afghan society allows analysis of how to judge the ripeness of the conflict for negotiations.

This model is constructed of concentric circles. At the center in the smallest circle are the terrorists—the Taliban. They are immediately surrounded by active Taliban supporters. The next layer consists of inactive supporters; the next, supporters of the goals and not the methods, and the last circle represents non-supporters (Pruitt 2006, 367). This method allows the relationship between terrorists and the government to be assessed. The objective in isolation is to constrict the terrorists and their supporters so that they make up the smallest fraction of society, with non-supporters comprising the majority. When the inner three layers comprise a majority of the society of the population, the terrorists are winning the conflict. However, in attempting to isolate the terrorists, this method allows the identification of groups who can be swayed.

A process of negotiations and non-violent counterterrorism strategy does not necessarily have to be aimed at the terrorist organization itself. Pursuing a strategy that addresses the needs of the populations immediately surrounding the Taliban and the more moderate parts of society serves the purpose of isolating the terrorist. As Pruitt observes,

isolation strategy is frequently implemented with a combative strategy. This “two-handed” approach, as Zartman has termed it, can be effective when the terrorists are easily differentiated from the population (Pruitt 2006, 377). However, efforts to violently combat the terrorists, particularly when they are integrated into the communities like the Taliban and the IRA, will most likely result in an increase in support for the terrorist cause. This is particularly true in Afghanistan where general support of any foreign force is low, and civilian deaths resulting from American military action frequently strengthens Taliban support amidst a growing number of grievances against the United States.

A 2011 report by the International Council on Security and Development found extreme divides among Afghan opinions concerning the northern and southern populations of the country, and expectedly so. Where the northern and southern Afghans’ opinions did align however, concerned a general disapproval of the presence of foreign forces and general support for negotiating with the Taliban (ICOS 2011, 12-12). The most support for the Taliban was found in the southern part of the country, understandably, as that is the homeland of the Pashtun population and the Taliban’s historic support base. The ICOS study has significant findings suggesting that the Taliban is winning the information war in that area, specifically where it concerns civilian deaths, in spite of a U.S. strategy to publicize deaths committed by the Taliban. United Nations assessments find insurgents responsible for 75 percent of civilian deaths and attribute only 16 percent of civilian deaths to the combined international and Afghan forces (UNAMA 2011, 1). The ICOS report suggests up to 69 percent of the population in Southern Afghanistan attribute a majority of civilian deaths to international forces,

while 12 percent of the population believes Afghan forces are responsible for more civilian deaths than the Taliban (ICOS 2011, 30).

Clearly such dramatic misinformation has a positive effect on support for the Taliban. Civilian deaths caused by the entity terrorists oppose drives populations to support organizations and actions they normally would resist. This perception has significant consequences for combating the Taliban. While it would be an overstatement to predict that an accurate understanding among the Taliban's dominant supporters concerning the role the Taliban plays in mounting civilian deaths would significantly reduce support for the organization, it would help move moderates away from the Taliban and toward supporting a new political order.

As a general trend, support for the Taliban has largely been falling over the last few years suggesting that the movement is becoming more isolated. Episodes like the highly publicized return of medieval Taliban punishment in 2010 with their first public stoning since their fall from power in 2001, and the more recent beheading of 17 civilians are grizzly blessings in the effort to weaken the Taliban's hold on the country and its future. It is paramount that the violence of the Taliban is not perceived as being matched by either coalition or Afghan forces. Such an environment, where support remains but is weakened, and where overt combative measures are becoming increasingly less successful in their effort to weaken and destroy the enemy, suggests that the time for negotiations is nearing.

Ripeness or Readiness: The Path to Negotiations

A peace with lasting potential must emerge from the parties whom it concerns. Given this, it is paramount that groups be ready for peace. Knowing that negotiations with a terrorist organization are possible does not initiate the negotiations. To understand better the peace process, I. William Zartman's "ripeness theory" and Pruitt's expansion of it into a "readiness" theory (Pruitt 2005) supply the tools by which conflict can be measured. The potential for negotiations to begin, and possibly succeed, is estimated using these theories. In resolving a conflict, the substance of the agreement is equally as important as the timing. An almost identical agreement rejected at one point in the conflict may be accepted later because the parties themselves have changed and evolved. Applying Pruitt's theory for conducting negotiations to Afghanistan, and the Taliban in particular, it is theorized that the organization is negotiable. Examining the elements necessary to create what he calls "ripe moments", I. William Zartman finds Mutually Hurting Stalemates (MHS) provide some of the most advantageous moments which can be exploited for peace (Zartman 2001, 8).

An MHS is exactly what it sounds like. It is a point in the conflict where none of the parties can outright "win" the conflict through pure escalation (Zartman 2001, 8). At this point in the conflict, an MHS does not necessarily entail each side equally matching the other. Indeed, it is enough that the opponents recognize that the necessary force and dedication to "win" is beyond what they are willing to invest in the conflict. Recognizing that a victory is either impossible or too costly, the opponents begin seeking the second key element for negotiations: a "way out" (Zartman 2001, 8). Just as the undertaking of

negotiations does not necessarily result in a favorable or even peaceful outcome, neither does ripeness result in successful transitioning from open hostilities to the path to negotiations and a successful negotiated settlement. A ripe moment must be recognized, and there must be parties present able to channel that moment into positive action, whether this stems from the parties to the conflict or a third party. Third parties can be powerful tools in seizing ripeness and helping to counter some of the obstacles which arise in the process of turning a ripe moment into a seized opportunity.

Principal obstacles to ripeness concern the vindication of militants and their perception of the conflict. When a conflict escalates, resistance might become more entrenched, not less (Zartman 2001, 12). This ties into a failure to recognize the realities of the situation; militants believe that a little more effort, at any cost, will result in their ultimate success. As a result of escalation in the conflict and an increasing amount of pain born by each side, demonization of the enemy tends to increase (Zartman 2001, 12). The results of this are that by the time leaders of the conflicting party recognize that they have reached an MHS, their perceptions of the other is extremely low. This has the result of encouraging hardliners to persevere at any cost (Zartman 2001, 12).

Ripeness theory has extensive application in interstate war as well as intrastate civil war and exists as a reasonably sound theory for reading conflicts.¹⁸ The importance of applying ripeness theory to negotiations with terrorists rests in the potential for

¹⁸ “Not all conflicts are ‘ripe’ for action by the United Nations (or any other third party). ...It therefore behooves the Secretary-General to be selective and to recommend action only in situations where he judges that the investment of scarce resources is likely to produce a good return (in terms of preventing, managing and resolving conflict).” Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding (Zartman 2001, 12).

religious terrorists to be viewed as unlikely to recognize an MHS in the same manner as the States combating them. A religious terrorist's likelihood to utilize cosmic war to explain losses and to find strength to endure at any cost makes ripeness an increasingly difficult climate to reach and to seize.

Centuries of warfare have shaped and defined Pashtun culture and attitudes; this in turn bears influence on the Taliban (Afsar, 59). Mindsets such as, "A Pashtun is never at peace, except when he is at war," embody cultural attitudes which promulgate the continuation of violence and pose difficulties for initiate negotiations. They also highlight the futility of continued hostilities against the insurgent Pashtun population. When certain elements of the population embrace violence as not only necessary to their goals but as a central tenet of their identity, military force will not be successful in defeating them. It is a more effective strategy to engage with other segments of the population, ones who do not embrace the increasing consequences resulting from continued violence.

Returning to Pruitt's negotiation theory, isolation is an important tool in forcing terrorists to negotiate. In his paper, *Whither Ripeness Theory*, Pruitt expands ripeness theory to explain more than the external conditions "under which decision makers become ready to enter negotiation" (Pruitt 2005, 12). Zartman's original theory primarily concerned the presence of an MHS and the desire for a way out. Pruitt's readiness theory accepts and elaborates readiness theory and adds several more indicators, making the theory more complicated but also more aptly applied to different types of conflict. The theories are not interchangeable although closely related, and reference to ripeness

indicates Zartman's theory and the general timeframe in a conflict when negotiation may be possible. Readiness refers to the state of each party. "Negotiation will only start if there is some degree of readiness on both sides and, hence, some degree of ripeness. The greater the readiness and ripeness, the more likely is negotiation to occur" (Pruitt 2005, 7). Two of the most important additions in readiness theory are optimism about the outcome of negotiation and the political process of central coalition building. Readiness theory expands the field of analysis proffered by ripeness. Applying both theories to the conflict with the Taliban allows for a better explanation of a potential peace process. Neither theory, however, offers predictions for the success or failure of attempts at peace through non-military means.

The IRA and the Taliban

In relation to terrorists, ripeness should be viewed as a process; one that slowly evolves overtime. In this process, moving toward negotiations, mainstreaming and backchannel talks are strong tools in helping to encourage terrorists to recognize their need for a "way out". This is especially evident in North Ireland where as early as 1988, a decade and two ceasefires before a finalized peace agreement was signed, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams asserted, "there is no military solution" (Pruitt 2007, 1523). Over the next ten years a variety of secret and public meetings and negotiations would take place encouraging the paramilitaries that the future of their objective lay in the political process and not in weapons. The extended period of hostilities after leaders recognized the futility of achieving their goals through violence, as well as a reestablishment of Direct Rule by the British government from 2002-2007, may stem from the relationship

between the conflict and the culture of the two major factions. This is a possibility that requires further attention and research. However, this case does indicate that a precise time may be ripe for opening the lines of communication even if the parties are not yet willing to accept the terms of peace.

As radically different as the IRA and the Taliban are, there are similarities in their respective evolutions. Formed with the initial intention of expelling an occupying force in 1916, the IRA began as an anticolonial movement not explicitly a terrorist organization. It could more accurately be described as a guerilla army. It is the faction which, after the creation of the Irish Free State (later the Republic of Ireland), rejected the six colonies remaining within the United Kingdom and eventually evolved into the IRA known for terrorizing Belfast and London and attempting to kill the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher¹⁹.

With the close of the Irish Civil War in 1923, the IRA and its splinter groups were largely irrelevant until the 1960's. The group emerging out of the civil rights movement among primarily working class Catholics in Northern Ireland traces its foundation to the group that refused to accept partition. This organization, the IRA, bears little relation to the army that gained independence from Britain in 1922. Already a trend of splintering and disagreement emerged as those who were determined to fight for ideologies found themselves disagreeing upon the acceptable terms of peace.

¹⁹ The IRA claimed responsibility for the bombing of the Brighton Grand Hotel in 1984. A statement released the following day read, "Today we were unlucky, but remember, we only have to be lucky once; you will have to be lucky always. Give Ireland peace and there will be no war."

The IRA has spawned several splinter groups including the Provisional IRA (PIRA), the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), and the Real IRA (RIRA), the organization most attributed to the August 1998 Omagh bombing—an event which very well could have acted as a spoiler for the nascent peace process. In response to emerging militarization of the Catholic population, from the majority Protestant community emerged several paramilitaries responsible for acts of terrorism in their own right.

The peace process in North Ireland has not been smooth, direct or universally celebrated. Ian Paisley, the firebrand Protestant preacher of his self-founded Protestant Free Church labored most sincerely in casting the Northern Ireland conflict in the image of divine and Cosmic war (Juergensmeyer, location 900). Paisley founded the Democratic Unionist Party, which became a prominent political party closely affiliated with his church and a staunch critic of the peace. Paisley's DUP, however, was unarmed and their refusal to negotiate with the IRA did not have the violent threat of destabilizing the peace process in the same manner the INLA and RIRA did, both of whom were not party to the negotiation of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. Crucial however, political parties representing the majority of the paramilitaries on both sides were included in the negotiations. Although not an armed group, the absence of the DUP—arguably the most religiously impassioned and ideological holdouts on the Unionist Protestant side—combined with the absence of both the INLA and the RIRA—the more extreme groups on the Catholic Republican side and both armed—demonstrates the necessity for negotiations with terrorist organizations does not need to include full acceptance by the most extreme.

Pruitt outlines the strategy of gaining broad support for a negotiated peace process as building a central coalition. Like all coalitions, they are fragile, however it assumes all parties who enter and stay in negotiations are ready for a negotiated agreement (Pruitt 2007, 1531). Where terrorists are involved, it may seem that the negotiations are even more imperiled because the parties have already demonstrated a willingness to sidestep all forms of legitimate political redress. However, the threat of a return to violence is not as strong as in cases of negotiating the end of a civil war for example. Terrorists comprise a small percent of the population and disproportionately affect and shape the lives of the rest of the population. If terrorist organizations have reached the table, they have accepted that violent action is unlikely to help meet their goals. This, of course, does not mean a negotiated settlement is guaranteed once the parties sit down. It signifies that once there is sufficient readiness to initiate negotiations, the portion of the population that supports the terrorists has shrunk, isolating the terrorists and incentivizing them to participate in negotiations.

The peace process and the negotiations in North Ireland spanned over a decade. With the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 the government of the Republic of Ireland committed itself to combating the IRA and ending the IRA's ability to find safe haven within the Republic (Pruitt 2007, 1522). This may not be explicitly part of the peace process, but the Anglo-Irish Agreement changed the political landscape upon which the IRA executed their goals (Pruitt 2007, 1522). While the IRA found safe haven in the Republic, they could continue to claim to represent population not only in Northern Ireland, but in the Republic as well. Close cooperation between the British and Irish

governments acted as a powerful symbol of the IRA's reduced ability to claim representation of populations and served to isolate the group.

Regarding the Taliban, it is generally believed the key to stabilizing Afghanistan lies in effectively closing the free range the Taliban has in crossing the border, finding safe havens, and executing their own law within the North-West Frontier Province and Balochistan. The U.S. backed jihad of the 1980's exploited the porous border between the Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many of the paths and routes originally utilized by mujahidin and CIA operatives fighting the Soviets have been repurposed for war against U.S. forces in Afghanistan and also for the training and trafficking of jihadi fighters trained in Afghanistan or Pakistan and sent to wage war in their home countries²⁰ (Weaver, 224). A genuine partner in combating the Taliban would send the message that the tactics of the Taliban are not accepted by Pakistan. A genuine undertaking by Pakistan to tighten controls on the border and police the Taliban within their own borders would go a long way toward isolating the group and encouraging further separation between the more moderate elements from the more extreme.

Unfortunately, Afghanistan has traditionally been viewed by Pakistan as a source of strategic depth in their ongoing confrontation with India over Kashmir. The Taliban was initially welcomed by Pakistan and treated as an ally, one which gave fighters to the cause in Kashmir (Weaver, 27). The importance of the conflict with India has traditionally taken precedence over helping their American ally combat terrorists,

²⁰ Tora Bora, where Osama bin Laden's now famous stand off occurred in 2001, is comprised of miles of tunnels and fortified bunkers that was originally CIA financed as a fortress complex for the mujahedin (Weaver, 228).

especially when those very terrorists are seen as strategic tools in the Kashmir conflict. However, the recent round of the Afghan war has taken Pakistan to the brink. Facing political instability beyond anything it has thus far experienced might encourage more legitimate action to limit the spread of the Taliban and Talibanization. The inroads and back channels that have been created since 1996 run deep into Pakistan's government. Undoing the relationship between the Pakistan and the Taliban will be more difficult than was creating it.

Because intractable conflicts involve fractured relationships, readiness becomes crucial to the approach to the conflict and resolution. Both sides must have a desire to end the conflict. This is evident in North Ireland where populations weary of violence began turning against the IRA in the polls as early as 1987, prompting Sinn Fein to become more dedicated to a political solution (Pruitt 2007, 1521). The British also realized, after successive attempts to escalate the conflict, culminating in a wildly unpopular and unsuccessful internment policy, that they needed to seek other methods of ending the conflict (Pruitt 2007, 1526).

For Coalition forces in Afghanistan the readiness for a settlement to the conflict is present. It is the Taliban's readiness that is questionable and thus throwing doubt on the readiness of the conflict for a negotiated settlement. Leaving Afghanistan without having settled the Taliban's future role, or lack there of, will only encourage them to seek power and influence as they have since the insurgence began—with threats of violence backed by demonstrations of actual violence and through shadowy influence on the corruptible, wavering political system. As effective as backchannel talks were in establishing

optimism for both IRA and the British government concerning the sincerity of the other side (Pruitt 2007, 1530), the backchannels that exist between the Taliban and Kabul are malignant²¹.

While the absence of Coalition forces is unlikely to result in a full-blown circa 1992 civil war, "...there can be no durable peace without a political resolution to the conflict—and that means dealing with the Taliban" (Barrett). Not all parties are willing to accept this; the Northern Alliance remains skeptical of negotiations with the Taliban, by extension negatively influencing the European countries with which they have strong ties (Masadykov, 13). The Obama administration's policy which is willing to engage with moderate elements should be viewed as a positive step, even as some analysts suggest that the official delineations between moderate and hardcore elements within the Taliban scared off moderates who were previously open to reconciliation (Masadykov, 9).

In February, 2012, it appeared as if negotiations were going to occur; the breakdown in March disheartened some at the prospects of success. However, while the failure in early 2012 may affect the overall optimism of the sides concerning the likelihood of success, more and more elements of the conflict are realizing that talks and some form of Taliban integration into the political system is necessary. The moment may not yet be ripe, but as more parties become ready, the conflict is moving in a more productive direction. Addressing the concerns about the legitimacy of the Afghan government should be a key strategy of Coalition forces. Since 2006, support for the

²¹ "Some [government] ministers enjoy strong links to the Taliban, including several Mahaz commanders." (Masadykov, 10).

government has been falling. Even in areas where anti-government insurgent forces such as the Taliban do not enjoy support, the population has begun distancing itself from the government. Since the Taliban is vehemently opposed to the current government, real reform could go a long way to demonstrate support for reconciliation in Afghanistan. This would have positive influence on the larger Afghan population and elements within the Taliban.

The Taliban today can be divided into three elements. The first is comprised of “older Taliban hands”. They held power in the 1990’s when they were in their twenties and recognize, after decades of war, that “fundamentalist Islam cannot be imposed on Afghanistan in 2014 anymore than Marxism could be imposed...in the 1970’s” (Barrett). The second group of commanders view negotiation as a tool to reduce military pressure so they can regroup and maintain their power and influence in the regions they already control. They remain resistant to steps that would result in a lasting peace until they have further exhausted their military prowess and tried the strength of centrists (Barrett). The third group is comprised of young radicals, who born and raised in war, see themselves as a key part in continuing Al Qaeda’s international struggle (Barrett). For this party their Pashtun and Afghan identities are weaker than their dedication to international Islam (Barrett).

Just as the IRA split when more moderate forces in the organization began to make overtures to begin resolving the conflict, so too, can the Taliban be viewed as dividing. The comparison is far from perfect, and the process in Ireland was facilitated by the existence of a political system in which all parties were willing to participate as

well as the terrorists themselves already being represented by a political wing. But as parties to a conflict begin to make overtures, the gap between them can decrease, as it did when Adams recognized a united Ireland would have to be accepted by the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland separately (Pruitt 2007, 1523). The religious ideologies and extremism of the Taliban should be treated with care and respect. The neglect of the seriousness of these ideals has led to disastrous consequences. The best method for defeating the extremism of the Taliban is to empower the Afghan people with legitimate political processes, which must include the Taliban in some form.

Taliban at the Table

Pursuing a negotiation strategy is the best method at this stage in the conflict. Afghanistan has proven century after century to be resistant to conquest and military domination. Karzai's government is not much more stable than the feeble Communist government the Soviet Union left behind in 1989. A true peace in Afghanistan begins with a political process in which all parties play a legitimate role in creating. The Taliban, as the former dominant governors of the Afghan State and current largest homegrown terrorist threat, have been the focus of this study, however the government and the Taliban share a problem: neither have succeeded in developing a "positive vision of their long-term aspirations for Afghanistan" (Jarvenpaa, 7).

There is evidence supporting the impression that the factions of the Taliban have changing perceptions about continued violence. This does not promise the renunciation of terrorism or the future reestablishment of Afghanistan as a haven for international terrorists. Many of the obstacles that undermine negotiation attempts with other

transnational terrorist organizations are present in discussions with the Taliban. In particular, the Taliban are not credible bargaining partners. Any renunciation of all ties with what remains of Al Qaeda, along with any promises concerning the constitution are difficult sticking points in negotiations, but not entirely unenforceable. Once a full withdrawal of international forces occurs, Afghanistan will be in much the same place it was in 1989—the most popular political groups will be those who can deliver on promises of safety and order.

Negotiations with the IRA were successful for several reasons, but the most important was the genuine desire of the group to govern. As it became increasingly evident that full integration with the Republic of Ireland would not occur without the approval of the majority of the population, their attention turned to representing their community's interests. The organization was mainstreamed by central coalition building and their objectives and methods were moderated as a result. This process was only able to occur because a legitimate political institution existed in which to integrate the organization, unlike the situation in Afghanistan.

At least two thirds of active Taliban currently appear amenable to “sitting at the table”. That is they are not looking, as has been observed about religious terrorists, to “blow the table up.” The problem in Afghanistan is the political system is not one which engenders confidence in any meaningful segment of the population. Indeed, why should the Taliban integrate into the government by democratic means when they already have so many nepotistic connections to power? Afghanistan remains held hostage by terrorism; not because terrorists cannot be negotiated with, but because there is no

meaningful order into which they can be integrated. The Taliban arose by offering respite from an incompetent puppet Communist government and volatile warlords funded by the country's poppy cash crop. They should not be given that chance a second time.

For now Mullah Omar has not chosen a side, although he has spoken out claiming that any overtures of reconciliation should be interpreted as weakness. The influence of the Mullah could be positive if he sided with reconciliation. It is far more likely that he will remain aloof of the conflict and wait to see which factions of the Taliban endure. The conflict may not be ripe for negotiations, but the parties are moving in that direction.

Chapter 4: Counterterrorism Beyond OCO

The story of modern terrorism begins in Russia; terrorism and Russia have been intimately involved since the first anarchist bombings in the 19th century. In 2012 the geopolitical landscape is still scarred by the glacial standoff between the superpowers of the 20th century. Cold War-style deterrence remained the defense theory of choice well after two superpowers became one. Upon entering into a new global war, traditional deterrence was correctly seen as an unfit strategy against an enemy that lacked a State, a conscience, and seemingly, a purpose. Without seeking to unravel the purpose of the enemy emerging to take the place of resident “global evil”, military strategy emerged with the purpose of “picking them up and picking them off” (Schmitt, 4).

In the hallways of the Pentagon strategists began with a strategy that adapted deterrence theory from an idea to compel an adversary not to do something by credibly threatening a devastating response (Schmitt, 5). For terrorists who lacked a State, and therefore cities and factories, to threaten with retaliation, a traditional deterrence poses limited credibility. The strategy that evolved during the George W. Bush years and has continued into Obama’s policies, includes “a more elastic set of concepts, in particular deterrence by denial (of the opportunity to attack) and deterrence by disruption as well as deterrence by punishment (Schmitt, 5). This new deterrence resembles the basic form of criminal deterrence common in civil society: a police presence, locks and bars on doors

and windows, and the looming threat of the prison system (Schmitt, 5). Of course, all of this is translated and applied to a much grander and more violent scale within new deterrence theory.

Being “picked up” has, for much of the Afghan war, entailed CIA black sites, indefinite incarceration in prisons like Guantánamo Bay, and the rendering of “suspects socially dead” (Hirsch, 294). Social death being, “the condition that results when individuals are intentionally denied access to social networks and relationships that recognize their humanity, especially their right to exist as humans” (Hirsch, 294). The irony of this strategy is that new deterrence relies on the justice of the law to create and enforce a system of law that reinforces the legitimacy of the State and the illegitimacy of terrorist activity. Unfortunately these strategies that manipulate the law into an active instrument of violence have more profound effect encouraging violence against the system than stemming it. Effective counterterrorism must include how terrorists, once in the hands of the government, are treated.

Warfare has been demonstrated to be an inbred aspect of humanity, not only in the annals of history, but also in the work of Jane Goodall whose anthropological studies on chimpanzees alludes to a primitive warring tendency in the genome of humanity. Warfare, being an unfortunate constant companion to advancement and evolution of civilization, has only recently been legalized. A modern tradition of warfare owes its origins to the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, who defined legitimate violence—warfare—as wielded by only the State, for the benefit of the State, and against another State. This formula, still not entirely rejected in spite of modern violent conflict

increasingly eroding the Westphalian State system, renders illegitimate not only terrorist acts outside legitimate warfare, but also militaristic responses to such acts—because they are not perpetrated against States. The changing international order requires a re-examination of how warfare is constructed, but surely it is worth noting and remembering that one of the greatest military “philosophers” found the utilization of the full force of State power as embodied by the military illegitimate when released against non-State actors.

Reflecting on nearly a decade of working in the Pentagon on this counterterrorism strategy, “[Brigadier General] Jeff Schloesser voiced concerns that the United States had failed to keep pace with the shifting tactics and strategies of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. ‘They have been able to innovate faster than we have, and we have been relatively unsuccessful in stemming the recruitment of new terrorist wannabes...’” (Schmitt, 276). Framing the conflict in Afghanistan within the context of a larger war on terror was a fundamental failing. While it did allow the auspices of the government to pursue terrorists wherever they fled in an attempt to give the military the free-range necessary to follow rapidly evolving organizations, a war against terrorism cannot be won. The term war itself indicates finality, or at least the necessity of moving toward a final conclusion. This is a point that must be accepted; there will be no V-Day for the defeat of terrorism. For Schloesser, success is “if we get back to the point where it [terrorism] is still considered a national security issue but it is far down the totem pole, like it was pre-East Africa embassy bombings, where you had generals saying, ‘Why should I care about terrorism?’” (Schmitt, 278).

Embedded in the legal philosophical question concerning the methods used to counter terrorism is the moral question. Considering it is moral outrage as much, if not more than the breach of law, that impels a response to terrorism, the moral aspects of that response should be central. Moral consideration is all the more critical because terrorist attacks are perceived as especially heinous. "...[W]e attach to their suppression an importance that is greatly disproportional to the immediate harm they inflict" (Pogge, 140). The concern of terrorism is real. However, with so much energy and resources directed at fighting existing terrorists with policies that all but guarantee more individuals will be pushed to terrorism as a last means of confronting a profound sense of betrayal, it must be asked if the resources are being directed to the right places. Even if all the measures attempted in Afghanistan had succeeded, and the extraordinarily devastating poverty were alleviated, the political system revived, the drug trade curtailed, women and girls educated and respected, in another dark and abandoned part of the world the hungry, the abused and the oppressed see the systems of the interconnected world which bring wealth and prosperity to some while leaving others.

Bringing the full force of the State against a small group of people inevitably forces adaptation and change. There will always be extreme radicals who refuse to accept the status quo and who accept and recognize violence as the only method by which they can alter the trajectory of history. Accepting this is the first step toward a real solution in Afghanistan. Afghanistan and Pakistan both have suffered as unwilling players, in America's wars. Writing in 2002, Bruce Hoffman speculates on the success of counterterrorism measures and in an accurate portrait. Hoffman observes,

The struggle against terrorism, however, is never ending. Terrorism has existed for 2,000 years and owes its survival to an ability to adapt and adjust to challenges and countermeasures and to continue to identify and exploit its opponent's vulnerabilities. For success against terrorism, efforts must be as tireless, innovative, and dynamic as that of the opponent" (Hoffman 2002, 314).

This prognosis is depressing for a nation that has wearied of the tolls of a decade of war.

However, Hoffman's observations reflect a long view of terrorism. As a scholar of terrorism he identifies the futility of the belief that successful protection against one form of terrorism will end the threat forever. He observes that the best Americans can hope for in Afghanistan would be the loss of physical sanctuaries that terrorists currently enjoy (Hoffman 2002, 313). This, he observes would "signal only the death knell of terrorism as it has been known" (Hoffman 2002, 313). Whether or not that prediction is accurate, the world has yet to discover. A decade has passed and terrorists continue to find sanctuary in Afghanistan, and more disturbingly, in the already destabilized Pakistan.

The failure to achieve an "AfPak" region that no longer serves as the safe haven of choice for international Islamic terrorists, signals the ineffective nature of the war as it has been fought. Concluding the war in Afghanistan is, in the end, about securing a country so that it does not relapse into the breeding ground of international terrorism. From a security standpoint, and from the standpoint of the war on terror, or the continuation of the Overseas Contingency Operations, the objective is to secure against future attacks on the United States of America—and by extension, her allies—by terrorists trained in a Talibanized version of the world.

If there is a primary place where Conflict Resolution breaks with traditional international relations or security studies it is on uses of force and violence. Recognizing

conflict as both a place of opportunity for positive change as well as a potentially violent and devastating climate, the uses of violent force are not relegated as useless. However, violence is seen not only as a last resource, but as a resource with the potential to cause more harm to already damaged relationships, to further entrench corrupt and unjust systems and to result in more loss of life than it prevents. It is unfortunate that negotiations, for example, are frequently the option treated as a last resort, being arrived at only once the parties have reached a Mutually Hurting Stalemate, "...when all other courses of action and possibilities of escalation have been exhausted" (Zartman 2001, 13).

The Global War on Terror, along with its legacy OCO, has the consequence of dehumanizing an undefined enemy. The lack of a clear understanding of whom this war targets has resulted in the traditional tools of warfare being cast in a wide net over more than those intended. Dehumanizing the enemy is a necessary aspect of warfare which militaries exploit so that their soldiers are able to kill. The framing of this conflict has collapsed Islam and terrorism in many ways. This is evident in the paranoid manner in which "Islamists" are treated, while equally religious Christians or Jews who attempt to integrate their respective religion into law are not labeled and treated as terrorists in waiting.

In this dehumanization there is something extraordinarily alarming; the terrorist must first dehumanize himself/herself before killing. They must also dehumanize their enemy. That governments and militaries deem fighting terrorism with violent strategies so closely aligned with the path the terrorist takes, is disconcerting. September 11 didn't

initiate many of the tactics now associated with Global War on Terror; rather, they have been augmented and become more public.

Examining an appropriate and effective response to violence and its sources is necessary. This is what the field of Conflict Resolution has to offer: an analysis of the conflict as more than its symptoms—those outbreaks which grab the headlines. Conflict grows and ferments long before any violence, and it persists after. The terrorist seeks to initiate a mass call to arms or to the cause. A violent response to a terrorist attack from the targeted population often serves the purpose of the terrorist more than the attack itself. As much as it targets the forces it perceives as opposing its interests, terror exists to create opposition (Cooper, 25).

Taking a long view of the conflict in Afghanistan and the war between the Taliban and U.S. led Coalition forces, Afghanistan is revealed as a formidable political and cultural landscape. Situated strategically in Central Asia, the not-so-cold standoff between Pakistan and India radiates conflict from the Kashmir valley and across the Hindu Kush to be played strategically in Afghanistan. Treated as a chessboard in the “Great Game” (Weaver, 10) of political powers, Afghanistan has shown time and time again to be an unreliable playing field.

This research has examined religious terrorism and, in a particular case, sought to understand the potential for reaching a resolution to the conflict in so much as reaching a negative peace. There are many aspects of conflict resolution that would need to be enacted along with and long after any Track I negotiated agreement. However, the path to a negotiated agreement that would lead to a negative peace is more than possible.

There are already stirrings within the Taliban and efforts by the United States to move toward a political process. The key struggle in the coming years will be to employ the timing in a manner that optimizes chances of integrating a maximum number of the Taliban insurgency. A focus on this aspect of conflict resolution places emphasis on securing an absence of personal violence (Galtung, 185). The origins of terrorism lie however, in structural violence. In the case of Afghanistan, and increasingly Pakistan, the conflict has become so saturated with overt violence that there remains little space in which these structures can be adequately addressed. Education, a fundamental tool for gaining opportunity and success in a globalizing world, is routinely halted and disrupted. The Taliban intimidate girls, in particular, but male students and teachers as well, with the intent of keeping them from attending school (Masadykov, 4). As long as the high level of violence continues, efforts aimed at creating a positive peace—one with healthy structures and working toward healing fractured relationships—cannot occur.

Regarding religious terrorists, it has been demonstrated that religion is invoked to serve different purposes within a conflict. In Afghanistan religion supplies a vision of a future to a generation who cannot imagine anything but war. The result has been at least the semblance of a holy war. But war hardened, and aged some of the old vanguard are recognizing the need to change tactics. This poses an interesting question. From ripeness and readiness theory it is recognized that the conflict must evolve to a state where parties are open to a negotiated settlement. In other words an agreement must come from the parties. An alien agreement, one not arrived at by the parties, will not last.

Looking at the IRA, it was the older generation of leaders who first began accepting and admitting the future would be a compromise. In the IRA, a structure of strict hierarchy was helpful in ensuring that those present at the negotiations had the power and persuasion over their organization to make the necessary agreement and reasonable power to assure that the organization would recognize those terms (Juergensmeyer, location 879). Even here some refused to compromise; however, their splinter groups never had the fighting power of the IRA. It is another obstacle to overcome, that the Taliban lacks such a centrality; of course this is also what has made the Taliban so successful at surviving. Nonetheless, the battle-worn Taliban vanguard seems to reach the turning point first. This warrants further examination. Is it age? Is it watching the conflict evolve and seeing the long view history, for example recognizing that a foreign religious ideology in Afghanistan will always meet the same resistance which was met, like the Communist ideology, by all other invasions before?

Furthermore, it is accepted that no agreement will ever appease every party, nor should it. However, the question remains concerning how best to approach those who would seek to violently continue the struggle. These are the young men and women who are caught between. In a sense, they are the lost generation. They grew up in war; they adopted a radical ideology that seemed the answer to the world's betrayal, and assuming a negotiated settlement, they perceive that the leaders of that ideology betray them again. The most radical terrorists are often the youngest and least amenable to compromise at the time when negotiations occur. As they become increasingly isolated, their religious justification of violence becomes a rationale for continuing the struggle. Examining how

this group responds to a peace agreement and reintegrates, or fails to reintegrate, into society would provide increased understanding of how individuals progress in their relationship to terrorism.

A negotiated settlement would only be the first step, and the work would need to continue, particularly in rebuilding the society. How the group who refuses to compromise is treated is also an area that needs more research. If the war continued another 10 to 15 years would they then become that old vanguard ready to reexamine the terms of the conflict? It is not a social experiment that should be attempted; lives depend on ripe moments being seized. However, given the passage of time it may be that even the most hardline ideologue develops a different perspective on war and conflict.

The research examines a narrow approach to conflict resolution, the pursuit of a stable negative peace as the first step in resolving conflicts involving religious terrorists. The primary focus has been on the role religion plays as a terrorist ideology and how that may disrupt attempts to end the conflict through negotiations. In examining the use of religion in several cases, and the Taliban in particular, it is revealed that religion often operates in much the same function as any other ideology. The primary distinction of religion is in its role as a source of strength committing the terrorist to persevere where a less spiritual conviction might recognize defeat. In religious terrorism, as with other forms of terrorism, the root causes and not the ideology, often account for the violence. This means that not only are these conflicts resolvable, the appropriate tools necessary are already known.

In Afghanistan the conflict will persist as long as it remains in the shadow of Pakistan. A ruptured political system will continue to create the political space for armed groups to claim legitimacy in the face of an inept government. Religious terrorism as a primary security concern, however, is not a condition that will necessarily last into perpetuity. This group of religious terrorists, the Taliban, can be brought back into mainstream society, if the root causes, particularly the adverse relationships developing as a consequence of modernization occurring rapidly in an increasingly global economy, are addressed. Until then, religion will appear the answer to many in response to change that seems neither beneficial nor inclusive of their life experience. Integrating one terrorist group—negotiating the Taliban into a political system where they are no longer able to exploit violence in order to terrify a population into submission—would be a great achievement for Afghanistan and for those working to defeat terrorism more broadly. This political system has the opportunity to encourage peoples who continually feel disenfranchised and powerless to pursue other means than violence. Conflict resolution has the opportunity to adjust the means, rather than the ends, which can empower people in a positive way within the international system. Until the larger systems are altered, this will be the promise of peace not yet fulfilled.

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