

Violent Propaganda: Violence, Communication and Technology—The Strategic Logic of Terrorism

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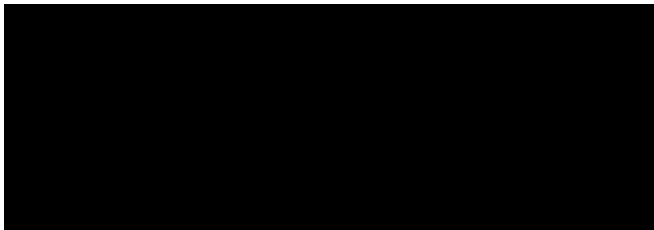
Abstract

Despite decades of efforts aimed at understanding and countering it, terrorism remains capable of achieving grossly disproportionate strategic effects against its targets. The ongoing conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and the broader Global War on Terror reflect the enduring legacy and impact of a highly calibrated, choreographed, and innovative act of terrorism. This dissertation develops and applies a novel conceptual framework that aims to provide explanatory insights in response to the question of how terrorism achieves strategic effect. It provides an overview of the extant terrorism studies literature, which, in conjunction with primary source terrorist ideology and doctrine, is drawn on to develop the framework. The framework consists of three elements: innovative forms of violence; communicative and narrative dynamics; and the exploitation of emergent information and communications technology. This dissertation proposes that the effective integration of these elements enables terrorism to cause strategic effects. To the greatest extent possible, this research draws on primary source material, including ideological, doctrinal, and propagandistic outputs, as well as secondary sources from the academic literature. The framework is applied to three paradigmatic case studies, namely Russian anarchist terrorism, Palestinian terrorism, and Salafi-Jihadist terrorism. In doing so, this dissertation seeks to provide an explanatory framework for how terrorism achieves strategic effect, while also emphasising the enduring nature of the phenomena, while recognising its character. The dissertation evidences an enduring nature regarding the underlying strategic calculus of terrorist entities over time, while noting the changing character of their specific praxis.

Declaration of Authenticity

I, Levi J. West, declare that the PhD thesis entitled *Violent Propaganda: Violence, Communication and Technology—The Strategic Logic of Terrorism* is 114,616 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures.

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the author.

Signature

10.02.22

Date

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List of Abbreviations

AQ	al-Qaeda
AQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
BSO	Black September Organization
GWOT	Global War on Terror
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IS	Islamic State
JRA	Japanese Red Army
KSM	Khaled Sheikh Mohammed
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba
NV	Narodnaya Volya
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFU	Palestinian Film Unit
PLF	Palestine Liberation Front
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Part I

Chapter One: Terrorism, Violence and Communication

On 19 August 2014, the terrorist entity then known as Islamic State (IS) released a four-minute and forty-second video entitled *A Message to America*, which depicted the beheading of American journalist James Foley. While this was not the first beheading video produced by IS or any of its precursor organisations, nor was it the first time a westerner had been the victim of this macabre subcultural practice, it was a catalytic moment in the trajectory of IS and relationship with a key adversary. The video constitutes a highly calibrated manifestation of propaganda of the deed, a multifaceted, choreographed action designed to maximise the effect it can have on the various audiences it was designed to impact. Various details of the product itself—its medium and distribution, and the victim and perpetrator—were intentionally synchronised to maximise the likelihood of the video causing substantial impact. While novel and unique in character and specifics, the nature of propaganda of the deed is enduring and has a long history.

The video successfully communicates a range of key messages to various audiences, but at the core of its effectiveness is the nature of the violence. While the violence is not explicitly depicted, it partly provides the video with its power to demand attention and, in turn, communicate the ideological messaging embedded within it. While beheading itself is an ancient form of punishment and execution, having been propagandistically represented as early as the thirty-first century BC in the ancient Egyptian Narmer Palette,¹ the Foley video was by no means the first beheading video made by IS or any of its precursor jihadist manifestations. It was by a significant magnitude the most consequential. The violence of the Foley video is only alluded to as the actual beheading itself is not explicitly depicted. Still, violence alone did not enable the video to gain traction in the broader discourse regarding IS, international security and terrorism. Achieving these types of outcomes requires a more sophisticated approach to violence that incorporates additional considerations. IS' *A Message to America* successfully combines a multitude of semiotic and distributive characteristics to achieve a dramatically amplified impact in terms of the scale of the action taken. As terrorism scholar Kruglanski stated at the time, 'the very concept of beheading, that was virtually non-existent in our unconscious prior to these events being propagated, is now there'.² This

¹ Rita Dolce, *'Losing One's Head' in the Ancient Near East: Interpretation and Meaning of Decapitation* (Routledge, 2018).

² Tim Hume, 'The Impact of ISIS Beheadings: Is Terror Propaganda Brutalizing Us All?' *CNN*, 21 April 2015, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/20/middleeast/isis-beheadings-psychological-impact/index.html>.

disruption of the existing discursive landscape is a substantial component of the purpose of an act of violence such as the beheading of James Foley.

While insufficient in and of itself, the violence is a necessary element for the purposes of achieving effect. It is only when the communicative and performative elements of the video are targeted and calibrated appropriately that propaganda of the deed can achieve the types of strategic consequences that *A Message to America* did. These elements of propaganda of the deed, or any act of terrorism, are vital in being able to communicate a variety of key messages to both sympathetic and hostile audiences. In determining the target or victim, the specifics of the violence used, and the overall optics of an operation or incident, it is necessary for an act of terrorism to consider the audiences with which it is communicating. It is further necessary to consider the perceptions and understandings those audiences have and the most effective way to garner their attention and the mechanisms, both explicit and semiotic, that can be deployed to either establish or reinforce key messages.

A Message to America is replete with these types of considerations. One of the most explicit is the use of the symbolically significant orange jumpsuit, which provides two key contextualising reference points. On the one hand, the orange jumpsuit is a direct and explicit reference to the uniforms worn by those incarcerated at Guantanamo Bay detention camp, which Richey and Edwards have referred to as an act of rhetorical resistance that ‘has been utilized as a symbol of humiliation and dehumanization and is forced on its prisoners to visually display their control over them’.³ The orange jumpsuits also pay due deference to the video of the beheading of Nicholas Berg released in May 2004 depicting the American being beheaded by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of what was then referred to as Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn, a precursor of IS. The victim in the Berg video is also wearing an orange jumpsuit. He has his decapitated head placed on his back, as is done in the Foley video and the videos share structural similarities. The orange jumpsuits were utilised by a range of other organisations both within Iraq and beyond, including Zarqawi’s Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Friis suggests, referring to the deployment of the orange jumpsuit motif by IS, that,

³ Patrick J. Richey and Michaela Edwards, ‘It’s More than Orange: ISIS’ Appropriation of Orange Prison Jumpsuits as Rhetorical Resistance’, in *The Media World of ISIS*, ed. Michael Krona and Rosemary Pennington (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019).

‘shown repeatedly across print, broadcast and online media, the screen-grabs of the orange-clad hostages have been probably the most conspicuous visual icon in the war against ISIS’.⁴

In addition to the iconic use of the orange jumpsuit by IS, there are numerous additional considerations both within the video itself and as addenda to the broader interpretation of the video. The perpetrator of the beheading was Mohammed Emwazi, a British citizen with a thick British accent, which served to emphasise the global nature of the Caliphate’s recruitment capability. The placement of the head on the back of the victim after its decapitation is a further reference to the Berg video and a reference to the providence of the organisation responsible and its roots in the Iraqi insurgency that began in response to the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. In conjunction with the imagery and the contents of the video, Emwazi justifies the violence, stating, with reference to the United States Government:

you have been at the forefront of aggression towards the Islamic State. You have plotted against us and gone far out of your way to find reasons to interfere in our affairs. Today, your military air force is attacking us daily in Iraq. Your strikes have caused casualties amongst Muslims.⁵

This message reinforced that sent via email by IS to the parents of James Foley, which closed with the words, ‘You and your citizens will pay the price of your bombings! The first of which being the blood of the American citizen, James Foley! He will be executed as a DIRECT result of your transgressions towards us’!⁶

In addition to the brutality depicted in *A Message to America* and the various elements contained within it that served to communicate an ideological proposition to a broad range of audiences, the video was also distributed in a manner that enabled it to achieve global distribution. Initially uploaded to IS’ Western-focused media division, *Al-Hayat’s* Diaspora account, before being briefly hosted on Twitter and YouTube, the video was then subsequently the focus of significant government and media attention and a substantive reframing of the issues under consideration. As Friis highlights:

⁴ Simone Molin Friis, ‘“Beyond Anything We Have Ever Seen”: Beheading Videos and the Visibility of Violence in the War against ISIS’, *International Affairs* 91, no. 4 (July 2015): 725–46, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12341>.

⁵ Al Furqan Foundation, *A Message to America*, 2020, <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Multimedia/is-beheads-captured-american-james-foley-threatens-to-execute-another.html>.

⁶ GlobalPost, ‘Full Text of the Last Email the Islamic State Sent to the Foley Family’, *The World*, 21 August 2014, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-08-21/full-text-last-email-islamic-state-sent-foley-family>.

During the weeks and months following dissemination of the beheading videos, the ‘humanitarian situation’ was rapidly reframed as a ‘national security’ issue, and ISIS was increasingly described as an ‘imminent threat’ spreading beyond the Middle East, including to the UK and US. The focus shifted from ‘containment’ to ‘degrading and destroying’; the number of US air strikes rapidly increased; the UK initiated military action in Iraq; and US military action was extended beyond Iraq, with air strikes carried out in Syria for the first time in September 2014.⁷

IS subsequently deployed a sophisticated, highly calibrated, diverse and effective propaganda campaign that, throughout 2014 to 2017, managed to attract substantial numbers of foreign fighters to their cause, inspiring large numbers of sympathisers to undertake terrorist attacks within Western jurisdiction and dominate national and international security agendas. This project, which leveraged leading-edge information and communications platforms such as Twitter and Telegram, managed to achieve significant strategic impact for IS, an organisation that, while frequently portrayed as the richest terrorist organisation in history, and as having attracted an unprecedented number of foreign fighters to its cause, was still marginal when considered relative to the capability and scale of its adversaries.

The above provides an archetypal example of terrorist violence undertaken in a manner that is consciously intended to achieve strategic effect. It is this process and the means by which it is achieved that this dissertation seeks to understand. As the above briefly alludes to, the mere deployment of violence itself is likely insufficient to achieve strategic effect. This research seeks to address the primary research question of *how does terrorism achieve strategic effect*. In addressing this primary research question, this dissertation develops and proposes a triadic conceptual framework, which is subsequently applied to three paradigmatic case studies. In proceeding with the research, the conceptual framework represents the hypothesis of this dissertation. It is proposed that the three elements and their integration represent the ‘how’ in relation to terrorism achieving strategic effect. As such, the central hypothesis of this dissertation can be proffered as follows:

When terrorism successfully integrates innovative forms of violence, communicative and narrative dynamics, and the exploitation of emergent information and communications technologies, it can achieve strategic effect.

Chapter Three, which provides a comprehensive articulation of the framework, sets out the key elements and provides an articulation of the role of the integrated relationship that

⁷ Friis, ‘Beyond Anything We Have Ever Seen’.

necessarily exists between them. The framework is subsequently applied to the three case studies to demonstrate its merits in addressing the overarching research question.

The case studies to which the conceptual framework is applied include anarchist terrorism as it emerged in Russia in the mid-1800s, Palestinian terrorism in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War and violent, global Salafist-Jihadism. These paradigmatic cases were selected, at least partly, due to certain shared characteristics, although not necessarily related to the specific elements of the conceptual framework. These include an ultimately globalised campaign of terrorism, either directly coordinated or ideologically inspired; a sustained campaign, whereby each of these cases provided ideological coherency to terrorist violence over an extended period; diversity in relation to their organisational and structural manifestations, and tactical and operational activity; and the existence of both violent and nonviolent components within their broader movement. The justification for each case is articulated more fully in Chapter Four. In seeking to address the question of how terrorism works, this dissertation applies the conceptual framework, fully articulated in Chapter Three, to the three cases identified above. In doing so, it seeks to demonstrate the explanatory power of the framework in illuminating the consistent mechanisms that have enabled these manifestations of terrorism to achieve strategic effect.

This dissertation is structured in a relatively orthodox fashion, with Chapter Two situating the research within the extant terrorism studies literature. It provides a brief historical survey of the foundational literature of the field before focusing on three relevant subcategories within the terrorism studies literature, namely the literature on terrorism and strategy: terrorism and communication, and terrorism and innovation. Chapter Three provides an expansive explication of the conceptual framework and explicates each of the three elements and the role of integration in the framework. Chapter Four details the method used to undertake the research and provides a justification for the use of case study methods to complete the research and an articulation of the case study selection. Chapters Five through Ten constitute the case studies, with each case study split into two parts. The first part of each case study provides background and context, focusing on ideology, doctrine and preliminary operational activity. The second part of each case study constitutes the application of the conceptual framework and emphasises how the elements of the framework explain the strategic effects achieved. Chapter Eleven provides a brief summary of the above, iterates the dissertation's contribution to the terrorism studies literature and emphasises the policy relevance of the

work. Before proceeding it is worthwhile to briefly highlight the underpinning approach that informs this dissertation. The strategic approach to understanding and analysing terrorism is central to the work that follows, and while it is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, a brief discussion is provided here to anchor a more general discussion of the idea of a strategic logic of terrorism.

The Strategic Approach

The approach taken herein is anchored in what Chenoweth⁸ refers to as the strategic approach. In articulating what the strategic approach entails, she notes that ‘proponents of the strategic approach assume that the choice to use terrorism is calculated, purposeful, and often entirely rational in the sense that it helps political actors to get what they want’.⁹

Beyond being arguably the predominant approach in the field, this approach provides this research with a firm grounding in rational choice theory that informs the analysis being undertaken. While there are recognised shortcomings and limitations to the strategic approach, as there are with all the recognised approaches to terrorism studies, the strategic approach is useful for analysing any consistent strategic logic that may be present across multiple case studies. As Chenoweth notes in explaining the assumptions of those scholars who take a perspective informed by the strategic approach, ‘whenever we see terrorism, it is generally the outcome of rational choice decision games, even if those processes are totally informal’.¹⁰ It is important to note that when the strategic approach refers to rationality, it is more generally a conception of rationality that reflects the concept of bounded rationality, as prosecuted by Simon.¹¹ This conceptualisation of rationality recognises that human decision-making is not undertaken in a context that reflects perfect information, nor is it undertaken in a purely calculating manner. Bounded rationality recognises numerous additional factors that influence decision-making: while an actor may be heavily influenced by rational calculations regarding the maximisation of utility, other emotional and cognitive constraints influence the process. The concept of bounded rationality does not discount the strategic approach but rather reflects the multicausality of all human behaviour.

⁸ Erica Chenoweth and Pauline L. Moore, *The Politics of Terror* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁹ Chenoweth and Moore, *Politics of Terror*, 42.

¹⁰ Chenoweth and Moore, *Politics of Terror*, 43.

¹¹ Herbert A. Simon, ‘Bounded Rationality in Social Science: Today and Tomorrow’, *Mind & Society* 1, no. 1 (March 2000): 25–39, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02512227>.

In a specific terrorism studies context, this multicausality is reflected by the inherently multidisciplinary approach to the subject. This is further reflected in the additional approaches Chenoweth identifies, including organisational, ideological and psychological approaches. The bounded rationality that informs the strategic approach provides scope for all of these approaches to coexist and recognise, to the extent that terrorist entities and their leadership do make calculated strategic assessments of their means relative to their ends, these decisions, and those of the operatives within the terrorist entity, are additionally influenced by a multitude of additional factors, including the cognitive and emotional limitations identified by Simon. In the adversarial context within which terrorism necessarily occurs, it is also important to acknowledge that any strategic logic informing terrorism must recognise and assess adversary behaviour and responses. The anchoring of this research in the strategic approach should not be taken to suggest that the proposed strategic logic is the sole driver of terrorist entity decision-making. Rather, it is a substantial and significant driver of decision-making within a terrorism context.

The Strategic Logic of Terrorism

The capacity of a terrorist organisation such as IS to achieve the kind of significant strategic effects witnessed during the post-2014 period, which ultimately involved having strategic impacts on their primary adversary, reflects the disproportionate power terrorism can have in terms of shaping and disrupting existing political and public discourse, and in being a tactic capable of substantial coercive influence on the relevant targets of the terrorist entity. This strategic utilisation of terrorism has been considered within the terrorism studies literature.¹² Still, these explanations have tended to focus on articulating the overarching strategies rather than on how they manifest themselves when deployed. The broader strategy of terrorism for political or ideological effect is potentially better understood as having an enduring nature, one which can be appreciated beyond ideological manifestations, historical contexts and technological specificity. Importantly, terrorism retains a dynamic, contextually dependent and constantly adapting character, which is why each subsequent ideological, organisational or tactical manifestation is often perceived to be distinct and novel. The underlying strategic logic of terrorism remains consistent even if the specific manifestations of the phenomena

¹² Martha Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism: Causes, Processes, and Consequences* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 111–24; Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, ‘The Strategies of Terrorism’, *International Security* 31, no. 1 (July 2006): 49–80, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2006.31.1.49>; David Fromkin, ‘The Strategy of Terrorism’, *Foreign Affairs* 53, no. 4 (1975): 683–98, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20039540>.

appear uniquely distinct. As Crenshaw has stated, ‘the strategy of terrorism has changed over time to adapt to new circumstances that offer different possibilities for dissident action—for example, hostage-taking. Yet terrorist activity considered in its entirety shows a fundamental unity of purpose and conception’.¹³

This research is anchored by this notion of an enduring strategic logic and engages with the question of *how does terrorism achieve strategic effect*. In doing so, this research recognises the existing literature on terrorism as a strategic calculation and aims to provide an operationalised consideration of these ideas. Further, it aims to recognise and articulate the ‘fundamental unity of purpose’ highlighted by Crenshaw above and the changing ‘different possibilities’ that varied historical contexts, technological developments and tactical innovation can present. Ultimately, this research will articulate and assess an enduring strategic logic that seeks to explain the mechanisms by which terrorism as a strategic tool can be deployed in multiple historical contexts. The enduring nature of terrorism, as distinct from the changing character of terrorism, will be developed and assessed through the research undertaken herein. The conceptual framework is an articulation and deconstruction of this enduring nature.

In distributing the *Message to America* video, IS was engaging in a practice that in its fundamental nature remains largely unchanged since its initial incarnation in the late 1800s. While their broader campaign appears novel from the perspective of the specific violence they deployed, the choreographed messaging embedded into their video release, and the technology used to disseminate the video across the globe, this novelty reflects the changing character of terrorism, rather than a fundamental revolution in terrorist praxis. Understanding the enduring nature of terrorism while appreciating its dynamic and contextually dependent character ought to be a central concern to the progression of the scholarly understanding of the phenomena while also potentially informing proportional and appropriate counterterrorism practices. More broadly, a recognition of the enduring nature of terrorism can assist in potentially providing a broader understanding of the vulnerabilities that terrorism seeks to exploit. Terrorism is an inherently dynamic phenomenon, required to adapt to specific social, political and technological circumstances to ensure it can achieve strategic effect. By undertaking an analysis of historical and contemporary case studies, it is possible to identify a consistent strategic logic to the phenomena of terrorism which, once understood,

¹³ Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism*, 112.

can potentially assist in better understanding the strategic intent of terrorist actors. It can potentially assist in pre-emptively determining emerging mechanisms of violence or forms of information and communication technology that might be exploited by terrorist organisations.

Conceptual Parameters

It is not possible to undertake a sustained analysis of terrorism, least of all to engage in theoretical or conceptual development in the field of terrorism studies, without engaging with the ongoing dilemma of the definition of terrorism. Across the terrorism studies literature, it is almost unanimously recognised that terrorism does not have a universally accepted definition. While there are numerous identifiable reasons for this, it ought not to be considered as unique or problematic as it is often portrayed. Terrorism, like many other concepts in political and social science, is complex. Complex phenomena or concepts rarely lend themselves to agreed-upon, universal definitions. A brief consideration of a range of other concepts in political theory, such as power or ideology, demonstrates the frequency with which terms and concepts can consistently have multiple coexisting definitions and conceptualisations without the need to identify a singular universal definition. While there are obvious imperatives for consistency in criminal definitions and doctrinal conceptualisations, the ongoing presumption that terrorism is universally definable is less limiting on the scholarly field than otherwise purported. Given the importance of context in understanding any social phenomena, identifying a singular definition that holds across contextual and temporal change is likely to be, by its nature, limited in its utility and generalisability. Seeking to establish universal agreement regarding an inherently political or ideological phenomenon is as futile as it is likely to be impossible. These structural limitations are further exacerbated by the contentious nature of a phenomenon like terrorism that is necessarily intertwined with contestation for power.

This is not to suggest that efforts have not been made to articulate something resembling an agreed-upon definition of terrorism, nor that from a policy and operational perspective, the litany of disparate definitions does not present an ongoing problem. In the American context, Perry, writing in 2004, identified at least 22 federal definitions of terrorism.¹⁴ The plethora of legislative and doctrinal definitions of terrorism demonstrates that defining terrorism is possible but that it is universality that is the challenge. Contrary to the notion that terrorism

¹⁴ Nicholas J. Perry, 'The Numerous Federal Legal Definitions of Terrorism: The Problem of Too Many Grails', *Notre Dame Journal of Legislation* 3, no. 2 (2004): 249–70.

cannot be defined in any agreed manner, Ganor argues forcefully, ‘an objective definition of terrorism is not only possible; it is also indispensable to any serious attempt to combat terrorism. Lacking such a definition, no coordinated fight against international terrorism can ever really get anywhere’.¹⁵

While this particular articulation is perhaps somewhat polemic, suggesting that there has not been a ‘coordinated fight against international terrorist’ by extension of the absence of a universal definition, it does not hold when considered in reference to broad efforts that international counterterrorism has undertaken in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The perspective that a universal definition is both necessary and plausible can be contrasted with the view and approach taken by Schmid.¹⁶ Rather than seeking to prosecute his definition of the concept, Schmid surveys respected academics working within terrorism studies, a process he undertook previously in 1988. In doing so, he openly recognises there are a multitude of shortcomings with any attempt to define terrorism but still proceeds to update his 1988 academic consensus definition. Schmid surveys 91 respondents, asking them four key questions that are then incorporated into establishing the ‘Revised Academic Consensus Definition’:

1. Whose ‘definition of terrorism’ do you use?
2. What is your comment/criticism on the 1988 academic consensus definition of terrorism?
3. What is your comment/criticism on the UN draft definition of terrorism?
4. What is your comment/criticism on the United States of America’s State Department definition of terrorism?¹⁷

The culmination of this process results in a definition that ‘tries to capture the core dimension of terrorism in its first paragraph, with the remainder (points 2–12) serving an explanatory purpose’.¹⁸ In doing so, the core definition, in addition to the 12 points identified, is nearly 650 words. While comprehensive, this approach poses substantial challenges, particularly the presence of 10 ‘contested elements’¹⁹ that emerge from the development of the consensus

¹⁵ Boaz Ganor, ‘Defining Terrorism: Is One Man’s Terrorist Another Man’s Freedom Fighter’, *Police Practice and Research* 3, no. 4 (January 2002): 287–304, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1561426022000032060>.

¹⁶ Alex P. Schmid, Albert Jongman and Eric Price, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2011).

¹⁷ Schmid, Jongman and Price, *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism*, 43.

¹⁸ Schmid, Jongman and Price, *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism*, 86–87.

¹⁹ Schmid, Jongman and Price, *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism*, 84.

definition and an appendix containing 250 definitions, all of which are recognised as having both meritorious elements and shortcomings. The consensus definition is an aggregate definition rather than an agreed definition. While this approach is worthwhile, it recognises its limitations and further reinforces the fundamental constraints on developing a universal definition of terrorism.

These two contrasting examples are cited to identify the ongoing, contested nature of the definition of terrorism itself and the approaches that can be taken in seeking a definition and the actual feasibility of a definition. In coming to the Revised Academic Consensus Definition, yet still acknowledging the fundamental challenges of defining terrorism, Schmid cites extensively from the likes of Laqueur, Jenkins and other foundational scholars in the field to highlight why the phenomenon is so difficult to define and the fundamental characteristics that place substantive barriers to a universal definition.²⁰

The limitations on defining terrorism are based on a number of key elements of the phenomena, but in particular, relate to the ideological or political nature of the act/s. As an extension of the political and ideological nature of terrorism, deployment of the term is an inherently subjective and almost exclusively pejorative exercise, informed in part by the degree of agreement or sympathy felt with the actor and their political or ideological claims. The clichéd phrase of ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’ is used to avoid engaging with the definitional question as frequently as it highlights the complexity of any attempt to do so. However, it reflects genuine challenges in finding a broad agreement or consensus, particularly if that consensus seeks to transcend political, ideological, cultural or geopolitical boundaries. In a paper originally published in 1978 yet engaging in debate easily transferrable to current discourse, Jenkins stated in reference to the term:

The problem of defining terrorism is compounded by the fact that terrorism has recently become a fad word used promiscuously and often applied to a variety of acts of violence which are not strictly terrorism by definition. It is generally pejorative. Some governments are prone to label as terrorism all violent acts committed by their political opponents, while anti-government extremists frequently claim to be the victims of government terror. What is called terrorism thus seems to depend on one’s point of view. Use of the term implies a moral judgment; and if one party can successfully attach the label terrorist to its opponent, then it has

²⁰ Schmid, Jongman and Price, *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism*.

indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint. *Terrorism is what the bad guys do* [emphasis added].²¹

To emphasise this point, it is worth considering a historical example of the subjective and contextually dependent nature of any use of the term terrorist, and further highlight how the use of the term is limited in its relevance to specific temporal and spatial contexts and is overwhelmingly informed by the perspective of the actor/s deploying the term. During the Cold War, numerous Western leaders, including then-British Prime Minister Thatcher and then-United States (US) President Reagan, identified Nelson Mandela, later the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and the first post-Apartheid leader of a democratic South Africa, as a terrorist.²² Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Mandela openly advocated political violence against the South African Government in efforts to free the oppressed population of Apartheid South Africa.²³ In his autobiography, Mandela reflected:

I explained that for the moment MK [Umkhonto we Sizwe—the armed wing of the African National Congress] was limited to sabotage, but that if sabotage did not have the desired effect we would probably move on to guerrilla warfare.²⁴

In the context of the Cold War and the waves of anti-colonial terrorism impacting the globe, Mandela's designation was a logical, arguably defensible determination in historical context. From the perspective of the African population of South Africa and those opposed to Apartheid, Mandela was a morally just freedom fighter, and the actions he endorsed were equally morally just, especially when considered relative to the violence, both explicit and structural, perpetrated by the Apartheid Government of South Africa. The Mandela case serves as a useful demonstration of the inherently subjective process of labelling an individual or organisation as terrorist in nature. It also provides a useful insight into a more appropriate basis for making these determinations. Anchoring any assessment of the terroristic nature of an individual or an organisation in the context of their strategic and ideological thought provides a clearer and more objective basis on which to make these determinations while providing greater clarity into the broader strategic calculus of the effort.

²¹ Brian Jenkins, 'The Study of Terrorism: Definitional Problems', RAND Paper Series (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1980), 1, <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/papers/2006/P6563.pdf>.

²² Caitlin Dewey, 'Why Nelson Mandela Was on a Terrorism Watch List in 2008', *Washington Post*, 7 December 2013, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/12/07/why-nelson-mandela-was-on-a-terrorism-watch-list-in-2008/>.

²³ Elleke Boehmer, 'Postcolonial Terrorist the Example of Nelson Mandela', *Parallax* 11, no. 4 (October 2005): 46–55, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13534640500331666>.

²⁴ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk of Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, repr. (London: Abacus, 2004), 45.

Given the inherent shortcomings and limitations of any definition of terrorism, this analysis incorporates an approach articulated by Garrison.²⁵ In this work, Garrison cites extensively from primary source documents authored by the philosophers, strategists and intellectual authorities of revolution, insurgency and terrorism to develop an approach that circumvents some of the inherent limitations to defining terrorism. Drawing from writers as historically disparate as German American anarchist Johann Most and Salafi-Jihadist leader Osama bin Laden, Garrison argues, ‘although there are clear differences in political ideology, philosophy, desired goals and the social context between terrorists through history, an examination of their writings reveals that *terrorists share a common understanding of the utility of terror*’ (emphasis in original).²⁶

This approach enables something nearer an objective standard to be established concerning whether or not specific individuals, organisations, networks or movements can be considered terroristic in nature. Referring to the ideological, doctrinal and strategic thinking and writing of these entities diminishes the subjective nature of the use of the term. It enables a degree of verifiability in relation to the actions being labelled as terrorism. Should an actor or an organisation subscribe to an ideological framework that endorses terrorist violence, it can be determined that said actor or organisation is terrorist in nature. Additionally, articulating a strategy that incorporates, either centrally or peripherally, the use of terrorism would subsequently enable the said enterprise to be reasonably objectively considered terroristic. Garrison cites Parry in stating, ‘although terrorists give innumerable explanations of their violence, these rationalizations are frequently related to three basic concepts:

- (1.) Society is sick and cannot be cured by half measures of reform.
- (2.) The state is itself violence and can be countered and overcome only by violence.
- (3.) The truth of the terrorist cause justifies any action that supports it. While some terrorists recognize no moral law others have their own “higher” morality’.²⁷

The approach taken in this analysis is informed substantially by Garrison’s approach and the more recent work of Ackerman.²⁸ Beyond informing the approach to defining key concepts in

²⁵ Arthur H. Garrison, ‘Defining Terrorism: Philosophy of the Bomb, Propaganda by Deed and Change through Fear and Violence’, *Criminal Justice Studies* 17, no. 3 (2004): 259–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601042000281105>.

²⁶ Garrison, ‘Defining Terrorism’, 260.

²⁷ Albert Parry, *Terrorism: From Robespierre to the Weather Underground* (Dover Publications, 2013), <http://www.myilibrary.com?id=570352>.

²⁸ Gary A. Ackerman and Michael Burnham, “Towards a Definition of Terrorist Ideology,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 33, no. 6 (August 18, 2021): 1160–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1599862>.

this paper, this approach also informs the development of the proposed conceptual framework. While the conceptual framework, fully articulated in Chapter Three, draws significantly on the existing terrorism studies literature, it is in the first instance informed by primary source materials such as ideological tracts and the declaratory strategic doctrine of terrorist organisations. This incorporation of ideological and strategic documentation grounds the conceptual framework in the body of literature produced by terrorist philosophers, political theorists and strategists of revolutionary warfare and terrorism, rather than solely in the analytical and scholarly literature.

Having identified the approaches above to defining terrorism, it remains appropriate and necessary to identify a definition that will provide sufficient conceptual parameters for the analysis being undertaken within this dissertation. Despite all the contention regarding the definition of terrorism, English notes, ‘the enormous range of competing definitions of the word “terrorism” should not lead scholars to abandon a term which will continue to be used; rather, it should ensure that we clearly, honestly and carefully define the term as we will use it’.²⁹

English’s caution provides the basis on which to proceed with identifying an appropriate definition. In his 2009, *Terrorism: How to Respond*,³⁰ English provides a comprehensive foundation to build an analysis of terrorism from a strategic perspective. His definition identifies a number of key and, at times, under analysed elements of terrorism. His definition argues that terrorism:

involves heterogeneous violence used or threatened with a political aim; it can involve a variety of acts, of targets, and of actors; it possesses an important psychological dimension, producing terror or fear among a directly threatened group and also a wider implied audience in the hope of maximizing political communication and achievement; it embodies the exerting and implementing of power, and the attempted redressing of power relations; it represents a subspecies of warfare, and as such it can form part of a wider campaign of violent and non-violent attempts at political leverage.³¹

²⁹ Richard English, *Does Terrorism Work? A History*, 1st ed. (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 10.

³⁰ Richard English, *Terrorism: How to Respond* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³¹ English, *Does Terrorism Work?*, 10.

This definition is not only comprehensive, but it also emphasises numerous elements of terrorism central to the analysis being undertaken herein and the proposed conceptual framework. The focus on audiences and the communicative elements of terrorism is crucial to the framework proposed here, as is the reference to ‘exerting and implementing power’, reflecting the strategic approach that informs this analysis. Importantly, English’s definition also identifies that terrorism is frequently a component of a broader political campaign, both violent and nonviolent, further reflecting the strategic and communicative approach to understanding the mechanisms by which terrorism can achieve strategic effect. The importance of the broader campaign and the narratives that contextualise terrorist violence are central to the argument being prosecuted herein.

Beyond a specific definition of terrorism itself, it is also important to distinguish between isolated instances of terrorism and seemingly coherent campaigns of terrorism. While this distinction is in one sense relatively straightforward, the adoption of decentralised or ‘leaderless’ strategies by various terrorist movements increases the complexity of understanding the way a sustained, albeit substantially distributed and dispersed campaign manifests. Across a multitude of terrorist movements, the decentralised approach has been incorporated at various times and to varying extents,³² frequently in response to sustained counterterrorism pressure. In understanding what constitutes a campaign of terrorism, it is necessary to recognise the strategic considerations of terrorist organisations themselves in terms of how a campaign might be operationalised. Pape argued, with specific reference to suicide terrorism campaigns, that a campaign consists of an ‘intended series of attacks that terrorist leaders explain and justify as aimed at gaining political concessions from a target government’.³³ While this definition is broad enough to encompass, for instance, the online campaign of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and to a greater extent, the social media campaigns of IS, it is necessary to emphasise that for the purposes of this research, the idea of a campaign is conceptualised in a significantly broader sense. As such, a *campaign of terrorism* is herein conceptualised as a *series of terrorist attacks that share a consistent yet*

³² Jeffrey Kaplan, ‘“Leaderless Resistance”’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 3 (September 1997): 80–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559708427417>; Paul Joosse, ‘Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion: The Case of the Earth Liberation Front’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 3 (July 2007): 351–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550701424042>; Mark S. Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017); Ramón Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention* (Dordrecht, NL: Springer Netherlands, 2011), ProQuest Central.

³³ Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York, NY: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006), 39–40.

broad strategic objective and a consistent ideological motivation, albeit not necessarily deeply understood by the operative or operatives. By extension, a campaign of terrorism conceived in this manner can be temporally remote from any initial articulation of a terrorist entity's statement of strategic objectives. It can be considered part of the same campaign merely by ideological correlation, targeting decisions or tactical choice, all of which can demonstrate a degree of ideological adherence or coherence. Under a leaderless model of terrorist attack facilitation, operatives need only signify or symbolically demonstrate their adherence to the ideological framework of the campaign or the movement, enabling a campaign to continue well beyond the need for direct command and control engagement.

Additionally, it is necessary to provide a foundational articulation of what is meant by the communicative dynamics of terrorism generally, and more specifically, of terrorist violence. The conceptualisation of communicative dynamics pertaining to terrorist violence that anchors this analysis builds in the first instance on the ideas of the early anarchist and socialist revolutionaries responsible for articulating the concept of *propaganda of the deed*. One of the earliest of these revolutionaries, Italian socialist Carlo Pisacane, famously articulated the frustration of traditional propagandising and the need for action as the vehicle to transmit ideas that traditional propaganda had failed to sufficiently communicate. He wrote, 'ideas spring from deeds and not the other way around ... The flash of Milano's bayonet was a more effective propaganda than a thousand volumes penned by doctrinaires who are the real blight upon our country and the entire world'.³⁴

This approach, subsequently further articulated by the likes of Mikhail Bakunin and Johann Most, was incorporated into the repertoire of strategies that informed the violent anarchist approach to revolutionary struggle. At the core of the propaganda of the deed is the idea that violence can play a communicative role, and both draw attention to ideological propositions and inspire others to embrace those ideas. The most specific and direct embrace and implementation of this approach was by Narodnaya Volya,³⁵ generally recognised as the first properly constituted terrorist organisation, who in their 1879 program stated:

³⁴ Carlo Pisacane, *Political Testament* (1857) in Robert Graham, ed., *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas* (Montreal; New York, NY: Black Rose Books, 2005), 68.

³⁵ ³⁵ It is important to note here that the Russian revolutionary movement was a broad movement that incorporated a diverse range of ideological manifestations from across a spectrum of what can broadly be referred to as 'Socialist', or even more broadly as 'Revolutionary.' These umbrella terms would include 'Anarchists.' The orientation of this dissertation towards the strategies of various movements, organisations, and individuals relies predominantly on the continuity of strategic and tactical thinking to bind together various

Terroristic activity ... aims to undermine the prestige of the government's power, to demonstrate steadily the possibility of struggle against the government, to arouse in this manner the revolutionary spirit of the people and their confidence in the success of the cause, and finally to give shape and direction to the forces fit and trained to carry on the fight.³⁶

Terrorism in its modern manifestation has been shaped significantly by the ideas of the early anarchists and their view that in the face of overwhelming asymmetries of power and means, the use of violence as a tool to spark a broader revolutionary sentiment among the population, to demonstrate the feasibility of revolutionary action and to communicate the underlying ideological proposition of the broader movement, was a legitimate and defensible, and necessary strategy.

Contemporary scholars such as Schmid have emphasised the centrality of communication to terrorism. His 1982 work *Violence as Communication*³⁷ provides a landmark articulation of the relationship between terrorist violence, audiences and the news media. Understanding this dynamic is central to appreciating the strategic purpose of terrorist violence and the mechanisms that terrorism exploits in seeking to achieve strategic impact. For the purposes of this analysis, communicative dynamics, as they relate to terrorism, is understood as meaning *the manner by which terrorism is informed by considerations of audiences and by considerations of the way in which terrorist violence will be portrayed, broadcast and re-broadcast, framed and interpreted*. This will be further articulated in Chapter Three, which will provide a more substantive discussion of this element of the conceptual framework that

manifestations of the three specific movements considered in each of the case studies. In the case of the anarchists this results in two points of clarification. Firstly, the majority of the terrorism studies literature considers Narodnaya Volya within a context of the period of what is referred to as anarchist terrorism, which impacted Europe and the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Secondly, while Narodnaya Volya refer to themselves as “socialists and democrats” in their own program, it is worthy to note that the boundaries between the various manifestations of socialist revolutionary activity were relatively fluid, and certainly contested, as was the case within the Palestinian movement, and the Jihadist movement. Not every terrorist organisation that refers to themselves as being motivated by a particular ideology necessarily subscribes to the same specific manifestation of that ideology. The point here is to note that within each of the case studies there is a degree of variance in relation to the specific ideological manifestations that each specific entity adhered to, and that they are analysed through a lens that prioritises strategic coherence and general ideological coherency. As such, Narodnaya Volya will be considered within this dissertation as part of the broad anarchist manifestation of terrorism that emerged in the late 1800s, while acknowledging that from a strictly ideological perspective they could be labelled otherwise.. Basil Dmytryshyn, ed., *Imperial Russia: A Source Book, 1700-1917*, 3rd ed (Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1990), p. 355.

³⁶ Narodnaya Volya, *Program of the Executive Committee* (1879) in Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media* (London; Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE, 1982), 13.

³⁷ Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media* (London; Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE, 1982).

underpins the analysis undertaken herein and the relationship these considerations have with both terrorist violence itself and information and communications technology.

These key concepts will be more fully articulated and contextualised within the doctrinal and contemporary literature over Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Two will provide a context for the analysis being undertaken, first within classic and contemporary strategic thought as articulated through terrorist philosophy and theory and subsequently within the context of the existing scholarly literature. Chapter Three will provide a comprehensive formulation of the conceptual framework, including clarification of the three elements of the framework and the relationship between them.

It is also appropriate to provide an articulation of what is meant by the term *strategic effect* in the context of this research. The term itself suffers from similar vagaries as those referred to above, suffering from a lack of specificity and highly contested positions regarding what does and does not constitute strategy. As leading strategic studies scholar Lawrence Freedman has noted, "...the concept of terrorism suffers from narrative abuse, that of strategy suffers from multiple use."³⁸ In an effort to provide some foundational conceptual clarity, this brief section will draw on the existing literature regarding strategy and terrorism to articulate what constitutes strategic effect.

A necessary start point for conceptualising strategic effect in the context of terrorism, and of broader forms of insurgent violence and politics, is the work of English, who importantly distinguishes between what he refers to as strategic victory, and partial strategic victory.³⁹ This distinction is important, as the concept of strategic effect, as articulated here, does not imply absolute victory or the achievement of the complete and total objectives of the organisation or movement responsible for the action, but rather refers to "the achievement or partial achievement of secondary (rather than central or primary) strategic goals."⁴⁰ What this approach enables is a conceptualisation of strategic effect that is anchored in considerations of strategy that are informed substantially by the literature on asymmetric, or revolutionary warfare, or what can more broadly be captured under the rubric of *irregular warfare*.⁴¹ This

³⁸ Lawrence Freedman, "Terrorism as a Strategy," *Government and Opposition* (London) 42, no. 3 (2007): 318, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2007.00226.x>.

³⁹ Richard English, *Does Terrorism Work? A History*, First edition (Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016). 30.

⁴⁰ English, 31.

⁴¹ The term is used here to refer to a range of related concepts that have been referred to variously as low-intensity conflict, revolutionary warfare, insurgency, guerrilla warfare or 4th generation warfare. There does not

literature is informed substantially by what can be considered the canon of revolutionary warfare, namely the strategic writing of strategists such as Lenin,⁴² Mao,⁴³ Che Guevara,⁴⁴ Giap,⁴⁵ and others. What these strategists share is an indirect approach to conflict whereby rather than seeking the absolute military defeat of a conventional military adversary through direct confrontation, asymmetric strategies advise indirectly targeting an adversary's decision making processes, convincing them that "their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit."⁴⁶ These are strategies that seek to weaken an enemy over the duration of a protracted conflict rather than the launching of a decisive operation that immediately and comprehensively resolves a conflict. This is a perspective that is anchored in the asymmetry of means that confront guerrillas, terrorists, and other insurgent-esque actors, and thus is a strategy frequently adopted by what the literature consistently refers to as the 'weak' actor. As Taber famously wrote,

The guerrilla, for his part, wishes to wear down his military opponent and will employ suitable tactics to that end, but his primary objective is political. It is to feed and fan the fires of revolution by his struggle, to raise the entire population against the regime, to discredit it, isolate it, wreck its credit, undermine its economy, over extend its resources, and cause its disintegration.⁴⁷

It is beyond the scope of this work to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the strategy or strategies of what Freedman refers to as "the underdogs, or at least those claiming to act on their behalf, who faced a large gap between desired ends and available means."⁴⁸ It is however necessary to articulate what is meant by strategic effect in the context of the above. As such, strategic effect is herein considered to be *the capacity to achieve either or both substantial or enduring impacts on an adversary's strategic decision making and/or on the*

exist a settled nomenclature for this form of warfare. The importance of revolutionary warfare perspectives on the emergence of terrorism studies is addressed below.

⁴² Vladimir Illyich Lenin, *Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Progress Publishers, 1976).

⁴³ Zedong Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith, Dover edition (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005).

⁴⁴ Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (United States: BN Pub., 2007).

⁴⁵ Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War, People's Army: The Viet Cong In surrection Manual for under-Developed Countries*. (N.Y., Praeger [1962, reprinted 1967]).

⁴⁶ Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004), 2.

⁴⁷ Robert Taber, *The War of the Flea: A Study of Guerilla Warfare Theory and Practice* (Frogmore, St. Albans, Herts.: Paladin, 1977), 26.

⁴⁸ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History*, 1. iss. as an Oxford Univ. Press paperback (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), 248.

political dynamics that shape and inform those decision-making processes. This approach is reflected in the comments of Gray who notes that strategy's purpose is "to generate the effect necessary to shift enemy behaviour from the path it was on."⁴⁹ He continues, and notes that "what we do, including what the enemy fears we may do, generates a composite compounded strategic performance that can shift the course of events, outcomes, hopefully in our favour."⁵⁰

This can manifest, in terms of demonstrated effect, in a diversity of ways, including the launching of substantial counter measures, either offensive or defensive, in response to an act or campaign of terrorism. It is this coercive component, in this case provocation, that allows terrorism to be considered through a strategic lens, whereby the violence deployed is able to influence and coerce the strategic decision making of the target. Of the various articulations of these mechanisms, Thornton, writing in 1964, identified that

another major use of agitational terror is the *provocation* of countermeasures by the incumbents...if the terrorists are effective – and especially if the incumbents perceive themselves to be in a crisis – it is almost inevitable that extraordinary repressive measures will be taken.⁵¹

It is this type of substantial or enduring effects that the term *strategic effect* refers to in this dissertation. It should be noted that the focus here is not on articulating what those effects have been, neither generally or in each of the case studies, but to try and articulate how it is that can be achieved through terrorism.

The Spectrum of Non-State Political Violence and Terrorism

Before articulating the broader approach undertaken within this dissertation it is necessary to briefly provide some context in relation to two particular points of contention regarding the concept of terrorism, noting that as a subject of scholarly inquiry, and a phenomenon that is anchored in contentious political and social issues, there exists an expansive body of contested concepts within the more abstract and theoretically orientated body of literature. This section will firstly, briefly discuss the focus on non-state terrorism adopted herein, a

⁴⁹ Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199579662.001.0001>, 167.

⁵⁰ Gray, 168.

⁵¹ Thomas Perry Thornton, 'Terror as a Weapon of Political Agitation.' In *Internal War : Problems and Approaches* (London: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 86-87.

practice largely in keeping with much of the orthodox terrorism studies literature, before providing a broader discussion of the spectrum of political violence in relation to the typologically proximate manifestations of non-state or revolutionary violence that includes insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism. These two points serve to clarify and justify the specific focus on a particular manifestation of the phenomena under consideration.

As is detailed substantially in Chapter Two, terrorism studies, as a distinct concentration of scholarly research, and more specifically, the practices of conceptual and categorical clarification within it, has its origins in the study of revolutionary warfare during the Cold War. It is this locus, within the analysis of insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and revolutionary warfare that has informed the prioritisation of non-state actors in the study of terrorism. Terrorism has, in the orthodox literature been almost exclusively concerned with the ideologies, strategies, tactics, and actors involved in non-state terrorism. This dissertation, while acknowledging for instance, the earlier work on what is referred to as ‘state terrorism,’ such as *Western State Terrorism*⁵² as well as the body of work that refers to itself as Critical Terrorism Studies, engages exclusively with non-state terrorism. This is not only as a result of the orthodoxy of the field in which the dissertation situates itself, but as a result of an effort to reflect the continuity embedded within this orthodoxy. The terrorism being analysed herein is contextualised by both the foundational and contemporary terrorism studies literature which has predominantly focused itself on non-state terrorism. This dissertation does not seek to assess the merits or otherwise of the concept of ‘state terrorism’ as it is well beyond the scope and orientation the question being addressed herein.

The phenomenon of non-state terrorism which is the focus of this research also necessitates being contextualised within a broader spectrum of non-state violence. The post 2001 period produced a vastly expanded literature that focused on non-state violent actors that included a diversity of motivations, actor types, and objectives. This literature is perhaps best represented, and understood by the work of Max G. Manwaring, a Professor of Military Strategy at the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College. His trilogy of contemporary works⁵³ both articulate a wide array of non-state threats from a strategic

⁵² Alexander L. George, ed., *Western State Terrorism* (Cambridge: Polity Pr, 1991).

⁵³ Max G. Manwaring and Edwin G. Corr, *Insurgency, Terrorism, and Crime: Shadows from the Past and Portents for the Future*, International and Security Affairs Series, v. 5 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008); Max G. Manwaring, *Gangs, Pseudo-Militaries, and Other Modern Mercenaries: New Dynamics in Uncomfortable Wars*, International and Security Affairs Series, v. 6 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,

perspective, including groups as diverse as the Russian *Nashi*, Mexican criminal organisations, popular militias in Venezuela, as well as jihadist entities. Manwaring's contribution to the broader literature on asymmetric conflict are immense, and in particular highlight the wide-ranging manifestations of the broader phenomenon. Importantly, Manwaring has been researching these issues continuously for decades, from a consistent perspective, albeit under the auspices of a dynamic nomenclature.⁵⁴ Manwaring's work is a useful point from which to begin a discussion of the broad spectrum of categories that constitute non-state violence and the dynamic nature of the literature on these issues.

It is again beyond the scope of this research to provide a fulsome analysis of the vast literature that conceptualises and typologises non-state violence, however it is appropriate to articulate some of the parameters of this literature, and in particular to articulate the approach adopted herein. The conceptualisation of terrorism as an act of resistance can be found in some of the earliest writings of political philosophy, a point that Lacquer makes when he notes that

“Terrorism has always been justified as a means of resisting despotism and as such its origins are of course to be found in antiquity. Plato and Aristotle regarded as a deviation, a perversion, the worst form of government. Tyrannicides in ancient Greece were elevated to the rank of heroes.”⁵⁵

The anchoring of the conceptualisation of terrorism in the political philosophies of tyrannicide provides a vital anchor point for the conceptualisation of terrorism as a predominantly non-state phenomena, and as an act of what Freedman refers to in his extensive analysis of resistance strategies, as “strategy from below.”⁵⁶ It is this conceptualisation that informs the idea that terrorism is understood as being ‘strategic cousins’ or as different manifestations of conceptually coherent phenomena. As a coherent set of activities, terrorism and its ‘cousins can be understood as similar yet distinct classes of

2010); Max G. Manwaring, *The Complexity of Modern Asymmetric Warfare*, International Security Affairs, v. 8 (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).

⁵⁴ See his earliest works using the terminology of low intensity conflict, and gray area phenomena. Max G. Manwaring, ed., *Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm of Low Intensity Conflict*, Westview Studies in Regional Security (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); Max G. Manwaring, ed., *Gray Area Phenomena: Confronting the New World Disorder*, Studies in Global Security (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

⁵⁶ Freedman, *Strategy*, p. 246.

phenomenon. As Whelan has noted “ all forms of political violence (from low-level riots to communal violence, terrorism, and insurgencies), are all born out of a political grievance.”⁵⁷

While these commonalities are useful, it is equally necessary to distinguish between the various manifestations of non-state political violence. In the broader sense, Kalyvas provides an overview of the full spectrum of political violence, ranging from interstate war and genocide through to mass protest and rebellion, political assassination, and terrorism.⁵⁸ It is necessary to identify that, drawing on this wider spectrum of political violence, that in certain circumstances, an entity that begins its existence as an organisation predominantly engaged in terrorism, can evolve into an organisation that constitutes something resembling an insurgency, that is engaged in terrorism and guerrilla warfare; and can subsequently evolve into an organisation that seeks to transition into something resembling a proto-state, but that continues, as it assesses there to be strategic utility in, to use terrorism as part of its repertoire of violence. The recent experiences of the Islamic State, discussed below, demonstrate how an organisation that is seeking to conceptualise itself as a state,⁵⁹ and is engaged in forms of warfare that reflect conventional warfare practices,⁶⁰ is simultaneously engaged in transnational terrorist practices, localised insurgent and guerrilla warfare practices,⁶¹ and engaged in an act of genocide.⁶² All these manifestations of political violence were able to be undertaken by a complex, multifaceted enterprise like Islamic State and reflects the realities of violent non-state actors and their multitudinal practices.

Given the broad perspective taken in the three case studies, of the anarchist movement, the Palestinian liberation movement, and the jihadist movement, it is important to recognise that factions, sub-factions, and affiliated organisations or fellow travellers, as well as inspired

⁵⁷ Thomas Edward Alexander Whelan, “The Capability Spectrum; Locating Terrorism in Relation to Other Manifestations of Political Violence,” *Journal of Terrorism Research* 7, no. 1 (February 5, 2016): 11, <https://doi.org/10.15664/jtr.1083>.

⁵⁸ Stathis N. Kalyvas. ‘The Landscape of Political Violence.’ In Erica Chenoweth et al., eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, First edition, Oxford Handbooks (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2019), p.11-33.

⁵⁹ Brynjar Lia, “Understanding Jihadi Proto-States,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015): 31–41.

⁶⁰ Ahmed S. Hashim, “The Islamic State’s Way of War in Iraq and Syria: From Its Origins to the Post Caliphate Era,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 1 (February 2019): 22–31; Stephen D. Biddle, *Nonstate Warfare: The Military Methods of Guerillas, Warlords, and Militias* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

⁶¹ Craig Whiteside, “New Masters of Revolutionary Warfare,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 4 (2016): 4–18; Craig Whiteside, “The Islamic State and the Return of Revolutionary Warfare,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 743–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1208287>.

⁶² Vicken Cheterian, “ISIS Genocide against the Yazidis and Mass Violence in the Middle East,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (August 8, 2021): 629–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2019.1683718>.

individuals, are able to participate in the various activities articulated above and both remain within the movement itself, and not preclude other activities being undertaken, either synchronously or asynchronously.

This dissertation actively avoids rigid categorisation of these phenomenon, or of the organisations that engage in any of them as being specifically defined by their actions alone. Doing so would place arbitrary and unrealistic parameters on enterprises that are fundamentally adaptive and dynamic, both as a function of effectiveness and necessity.

Overview of Approach

This dissertation seeks to provide explanatory insight into how terrorists can exercise disproportionate strategic effect on their adversaries in the absence of any conventional means. Miles and Huberman define what a conceptual framework is and identify its purpose and nature in stating, ‘a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, constructs, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them. Frameworks can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory-driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal’.⁶³

As such, this dissertation proposes a framework that identifies the key mechanisms by which terrorism can achieve strategic effect and seeks to articulate and conceptualise the relationships between these mechanisms. The dissertation provides a framework that is then applied across multiple case studies, consisting of three paradigmatic terrorism campaigns. Demonstrating the explanatory utility of the conceptual framework against these case studies seeks to both evidence the merits of the framework and, additionally, evidence the enduring nature and strategic logic of terrorism.

While this dissertation proposes that the framework has a level of generalisability, there are some inherent constraints on what can be extrapolated from the research undertaken herein. As with all social phenomena, a generalisable ‘theory’ of terrorism in the strict positivist sense is, for the most part, unachievable. The approach taken herein is anchored in an approach articulated by Buzan and Hansen, who noted in their influential *The Evolution of International Security Studies* that their five driving forces framework was:

⁶³ Matthew B. Miles, A. M. Huberman and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2020), 20.

a ‘theory’ in the European sense, where the term is used for something that organises a field systematically, structures questions and establishes a coherent and rigorous set of inter-related concepts and categories, but not in the dominant American positivist sense of the term (which requires cause-effect propositions).⁶⁴

With this caveat in mind, it is worthy of note that the framework proposed here reflects a start point for further development and refinement in progressing towards a more integrated understanding of the mechanisms by which terrorism, and other asymmetric strategies, can achieve disproportionate effects. Some elements necessarily are not captured by the framework, both to maximise its parsimoniousness and as a function of the limitations imposed by the dissertation. For instance, there is scope for further specific articulation of temporal dynamics as an additional overarching factor related to the framework. This would engage with the requirement of a terrorist entity to develop and refine their praxis over repeated operations, both failed and successful, often over an extended period of operational activity. The successful assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, for instance, was the culmination of numerous attempts, both at assassinating the Tsar specifically and various other attacks on a diversity of targets. In addition, and as articulated in the anarchist case study, it required the iterative development of a public narrative that enabled the 1881 success to be comprehended in the way Narodnaya Volya intended. This dissertation aims to provide an integrated framework that explains how terrorism can achieve strategic effect. However, in demonstrating the applicability of this framework across multiple cases, it also seeks to evidence an enduring nature to terrorism that causes strategic effect. In the broader sense, this dissertation will argue that the fundamentals of what Narodnaya Volya was doing in the mid to late 1800s are no different to what IS was doing in 2014.

The framework proposes that in achieving strategic effect, terrorism necessarily depends on integrating three elements, each articulated below. The absence of one of these elements would undermine the capacity of terrorism to achieve strategic effect. The framework, which is more fully articulated in Chapter Three, draws on historical and contemporary strategic doctrine and philosophical considerations of terrorists, terrorist organisations and terrorist ideologues, as well as the existing scholarly terrorism studies literature. Working with Miles and Huberman’s definition of a conceptual framework, the below seeks to briefly explain, narratively and graphically, the key elements that enable terrorism to have strategic effect and articulate the necessary relationships between those elements. As with any phenomena in

⁶⁴ Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 47.

international relations, or the political and social sciences, more broadly, context is paramount. Therefore, a working assumption of this framework is that its effectiveness is constrained by appropriate political, social and historical contexts. The framework seeks to identify the enduring nature of terrorism rather than the specific character of particular manifestations. The purpose of the historical and ideological diversity of the case studies is to test the explanatory power of the framework across a range of political, social and historical contexts. As such, the analysed case studies will be considered within their political, social and historical contexts. This is particularly important when considering phenomena that have political and ideological elements, as the resonance and receptivity of any target audiences to particular political and ideological propositions, either communicated overtly or embedded within communicative violence, are shaped and determined partly by historical context. Therefore, the generalisability of the framework is contingent on an appropriate political and ideological context being present.

For instance, to effectively launch a campaign of terrorism informed by a Marxist ideological framework in a political, historical and social context within which Marxism is unlikely to gain any traction or sympathy. It does not address in any meaningful manner the grievances that may be present among the population that, even if only rhetorically, would be unlikely to achieve the kinds of successes that launching the said campaign in a more appropriate context may achieve. The framework's three interlocking factors are:

1. innovative forms of violence
2. communicative and narrative dynamics
3. emergent information and communication technologies.

Each of these capabilities in and of themselves is insufficient to enable an otherwise relatively powerless terrorist entity to achieve strategic effect. Innovative violence alone will likely have little impact beyond the immediate targets of the violence. The framework proposes that only when these three capabilities are fully integrated, they create a dramatic amplification effect that enables a terrorist actor to exert disproportionate power within the context it seeks to operate, consequently achieving strategic effect against their adversaries. The three case studies considered in this research—anarchist terrorism in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Palestinian terrorism and Salafi-Jihadist terrorism—will seek to illustrate how, when all three factors are effectively integrated into the operational and strategic planning of a terrorist entity, it becomes possible to exert substantial strategic influence, even in the

absence of the achievement of overall, maximalist ultimate end states. In addition to the contextual elements of the framework, there is also necessarily a temporal component to the framework. In this sense, the framework seeks to identify the core aspects of terrorism while acknowledging there is necessarily a life cycle to a terrorism campaign and that time is an element of the aforementioned context. A terrorist entity must build, refine and reinforce its efforts over time rather than simply deploy violence in isolation of these considerations. This framework aspect will be refined, further articulated and incorporated throughout the research.

Innovative Forms of Violence

The innovative forms of the violence element in this framework seek to capture several interrelated ideas. The first is that the mere application of violence, in and of itself, is insufficient to achieve the objectives of a terrorist entity or campaign. The type of violence deployed needs to possess a degree of novelty or innovation that demands the attention of the various audiences it is designed to communicate with. Further, the framework also seeks to capture the need for innovation regarding the medium through which the violence will be communicated. These considerations are paramount in maximising the exploitative value of the violence and ensuring that it is witnessed by the desired audience(s). In its interaction with the other framework factors, the violence must have the communicative dynamics and exploitation of emergent information and communications technologies embedded within its design and deployment. Finally, this factor of the framework seeks to capture the purpose of the exercise of violence: to communicate that the members or sympathisers of the terrorist entity are so deeply committed to a cause in which they believe that they are not only prepared to either kill others for the cause or to die for the cause. Rather, due to the embedded ideological proposition, violence is legitimate and justified in pursuing their goals. The use of novel forms of violence enables terrorism campaigns to attract the attention required to ensure the ideological proposition is considered and incorporated into broader political and public discourse. The use of dynamite by anarchist terrorists, for instance, exploited the novelty and accessibility of a newly discovered destructive technology that in turn demanded media and public attention. The capacity to identify and refine novel manifestations of violence is a central component of terrorist planning and strategic thinking and a necessary condition for terrorism to achieve strategic consequences.

A terrorism campaign further contextualises these dynamics. An ongoing campaign of terrorism establishes the ideological context and communicates ideological motivations and justifications by reinforcing established narratives surrounding actions. For instance, the development of signature attacks that communicate the ideological justifications of violence through merely assumed affiliation with the entity responsible is a key consequence of the deployment of innovative forms of violence within the context of a strategically conceived terrorism campaign. For example, the current news practice regarding incidents of vehicular ramming tactics has resulted in an inversion of news coverage of benign motor vehicle incidents being reported as *not* terrorist-related.⁶⁵ This is representative of the types of shorthand that can emerge in the context of a sustained campaign.

It is important to note that innovation in this context is as much a reference to new mechanisms of violence as it is to a form of violence with which the target audience is not familiar. The work of Horwitz is instructive in understanding how terrorist entities innovate and adopt existing practices from within the broader terrorist violence universe.⁶⁶ In this sense, the above example is instructive. Vehicular ramming was first recommended in the second edition of *Inspire* magazine, published in English by AQAP, and then in the third editions of *Rumiyah* magazine published by IS, and supported by a broader campaign on social media and encrypted chat platforms such as Telegram. The tactic has now evolved from its initial iteration, has been adopted by multiple Salafi-Jihadist entities, and has resulted in numerous jurisdictions adopting a range of policies and measures that seek to mitigate the threat of this tactic. While the deadliest incident took place in Nice, France, in October 2016, the tactic has now migrated beyond the exclusive preserve of Salafi-Jihadist terrorists. It is now increasingly deployed by extreme right-wing perpetrators.⁶⁷

If IS had only beheaded James Foley in the Syrian desert, absent the video recording and communicative considerations such as the orange jumpsuit that references and communicates Guantanamo Bay and the choice of the individual undertaking the violence as someone with a thick British accent, the video would have had less traction. In addition, failure to consider

⁶⁵ Nicola Slawson and Ben Quinn, 'Crash at London's Natural History Museum Not Terror-Related, Say Police', *The Guardian*, 8 October 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/oct/07/car-hits-pedestrians-outside-natural-history-museum>.

⁶⁶ Michael C. Horowitz, 'Nonstate Actors and the Diffusion of Innovations: The Case of Suicide Terrorism', *International Organization* 64, no. 1 (2010): 33–64, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818309990233>.

⁶⁷ Counter Extremism Project, 'Vehicles as Weapons of Terror', published 2020, https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/Vehicles%20as%20Weapons%20of%20Terror_100520.pdf.

the platform on which to rely for distribution would have diminished the capacity of the video to shape the decision-making of IS' adversary. By using contextually innovative forms of violence such as beheading, the video demanded media coverage, translating into a need for a policy response. If one element of the framework is removed, the impact and, therefore, the strategic effect of the action are substantially diminished. Beheading an American journalist in the Syrian desert in isolation is insufficient. To achieve the desired objectives, it was necessary to achieve a convergence of the three elements in the framework.

Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

The communicative factor in terrorist actions is well recognised within strategic doctrine and scholarly literature. Schmid argues forcefully, building on his earlier foundational work,⁶⁸ that 'terrorism cannot be understood only in terms of violence. It has to be understood primarily in terms of propaganda. Violence and propaganda, however, have much in common. Violence aims at behaviour modification by coercion. Propaganda aims at the same by persuasion. Terrorism can be seen as a combination of the two'.⁶⁹

This factor of the framework draws more overtly and substantially on existing understandings of the communicative nature of terrorist actions. This topic is addressed extensively by authors such as Juergensmeyer, who highlight that terrorist violence is often 'executed in a deliberately intense and vivid way'.⁷⁰ This communicative consideration is essential to the design and deployment of effective terrorist actions and the achievement of strategic consequences. Schmid further argues, 'each act of terrorism is performed with an eye to sending a specific (set of) message(s) to impress or influence specific audiences in one way or another'.⁷¹

In constructing each act of terrorism or sustained terrorist campaign, a terrorist entity must necessarily consider not only the most effective and contextually appropriate violent measure but also how this violence, in its tactical design or targeting decision, communicates the elements of the ideological message they wish to convey and the audience(s) to whom they wish to convey this. In this process, all elements of the framework must be incorporated. In

⁶⁸ Schmid and Graaf, *Violence as Communication*.

⁶⁹ Alex P. Schmid, 'Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 2 (January 2004): 205–6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550490483134>.

⁷⁰ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, rev. 3rd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 121.

⁷¹ Schmid, Jongman and Price, *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism*, 246.

addition to the utilisation of innovative forms of violence and the exploitation of the appropriate information and communications technologies, the communicative dynamics are necessary for terrorism to be capable of strategic consequence. The communicative dynamics are arguably at the centre of this consideration as failure to appreciate the propagandistic purpose of terrorist violence will diminish the capacity of the terrorism to have its desired effect.

In addition to scholarly insight into the role of violent communication, it is necessary to recognise that anarchist theorists and terrorists of the late 1800s and early 1900s were the progenitors of the idea of communicative violence in its doctrinal form. Their conceptualisation of the ‘propaganda by the deed’ is broadly recognised as the foundation of modern terrorism. While the specific origin of the phrase is variously attributed to a range of activists and political theorists,⁷² Mikhail Bakunin is one of the most influential on the broader phase of anarchist terrorism. In 1870, in his *Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis*, he stated, ‘from this very moment we must spread our principles, not with words but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda’.⁷³

It is this idea, one that has been at the core of modern terrorism either implicitly or explicitly for over a century, that the framework seeks to capture, and in particular, the element related to the communicative dynamics of terrorist actions. Further, this communicative dynamic of violence, or instrumentality, distinguishes terrorism from other forms of ‘conventional crime’. The willingness to exploit fatal violence, or the potentiality of future violence, to communicate an ideological message is a key element of the overall exercise being undertaken in a terrorist action. Understanding the willingness of terrorists and terrorist entities to exploit violence for communicative purposes is assisted by an appreciation of the comments of Mohammed Oudeh, formerly known by his *nomme de guerre*, Abu Daoud, the Black September terrorist who masterminded the terrorist attacks on the Munich Olympics in 1972. In reference to the Munich attack, which left 17 people dead, he is quoted as stating: ‘before Munich, we were simply terrorists. After Munich, at least people started asking,

⁷² Marie Fleming, ‘Propaganda by the Deed: Terrorism and Anarchist Theory in Late Nineteenth-Century Europe’, *Terrorism* 4, no. 1–4 (January 1980): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108008435483>.

⁷³ Mikhail Bakunin, *Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis* (1870) in Graham, *Anarchism*, 101.

“Who are these terrorists? What do they want”? Before Munich, nobody had the slightest idea about Palestine’.⁷⁴

In a similar demonstration of the framework’s interlocking components, the Munich attack effectively achieved the convergence of the key elements of the framework: utilising an innovative form of violence; embedding communicative dynamics into the violence through the targeting of Israeli athletes and, by extension, the broadcasting of an ideological position; as well as effectively exploiting the dominant information and communications platform of the period. In the broader target selection of the Olympic Games, as opposed to the specific target of Israeli athletes, the operatives maximised overall exploitation and contributed substantially to the overall Palestinian terrorism and resistance project.

Emergent Information and Communications Technologies

The exploitation of emergent information and communications technologies is the final element of the framework developed in this dissertation. The *A Message to America* beheading video discussed in the introduction demonstrates the importance of platform and medium selection to achieve strategic effect from terrorism. Initially, the brief video was distributed via the Diaspora social networking service and then uploaded to YouTube and other video hosting sites.⁷⁵ This video achieved extensive exposure through direct access by supporters and sympathisers of IS in the online environment and extensive rebroadcasting via mass media outlets. The video’s role in influencing the decision of the US Government, and ultimately, its coalition partners, to engage militarily with IS and other actors in the Syrian and Iraq theatres is difficult to overstate. Creating political conditions that provoke an adversary into engagement is a key outcome for a terrorist entity.

A useful starting point and a significant influence on understanding the conceptualisation of technology used here is the substantive treatment of technology and war authored by van Creveld. In the introduction to his discussion of the central role of technology in war, he forcefully articulates the centrality of technology in not only the prosecution of war but in shaping the very decision-making processes that lead to, undertake and potentially resolve war. His insights are worth quoting at length:

⁷⁴ ‘Mohammed Oudeh (Abu Daoud) Obituary’, *The Guardian*, accessed 2 November 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/04/mohammed-oudeh-abu-daoud-obituary>.

⁷⁵ Friis, ‘Beyond Anything We Have Ever Seen’.

war is completely permeated by technology and governed by it. The causes that lead to wars, and the goals for which they are fought; the blows with which campaigns open, and the victories with which they (sometimes) end; the relationship between the armed forces and the societies that they serve; planning, preparation, execution, and evaluation; operations and intelligence and organization and supply; objectives and methods and capabilities and missions; command and leadership and strategy and tactics; even the very conceptual frameworks employed by our brains in order to think about war and its conduct—not one of these is immune to the impact that technology has had and does have and always will have.⁷⁶

This broader conceptualisation of technology is used here, rather than a narrow focus on hardware alone. The information and communications technology factor of the conceptual framework is important in its capacity to determine the effectiveness or otherwise of terrorist actions and terrorist campaigns. The capacity to obtain ‘cut through’ and effectively demand coverage and consumption by the various audiences being targeted is contingent on the use of innovative forms of violence and on ‘designing in’ communicative considerations to the violence undertaken. In doing so, exploiting emergent information and communications technologies and their broader cultural implications.

In maximising the exploitative opportunities that properly constituted terrorist violence presents, it is further necessary to consider the information and communications technologies available and the specific information and communications technology most frequently and easily accessed by the target audiences. This will also shape the type of violence engaged in, as the medium will permit various forms of media to be used, in turn determining whether video, photography or textual descriptions will be how the violence is conveyed to and consumed by target audiences. This will contribute to determining the specific type of violence engaged in.

The following chapter contextualises this dissertation within the terrorism studies literature. It provides a brief historical overview of the field’s development, before articulating three fundamental sub-fields of literature from which have been especially important on the ideas developed within this document.

⁷⁶ Martin van Creveld, *Technology and War: From 2000 BC to the Present* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2014), 1.

Chapter Two: Situating the Research

This chapter provides an overview of the extant terrorism studies literature pertaining to the research being undertaken herein. In doing so, it approaches the literature from two distinct yet complementary perspectives. First, a brief reflection on the emergence and consolidation of terrorism studies as a distinct field of scholarly inquiry is undertaken, with a particular emphasis on the origins of the field in the study of revolutionary warfare, and how this literature shaped key perspectives of the foundational work undertaken in the field. Second, the contemporary terrorism studies literature is reviewed, emphasising three subfields with specific relevance to this dissertation, namely the literature on terrorism and strategy, terrorism and communication, and terrorism and innovation. The conceptual framework derives from this literature and the primary source doctrinal literature of terrorist ideologues, strategists and philosophers.

As with any research undertaking, it is necessary to situate the development of new analysis within the existing body of scholarly literature. This serves to provide recognition of the intellectual providence of the ideas that inform the contemporary analysis and recognise the contributions of previous scholars within the field and tangential to the field. This research is situated within the field of orthodox terrorism studies. While the field is still emerging, the post-9/11 period has evidenced a substantial expansion in the relevant literature. This period has witnessed a substantial quantitative expansion in the volume of terrorism studies literature and concomitant maturing of the field, evidenced by numerous artifacts of scholarship that have reflected, both positively and negatively, on the field itself and the challenges that are inherent to terrorism studies research. Landmark contributions such as the *Handbook of Terrorism Research*⁷⁷ and *Research on Terrorism*⁷⁸ evidenced an increasingly self-aware, considered and mature field of scholarly activity that seeks to engage with and address those areas where the field can be legitimately critiqued. Terrorism studies as a field have demonstrated an increasing willingness to undertake substantial internal critique and reflection, evidenced by the forceful articulation advanced by Sageman.⁷⁹ He identified structural issues such as inconsistent funding arrangements and how this impacted terrorism research and undermined its appeal as a full-time field of research. Sageman further identifies

⁷⁷ Schmid, Jongman and Price, *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism*.

⁷⁸ Andrew Silke, ed., *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements & Failures* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2004).

⁷⁹ Marc Sageman, 'The Stagnation in Terrorism Research', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 4 (September 2014): 565–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2014.895649>.

a key component of the nature of terrorism studies that is relevant to this research, stating, ‘by its nature, the study of terrorism is multidisciplinary, inviting the insights of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, historians, economists, engineers, and computer scientists’.⁸⁰

The field’s multidisciplinary nature informs, in part, the approach developed in this research and literature review. As such, a conceptual framework will be developed, drawing substantially on the existing literature across three distinct but related subsets of the ‘multidisciplinary’ terrorism studies literature. The intent here is to produce a conceptual framework that, in addition to identifying and testing the strategic logic of terrorism, also reflects an integrated approach to the existing literature and recognises that while the field is multidisciplinary, there are more commonalities across the literature than fundamental distinctions. This review identifies three distinct subfields: the literature focused on terrorism and strategy, terrorism and communications and terrorism and innovation. It identifies a lack of integrated analysis across these three subfields as a distinct gap within the literature. The analysis undertaken herein, and the conceptual framework articulated in the following chapter draw significantly on these three subfields of literature. It identifies the benefits of developing a conceptual framework that draws these approaches together and seeks to provide an integrated perspective of the phenomena that applies equal weight to each of these approaches. In developing and proposing a conceptual framework anchored within the existing literature, the framework reflects the existing body of understanding relevant to the area of focus.

⁸⁰ Sageman, ‘Stagnation in Terrorism Research’, 569.

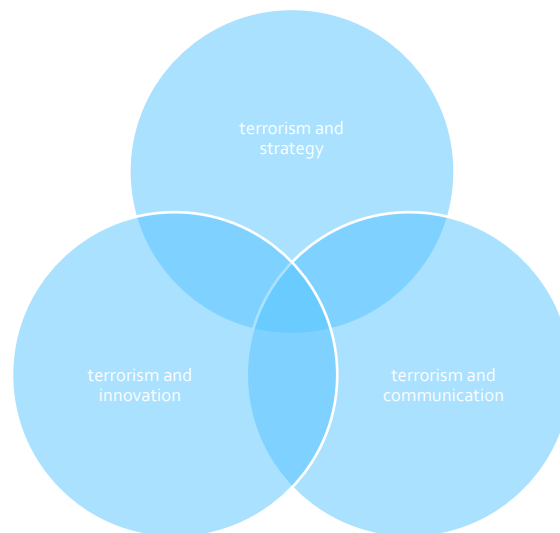


Figure 1: Subfields of terrorism studies

Part of the purpose of this literature review is to highlight that while there has been substantial insight provided by the three bodies of scholarship identified here, there remains an opportunity for an analysis that integrates the assumptions and findings of these subfields of terrorism studies. By fusing the ideas and insights provided by the literature on terrorism and strategy, terrorism and communication, and terrorism and innovation, the conceptual framework will evidence the enduring nature of terrorism as a phenomenon and how it can maximise strategic effect against its adversary. This literature review provides the foundation upon which the conceptual framework draws. In doing so, it explicitly recognises the substantial scholarship that has contributed to the development of terrorism studies since its beginnings as a dedicated area of scholarly inquiry in the early 1970s.

A Brief History of Terrorism Studies

Terrorism studies as a field have been shaped significantly by two major events. The impact of 9/11 has been identified above; however, as Stampnitzky⁸¹ has identified, the 1972 attacks in Munich played a substantial role in the first substantial formalisation and expansion of the field. In the aftermath of the Munich attacks, governments expanded their policy remit regarding terrorism. In turn, they began to provide demand for scholarly research focused on terrorism. This initial body of work, dominated by scholars such as John Bowyer Bell, remained anchored within the broader body of work oriented towards the study of guerrilla warfare. This was reflective of the orientation of counterterrorism at the time, with terrorism

⁸¹ Lisa Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented 'Terrorism'*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

throughout the decade being overwhelmingly contextualised by the ‘New Left’ wave.⁸² The ‘New Left’ wave was animated by a transnationally unifying framework of Third Worldist revolutionary ideology, which enabled groups as disparate as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Baader Meinhoff Group, the Japanese Red Army and the various factions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to find a degree of common cause. Importantly, this period of increased scholarly activity also witnessed a shift in the semantic and conceptual orientation of the field, as the language of insurgency and counterinsurgency began to be supplanted by both a policy and scholarly focus towards terrorism and counterterrorism. In 1972, RAND Corporation established its first research concentration on terrorism,⁸³ shifting from programs focused on insurgency and counterinsurgency or the broader phenomena of low-intensity conflict and guerrilla warfare. This transitional period in the scholarly literature reflected the changing dynamics of terrorist activity, with terrorism becoming a prominent and increasingly central aspect of revolutionary warfare and an increasingly prominent aspect of national and international security. With the emergence of substantial terrorist activity within Western jurisdictions and what Hoffman refers to as ‘international terrorism’,⁸⁴ the field began to coalesce as a distinct body of scholarly inquiry.

The transition from literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency to scholarship focused on terrorism and counterterrorism involved substantial conceptual and authorship overlap. Some of the earliest recognised contributions remained anchored in perspectives related to revolutionary warfare and insurgency, and titles like Bowyer Bell’s *On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation*,⁸⁵ *The Myth of the Guerrilla*⁸⁶ as well as Moss’s *Urban Guerrillas*⁸⁷ are all equally informed by the legacies of insurgency-oriented perspectives as they are by discrete terrorism considerations. By the late 1970s, with the end of the Vietnam War and the perception that counterinsurgency had failed, terrorism had become the dominant frame to understand and analyse the cluster of problems associated with low-intensity conflict. By 1978, Bell himself commented, in a review of Laqueur’s newly released *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study*:

⁸² David C. Rapoport, ‘The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism’, in John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, *Terrorism Studies: A Reader* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2009).

⁸³ Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror*.

⁸⁴ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017), 65.

⁸⁵ J. Bowyer Bell, *On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁸⁶ J. Bowyer Bell, *The Myth of the Guerrilla: Revolutionary Theory and Malpractice*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Knopf, 1971).

⁸⁷ Robert Moss, *Urban Guerrillas: The New Face of Political Violence* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1972).

Guerillas [*sic*], as the knowledgeable and ambitious academics know, are not ‘trendy’—the rage is terrorism, just as in matters of political violence it once was anti-insurgency, or assassination, or riots ... memory seems to indicate that the desks of scholars and policymakers, not to mention the shelves of bookstores and libraries, have, until recently, groaned under linear feet out of various guerilla workshops: the cut-and-paste of SORO, the enthusiasm a la Green Beret, the hagiography of the New Left, the ‘how-I-won’ by Grivas, Guevara, and Giap, or by their opposite numbers, Sir Frank Kitson, out of Kenya and into Low Intensity Warfare, or Sir Robert Thompson out of Malaya into countering communist insurgencies worldwide. Then came the theorists and anti-theorists, the myth makers and destroyers, at the end, the autopsies. When the guerilla industry ran dry, the terrorists surfaced at Lod and Munich and Khartoum, giving a new facet of political violence for the next eager analytical wave.⁸⁸

Bell recognised the immense scholarly contribution of *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study*⁸⁹ and its companion *The Guerrilla Reader*⁹⁰ in the balance of his review. Ultimately these and the complementary terrorism-focused texts by Laqueur provided the seminal scholarly foundations for the broader field and terrorism studies specifically. In conjunction with the companion texts, *Terrorism*⁹¹ and *Terrorism: A Reader*,⁹² Laqueur evidenced the enduring nature of both guerrilla warfare and terrorism and most significantly provided a compendium of otherwise-overlooked or unconsidered primary source material, with a particular focus on the philosophical, strategic and doctrinal work of those ideologues and intellectuals who had advocated and endorsed the use of terrorism and guerrilla warfare over centuries. *The Terrorism Reader*, in particular, enabled subsequent scholars to access numerous obscure or otherwise-unavailable primary source works by influential actors like German anarchists Johann Most and Karl Heinzen in developing a terrorist doctrine. The text also anchored the concept of terrorism within a broader framework of intellectual and philosophical considerations that included concepts such as tyrannicide and assassination. The influence that Laqueur had on the development of terrorism studies is difficult to overstate. At the time of his ninetieth birthday, the contemporary denizen of the terrorism studies field, Professor Bruce Hoffman, wrote, in his capacity as editor of *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, a leading journal in the field:

⁸⁸ J. Bowyer Bell, ‘Guerilla’, *Armed Forces & Society* 4, no. 2 (January 1978): 341–43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X7800400214>.

⁸⁹ Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977).

⁹⁰ Walter Laqueur, *The Guerrilla Reader: A Historical Anthology* (New York, NY: New American Library, 1977).

⁹¹ Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977).

⁹² Walter Laqueur, *The Terrorism Reader: A Historical Anthology* (New York, NY: New American Library, 1978).

Scholars today researching and writing on terrorism and guerrilla warfare face a daunting challenge. Walter Laqueur. While it would be fatuous to state that Walter has said or written every thing that there is to say or write about either of those two phenomena, such a claim is not entirely inaccurate...Walter has indefatigably shed new light on both subjects while simultaneously dismembering the conventional wisdom and dismantling the latest, vogueish, but substance-less, methodological fads. He has systematically demolished myths and corrected popular misconceptions. In doing so, Walter has laid claim to having the first or final word—and often both—throughout his long and intellectually luxurious career.⁹³

The Strategic Literature

The field of terrorism studies and the dominance of the strategic approach referred to earlier were heavily influenced by the field's origins, both within the study of insurgency and counterinsurgency, while also having rooted a broader analytical perspective anchored in the study of revolutionary warfare. Through its evolution from a field that conceived of terrorism as a means of prosecuting war, albeit a distinct and unconventional one, underlying assumptions regarding the rationality of the actors involved, of a strategic purpose to the actions, and the assumption of strategic end states, shaped the earliest scholarly approaches to terrorism. These assumptions are clearly manifested across the body of preliminary output focused on terrorism as a discrete phenomenon. As early as 1976, Hackett stated, 'terroristic aggression is not just a symptom, a directionless explosion to relieve intolerable tension; rather, it is a *calculated strategy* (emphasis added) that uses psychological means (psychoterror) to reach its goals brutally and effectively'.⁹⁴

In his 1977 treatment of the subject, Laqueur himself refers to terrorism as 'not an ideology, but an insurrectional strategy'.⁹⁵ Wilkinson stated the same year, 'strategic theories of terror as a psychological weapon assume a logic and symmetry in the rationale of the terrorist'.⁹⁶ Evidence of the ubiquity of this approach and the assumption of strategic considerations is most evident in Jenkins's 1974 report entitled *International Terrorism: A New Kind of Warfare*. He unequivocally states, 'international terrorism represents a new kind of warfare. It is warfare without territory, waged without armies as we know them. It is warfare that is

⁹³ Bruce Hoffman, 'In Celebration of Walter Laqueur's 90th Birthday: Reflections on His Contributions to the Study of Terrorism and Guerrilla Warfare', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 9 (September 2011): 667–71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2011.594942>.

⁹⁴ Friedrich Hacker, *Crusaders, Criminals, Crazies: Terror and Terrorism in Our Time*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Norton, 1976), 7.

⁹⁵ Laqueur, *Terrorism*, 4.

⁹⁶ Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 49.

not limited territorially; sporadic ‘battles’ may take place worldwide. It is warfare without neutrals, and with few or no civilian innocent bystanders’.⁹⁷

The enduring influence of the early scholarship and the revolutionary warfare perspective has served to ensure terrorism has been and continues to be researched and understood through a predominantly strategic lens. This approach and the concomitant literature are central to the approach undertaken herein and inform the effort to identify an enduring strategic logic that informs terrorism as a phenomenon.

While there is little doubt, at least within the terrorism studies field, that the early work of Laqueur, and contemporaries like Bell, provided the foundations upon which terrorism studies was built, it is the work of the second generation of scholars that engaged in crucial and highly influential conceptual scholarship that built on these early works and provided the beginnings of what is now understood as terrorism studies. While Laqueur and Bell transcended this generational shift and continued to contribute substantially to the field over their esteemed careers, scholars such as the late Paul Wilkinson, Alex Schmid, Martha Crenshaw, Brian Jenkins and Bruce Hoffman, beginning in the mid-1970s, are considered largely responsible for the coalescence of what we now understand as terrorism studies and for reinforcing the perspectives identified above.

Wilkinson’s work, particularly his *Terrorism Versus Liberal Democracy*,⁹⁸ was enormously influential in shaping the parameters of the field. Now in its third edition,⁹⁹ it is regularly relied on as a core text in terrorism-focused tertiary education programs. Importantly, from its earliest iterations, Wilkinson’s work sought to anchor analysis of terrorism within a paradigm of an understanding of broader liberal democratic values, the broader political philosophy on the concept of the state and acknowledging the limits of a liberal society’s capacity to counter terrorism. In language that continues to resonate more than 40 years later, Wilkinson wrote that ‘part of the price of a liberal society is that some individuals may begin to use their liberties to plot to radically change or destroy the state by means of violence’.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Jenkins, Brian, ‘International Terrorism: A New Kind of Warfare’ (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1974), <https://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P5261.html>.

⁹⁸ Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism versus Liberal Democracy: The Problems of Response* (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1976).

⁹⁹ Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response*, 3rd ed. (Abingdon, UK; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, 114.

These deeper philosophical considerations were essential in developing a preliminary understanding of the less tangible impacts that terrorism can achieve, rather than an analysis that essentialises the violence and assesses impact solely by reference to physical and measurable consequences. Wilkinson's contributions to preliminary conceptualisations of terrorism and the development of a preliminary typology¹⁰¹ were integral to developing the field and evidencing and reinforcing the rational choice-informed strategic perspective. His 1977 work successfully articulates an analysis of terrorist strategy wherein he highlights the need to distinguish between the broader 'long-term *political* objectives and strategies and their military strategies'.¹⁰² These approaches, and the body of exclusively terrorism-focused research that it reflects, formed the underpinning basis of much of the subsequent literature.

Crenshaw provided equally influential preliminary conceptualisations in her 1972 article 'The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism' during this same period.¹⁰³ She identifies the absence of a sufficient conceptualisation of the phenomena within the then-nascent literature. Her efforts to address this, across several key contributions, remain both highly influential and equally relevant to the field today. Crenshaw's contribution to the field is difficult to overstate, and the enduring influence of her work is reflected in numerous more contemporary efforts to analyse and understand terrorist strategy generally. This is witnessed both explicitly and implicitly in a dedicated analysis of the strategies of specific organisations or movements. Reflecting the conceptualisations of her contemporaries, Crenshaw argued that revolutionary terrorism 'is a part of insurgent strategy in the context of internal warfare or revolution: the attempt to seize political power from the established regime of a state, if successful causing fundamental political and social change'.¹⁰⁴

Over the course of a series of highly influential contributions, Crenshaw further refined the field's understanding of terrorism. This body of work plays a central role in informing the field itself and the body of strategically oriented work that this analysis draws on. Her 1981 *Causes of Terrorism*¹⁰⁵ further articulated the underlying rational choice basis for analysing

¹⁰¹ Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, 56–57.

¹⁰² Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State*, 106.

¹⁰³ Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, 'The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 16, no. 3 (September 1972): 383–96, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200277201600307>.

¹⁰⁴ Crenshaw Hutchinson, 'Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism', 384.

¹⁰⁵ Martha Crenshaw, 'The Causes of Terrorism', *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 4 (1981): 379–99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/421717>.

terrorism. The author explicitly refers to terrorism as ‘a form of political behaviour resulting from the deliberate choice of a basically rational actor, a terrorist organisation’.¹⁰⁶

Of most explicit influence on this analysis is her 1990 chapter ‘The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorism as the Product of Strategic Choice’.¹⁰⁷ In this landmark work, Crenshaw adroitly explained numerous underlying drivers of the turn to terrorism, such as the frustrations associated with the failure of more conventional methods of political agitation, the inability or unwillingness to mobilise broad-based support and, at least in conditions of authoritarian governance, the belief that sympathisers are unwilling to express support for the cause due to concerns of the repressive abilities of the state apparatus. Crenshaw articulated the strategic advantages of terrorism, stating, ‘terrorism has an extremely useful agenda-setting function. If the reasons behind violence are skilfully articulated, terrorism can put the issue of political change on the public agenda’.¹⁰⁸ This identification of the inherently communicative nature of terrorism is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of the means by which the strategic objectives of terrorism can be achieved, or at least how terrorist organisations seek them. Further insights contained in this article, including that ‘terrorist activity considered in its entirety shows a fundamental unity of purpose and conception,’¹⁰⁹ further reinforced the depth of insight in her work and its direct relevance and influence on the research undertaken herein. The analysis undertaken here seeks to identify and articulate this ‘fundamental unity of purpose and conception’ through developing a conceptual framework that models and explains the enduring strategic logic of terrorism across multiple historical manifestations of the phenomena. Crenshaw reiterated the notion of an enduring continuity with regards to the nature of terrorism when she states in her 2009 discussion of the debate between ‘old terrorism’ and ‘new terrorism’, ‘today’s terrorism is not a fundamentally or qualitatively new phenomenon but grounded in an evolving historical context ... and the differences are of degree rather than kind’.¹¹⁰

The period between Crenshaw’s ‘Logic of Terrorism’ and the events of 9/11 saw only limited scholarly work on terrorism generally, particularly on terrorism from an explicitly strategic

¹⁰⁶ Crenshaw, *Causes of Terrorism* 380.

¹⁰⁷ Martha Crenshaw, ‘The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behaviour as a Product of Strategic Choice’, in *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, ed., Walter Reich and Walter Laqueur (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1990), 7–24.

¹⁰⁸ Crenshaw, ‘Logic of Terrorism’, 17.

¹⁰⁹ Crenshaw, ‘Logic of Terrorism’, 10.

¹¹⁰ Martha Crenshaw, ‘The Debate over “Old” vs. “New” Terrorism’ in *Values and Violence: Intangible Aspects of Terrorism*, Studies in Global Justice, vol. 4, ed. Ibrāhīm Karawān, Wayne McCormack and Stephen E. Reynolds (New York, NY: Springer, 2009), 120.

perspective or on the specific strategies of terrorist organisations. Of the minimal body of strategically oriented literature produced during this period, Merari's work is the most substantive and influential both generally and regarding this analysis. *Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency*¹¹¹ provided a clear overview of the delineations between the various forms of asymmetric struggle and, having argued that terrorism constitutes a unique and discernible manifestation of asymmetric struggle, emphasised the structural determinants of the strategies adopted by terrorists. Of most direct relevance to the analysis developed here, Merari states, 'it is possible to discern several strategic ideas that terrorists have held as the cardinal practical concept of their struggle'.¹¹² The author identified propaganda by the deed, intimidation, provocation, a strategy of chaos and attrition¹¹³ as the primary strategies that terrorists have deployed to achieve impacts upon their adversaries. Merari recognises that these strategies have not necessarily achieved the ultimate strategic outcomes their practitioners may have sought. Rather, they are the strategies assessed as the most effective means to prosecute their case. Merari's contribution builds on the previous conceptual foundations of the strategic approach and expands substantially the field's understanding of how terrorist organisations seek their identified ends.

Merari's work was reflected in the later work of Kydd and Walter.¹¹⁴ Their 2006 *International Security* article provided additional clarity concerning efforts to understand terrorist strategies in the more generalised sense, as distinct from analysing the specific strategies of discrete organisations or specific ideological movements. The article articulates a five-point typology of strategies utilised by terrorists, namely attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling and outbidding¹¹⁵ and provides additional insights regarding what circumstances have enabled these strategies to be successful. Kydd and Walter also emphasised the effectiveness of terrorism as part of the calculus of those organisations that embrace the practice. The opening sentence of the article asserts, 'terrorism often works. Extremist organizations such as al-Qaida, Hamas, and the Tamil Tigers engage in terrorism because it frequently delivers the desired response'.¹¹⁶ The authors subsequently cite, among

¹¹¹ Ariel Merari, 'Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 4 (December 1, 1993): 213–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559308427227>.

¹¹² Merari, 'Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency', 233.

¹¹³ Merari, 'Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency', 233–37.

¹¹⁴ Kydd and Walter, 'Strategies of Terrorism'.

¹¹⁵ It should be noted here that of these five strategies, three (attrition, intimidation and provocation) were identified by Merari and outbidding is dealt with in detail in Bloom's *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. The authors reference Bloom explicitly regarding outbidding but do not reference Merari.

¹¹⁶ Kydd and Walter, 'Strategies of Terrorism', 49.

other examples, the US withdrawal of troops in the aftermath of the Beirut bombings of 1983 and the US withdrawal of troops from Saudi Arabia in 2003. Merari's work, and subsequently, Kydd and Walter's, provided sophisticated and in-depth considerations of the types of strategies that terrorist organisations deploy and provided further insights into the contexts in which these strategies may be adopted and in which they might be effective.

The broader absence of sustained engagement with the topic was subsequently redressed in the post 9/11 period with an expanding body of literature on the topic, albeit overwhelmingly focused on the strategies used by jihadist organisations, particularly of al-Qaeda.¹¹⁷ Over time, the strategically oriented literature incorporated various focus areas, including IS¹¹⁸ specific operations¹¹⁹ and analysis of specific strategists¹²⁰ and their strategies. In addition, and as a function of collecting and declassifying primary source materials, a small but influential body of work was produced that sought to introduce the concept of jihadi strategic studies.¹²¹ This body of literature provided an analysis of the key strategic products of a small cohort of secularly oriented, pragmatic strategists from within the jihadist milieu. This body of literature has contributed significantly to the field's understanding of jihadist strategic thought and understanding terrorist strategies more generally. Important collections of primary source material were published during this period, which increasingly evidenced strategic considerations within jihadist organisations and included books like *The Canons of Jihad*¹²² and others¹²³ and the Harmony Program documents translated and published by the

¹¹⁷ Brynjar Lia and Thomas Hegghammer, 'Jihadi Strategic Studies: The Alleged Al Qaida Policy Study Preceding the Madrid Bombings', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27, no. 5 (October 2004): 355–75; Steven Brooke, 'Jihadist Strategic Debates before 9/11', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 3 (February 2008): 201–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100701879612>; Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), <http://0-dx.doi.org.oasis.unisa.ac.za/10.1017/CBO9780511817793>.

¹¹⁸ Ahmed Hashim, *The Caliphate at War: The Ideological, Organisational and Military Innovations of Islamic State* (London: Hurst, 2018); Haroro J. Ingram, Craig Whiteside and Charlie Winter, *The ISIS Reader: Milestone Texts of the Islamic State Movement*, 2020; Brian H. Fishman, *The Master Plan: ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and the Jihadi Strategy for Final Victory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016).

¹¹⁹ Fernando Reinares, *Al-Qaeda's Revenge: The 2004 Madrid Train Bombings* (Washington, DC; New York, NY: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Columbia University Press, 2016).

¹²⁰ Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014); Paul Cruickshank and Mohammad Hage Ali, 'Abu Musab Al Suri: Architect of the New Al Qaeda', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 1 (January 2007): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100601049928>; Dmitry Shlapentokh, 'The Intellectual and Political Exchange Among Jihadists: The Case of Mustafa Setmariam Nasar (Abu Musab al-Suri)', *Journal of Applied Security Research* 7, no. 3 (July 2012): 301–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361610.2012.686093>.

¹²¹ Lia and Hegghammer, 'Jihadi Strategic Studies'; Brooke, 'Jihadist Strategic Debates before 9/11'.

¹²² Jim Lacey, ed., *The Canons of Jihad: Terrorist's Strategy for Defeating America* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008).

¹²³ Jim Lacey, ed., *A Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad: Deciphering Abu Musab al-Suri's Islamic Jihad Manifesto* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008); Osama bin Ladin and Brad K. Berner, *Jihad: Bin Laden in His Own Words: Declarations, Interviews and Speeches* (New Delhi: Peacock Books, 2007); Gilles

Combatting Terrorism Center at Westpoint.¹²⁴ These works further evidenced the validity of the strategic approach to understanding terrorism by providing a body of specific strategic thought authored and, in many cases, adopted by terrorist organisations.

Of this contemporary literature, Ryan's *Decoding al-Qaeda's Strategy*¹²⁵ and his later monograph, *ISIS: The Terrorist Group That Would Be a State*,¹²⁶ emphasise the continuity between traditional revolutionary warfare theory and jihadist strategic thought. While remaining focused on jihadist conceptualisations of strategy, these works emphasise the influence and presence of explicit references to Mao, Guevara and Giáp in the core strategic documents and thinking of the jihadist movement and al-Qaeda (AQ) and IS specifically. These works reinforce the continuity among asymmetric actors regardless of their ideological affinity, historical context or available technologies. They further support the proposition that terrorism retains an enduring nature while exhibiting a changing character and subsequently reinforce the proposition tested within this research.

Any analysis of the post-9/11 contributions that had a significant impact on the field of terrorism studies, and especially on the understanding of the strategies associated with terrorism, would be incomplete if it did not recognise Robert Pape's 'Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism'.¹²⁷ Pape not only emphasised the strategic calculus that informed suicide operations. He also argued that in multiple circumstances, this strategy has been successful.¹²⁸ His original article and subsequent book-length treatment of the topic was an important contribution in countering the dominant public and political discourse associated with terrorism in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which had emphasised the 'evil' nature of those responsible and frequently asserted that for operatives to undertake suicide missions, they must have been 'brainwashed' or suffering from significant mental health issues. Pape's work played an essential role in reasserting the rational choice perspective to understanding

Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, eds., *Al Qaeda in Its Own Words* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2008); Donald Holbrook and Cerwyn Moore, eds., *Al-Qaeda 2.0: A Critical Reader* (London: Hurst, 2018); Ayman Al Zawāhirī, *His Own Words: Translation and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*, trans. Laura Mansfield (Old Tappan, NJ: TLG Publications, 2006).

¹²⁴ 'Harmony Program,' Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, (2005). <https://ctc.usma.edu/harmony-program>.

¹²⁵ Michael Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013).

¹²⁶ Michael Ryan, 'ISIS: The Terrorist Group That Would Be a State', US Naval War College, published 2015, <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010&context=ciwag-case-studies>.

¹²⁷ Robert A. Pape, 'The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism', *The American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 343–61; Pape, *Dying to Win*.

¹²⁸ This is contested, in particular by Abrahms. See: Max Abrahms, 'Why Terrorism Does Not Work' *International Security* 31, no. 2 (2006): 42–78.

the decision-making processes of terrorist organisations and their broader strategic calculus in this regard.

Over the post-9/11 period, there were also several important contributions to the literature from outside the discrete field of terrorism studies. Of particular significance to the broader understanding of asymmetric strategies undertaken by the wider category of actors, including guerrillas and insurgents, are a cluster of authors who sought to explain asymmetric strategies. Beginning with the work of Hammes,¹²⁹ this literature¹³⁰ sought to contextualise the terrorist activity of the post-9/11 period as either part of a broader global insurgency¹³¹ or to counter the essentialisation of terrorism and recast the behaviour as insurgent or asymmetric. This literature retains an inherently strategic perspective and provides an outstanding contribution to the appreciation of how asymmetrically weak actors can achieve effect. While not directly contributing to the specific terrorism studies literature, these works have contributed enormously to the development of the field more generally.

This body of strategically orientated literature has been a centrepiece of the terrorism studies field in its embryonic period and throughout its maturation to beyond the events of 9/11. The strategic approach remains a crucial element of what has subsequently become a more diverse body of literature, entailing diverse approaches beyond the strictly strategic, including what Chenoweth and Moore typologised as the organisational, psychological, ideological, structural and critical approaches.¹³² While the preliminary focus of this assessment of the literature has focused on the strategic approach, and the analysis undertaken herein is overwhelmingly informed by this approach, it is equally important to recognise that each of the approaches referred to above has contributed to the broader development and refinement of the field. With this consideration in mind, it is appropriate to recognise the other bodies of literature that contribute to the research undertaken here. The literature on terrorism and communication and terrorism and innovation informs the conceptual framework articulated in the following chapter to an extent equal to the strategic literature highlighted above. These

¹²⁹ Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004).

¹³⁰ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics* (London: Hurst, 2012); Seth G. Jones, *Waging Insurgent Warfare: Lessons from the Vietcong to the Islamic State* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017); Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹³¹ David J. Kilcullen, 'Countering Global Insurgency', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 4 (August 2005): 597–617, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390500300956>.

¹³² Chenoweth and Moore, *The Politics of Terror*.

bodies of literature will be addressed below, articulating the second and third set of conceptual parameters that shape the conceptual framework developed below and the broader approach of this research.

Terrorism and Communication

The literature on terrorism and communication has experienced a similar expansion as has the strategic literature. However, this body of literature has been shaped substantially by the litany of analysis that has emerged from the IS phenomenon, particularly their Western-oriented social media campaigns. This phenomenon produced a vast body of analysis that focused on either how the information campaign of IS was prosecuted, the nature of the content of their output or the narratives and messaging contained within those outputs. The IS phenomenon, especially its exploitation of social media, produced a litany of specific analyses, informed substantially by the readily accessible data that the social media platforms enabled. The analysis of terrorism from a communications perspective or the analysis of the communicative dynamic of terrorism was a component of the terrorism studies field well before the emergence of IS. Any analysis of this body of literature necessarily must start with Schmid and De Graaf's classic contribution, *Violence as Communication*.¹³³

Schmid and De Graaf's work was one of the first scholarly contributions that analysed terrorism from an explicit communications perspective. As with many texts focused on terrorism, *Violence as Communication* opens with an erudition of the beginnings of modern terrorism and reflects on the emergence of two key technologies, namely the discovery of dynamite and the introduction of the rotary printing press in 1848. The authors reflect an analysis of the emergence of anarchist terrorism in Russia in the mid to late 1800s and the concomitant 'communication revolution',¹³⁴ an analytical focal point reflected in multiple historical works¹³⁵ and Rapoport's foreword to Jensen's seminal work on anarchist terrorism, stating:

Critical changes in communication pattern provided the publicity those small groups needed for their violent acts, which they described as 'propaganda of the deed'. The transatlantic cable telegraph enabled the new daily newspapers with

¹³³ Schmid and De Graaf, *Violence as Communication*.

¹³⁴ Schmid and De Graaf, *Violence as Communication*, 16.

¹³⁵ Matthew Carr, *The Infernal Machine: A History of Terrorism* (New York, NY: New Press, 2008); Randall D. Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2016); Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, eds., *The History of Terrorism: From Antiquity to ISIS*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2016).

mass circulations to report events throughout the world in a day. Mass rail transportation networks were available enabling extensive emigrations from poor countries to others, creating diaspora communities very interested in the politics in both their old and new homes. The technological circumstances essential for small groups to become so important grew more favorable over time, encouraging similar sized groups with their own political objectives to become terrorists in different eras.¹³⁶

While this analysis is informed particularly strongly by the theoretical and doctrinal statements of early anarchist revolutionaries and terrorists, it is equally reflective of the centrality of communication and propaganda to terrorism itself. A central purpose of terrorism is to ensure that otherwise-ignored political or ideological agendas are asserted as forcefully and communicated as broadly as possible. Of the more enduring statements articulated by a terrorism scholar, the words of Brian Jenkins have remained at the centrepiece of understanding terrorist violence. In 1974, he famously wrote:

Terrorist attacks are often carefully choreographed to attract the attention of the electronic media and the international press. Holding hostages increases the drama. If certain demands are not satisfied, the hostages may be killed. The hostages themselves often mean nothing to the terrorists. Terrorism is aimed at the people watching, not at the actual victims. Terrorism is theater.¹³⁷

This critical insight is reflected in the lengthy treatment that Schmid and De Graaf provided, explaining the co-dependent dynamic between the media and terrorism. Similar themes were considered by Weimann and Winn¹³⁸ in their chapter, ‘The Terrorist Act as a Media Event’, where they utilised a communications framework to evidence the media-centric character of terrorism.

While this approach to analysing terrorism did not receive the level of focus that the strategic perspective did, at least not explicitly,¹³⁹ it remained a consistent, if not prioritised, aspect of terrorism literature. This is not to suggest that substantial contributions were not authored, with analysts such as Crelinsten¹⁴⁰ providing substantial contributions, with a particular focus

¹³⁶ Richard Bach Jensen, *The Battle against Anarchist Terrorism: An International History, 1878–1934* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), xiv.

¹³⁷ Jenkins, ‘International Terrorism’, 4.

¹³⁸ Gabriel Weimann and Conrad Winn, *The Theater of Terror: Mass Media and International Terrorism* (New York, NY: Longman, 1994).

¹³⁹ Many of the early strategic analysis of terrorism implicitly recognise but do not dwell, on the communicative elements of terrorism

¹⁴⁰ Ronald D. Crelinsten, ‘Images of Terrorism in the Media: 1966–1985’, *Terrorism* 12, no. 3 (January 1989): 167–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108908435785>; Ronald D. Crelinsten, ‘Terrorism and the Media: Problems, Solutions, and Counterproblems’, *Political Communication* 6, no. 4 (October 1989): 311–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.1989.9962881>; Ronald D. Crelinsten, ‘Television and Terrorism: Implications

on the impacts and role of television media. As with much terrorism scholarship, the immediate has tended to be the overwhelming focus of analysis. Thus, much of the communications-orientated literature through the 1980s and 1990s was positioned towards understanding the impacts of television media specifically and, more broadly, the impact of changing media structures and technologies.

Analysis of television media's role in terrorism and the changing nature of television media was a recurring theme within terrorism and communications before and beyond the events of 9/11 and endured as the role of the internet began to inform scholarly analysis. One of the most consistent contributors to the communications and terrorism literature has been Nacos, who has provided critical consistency and grounding to the field over multiple books, many in second and third editions, and in influential article contributions. In addition to providing core reference material on understanding the terrorist calculation regarding the media generally¹⁴¹ and the role of the media in counterterrorism, both positive and negative,¹⁴² Nacos has additionally addressed less represented issues like the representation and perception of Muslims in the post-9/11 environment¹⁴³ and the depiction of women within the media discourse on terrorism.¹⁴⁴ Of most direct and specific relevance to the analysis undertaken here is her 2003 analysis of the strategic calculus of 9/11 and an assessment of the effectiveness of the operation. Her articulation of the updated 'theatre' metaphor put forward by Jenkins in 1974 stated:

From the terrorists' point of view the attack on America was a perfectly choreographed production aimed at American and international audiences. In the past, terrorism has often been compared to theatre because political violence is staged to get the attention of the audience. Although the theatre metaphor remains instructive, it has given way to that of terrorism as a global television spectacular, as breaking news that is watched by international audiences and transcends by far the boundaries of theatrical events.¹⁴⁵

for Crisis Management and Policy-making', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 4 (December 1997): 8–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559708427428>.

¹⁴¹ Brigitte L. Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism: Mainstream and Digital Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

¹⁴² Brigitte L. Nacos, Yaeli Bloch-Elkon and Robert Y. Shapiro, *Selling Fear: Counterterrorism, the Media, and Public Opinion* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹⁴³ Brigitte L. Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna, *Fueling Our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

¹⁴⁴ Brigitte L. Nacos, 'The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 5 (September 2005): 435–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500180352>.

¹⁴⁵ Brigitte L. Nacos, 'The Terrorist Calculus behind 9-11: A Model for Future Terrorism?' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 26, no. 1 (January 2003): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100390145134>.

Nacos' enduring contributions have been instrumental in anchoring the body of communications-oriented terrorism studies literature and has been complemented by the work of Weimann, a communications scholar who has provided influential contributions to the literature on terrorism and communication¹⁴⁶ and the role of the online environment.¹⁴⁷ Weimann has also contributed substantially to the broader scholarship on the changing dynamics of the media landscape.¹⁴⁸ His more recent work, including an updated edition of his seminal 2006 work, *Terror on the Internet*,¹⁴⁹ included a preliminary analysis of the use of emergent communications platforms such as TikTok.¹⁵⁰ The influence of Nacos and Weimann on the parameters of the communications-oriented terrorism studies literature has been and continues to be vast. Their work has ensured that the importance of the medium exploited by terrorists is considered within the analysis of the phenomenon and the impact that varying mediums can have on considerations of audiences, messaging and countermeasures.

While the events of 9/11 provided the impetus for an already highlighted expansion in the volume and diversity of terrorism studies literature, the IS phenomenon has provided a similar impetus for the communications-focused terrorism studies literature. IS' use of social media specifically, but their propaganda campaign more generally, was the basis for a plethora of analysis on the nature of the platforms and their impact on terrorism generally, and jihad specifically,¹⁵¹ on the strategic communications elements of the campaigns¹⁵² and the dynamics of particular products within those campaigns.¹⁵³ The work of Ingram has been

¹⁴⁶ Weimann and Winn, *The Theater of Terror*.

¹⁴⁷ Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006).

¹⁴⁸ Gabriel Weimann et al., 'Reevaluating "The End of Mass Communication"'? *Mass Communication and Society* 17, no. 6 (November 2, 2014): 803–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2013.851700>; Vered Elishar-Malka, Yaron Ariel and Gabriel Weimann, 'Rethinking Political Communication in the Digital Sphere', *The Journal of International Communication* 26, no. 2 (July 2020): 190–210, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2020.1771397>.

¹⁴⁹ Gabriel Weimann and Bruce Hoffman, *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2015), ProQuest Central.

¹⁵⁰ Gabriel Weimann and Natalie Masri, 'Research Note: Spreading Hate on TikTok', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (June 2020), 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1780027>.

¹⁵¹ Jytte Klausen, 'Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 1 (January 2015): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.974948>.

¹⁵² Haroro J. Ingram, 'The Strategic Logic of Islamic State Information Operations', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 69, no. 6 (November 2015): 729–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2015.1059799>.

¹⁵³ Haroro J. Ingram, 'An Analysis of Inspire and Dabiq: Lessons from AQAP and Islamic State's Propaganda War', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 40, no. 5 (May 2017): 357–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1212551>.

at the leading edge of this body of literature, and has contributed substantially to the development of the field and the perspective of the analysis herein.¹⁵⁴

In addition to the social media-specific literature borne of the IS propaganda campaign, a broader body of communications and propaganda-oriented literature has emerged, shaped by the IS phenomenon and the broader engagement with new communications technologies by terrorist organisations generally. Numerous valuable contributions from a communications perspective have expanded terrorism studies understanding and perspective on the role of communication and communications technologies, resulting in a rich and diverse body of scholarship.¹⁵⁵

As with the maturation and increased specificity evidenced in the strategic literature, the communications literature has become increasingly refined and come to represent a sophisticated body of knowledge and analysis regarding the role communications technology plays in terrorism and the importance of changing communications technologies on the character of terrorism. Understanding the propaganda element of terrorism has been an enduring necessity for properly constituted analysis of the phenomenon. The global effort to counter IS has reinforced the approach's relevance and importance. Propaganda, and propaganda by the deed, have fundamentally shaped terrorism since their modern emergence in Russia in the 1800s. Thus, it is necessary to ensure that the communications-oriented literature sufficiently shapes and informs the development of the conceptual framework proposed herein. Ultimately, terrorism is an inherently communicative act, the purpose of which is, at least in part, to shape and influence the nature of public and political discourse regarding particular political and ideological issues.

Additionally, a smaller, bespoke body of literature has emerged that addresses the role of literature and literary culture in the early period of anarchist revolutionary ideals and activity.

¹⁵⁴ Ingram, 'Strategic Logic of Islamic State Information Operations'; Haroro J. Ingram, 'Three Traits of the Islamic State's Information Warfare', *The RUSI Journal* 159, no. 6 (November 2014): 4–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2014.990810>; Haroro J. Ingram, 'Islamic State's English-Language Magazines, 2014–2017: Trends & Implications for CT-CVE Strategic Communications', 8, no. 15 (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2018), 12, <http://dx.doi.org/10.19165/2018.1.03>.

¹⁵⁵ Christopher C. Harmon and Randall G. Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument: Modern Advocacy and Propaganda* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018); Joseph M. Brown, *Force of Words: The Logic of Terrorist Threats* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2020); Kurt Braddock, *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Persuasion*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Philippe-Joseph Salazar and Dorna Khazeni, *Words Are Weapons: Inside ISIS's Rhetoric of Terror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017); Cristina Archetti, *Understanding Terrorism in the Age of Global Media: A Communication Approach* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10621916>.

This niche body of literature¹⁵⁶ provides a particularly insightful approach to the topic, emphasising the wider cultural and public perception issues that pertain to audience understandings of terrorism. Additional texts that provide an analysis of the underpinning structural considerations regarding consumption of new media¹⁵⁷ and the associated cultural and media literacy¹⁵⁸ necessary for audiences to be capable of comprehending incidents of terrorism has also emerged assist in identifying important parameters to analyse the relationship between communications technologies and terrorism. Taken collectively, this small subfield of research provides important insights into the broader societal and technological conditions that can impact whether or not terrorism has strategic effect or is even understood and comprehended as intended.

Terrorism and Innovation

Before the emergence of specifically innovation-oriented literature within terrorism studies, the broader area of focus was dominated by analysis of terrorism and its relationship with technology, frequently through the analysis of the tactical dimensions of terrorist action or a lens of technology as a counterterrorism capability. In 1987, the journal *Terrorism*, now *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, published a series of articles that were the product of a conference entitled ‘Terrorism and Technology.’¹⁵⁹ The articles focused primarily on the role that technology played in strengthening counterterrorism capabilities,¹⁶⁰ with a broader analysis of the impact of technology on the relationship between the terrorist and the counterterrorist.¹⁶¹ The articles provided only limited analysis of the application or adoption

¹⁵⁶ Peter C. Herman, ed., *Terrorism and Literature* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Lynn Ellen Patyk, *Written in Blood: Revolutionary Terrorism and Russian Literary Culture 1861–1881* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020); James Goodwin, *Confronting Dostoevsky’s Demons: Anarchism and the Specter of Bakunin in Twentieth-Century Russia*, Middlebury Studies in Russian Language and Literature, vol. 33 (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2010); John P. Moran, ‘The Roots of Terrorist Motivation: Shame, Rage, and Violence in *The Brothers Karamazov*’, *Perspectives on Political Science* 38, no. 4 (October 2009): 187–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10457090903231516>.

¹⁵⁷ Steven G. Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), <http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6367860>.

¹⁵⁸ Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861–1917* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003).

¹⁵⁹ Bernard L. Stewart, ‘The Role of Technology in Combatting Terrorism a Symposium’, *Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (January 1987): 211–12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108708435663>.

¹⁶⁰ Admiral Jon L. Boyes, ‘C3I Technologies: A Deterrent to Terrorism’, *Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (January 1987): 271–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108708435681>; Martin Silverstein, ‘Medical Technology in Combatting Terrorism’, *Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (January 1987): 277–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108708435683>; John W. Howard, ‘Designing the Embassy of the Future’, *Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (January 1987): 241–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108708435672>.

¹⁶¹ Bernard J. O’Keefe, ‘Technology: An Introduction’, *Terrorism* 10, no. 3 (January 1987): 269, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576108708435680>.

of specific technologies by terrorists, or even general analysis of the centrality of technology to the terrorist enterprise.

In 1993, *Terrorism and Political Violence* published a similarly focused special issue of their journal with a number of valuable contributions from Wilkinson¹⁶² and Hoffman.¹⁶³ In his introductory article and capacity as editor, Wilkinson wrote of the dearth of scholarly contributions: ‘there have been few scholarly publications, even during the recent expansion of research on terrorism, which give serious attention to the relationship between technology and terrorism’.¹⁶⁴

Wilkinson further emphasised the importance of technological developments in making terrorism a feasible avenue for expressing ideological and political grievances, referring to the willingness of numerous actors to utilise terrorism as an ‘alternative instrument of coercion’.¹⁶⁵ Of specific and relevant insight to the analysis herein, Wilkinson also identified those technological developments that exist beyond technology related to weapons and tactical capability: ‘the development of television satellite links and global communication networks has made it easy for terrorists to relay their ‘propaganda of the deed’ around the world almost instantaneously’.¹⁶⁶

Hoffman explicitly addressed the discussion of innovation and the nature of terrorist organisations regarding technology and their tactics, who considered the enduring consistency of terrorist tactics over time. This important observation delineates between the fundamental reinvention of the tactical aspects of terrorist activity and innovation occurring within this existing repertoire of actions. Such ‘methods used to conceal and detonate explosives ... terrorists continue to rely—as they have for more than a century—on the gun and the bomb: rarely do they deviate from an established *modus operandi*’.¹⁶⁷

This assessment, that terrorist organisations are inherently conservative concerning their tactical activities, relates to the broader consideration articulated and assessed herein; namely, there is an enduring nature to terrorism, despite its changing character. Hoffman emphasised

¹⁶² Paul Wilkinson, ‘Editor’s Introduction: Technology and Terrorism’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 2 (June 1993): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559308427204>.

¹⁶³ Bruce Hoffman, ‘Terrorist Targeting: Tactics, Trends, and Potentialities’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 2 (June 1993): 12–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559308427205>.

¹⁶⁴ Wilkinson, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Wilkinson ‘Editor’s Introduction’.

¹⁶⁶ Wilkinson, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, 3.

¹⁶⁷ Hoffman, ‘Terrorist Targeting’, 14.

in his article, between 1968 and the article's publication in 1993, 'bombings continued to account for roughly half of all terrorist attacks annually'.¹⁶⁸

Additional preliminary work by the RAND Corporation, extending the perspective taken by Hoffman, saw a particular focus on incorporating new weapons and tactics and the refinement of existing tactical and operational practices while also considering how terrorist organisations evolved and adjusted their counterintelligence capabilities in response to counterterrorism measures.¹⁶⁹ Further work by RAND included analysis of technology diffusion and exchange across a diversity of terrorist organisations, using a diversity of case studies beyond jihadist organisations,¹⁷⁰ and analysis of countermeasures undertaken by a variety of terrorist organisations to surmount defensive measures undertaken by counterterrorism forces.¹⁷¹

The body of literature more explicitly oriented towards innovation is anchored by Dolnik's *Understanding Terrorist Innovation*¹⁷² and the edited collection by Ranstorp and Normark, *Understanding Terrorism Innovation and Learning*.¹⁷³ These two works provided invaluable theoretical and conceptual contributions. Dolnik's identification of an 11-point framework of relevant factors that inform terrorist innovation is especially important to the subsequent body of innovation-focused literature and its evolution and increased specificity over time. Additionally, Dolnik's recognition of the limited applicability of the application of conventional military innovation concepts to the subject of terrorism is addressed by his definition of innovation in a terrorism context, which he argued constitutes 'an act of introduction of a new method or technology or the improvement of an already existing capability'.¹⁷⁴ He argues that this definition accounts for both the fundamental manifestations of innovation and the piecemeal manifestations of innovation, as identified by Hoffman above.

¹⁶⁸ Hoffman, 'Terrorist Targeting', 13.

¹⁶⁹ Brian A. Jackson and John C. Baker, *Aptitude for Destruction: Volume 1 – Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and Its Implications for Combatting Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005).

¹⁷⁰ Kim Cragin et al., eds., *Sharing the Dragon's Teeth: Terrorist Groups and the Exchange of New Technologies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007).

¹⁷¹ Brian A. Jackson et al., eds., *Breaching the Fortress Wall: Understanding Terrorist Efforts to Overcome Defensive Technologies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Homeland Security, 2007).

¹⁷² Adam Dolnik, *Understanding Terrorist Innovation: Technology, Tactics and Global Trends* (London: Routledge, 2007).

¹⁷³ Magnus Ranstorp and Magnus Normark, *Understanding Terrorism Innovation and Learning: Al-Qaeda and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁷⁴ Dolnik, *Understanding Terrorist Innovation*, 6.

In Ranstorp and Normark's edited collection, Ackerman provided an especially valuable contribution by discussing the theoretical underpinnings of the innovation literature beyond terrorism studies and beyond the literature on military innovation, from which much of the scholarly analysis considering innovation in a terrorism context has drawn. Ackerman quoted Rogers and his definition of innovation as 'an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or another unit of adoption'.¹⁷⁵ This broader conceptualisation of innovation reflects the broader understanding of technology by van Creveld cited in Chapter One and recognises that understanding technology or innovation requires an appreciation for issues beyond purely hardware. Ackerman's contribution provides a nuanced and sophisticated series of theoretical articulations and draws widely on existing literature to explain the innovation process. While much of the literature has concentrated on the tactical level, an emergent body of literature has increasingly come to recognise the broader contexts within which technologies are as dependent on the material aspects of the technology as it is on the cultural and social dynamics that inform adoption and diffusion of technologies and their associated practices.

Early work was also collected in a contribution under the editorship of Forest, *Teaching Terror: Strategic and Tactical Learning in the Terrorist World*¹⁷⁶ provided a valuable addition to the preliminary literature and contained contributions from several authors who subsequently contributed significantly to the broader literature. For instance, Kenney's chapter on how terrorists learn ultimately contributed to his sophisticated comparative analysis of Colombian drug-trafficking enterprises and terrorist networks and how they apply knowledge and experience.¹⁷⁷ Kenney's discussion in his book-length treatment of the subject included the introduction of the concepts of *metis* and *techne*, delineating between the former, learning obtained through doing, and the formal transmission of 'abstract technical knowledge' associated with *techne*.¹⁷⁸ Incorporating these concepts into the literature reflected an increasingly rich and in-depth approach to appreciating and understanding the diversity of processes that terrorist and non-state entities engage in regarding learning, innovation and other associated processes.

¹⁷⁵ G. Ackerman, 'The Theoretical Underpinnings of Terrorist Innovation Decisions', in *Understanding Terrorism Innovation and Learning: Al-Qaeda and Beyond*, ed. Magnus Ranstorp and Magnus Normark (London: Routledge, 2015), 20.

¹⁷⁶ James J. F. Forest, ed., *Teaching Terror: Strategic and Tactical Learning in the Terrorist World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

¹⁷⁷ Michael Kenney, *From Pablo to Osama: Trafficking and Terrorist Networks, Government Bureaucracies, and Competitive Adaptation* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2008).

¹⁷⁸ Kenney, *From Pablo to Osama*, 4.

These contributions, in conjunction with the work of Dolnik and Ranstorp and Normark, provided the broad base of a body of literature that, over time, has come to address a range of fine-grain questions about specific organisations and particular tactics and technologies, as well as broader questions like strategic innovation,¹⁷⁹ innovation in intelligence and counterintelligence practice, both historically¹⁸⁰ and in a contemporary AQ context.¹⁸¹ Of particular influence, and as a useful demonstration of the maturation of this body of literature, Horwitz's analysis of the diffusion of suicide operations¹⁸² provides not only a sophisticated analysis of how specific tactics can spread across terrorist movements. It also provides a useful counterpoint to the analysis of Pape on the role of occupation in prompting the deployment of suicide tactics. The author's refinement beyond a strictly innovation-oriented analysis to provide an analysis anchored in the concept of diffusion significantly strengthens understanding of how the adoption and incorporation of new tactics are undertaken and the enablers and barriers to that adoption.

The broader body of literature that has emerged on innovation and terrorism has come to represent a sophisticated avenue of analysis and contains a range of important contributions to the conceptual and operational understanding of terrorist practices. For instance, Horowitz's 2017 contribution¹⁸³ proposed a novel explanation of the drivers of adopting and abandoning different tactics within a suite of practices. Additional analysis investigating innovation in the organisational structures of terrorist enterprises and how this has impacted operational capability has also emerged,¹⁸⁴ with particular salience regarding the substantial increase in lone-actor terrorism facilitated by IS.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Brian A. Jackson and Bryce Loidolt, 'Considering Al-Qa'ida's Innovation Doctrine: From Strategic Texts to "Innovation in Practice"', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25, no. 2 (April 2013): 284–310, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2012.662557>; 'ISIL's Virtual Planners: A Critical Terrorist Innovation', *War on the Rocks*, 4 January 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/01/isils-virtual-planners-a-critical-terrorist-innovation/>.

¹⁸⁰ Gaetano Joe Ilardi, 'IRA Operational Intelligence: The Heartbeat of the War', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21, no. 2 (June 2010): 331–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2010.481429>.

¹⁸¹ Gaetano Joe Ilardi, 'The 9/11 Attacks—A Study of Al Qaeda's Use of Intelligence and Counterintelligence', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 3 (March 2009): 171–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100802670803>; Blake W. Mobley, *Terrorism and Counterintelligence: How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection*, Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012).

¹⁸² Horowitz, 'Nonstate Actors'.

¹⁸³ Michael C. Horowitz, Evan Perkoski and Philip B. K. Potter, 'Tactical Diversity in Militant Violence', *International Organization* 72, no. 1 (2018): 139–71, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818317000467>.

¹⁸⁴ Jacob N. Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2tt8v9>; Barak Mendelsohn, *The Al-Qaeda Franchise: The Expansion of Al-Qaeda and Its Consequences* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press USA – OSO, 2016), ProQuest Central; Arabinda Acharya and Sonal Marwah, 'Nizam, La Tanzim (System, Not Organization): Do Organizations

‘New Terrorism’

In addition to the explicitly innovation-focused literature, it is worth noting debates that took place regarding what was referred to as ‘new terrorism.’ These debates first emerged¹⁸⁶ in an article published in *Survival*,¹⁸⁷ wherein two former national security officials referred to ‘a new, religiously motivated terrorism that neither relies on the support of sovereign states nor is constrained by the limits on violence that state sponsors have observed themselves or placed on their proxies.’¹⁸⁸

In a subsequent exchange, published in the same journal,¹⁸⁹ renowned terrorism scholars such as Olivier Roy, Ruben Paz and Bruce Hoffman provided substantial critiques of the original article, including Hoffman’s that ‘this is by no means as certain or even convincing as it is often portrayed’.¹⁹⁰ These debates reflected an interpretation of what was arguably the changing characteristics of terrorism, rather than a change in its more fundamental nature. The debates were shaped in particular by concerns regarding terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction and the perceived ‘millenarian and apocalyptic tone’¹⁹¹ of then-emergent terrorist movements, greatly strengthened by the events of 9/11. In response to these ongoing debates and their impacts on counterterrorism policymaking, scholars such as Crenshaw provided comments worth noting at some length. Her comments reflected a core idea this dissertation seeks to evidence and articulate, namely the enduring nature of the fundamentals of terrorism, as distinct from its changing character. Crenshaw wrote in 2007:

Matter in Terrorism Today? A Study of the November 2008 Mumbai Attacks’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 1 (2010): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2011.531455>.

¹⁸⁵ Paul Gill and Emily Corner, ‘Lone-Actor Terrorist Target Choice’, *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 34, no. 5 (September 2016): 693–705, <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2268>; Burcu Pinar Alakoc, ‘Competing to Kill: Terrorist Organizations Versus Lone Wolf Terrorists’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 509–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2015.1050489>; Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Seamus Hughes, ‘The Threat to the United States from the Islamic State’s Virtual Entrepreneurs’, *CTC Sentinel* 10, no. 3 (March 2017), <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-threat-to-the-united-states-from-the-islamic-states-virtual-entrepreneurs/>; Anne Speckhard and Yayla Ahmet, ‘The ISIS Emni: Origins and Inner Workings of ISIS’s Intelligence Apparatus’, *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 1 (2017), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/573/pdf>.

¹⁸⁶ It is important to note that while these debates are generally considered to have begun with the initial article by Simon and Benjamin, Laqueur’s 1999 book addressed many of these same issues earlier. See Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁸⁷ S. Simon and D. Benjamin, ‘America and the New Terrorism’, *Survival* 42, no. 1 (January 2000): 59–75, <https://doi.org/10.1093/survival/42.1.59>.

¹⁸⁸ Simon and Benjamin, ‘America and the New Terrorism’, 59.

¹⁸⁹ O. Roy et al., ‘America and the New Terrorism: An Exchange’, *Survival* 42, no. 2 (January 2000): 156–72, <https://doi.org/10.1093/survival/42.2.156>.

¹⁹⁰ Roy et al., ‘America and the New Terrorism’, 162.

¹⁹¹ Laqueur, *The New Terrorism*, 11.

Today's terrorism is not a fundamentally or qualitatively 'new' phenomenon but grounded in an evolving historical context. Much of what we see now is familiar, and the differences are of degree rather than kind. Contemporary terrorism shares many of the characteristics of past terrorism, dating back at least to the late 19th century and the use of terrorism by groups of Russian revolutionaries, European anarchists, and Irish nationalists.¹⁹²

Beyond the Venn Diagram

Three key texts are highly influential on the development of this research and warrant recognition beyond the parameters utilised above. These three texts include Ryan's *Decoding al-Qaeda's Strategy*, discussed above, Cronin's *Power to the People*¹⁹³ and English's *Does Terrorism Work?*¹⁹⁴ These three texts have been instrumental in the preliminary conceptualisation of this research and in informing the methodological approach taken. Together they represent work that reinforces the centrality of the strategic approach to understanding terrorism while demonstrating the utility of case-based research methods. All three texts are authored by highly respected, senior terrorism studies scholars and contribute sophisticated analysis to the field. Of resonance with the approach taken herein is the macro-level analysis that all three works utilise. In this sense, the three texts analyse terrorism as a phenomenon while also seeking to demonstrate the utility of their frameworks to multiple cases.

Ryan's *Decoding* analysed the strategic documents and strategists that have informed the approach to conflict adopted by AQ. The author's approach focussed on specific leaders and strategists and their intellectual contributions to AQ's understanding of strategy. A series of case studies addressed his key objective: 'to demonstrate that al-Qaeda and its allies have a detailed, coherent strategy that tells us what they hope to achieve and how'.¹⁹⁵ Ryan used a chronologically organised case study approach and focused on the output of key strategists and the strategists themselves to demonstrate a detailed, coherent strategy; albeit, 'none of these documents was produced in the sense that the American J-5 drafts war plans or the National Security Council approves a national strategy'.¹⁹⁶ Ultimately, Ryan's work contributed immensely to and demonstrated the importance of understanding the strategic

¹⁹² Crenshaw, 'The Debate', 120.

¹⁹³ Audrey Kurth Cronin, *Power to the People: How Open Technological Innovation Is Arming Tomorrow's Terrorists* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹⁹⁴ Richard English, *Does Terrorism Work? A History*, 1st ed. (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁹⁵ Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 3.

¹⁹⁶ Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 11.

thought of the jihadist movement and recognising the importance, both academically and from a practitioner perspective, of understanding the strategies that inform terrorism more generally.

Power to the People: How Open Technological Innovation is Arming Tomorrow's Terrorists by Audrey Kurth Cronin is an additional influential text regarding the research undertaken herein while also representing a culmination of the innovation and terrorism literature. The text itself constitutes an analysis of the central role that is not just innovation. Particular models of innovation and diffusion play a role in informing the adoption of certain technologies by terrorist groups and across terrorist movements. With a case study analysis of dynamite and the AK-47, Cronin evidenced how the specific character of certain technological developments and their accessibility impacts their uptake. Cronin further refined the existing body of literature on innovation and diffusion by distinguishing between open and closed innovation systems before utilising the case studies to further demonstrate the validity of her claims on the adoption by terrorists of technologies generated by open innovation systems. She then applied these ideas to what she referred to as 'clusters of emerging technologies' that are 'offering non-state actors unprecedented disruptive power'. The forecasting component of her work demonstrated the utility of identifying consistent patterns of activity within specified categories of phenomena and highlights how conceptual and historical analysis can inform both over the horizon assessments and policy development.

The other crucial text that has substantially informed this research and the approach utilised is Richard English's *Does Terrorism Work: A History*.¹⁹⁷ This text has influenced the conceptualisation utilised here on the issue of terrorism's effectiveness. English engaged with a substantial question and addressed it with subtlety and nuance while providing a sophisticated and considered framework. He outlined a four-part 'detailed, systematic framework for understanding what we might consider it to mean to say that terrorism works.'¹⁹⁸ It is this systematic approach that substantially influenced the approach undertaken here. The framework articulated in the following chapter is informed by both the literature discussed above and the approach taken by English. In addition to the richness of English's framework and its focus, in part on strategic aspects of terrorist activity, the framework provides a useful lens through which to consider strategic effect. The framework explicitly recognised that what English refers to as victory does not necessarily require an absolute and

¹⁹⁷ English, *Does Terrorism Work?*

¹⁹⁸ English, *Does Terrorism Work?*, 30.

total capitulation of an adversary. Strategic victory, or strategic impact, can be achieved by denying victory to your adversary. As will be further articulated in the following chapter, measuring the achievement of strategic effect, as distinct from victory per se, provides an even broader aperture through which to assess terrorism and its consequences while enabling an analysis of the means through which these effects might be facilitated. Additionally, English applies the framework to four case studies—AQ, the IRA, Hamas and *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA)—further evidencing the ubiquity of case study approaches and the utility of the approach in evidencing the merits or otherwise of a conceptual framework.

These three texts by Ryan, Cronin and English have individually and cumulatively been deeply influential on the approach adopted here, both in terms of the research questions they seek to address, and the methods used to do so. Additionally, all three works contribute equally to academic scholarship and policy and practice. By emphasising their utility beyond the academy and evidencing how nuanced considerations can strengthen the collective understanding of problems such as terrorism and political violence, these works reinforce the value of macro-level analysis, strategic perspectives and rigorous scholarship. Their use of case study approaches has further supported the determination to utilise the same approach. They provide a structured and systematic manner to interrogate the proposed framework and enable a diversity of cases to be utilised. Rather than focusing exclusively on, for instance, contemporary global jihadist terrorism, the case study approach enables the framework developed here to be tested across historical, geographical and technological contexts, strengthening the validity and rigour of the framework.

The literature considered above provides a basis for establishing the conceptual framework while contextualising the broader research endeavour undertaken. Surveying the identified subfields reveals that while terrorism studies have progressively expanded their aperture to consider a wide range of components of the phenomenon, what remains lacking is an integrated articulation of how terrorism works, namely, the means deployed and how those means are deployed to achieve strategic effect against adversaries. While terrorism studies have identified that the phenomenon is inherently strategic and that various strategies are utilised, the literature has not effectively articulated how those strategies manifest in practice and what various components of terrorism are necessary to enable it to achieve the types of disproportionate consequences it is capable of.

The framework proposed here incorporates the three perspectives considered above to develop an integrated framework, albeit not exclusively. The resulting framework helps illuminate how all three elements are incorporated into the strategic design of terrorism campaigns to enable the achievement of strategic effects. In doing so, this research builds on the cumulative insights of terrorism studies as a field to provide fresh insights into the phenomena of terrorism, including its enduring nature and changing character, while shedding light on the elements necessary for it to be an effective strategy. This framework is fully articulated in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: The Framework

This chapter develops and articulates the conceptual framework that will undergird the case study analysis that constitutes the proceeding chapters. The conceptual framework expands and extrapolates the existing literature regarding the orthodox scholarly understanding of terrorism as a distinct phenomenon. This chapter initially outlines the three elements of the conceptual framework before providing a more detailed overview of each, including an articulation of appropriate specificity in relation to the various components and meanings associated with each sub-component of the elements. Having identified the key elements and provided sufficient articulation as to their meaning and purpose, this chapter then proceeds to identify how each of the elements relates to each other and how, when properly integrated, these elements enable terrorism to achieve strategic effect. In articulating these aspects of the conceptual framework, this chapter will also utilise examples from the case studies and beyond, to provide further clarity about the elements of the framework.

As discussed earlier, the framework articulated here draws substantially from the literature identified in the previous chapter. It is anchored significantly in the assumptions of the strategic approach detailed by Chenoweth. In particular, the assumptions regarding bounded rationality are central to the approach taken. This concept of bounded rationality is of particular relevance when analysing a terrorist organisation from a strategic perspective in that it recognises the prioritisation of rational and strategic perspectives without precluding the role of other factors in the decision-making of the actors involved. Of the various justifications for orienting this research towards the strategic approach, the effort to identify an enduring strategic logic is arguably the most compelling justification. As stated in Chapter One, this is not to suggest, for instance, that the psychological approach, best reflected in the work of authors like Horgan¹⁹⁹ and McCauley and Moskalenko,²⁰⁰ is not valuable or does not provide substantial value to terrorism studies as an academic pursuit and to policy and practice within counterterrorism. The strategic approach is ideally suited for assessing the strategic considerations of terrorist organisations and, by extension, for informing the development of a conceptual framework for assessing the enduring presence of those strategic considerations across multiple cases.

¹⁹⁹ John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, rev. 2nd ed., (London: Routledge, 2014).

²⁰⁰ Clark R. McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, *Friction: How Conflict Radicalizes Them and Us*, rev. ed. (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

The literature regarding conceptual frameworks is predominantly anchored within the literature on qualitative research methods. As with the overwhelming majority of ideas and concepts in the social sciences, there is no universally accepted or recognised definition of what exactly constitutes a conceptual framework. Crawford highlights numerous and at times contradictory definitions but emphasises that concerning all the definitions cited, all ‘indicate ways that a conceptual framework makes the construction of a study clearer, cleaner, and more straightforward’.²⁰¹ In keeping with the structured, focused comparison methodology of George and Bennett,²⁰² the development of a conceptual framework ensures that this study remains focused on the key factors identified in the framework and that the case studies are structured around these factors, enabling analysis and comparison across cases.

As identified in Chapter One, this research relies on the definition of a conceptual framework as stated by Miles et al., ‘a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, constructs, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them. Frameworks can be rudimentary or elaborate, theory-driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal’.²⁰³

This definition of a conceptual framework is reinforced and reflected in the work of Jabareen, who takes a philosophical approach to building a conceptual framework with a particular emphasis on multidisciplinary bodies of knowledge. His definition is that conceptual frameworks constitute ‘a network, or “a plane”, of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena’.²⁰⁴

In the first instance, these definitions indicate the initial purpose for the framework being developed here, which is operationally oriented. The framework’s initial purpose is to provide a clear and intentional structure to the analysis that follows within the case studies and enable the identification and analysis of common attributes across the case studies. This is particularly important as the case studies are purposefully selected with distinct historical contexts. The development of a properly constituted conceptual framework ensures the case studies remain focused and bounded and ensures that they are structured to enable a

²⁰¹ Linda M. Crawford. ‘Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks in Research’, in Gary J Burkholder et al., *Research Design and Methods: An Applied Guide for the Scholar-Practitioner* (SAGE, 2020), 37.

²⁰² Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

²⁰³ Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 20.

²⁰⁴ Yosef Jabareen, ‘Building a Conceptual Framework: Philosophy, Definitions, and Procedure’, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 4 (December 2009): 51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800406>.

comparative analysis to be undertaken. In the secondary sense, the framework also serves to identify and articulate those elements of terrorism that constitute the enduring nature of the phenomenon. This aspect of the conceptual framework development process is more ambitious. It involves proposing that the elements identified and the interrelationships between them that, when evidenced across time and space, constitute the phenomenon's consistent and enduring nature

The framework itself, briefly mentioned in Chapter One, addresses an otherwise under considered aspect of understanding terrorism from a scholarly perspective. As demonstrated in the literature review, only a limited body of work has sought to identify or describe a general framework for explaining terrorism in detail. While certain authors like Crenshaw²⁰⁵ have provided substantial contributions to the literature in this regard, and authors such as Laqueur and Hoffman²⁰⁶ have contributed immensely to understanding the phenomenon on a macro-level of analysis, only very limited work has sought to provide an abstracted articulation of the key necessary elements of the phenomenon that endure across diverse historical and ideological manifestations and are consistently present in cases where terrorism has achieved strategic effect, such as the post-Munich quasi-legitimation of the PLO.²⁰⁷ This framework proposes that not only is there a strategic logic to terrorism, but that the strategic logic is reflective of the enduring nature of terrorism as a phenomenon and that the key elements of that strategic logic can be identified in various case studies across various historical and ideological manifestations. Further, it is proposed here that these elements reflect the strategic logic of terrorism and, when properly integrated, are the key to terrorism being capable of achieving strategic effect.

The Framework

The framework developed in this dissertation consists of three key overarching elements that provide the parameters for the structure of the case studies while identifying and explaining

²⁰⁵ Crenshaw, 'The Logic of Terrorism'.

²⁰⁶ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*.

²⁰⁷ Byman notes with regard to the Munich Massacre, 'only two years later Arafat would address the UN General Assembly, dressed in guerrilla fatigues and wearing an (empty) holster, declaring to a standing ovation, "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand". At the 1974 Arab summit in Rabat Arafat persuaded the Arab world to grant the PLO the status of being the "sole, legitimate representative" of the Palestinians. The European left steadily embraced the cause of the Palestinians and the romance of the fedayeen; Arafat was hailed as "the Palestinian 'Che'" and the Palestinians compared favorably to the Viet Cong. By the decade's end the PLO would enjoy more diplomatic recognition than the state of Israel': Daniel Byman, *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 47.

the aforementioned strategic logic of terrorism as a phenomenon. In keeping with the definition provided by Miles et al., the framework identifies ‘the main things to be studied—the key factors, constructs, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them’.²⁰⁸ These key elements are represented in the graphic below and in the subsequent points:

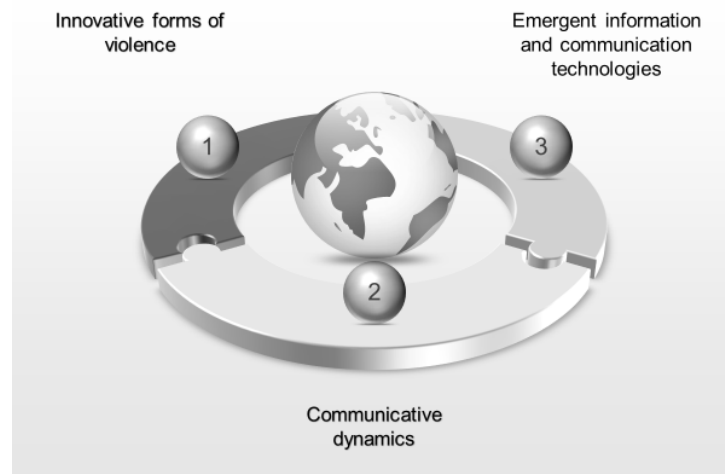


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

1. innovative forms of violence
2. communicative and narrative dynamics
3. exploitation of emergent information and communications technology.

Each point will be subsequently explained in detail below, but of central importance to the framework is the necessary interrelationships between each. In essence, this framework proposes that when these three elements are properly conceived, integrated, and deployed, terrorism is capable of achieving strategic effect. Moreover, it suggests that the presence of each of these elements individually and their integration are necessary for achieving this strategic effect. The absence of one of these, or the failure to properly integrate them, will result in the inability to achieve strategic effect. In highlighting the integration of the three elements, the framework seeks to emphasise the need for each of the elements to be considered and interwoven within the operational planning process. By this, the framework seeks to demonstrate a relationship of interdependent necessity between the elements, whereby the deployment, for example, of innovative violence independent of considerations regarding communicative and narrative dynamics and the exploitation of emergent

²⁰⁸ Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 20.

information and communications technology would be insufficiently calibrated for the achievement of strategic effect. The framework suggests that it is through the integration of these elements that the amplification of effect occurs, as well as the resultant disproportionate strategic effects.

Innovative forms of Violence

The first element of the framework focuses on the forms of violence deployed by terrorist organisations and the need for this violence to be innovative. It is evidenced most frequently and directly in the tactical choices and targeting decisions of terrorist organisations. For the purposes of the framework, this encompasses a range of manifestations of innovation and can include both internal and external innovation, revolutionary and iterative innovations, and can include innovations related to broader issues of strategy and organisational structure, including the ways this can facilitate the deployment of new tactics or new targeting decisions. Each of these sub-elements of innovation will be explained in the following sections.

1. Innovative forms of violence

- a. *internal innovation*, innovations developed and deployed within a terrorist organisation
- b. *external innovation*, the adoption of innovations developed external to the terrorist organisation
- c. *revolutionary innovation*, innovations that fundamentally alter the tactical or targeting options of a terrorist organisation
- d. *incremental innovation*, the innovative application of existing tactical capabilities or innovation regarding targeting decisions or the implementation of incremental changes to existing tactical practices
- e. *structural innovation*, innovations regarding organisational structure that result in changes in tactical or targeting determinations
- f. *strategic innovation*, innovations in strategic approach or strategic objective that enables new tactical or targeting opportunities
- g. *communicative innovation*, innovations in relation to the framing or presentation of terrorist violence.

Internal Innovation

Internal innovation refers to those innovative processes predominantly undertaken within the organisation, or at least within the broader movement and its support networks. A prime example of this is the determination by Hezbollah to engage in a series of suicide bombings inside Lebanon in the early 1980s and throughout the Lebanese Civil War.

While the 1983 US Marine Barracks bombing is perhaps the most well-known Hezbollah suicide operation, and it certainly served to establish their international profile, this was but part of a campaign of specifically vehicle-borne suicide attacks launched in the early 1980s at key strategic targets within Lebanon. The first of these attacks was not strictly a Hezbollah operation.²⁰⁹ It was undertaken, in 1981, by Shiite militia known by the name al-Dawa,²¹⁰ which would later merge with other Shiite militias to form Hezbollah.²¹¹ The operation targeted the Iraqi embassy in Beirut, and as Lewis highlights, ‘the Beirut bombing signaled [*sic*] the evolution of suicide bombing into a refined, more effective organizational phenomenon, using technology uniquely appropriate for the environment’.²¹² Over the following two years, numerous vehicle-borne suicide operations were undertaken by Hezbollah, targeting what they perceived as strategic adversaries. In November 1982, Hezbollah undertook what they consider their first suicide car bombing, perpetrated by Sheik Ahmed Qassir, against the Israeli military headquarters in Tyre.²¹³ Coupled with the tactical innovation of vehicle-borne suicide operations, Hezbollah also filmed the operation. In 1985, after the withdrawal of Israeli Forces from Southern Lebanon, the personal details of the 19-year-old perpetrator were released, and ‘video recordings of the operation’s details were broadcast in the martyr’s village during a crowded celebration’.²¹⁴ Khatib et al. suggest that this was the beginning of a more general practice of Hezbollah filming their military operations.²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ Hezbollah formally came into existence under its current name in 1982. See Na‘īm Qāsim and Dalia Khalil, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* (London: Saqi, 2005).

²¹⁰ Jeffrey William Lewis, *The Business of Martyrdom: A History of Suicide Bombing* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 57.

²¹¹ Nicholas Blanford, *Warriors of God: Inside Hezbollah’s Thirty-Year Struggle against Israel*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 2011), 35; Pape, *Dying to Win*, 132.

²¹² Lewis, *Business of Martyrdom*, 57.

²¹³ Mike Davis, *Buda’s Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb* (London; New York, NY: Verso, 2017), 78; Aurélie Daher, *Hezbollah: Mobilization and Power* (London: Hurst, 2016), 67.

²¹⁴ Qāsim and Khalil, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*, 89.

²¹⁵ Lina Khatib, Dina Matar and Atef Alshaer, *The Hizbullah Phenomenon: Politics and Communication* (London: Hurst, 2014), 41.

However, the 1983 attack on the US Marine Barracks in Beirut established Hezbollah's reputation. More specifically, it demonstrated the capacity of suicide operations to achieve strategic outcomes. While the attack on Israeli military headquarters in Tyre in 1982 and the repeat of this operation in 1983 certainly contributed to the strategic withdrawal of Israeli troops from Southern Lebanon, the attacks on the Multinational Forces and Observers demonstrated the potential of suicide operations to achieve strategic geopolitical outcomes. As Bergman states regarding this series of operations, 'thanks to these suicide attacks, which were planned and directed by Mughniyeh, Mohtashamipur got almost exactly what he wanted: The Multinational Force was disbanded, and Israel withdrew by stages from most of Lebanese territory'.²¹⁶

The 1983 US Marine Barracks operation and the subsequent attack on the French Barracks represent the beginnings of the broader adoption of suicide tactics by Sunni and Shiite jihadist organisations, with Moghadam going as far as to declare the 1983 attacks 'the beginning of the modern phenomenon of suicide attacks'.²¹⁷ The connective tissue that links these operations and the wave of suicide operations undertaken by Hezbollah during the Lebanese Civil War was the 'world's master car bomber'²¹⁸ Imad Faiz Mughniyeh. Mughniyeh was not only responsible for the innovative preliminary conceptualisation of the use of vehicles to ensure the precise delivery of suicide operatives, but he was also intimately involved in the innovation and demonstration of the strategic utility of vehicle-borne suicide operations within the Lebanese theatre of operations. From his initial conceptualisation of suicide vehicle-borne operations,²¹⁹ his recruitment of Qassir for the initial attack on Israeli military headquarters, his subsequent long career as a senior Hezbollah leader and his ultimate death at the hands of Israeli authorities,²²⁰ the impact of Mughniyeh's innovations is difficult to overstate. Then-President Reagan's decision to withdraw US Forces from Lebanon speaks to the potential power of innovative forms of violence. The sustained campaign would serve to make Hezbollah a substantial actor both within Lebanon and beyond.

²¹⁶ Ronen Bergman, *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations*, trans. Ronnie Hope, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 2018), 375.

²¹⁷ Asaf Moghadam, 'The Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: A Multi-Causal Approach', in Ami Pedahzur, ed., *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: Globalization of Martyrdom* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 81.

²¹⁸ Davis, *Buda's Wagon*, 82.

²¹⁹ Blanford, *Warriors of God*, 53.

²²⁰ Bergman, *Rise and Kill First*, 602.

External Innovation

External innovation, or innovation which is undertaken by an individual or organisation beyond a terrorist organisation and subsequently adopted by another terrorist organisation through a process of diffusion,²²¹ contagion²²² or emulation,²²³ is best demonstrated through further analysis of the expansion of suicide bombing phenomena beyond its emergence in Lebanon in the early 1980s. The early successes of suicide bombing in the Lebanese theatre ultimately had an enduring influence on the violent innovations of terrorist organisations across the world, particularly on the jihadist movement. The successes of the 1983 Marine Barracks bombing would inspire bin Laden to engage with the strategically distinct Hezbollah to learn more about suicide capabilities. AQ would ultimately deploy this capability in the 1998 Twin Embassy bombings, the 2000 USS Cole attacks, and the 2001 assassination of Ahmed Shah Massoud. AQ's further refinement of suicide operations would culminate with the 9/11 attacks, which fused airline hijacking with suicide operations. The initial innovation, made by Hezbollah, was shared with the jihadist community in a demonstrative example of external innovation.

Ali Mohammed, who served in both US and Egyptian militaries²²⁴ and was a double agent working for the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Central Intelligence Agency, testified he had facilitated a meeting between Imad Mughniyeh and Osama bin Laden²²⁵ at the 1991 Popular Arab Islamic Congress in Sudan, resulting in broadening the relationship between Hezbollah and AQ. As detailed in the 9/11 Commission Report, 'In the fall of 1993, another such delegation went to the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon for further training in explosives as well as

²²¹ Horowitz, 'Nonstate Actors'.

²²² Manus I. Midlarsky, Martha Crenshaw and Fumihiko Yoshida, 'Why Violence Spreads: The Contagion of International Terrorism', *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1980): 262–98, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600202>; Gary LaFree, Min Xie and Aila M. Matanock, 'The Contagious Diffusion of Worldwide Terrorism: Is It Less Common Than We Might Think?' *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no. 4 (April 2018): 261–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1290428>; Brigitte L. Nacos, 'Revisiting the Contagion Hypothesis: Terrorism, News Coverage, and Copycat Attacks', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 3, no. 3 (November 2010), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/73>.

²²³ Sara M. T. Polo, 'How Terrorism Spreads: Emulation and the Diffusion of Ethnic and Ethnoreligious Terrorism', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, no. 10 (June 2020): 1916–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002720930811>.

²²⁴ 'A Profile of Ali Mohamed', Combating Terrorism Center, 1 January 2008, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/a-profile-of-ali-mohamed/>.

²²⁵ 'USA v. Ali Mohamed, Guilty Plea in US Embassy Bombings', accessed 30 December 2020, <https://cryptome.org/usa-v-mohamed.htm>.

in intelligence and security. Bin Laden reportedly showed particular interest in learning how to use truck bombs such as the one that had killed 241 US Marines in Lebanon in 1983'.²²⁶

Numerous authors²²⁷ have cited the meeting between Mughniyeh and bin Laden and the subsequent relationship between Hezbollah and AQ as integral to the adoption of suicide operations by the global jihadist movement. Horowitz, in writing specifically on the diffusion of suicide operations, stated, in reference to AQ operatives being trained by Hezbollah that:

bin Laden purportedly told his operatives to specifically study the Hezbollah suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon in 1983. His operatives went, took careful notes, and returned with the operational concepts and knowledge necessary for the 1998 embassy bombings.²²⁸

This example of how innovative concepts can transfer from, in this instance, a Shiite militant organisation such as Hezbollah to a Sunni militant organisation such as AQ can be operationalised, distinguishes between internal and external innovation. This example is a specific and direct manifestation of the diffusion of innovation between terrorist organisations and highlights both the pragmatism of terrorist organisations and the currency of effectiveness within the terrorist operational repertoire. Despite divergent strategic objectives between Hezbollah and AQ, they were able to cooperate sufficiently to share distinct capabilities. This is the most direct of mechanisms by which violent innovations can transmit across the terrorist milieu. As referenced above, authors such as Polo have written on processes such as conditional emulation, which she defines as a process whereby 'groups observe and emulate the tactical choice of others whom they perceive as similar to them and as an example for their own behavior',²²⁹ while Nacos has written on the role of mass media in informing the contagion of terrorist methods across time and space.²³⁰ Regardless of the specific mechanism by which terrorist capability transfers across organisational delineations, the process of external innovation is a crucial subtype of terrorist innovation.

²²⁶ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, ed., *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Norton, 2004), 61, <https://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>.

²²⁷ Michael C. Horowitz, 'The Rise and Spread of Suicide Bombing', *Annual Review of Political Science* 18, no. 1 (May 2015): 80; Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 2002); Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 270; Bergman, *Rise and Kill First*, 702, n. 514; Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 41; Lewis, *Business of Martyrdom*, 198.

²²⁸ Horowitz, 'Nonstate Actors', 33–34

²²⁹ Polo, 'How Terrorism Spreads', 1917.

²³⁰ Nacos, 'Revisiting the Contagion Hypothesis'.

Revolutionary Innovation

Revolutionary innovation, or innovation that fundamentally alters the tactical or targeting options of a terrorist organisation, transcends the internal–external distinction discussed above. The concept of revolutionary innovation captures the fundamental changes to terrorist capabilities or targeting options that have been predominantly shaped by technological or social developments beyond the scope and scale of the terrorist organisation specifically. One of the most influential technological developments to have impacted terrorist organisations generally, and which in many ways enabled the emergence of the phenomena itself, was the invention of dynamite. Its initial uptake by Russian anarchists and Irish Fenians has been discussed in extensive detail across a broad range of literature,²³¹ but Cronin, in particular, highlights the open technological innovation system that dynamite emerged from and diffused through. She articulates the character of these open innovation systems when she states that, ‘in open technology innovation, there is popular access to advanced lethal technologies. You do not have to be a nuclear scientist to use them. Indeed, you don’t even have to understand them, because many platforms are designed to help people experiment’.²³²

This open innovation environment underpinned the initial emergence of non-state actor usage of newly available lethal technologies and the capacity of these actors to experiment with the application of the technology. Dynamite facilitated a revolutionary shift in the balance of power between early revolutionaries, terrorists, and the state. By enabling political agitators and those who perceived themselves as representatives of the oppressed to possess the means to launch attacks against the authorities, dynamite provided the means to exert power in ways that had previously only been available to state actors.

The actions of the Fenian dynamiters and anarchist revolutionaries across Russia and Europe, and subsequently in the US, would not have been possible but for the technological development of dynamite and its ready availability to the general public. Complementing the

²³¹ Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867–1900*, 2015; Kenneth R. M. Short, *The Dynamite War: Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain* (Dublin, Ireland: Gill and Macmillan, 1979); Lindsay Clutterbuck, ‘The Progenitors of Terrorism: Russian Revolutionaries or Extreme Irish Republicans?’ *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 1 (January 2004): 154–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550490457917>; Joseph McKenna, *The Irish-American Dynamite Campaign: A History, 1881–1896* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2012); James Revill, *Improvised Explosive Devices: The Paradigmatic Weapon of New Wars* (Cham: Springer International, 2018); Brian Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858–1874* (Montréal; Ithaca, NY: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008); Shane Kenna, *War in the Shadows: The Irish-American Fenians Who Bombed Victorian Britain* (Sallins, UK: Merrion, 2014).

²³² Cronin, *Power to the People*, 13.

technical emergence of dynamite was the concomitant emergence of what was known as the *Dynamite Press*, a component of what Revill described as ‘a set of loosely connected networks of transnational extremist groups through which instruction on dynamite and bomb making was circulated, frequently alongside treatise on the justification for the use of such weapons and even poetry in praise of dynamite’.²³³

The emergence of publications such as *Dynamite Monthly* and the *Brooklyn Dynamite School*²³⁴ reflects the relative freedom by which terrorists and revolutionaries were able to not only obtain dynamite but were also able to develop an indigenous capability to manufacture and distribute explosives and the knowledge required for their use. Dynamite was one of the relatively rare instances of revolutionary innovation that had lasting and significant impacts on the capability of terrorist organisations.

While the dynamite example is unique in its substantial legacy and the enduring legacy it has had on modern terrorism, similar revolutionary technological change has had similar substantial impacts on terrorism’s arsenal of capabilities. The development of the commercial aviation industry, and the increased number of passengers travelling by air, created the opportunity for terrorists to embrace hijacking as an enduring tactic of terrorism. Hoffman cites the 1968 hijacking of El Al Flight 426 from Rome to Tel Aviv as ‘the advent of what is considered modern, international terrorism’.²³⁵ Similarly, the increasingly ubiquitous nature of social media played a central role in IS’ exploitation of these platforms to support their broad-spectrum propaganda campaign that assisted dramatically in enabling them to recruit an unprecedented number of foreign fighters to their cause in Syria and Iraq. This technology was also utilised in ways that inspired a substantial number of individuals to undertake, or attempt to undertake, lone-actor terrorist attacks across the globe. These types of social and technological innovations are exploited by terrorists rather than developed by them.

Incremental Innovation

In the absence of dedicated research and development capabilities, scientific laboratories and, in most cases, the absence of enduring infrastructure to enable the continuity of knowledge necessary to undertake conventional research or innovation, terrorist organisations tend to incrementally adjust, improve and innovate either in the field when engaged in open

²³³ Revill, *Improvised Explosive Devices*, 21.

²³⁴ Whelehan, *The Dynamiters*, 157–75.

²³⁵ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 63.

hostilities with their adversaries, or through operational planning adjustments. Incremental innovation, or the innovative application of existing tactical capabilities or innovations regarding targeting decisions, is a way that terrorist organisations frequently engage in innovation. Authors such as Hoffman have assessed terrorist organisations to be generally conservative in terms of their tactical decision-making, relying predominantly on a consistent arsenal of capabilities. He notes they can possess a ‘very limited tactical repertoire directed against a similarly narrow target set’.²³⁶ However, what is evident is that terrorist organisations make incremental changes to an existing range of capabilities and that these innovations enable terrorist organisations to adapt to the decisions and reactions of their counter forces.

To understand how this incremental innovation manifests itself, it is worth citing a number of brief examples and providing further detail on a specific case study. While the initial conceptualisation and deployment of vehicle-borne suicide operations in Lebanon in the early 1980s was clearly a substantial and deeply consequential innovation,²³⁷ it built on a longer history of using car bombs in Lebanon, with estimates suggesting some 245 car bombs exploded in Lebanon between 1975 and 1991.²³⁸ The car bomb itself has a longer history, generally recognised as dating to 1920, when ‘a bomb comprised of 100 pounds of dynamite and 500 pounds of fragmented steel window sashes, which were heavy, cast-iron slugs, exploded from a horse and cart parked on the corner of Broad and Wall Street in the heart of the financial district’.²³⁹

The innovation that Mughniyeh developed and deployed was incremental in the sense that he took an existing capability and innovated by incorporating a suicide operative into the delivery of the device, thereby substantially increasing the likelihood of successful targeting. The attacks of 9/11 can be considered similarly by acknowledging that, overwhelmingly, these were plane hijackings—a tactic whose history dates as far as 1930, when ‘men hijacked

²³⁶ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 268.

²³⁷ Davis notes in reference to the Zionist Stern Gang, ‘Stern’s followers were the first to improvise vehicle bombs as a sustained tactic, initially against the British forces, then against the Palestinian population’: Davis, *Buda’s Wagon*, 36.

²³⁸ The Atlas Group and Walid Raad, ‘My Neck is Thinner Than a Hair: A History of the Car Bomb in the Lebanese Wars of 1975 to 1991’, *Rethinking Marxism* 15, no. 3 (July 2003): 408–9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0893569032000131910>.

²³⁹ Jeffrey D. Simon, ‘The Forgotten Terrorists: Lessons from the History of Terrorism’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 2 (April 2008): 205, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550801907599>.

a Pan-American-Grace Airways (PANAGRA) F7 Trimotor mail aircraft'.²⁴⁰ Khalid Sheik Mohammed, referred to by the 9/11 Commission Report as 'the principal architect of the 9/11 attacks',²⁴¹ pitched his initial innovative idea to bin Laden in Afghanistan in mid-1996. It revolved around 'proposal for an operation that would involve training pilots who would crash planes into buildings in the United States. This proposal would eventually become the 9/11 operation'.²⁴²

As with Mughniyeh's incremental innovation that altered the static car bomb and developed the vehicle-borne suicide bomber, the 9/11 plot built on the long history of plane hijackings, both from the 1930s and in its modern incarnation since the 1968 El Al hijacking, and significantly enhanced the destructive capability of AQ by incrementally altering the tactic of plane hijacking, and by making important symbolic targeting decisions. Incremental innovation can be substantially consequential in strengthening terrorist capability and, in turn, the potential strategic effect it can impose on the adversary of the perpetrators.

Structural, Strategic and Communication Innovation

The structural, strategic and communication-oriented manifestations of innovation depart from innovation directly associated with the violence deployed by terrorists. Still, they have important consequences on the types of violence deployed, the targets of that violence and how that violence is portrayed and communicated to intended audiences. Each of these manifestations of innovation will be briefly articulated through this concluding section regarding innovation. As with the previous manifestations, brief examples will be used to demonstrate the manner in which these types of innovation have consequences for terrorist praxis.

Structural innovation, or innovations regarding organisational structure that result in changes in tactical or targeting determinations, can be substantially consequential for the capability of terrorist organisations. The strategic and organisational thought of Abu Musab al Suri, and its influence on organisations such as IS, is an ideal demonstration of how changes in organisational structure and operational authorisations can facilitate the emergence of a diversity of novel tactical innovations. Al-Suri's ideas regarding a 'system, not an

²⁴⁰ Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terror Evolves: The Emergence and Spread of Terrorist Techniques* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 2.

²⁴¹ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, 145.

²⁴² National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, 149.

organisation’²⁴³ are the predominant justification for Burke, who referred to him as ‘the strategist of greatest relevance’.²⁴⁴ Al-Suri’s innovative approach to jihadist strategy incorporated ideas related to what Bourke referred to as ‘individual terrorism’, or what has become known in counterterrorism parlance as lone-actor terrorism. His advocacy of this approach, the organisational structures as a component of a broader movement and his early identification of the utility of the internet for complementing this organisational structure and facilitating these types of operations make him a key innovator of contemporary jihadism.

Al-Suri’s ideas were a substantial influence on and widely propagated by Anwar al-Awlaki, who, through his production and distribution of *Inspire* magazine, began the overt facilitation of English-speaking jihadists and legitimised and facilitated individual jihadist terrorism. Articles detailing the construction of pressure-cooker bombs, the use of vehicles as weapons and stabbings all serve to empower and enable individuals with minimal contact or engagement with any formal terrorist organisation to undertake attacks utilising tactics that have been given the explicit imprimatur of the movement. The linkage between al-Suri’s strategic and organisational concepts and the publication of *Inspire* by AQ in the Arabian Peninsula under the editorial guidance of Awlaki and a fellow American, Samir Khan, is clear in practice. As Meleagrou-Hitchens highlights, ‘the editors ... saw their work as a direct extension and realization of al-Suri’s vision and regularly reproduced sections of his book in the pages of the magazine’.²⁴⁵

Al-Suri’s innovations enabled and underpinned the subsequent propaganda campaign launched by IS, which explicitly implemented the ideas he advocated while also incorporating and building on the work of Awlaki and *Inspire*. The mass wave of individual terrorism that swept across the Western world in response to the declaration of the Caliphate by IS and the release of Abu Mohammed al-Adnani’s *Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful*²⁴⁶ call to arms in 2014 must be understood in the context of the underlying innovative strategic, organisational and structural ideas of al-Suri.

²⁴³ Brynjar Lia, ‘Al-Suri’s Doctrines for Decentralized Jihadi Training – Part 1’, *Terrorism Monitor* 5, no. 1 (2007), <https://jamestown.org/program/al-suris-doctrines-for-decentralized-jihadi-training-part-1>

²⁴⁴ Jason Burke, *The New Threat: The Past, Present, and Future of Islamic Militancy* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2017), 164, ProQuest Central.

²⁴⁵ Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement: Anwar Al-Awlaki’s Western Jihad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 138.

²⁴⁶ Holbrook and Moore, *Al-Qaeda 2.0*, 153–69.

While elements of al-Suri's innovations can be conceived of as strategic innovation, conceptualised here as an innovation in strategic approach or strategic objective that enables new tactical or targeting opportunities, the pivot by the jihadist movement from the near to the far enemy arguably had far more fundamental consequences. It provided the grounding for the targeting of the US generally, as distinct from the previous prioritisation of regional governments across the Middle East or the 'near enemy.' As Gerges articulates, 'jihadis, who had made the fight against the near enemy a key operational priority, shifted gears and called for a new 'jihad' against the far enemy, particularly the United States and its Western allies'.²⁴⁷

This pivot took place in the mid-1990s and involved amending the existing strategic rationale for targeting local Middle Eastern governments and providing a strategic rationale for shifting focus and orienting primary military efforts to the US. As with the structural innovation identified above, this is an unconventional way to conceive of innovation in relation to terrorism. However, as a process, it had significant consequences. It demonstrated an ongoing ability of the jihadist movement specifically and terrorist organisations more generally to adapt their strategic orientation when necessary or when the opportunity presents itself. It also reinforces the importance of leadership figures as Gerges emphasises the centrality of both bin Laden and Zawahiri in driving this strategic innovation. The longer-term consequences of this strategic reorientation are evidenced in the attacks on US interests over the late 1990s and culminated with the attacks on 9/11.

The final manifestation of innovation in the context of terrorism is communications innovation or innovation in relation to the framing or presentation of terrorist violence. This type of innovation can manifest itself in a diversity of ways, through either the exploitation of new mediums of communication, the construction and deployment of new messaging or types of content or through the innovative framing of particular terrorist actions or messages. The development, refinement and frequent deployment of so-called beheading videos by IS is a useful example of how this type of innovation can manifest itself and cause strategic effect.

As discussed in Chapter One, the consolidation of beheading videos as a discrete form of terrorist propaganda was crystalised through the release of the *Message to America* video in 2014. The release of this and multiple subsequent beheading videos by IS explicitly, but also

²⁴⁷ Gerges, *Far Enemy*, 14.

by other jihadist terrorist organisations,²⁴⁸ evidences how an ancient form of violence, framed in a highly calibrated manner and distributed through innovative practices, can cause strategic effect. This form of innovation overlaps most explicitly with the other elements of the framework as it relies on both the incorporation of substantial communications and narrative consideration and the exploitation of emergent information and communications technology. The innovation itself, the beheading video as a product unto itself, demonstrates the integration referred to earlier. The beheading video as a form of innovative violence does not rely exclusively on an innovative terrorist tactic or an innovative form of technology in terms of its violence but rather packages an ancient form of violence innovatively. The product itself is innovative, even though it concurrently relies on emergent information and communications technology.

Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

Since its modern inception in the mid-1800s terrorism, has been conceived by its perpetrators as a form of communication, designed to propagate an ideological or political proposition that was otherwise unable to obtain sufficient exposure or penetration to be consumed by the target audience. The frustrations of the earliest philosophers and strategists of ‘propaganda of the deed’ compelled them to deploy violence as an explicit effort to demand the attention of the press, the public, and the political apparatus, in hopes of mobilising the broader community towards revolution, or at least to propagate the ideas and justifications for revolution. Terrorism is thus an inherently communicative action, and the achievement of strategic effect through terrorism requires an intrinsic appreciation and consideration of this dynamic and its incorporation into the operational planning and design of terrorism actions and campaigns. In a contemporary context, senior terrorist leaders such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, the current AQ leader, explicitly expressed the centrality of communication and media to the struggle in which his organisation remains engaged. In 2005, during the emergence of the initial manifestation of what ultimately became IS, he wrote to the then-leader of AQ in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. He stated, ‘I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media’.²⁴⁹ Further evidence of the centrality of media and communications strategies at the core of terrorist

²⁴⁸ Beheading videos are by no means exclusively deployed by jihadist organisations. However, through their highly calibrated release and their demonstration of the strategic potential of these propaganda forms, they have become overwhelmingly associated with jihadist groups.

²⁴⁹ Ayman Zawahiri, ‘Zawahiri’s Letter to Zarqawi’, Combating Terrorism Center, accessed 2 January 2021, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/harmony-program/zawahiris-letter-to-zarqawi-original-language-2/>.

considerations is found in the comments of Abu Daoud, considered by many the mastermind of the 1972 Munich Massacre perpetrated by the Black September faction of Fatah. In speaking with journalists at the time of the release of the 2006 Steven Spielberg film *Munich*, it declared:

There was nothing we weren't prepared to do to keep the Palestinian cause in the public eye. Before Munich, we were simply terrorists. After Munich, at least people started asking who are these terrorists? What do they want? Before Munich, nobody had the slightest idea about Palestine ... People were more interested in sports than in the plight of the Palestinians ... In one sense, we succeeded in Munich: we forced our cause on to the television screens of 500 million households.²⁵⁰

The following section will expand in some detail this element of the framework with an articulation of how communicative and narrative considerations manifest themselves in tactical and targeting decision-making before providing a brief analysis of the necessary role that narrative establishment and narrative reinforcement plays in the ongoing efforts of terrorist organisations to achieve strategic impact. These two aspects of the element are crucial to the operational considerations of terrorist praxis and are essential to any capacity of terrorism to achieve strategic effect.

Importantly, this section will distinguish between the messaging components and the mediums through which these messages are delivered, which is dealt with more explicitly in the third element of the framework. The focus here is on the communication embedded within the violent acts that constitute terrorism and the propaganda production by terrorist organisations, rather than on the exploitation of a specific information and communication technology. While these elements are deeply interrelated, in that certain technologies enable different and specific forms of communication and more or less direct communications with different audiences, the consideration here is oriented towards recognising the importance of communicative and narrative dynamics in the conceptualisation of terrorism and how this is essential for achieving strategic effect.

As identified in the survey of the strategic literature and the communications literature, analysis of terrorism has long recognised the importance of the theatrical aspect²⁵¹ and the associated performative nature of the violence. The first and most direct way to understand the importance and centrality of this element of terrorism is by recognising the indirect nature

²⁵⁰ Michael Bar-Zohar and Eitan Haber, *Massacre in Munich: The Manhunt for the Killers behind the 1972 Olympics Massacre* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2005).

²⁵¹ Jenkins, 'International Terrorism'; Weimann and Winn, *The Theater of Terror*.

of terrorist violence and the broader family of asymmetric violence. Arreguin-Toft articulates the distinction between direct and indirect strategies succinctly; he states, ‘direct approaches target an adversary’s armed forces in order to destroy that adversary’s capacity to fight. Indirect approaches seek to destroy an adversary’s will to fight’.²⁵²

In targeting an adversary’s ‘will fight’, terrorism necessarily constitutes an indirect or asymmetric strategy that, rather than confronting an adversary directly using comparable military capabilities, seeks to influence the willingness of an adversary or its supporting constituencies to continue to resist the objectives of the terrorist organisation. This necessarily requires a component of effort that focuses on the mindset of the target and thus requires consideration of the communicative dynamics associated with or embedded within any violence undertaken.

Both Schmid²⁵³ and Ganor²⁵⁴ conceive terrorism as a manifestation of psychological warfare, reinforcing the necessary influence and persuasion aspects of terrorism. For terrorism to be capable of influencing and persuading audiences, it is necessary that appropriate consideration of the performative aspects of terrorist actions be given. This can be analysed by distinguishing between the aspects of terrorism that are under the control of the perpetrator, such as target selection and choice of tactic, and those that are dependent on the audiences and targets of terrorism. This dynamic relationship between the intended effects of terrorism and its impact on its target audience is essential to determining whether strategic effect can be achieved. Ganor provides an excellent articulation of the core logic of this element of terrorist calculus:

Modern terrorist attacks are perpetrated to achieve a resounding media echo in order to reach public opinion. The attack usually causes limited physical damage in international terms (e.g., in comparison to the physical and property damage caused in traffic accidents). Yet, its explosive echo grows in volume as it is amplified by the media; the message conveyed by the attack is sharpened and magnified. A terrorist attack is intended to influence public opinion. Its message is really a combination of three different messages aimed at three different audiences: the

²⁵² Ivan Arreguin-Toft, ‘How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict’, *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 93–128, <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228801753212868>.

²⁵³ Alex P. Schmid, ‘Terrorism as Psychological Warfare’, *Democracy and Security* 1, no. 2 (July 2005): 137–46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419160500322467>.

²⁵⁴ Boaz Ganor, ‘Terrorism as a Strategy of Psychological Warfare’, *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 9, no. 1–2 (April 2004): 33–43, https://doi.org/10.1300/J146v09n01_03.

people whom the terrorists claim to represent, the targeted population, and lastly, the international community.²⁵⁵

To understand how communicative and narrative dynamics manifest in the context of terrorism, it is useful to delineate between propaganda in the strict sense and propaganda of the deed or violent terrorist actions designed to achieve propagandistic effects. Terrorist organisations seek to maintain the production and distribution of both types of outputs. However, it is possible to distinguish, for example, between ideological or philosophical tracts that advocate the political or religious justifications for terrorist violence²⁵⁶ and indigenously produced videos of terrorist actions or news coverage of terrorist incidents. The former reflects a traditional understanding of propaganda, whereas the latter is propaganda of the deed—an explicit attempt to exploit calibrated violence for propagandistic effects.

It is appropriate here to articulate what is meant by communicative and narrative dynamics. For the purposes of the framework being developed, communicative and narrative dynamics is defined as *the intentional embedding of ideology, through either explicit or symbolic components, into the conceptualisation and production of either conventional propaganda or terrorist actions undertaken for propagandistic effect*. The 2014 *Message to America* video released by IS provides an ideal demonstration of how this is undertaken and how it can achieve strategic effect when undertaken in a refined and sophisticated manner. As discussed in Chapter One, the incorporation of numerous symbolic components into the video greatly strengthened its capacity to achieve the type of strategic effect it did. Dressing the victim in an orange jumpsuit and the English accent of the perpetrator served to enable a global spectacle, described by Friis in the following:

During the autumn of 2014, screen-grabs from a number of beheading videos, produced by al-Furqān Media, were shown repeatedly across various media platforms, establishing the images of the kneeling, orange-clad hostages next to the black-clad executioner ‘Jihadi John’ as ‘instant icons’ and almost unavoidable topics in public debates about contemporary security threats.²⁵⁷

The role of traditional propaganda in the context of terrorism is somewhat under analysed in part due to an ongoing, albeit understandable, essentialisation of the violent component of

²⁵⁵ Ganor, ‘Terrorism as a Strategy of Psychological Warfare’, 35.

²⁵⁶ See, e.g., Sayyid Qutb’s *Milestones*, William Pierce’s *The Turner Diaries*, or the Weather Underground’s *You Don’t Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows*.

²⁵⁷ Simone Molin Friis, ‘“Behead, Burn, Crucify, Crush”: Theorizing the Islamic State’s Public Displays of Violence’, *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 2 (June 2017): 245, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066117714416>.

terrorism. This is not to suggest that the nonviolent propaganda outputs of terrorist organisations are unimportant. The broader body of nonviolent propaganda produced by terrorist organisations plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining context and in creating and reinforcing narratives that further contextualise the violence of terrorist actions. This contextualisation and narrative development empower terrorist violence, providing it with meaning and power. In the absence of narrative context, terrorist actions have only limited capacity to communicate the ideological propositions in support of which they are undertaken and lack any meaningful capacity to reach their desired audiences in meaningful ways.

A sustained communications campaign is required to establish and maintain this narrative context for violence. In the first instance, a terrorist organisation and its broader social movement must establish the basic parameters of their grievance and, by extension, the justification for their violence. In doing this, it is also necessary for the violence itself, particularly as an extension of its innovative character, to be understood by the relevant audiences and begin establishing itself as a component of the known world. Verhoeven makes a crucial point in this regard when she discusses the first attempt on the life of the Russian Tsar by Dmitry Karakozov on 4 April 1866, some 15 years prior to his successful assassination by Narodnaya Volya in 1881. In discussing what she refers to as the ‘prologue of terrorism’, she states:

The following, for example, has always seemed strange: Narodnaia Volia’s terrorism shocked everyone, of course, but it surprised no one. Bizarre, to say the least, that a radically new political phenomenon can come into being, yet immediately seem not only intelligible, but even self-evident. So self-evident, in fact, that within a year, Dostoevsky could suggest to his editor, apropos of what he had in store for his pure Alyosha Karamazov, that for anyone seeking the truth in modern Russia, the path from religion to revolutionary terrorism was natural. In short, contemporaries—Narodovoltsy themselves included—reacted to the emergence of terrorism as if the idea of terrorism had already been there. And this is precisely the point: the idea had already been there—ever since 1866, when Karakozov first shot at the tsar.²⁵⁸

What Karakozov and other revolutionaries during the period until 1881 had achieved, through multiple assassination attempts, the distribution of conventional propaganda and the other various outreach efforts of the broader revolutionary movement, was to make the

²⁵⁸ Claudia Verhoeven and Dmitrij V. Karakozov, *The Odd Man Karakozov: Imperial Russia, Modernity, and the Birth of Terrorism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 5.

actions of Narodnaya Volya coherent and understandable to the public and the various specific audiences they sought to influence. In the process, these activities created and refined a narrative that meant that the ultimate actions of Narodnaya Volya were perceived ‘as if the idea had already been there’.

A similar narrative contextualisation can be seen in the individual terrorism campaign promoted by IS from 2014 onwards. This specific campaign, primarily targeted at potential Western operatives, encouraged individuals to undertake low capability terrorist attacks using unsophisticated and readily available weaponry such as stabbings and vehicle ramming. While embedded within the broader, well-established jihadist narrative and the general IS narrative, this campaign celebrated lone-actor terrorism, promoted specific tactics and targets and provided strategic and theological endorsement of the activities. In doing so, these attacks relied on the established narrative that an act that involved these specific forms of violence would be likely interpreted as an act of terrorism in a Western jurisdiction. Since at least 2001, the establishment and reinforcement of a narrative surrounding jihadist terrorism through media coverage and popular culture has enabled organisations like IS to deploy rudimentary manifestations of violence and contextualise and embed meaning in them by exploiting an established narrative. In doing so, they can achieve a grossly disproportionate effect on their adversaries.

Distinct from the communicative dynamics articulated above, the narrative dynamics of a terrorist action refers to *the conceptualisation and production of terrorist propaganda or terrorist actions undertaken for propagandistic effect, with the intention of establishing or reinforcing an ideologically informed narrative context*. This process enables potential recruits, the public (usually consuming mediated representations of these actions) and governments to interpret and understand the purpose of the actions, the meaning embedded within, and subsequently shape and inform their responses with these narratives. It is important to recognise the limitations of the communicative dynamic’s aspect of the element. Archetti has referred to the fact that ‘messages are not simply transmitted, but they are constantly reinterpreted’.²⁵⁹ Audiences retain substantial agency in their interpretation of the communicative and narrative dynamics of terrorist actions. The focus here is primarily on how terrorist organisations conceive and deploy these efforts and how these can achieve strategic effects. While it is necessary to acknowledge that audiences can interpret these in

²⁵⁹ Archetti, *Understanding Terrorism in the Age of Global Media*.

various ways, this element of the framework focuses on the need for terrorism to ensure that these efforts are undertaken, distinct from how they may be understood.

Emerging Information and Communications Technology

This element of the framework is, in some senses, the most straightforward to appreciate and identify. However, ensuring that its articulation encapsulates all the relevant components requires a degree of specificity. At its core, this element of the framework refers to *the exploitation of emergent forms of information and communication technology that have sufficiently diffused to have shaped and informed the relevant cultural and social practices associated with them*. Understanding the importance of the cultural and social practices and norms that develop as a function of the evolution of information and communications technology is essential to understanding how integral these technologies are to terrorism and its capacity to achieve strategic effect.

This element draws substantially on the definition of technology by van Creveld highlighted in Chapter One.²⁶⁰ In the introduction to his work on technology and war, van Creveld referred to the assumption that ‘behind military hardware there is hardware in general, and behind that again there is technology as a certain kind of knowhow, as a way of looking at the world and coping with its problems’.²⁶¹

Inverting van Creveld’s articulation, it is possible to identify the way technology also shapes and informs a ‘certain kind of knowhow’ and ‘a way of looking at the world’ that can be conceived as the cultural and social practices associated with technology. This broader perspective informs the final element of the framework. This refers, for example, to the emergence of the newspaper industry and the associated commercialisation and industrialisation of the print media, how this drove the expansion of literacy, and, in turn, the emergence of the production and consumption of popular literature. As discussed in the preceding chapters, Russian anarchist terrorism and the subsequent European and American manifestations of anarchist terrorism depended extensively on not just the industrialisation of the printing press but on the emergence of a news industry to recount their actions, on affordable printing technologies and the growth in literacy to spread their ideology and associated manuals and operational knowledge. As Patyk states in her contribution to the

²⁶⁰ van Creveld, *Technology and War*.

²⁶¹ van Creveld, *Technology and War*, 1.

Routledge History of Terrorism, ‘literary and popular fiction have participated in the mediatization that is said to be the hallmark of modern terrorism’.²⁶² This broad body of public cultural practice is reflected in the approach of terrorists towards their actions that they are then equally dependent upon for the successful comprehension of their ideologically embedded violence.

At each stage of the various modern information and communications technology transformations, cultural practices, including war in general and terrorism and other asymmetric strategies, have been directly and indirectly impacted. In the direct sense, new information and communications technologies have enabled a variety of innovations in command and control and the production and distribution of propaganda in support of either the war efforts of states or the resistance efforts of terrorists and insurgents. Terrorists and those lacking the military means to directly confront their adversaries have been required to embrace new information and communications technologies as part of their efforts to indirectly affect them or exploit these technologies to seek to shape the perception of the conflict or the actors and their legitimacy. These efforts have depended as much on the commercialisation of those technologies and their eventual diffusion and dominance of news consumption practices as it has with the adoption and exploitation of them by terrorists and others.

The exploitation of information and communication technologies has also been a cumulative practice inasmuch as it has resulted in the addition of emerging technologies to the arsenal of terrorists rather than wholesale substitution. Terrorists retain effective technological capabilities rather than reject them when a new platform emerges. In this sense, terrorist organisations tend to exploit newer technologies by, in part, incorporating them into their existing technological repertoire. This means potentially distributing content designed for a previously dominant technology through new technological platforms or capabilities. As an example, Baele identifies that:

Since its origins in Iraq under the leadership of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and throughout its subsequent avatars, IS has developed a sophisticated and exceptionally extensive propaganda system inherently linked to its actions; it has disseminated photographs; published magazines in several languages, as well as newspapers, books, and pamphlets; recorded music and speeches; broadcasted radio programs; produced short and long videos; designed infographics; created and

²⁶² Lynn Patyk, ‘The Age of Terrorism in the Age of Literature’, in Randall D. Law, *The Routledge History of Terrorism* (Routledge, 2019).

alimented closed discussion spaces on the Internet; stimulated social media activity; organized permanent and temporary ‘information’ points in controlled territory; and developed smart-phone applications and even educational e-games for children.²⁶³

Crucial to the determination to consider a particular technology as worthy of consideration as a distribution channel and as an extension of the aforementioned social and cultural practices is an assessment as to sufficient diffusion of that technology. In this sense, said technology necessarily needs to have become a predominant platform for the target audiences of the terrorist propaganda or the terrorist action and its mediated representation. As terrorism has evolved, achieving narrative dominance or, at the very least, narrative disruption has required more than simply producing content for and distributing via appropriate platforms. Rather, the content and the communicative and narrative dynamics must be highly calibrated to ensure a level of coerced coverage by news outlets. Incidents such as 9/11 and ‘products’ such as the *Message to America* video successfully achieved this in a manner commensurate with the technologies available at the time. The assassination of Tsar Alexander II on 1 March 1881, while lacking the live coverage dynamics of 9/11 or the 24-hour response time from the target government that the James Foley video elicited, succeeded in gaining global coverage in the dominant print media of the day. By 14 March, the otherwise obscure and irrelevant West Virginian newspaper, *The Wheeling Intelligencer*, was reporting on the assassination of the Tsar.²⁶⁴

Integration

Essential to the achievement of strategic effect through the above-identified elements is the integration of each element and the proper calibration of any and all actions undertaken by a terrorist organisation to ensure that each element is given proper consideration. In doing so, it is equally vital that an appreciation of the manner in which the action will be perceived and represented is given due thought. This aspect of the framework, while less explicit than the three primary elements, is a crucial variable in ensuring the effectiveness of terrorist action.

Integration, in this context, relates to the need to consider all three elements of the framework: as independent variables and in the manner in which they complement and

²⁶³ Stephane Baele ‘Appraising the IS moment in propaganda history’, in *ISIS Propaganda: A Full-Spectrum Extremist Message*, ed. Stephane Baele, Katharine A. Boyd and Travis G. Coan (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).

²⁶⁴ “The Murdered Czar,” *The Wheeling Intelligencer*, March 14, 1881, https://www.rarenewspapers.com/view/594948?list_url=%2Flist%2Fnovices%3Fpage%3D22.

exploit each other. Again, the *Message to America* video is instructive. The violence itself, namely the beheading, was a crucial component of the overall effectiveness of the release, which the US Deputy National Security Advisor referred to as a ‘terrorist attack’.²⁶⁵ However, the power and strategic impact of the video was dependent on the further calibration of the entire ‘product’ that was the video, in empowering an ancient form of violence and transforming it into an innovative and highly calibrated act. In this sense, the communicative and narrative dynamics of the video were unambiguously calibrated to speak to numerous audiences.

The act of the beheading itself communicated to those sympathetic audiences familiar with the longer history of beheading videos within jihadist discourse, dating to the earliest Chechnyan outputs²⁶⁶ and explicitly referencing *Sheikh Abu Musab Zarqawi Slays an American infidel*,²⁶⁷ the 2004 beheading video of Nicholas Berg, made globally available online via an ‘Ansar Al-Islam web site’.²⁶⁸ The video was contextualised within an existing narrative, which enhanced its capacity for interpretation by those audiences. Further, the gruesome nature of the violence was designed to demand media attention from Western audiences and media outlets. The victim was adorned in an orange jumpsuit, a direct reference to the uniforms of those held at Guantanamo Bay. The lead role of Mohammed Emwazi, or *Jihadi John* as he was dubbed in the Western media, with his ‘distinct and confident London street accent’,²⁶⁹ served to further strengthen the power of the video release and communicate the globality of IS and its appeal. By directly contextualising the action within existing Western political discourse, the violence, itself already powerful in its brutality, became both interpretable and contextualised within existing narratives of resistance regarding the ‘previous’ Iraq War, the conflict in Syria and the expansion of IS. By situating the beheading within a broader context that referenced not only excesses such as Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay but also previous beheadings such as those of Nicholas Berg and Daniel Pearl, the impact and effectiveness of the product was further strengthened. Last, the video’s distribution format was equally instrumental in enabling strategic effect.

²⁶⁵ White House Office of the Press Secretary, ‘Press Briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz and Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes, 8/22/2014’, [whitehouse.gov](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/22/press-briefing-principal-deputy-press-secretary-eric-schultz-and-deputy-), last modified 22 August 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/22/press-briefing-principal-deputy-press-secretary-eric-schultz-and-deputy->.

²⁶⁶ Ariel Koch, ‘Jihadi Beheading Videos and Their Non-Jihadi Echoes’, *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 3 (2018): 24–34.

²⁶⁷ Napoleoni claims this video was ‘broadcast live on the Internet’: Loretta Napoleoni, *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the New Generation* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2014), 19.

²⁶⁸ Jean-Charles Brisard, *Zarqawi: The New Face of Al-Qaeda* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005), 131.

²⁶⁹ Robert Verkaik, *Jihadi John: The Making of a Terrorist* (London: Oneworld, 2016), 97.

Initially distributed via the social networking platform Diaspora,²⁷⁰ *Message to America's* global reach and impact were shaped as much by its content as by its distribution and the mechanism by which IS exploited emergent technologies²⁷¹ and, in turn, existing mass media. Reflecting the penetrative capacity of highly calibrated and choreographed violent content such as *Message to America*, Redmond et al. have noted that even though most 'news organizations made the decision to shield viewers from the gruesomeness of the video by sharing only screen grabs, [this] may have paradoxically increased interest in the video'.²⁷² Regardless of censoring the reproduction and rebroadcasting of the explicit content, institutionalised media outlets were necessarily forced to 'quote the "Islamic State" as a valid source of information is a requisite step in ISIL's larger strategy of imposing and communicating its political and religious agenda on and through global media institutions, and ultimately, world governments'.²⁷³

Only when all three of these elements are integrated within a specific terrorist act is the potential for strategic effect maximised. The presence of a strategy underpinning the deployment of these types of choreographed acts further supports the proposition that there is, explicitly or otherwise, strategic calculus and strategic intent by terrorist actors. In the case of the IS, by 2016, it was publishing and distributing specific media strategies and exhorting its supporters and operatives that 'the media jihad against the enemy is no less important than the material fight against it. Moreover, your media efforts are considered to be among the many great forms of the rite of jihad'.²⁷⁴

At their most hyperbolic, they went as far as to state, 'it is no exaggeration to say that the media operative is an *istishhadi* [suicide bomber] without a belt'!²⁷⁵ Sella writes in terms that capture the enhanced and disproportionate impacts that a highly calibrated output such as *Message to America* can achieve. The product itself, with its careful selection of violent methods, choreographed communicative and narrative signifiers and effective distribution to

²⁷⁰ Noting that the subsequent video of the beheading of Steven Sotloff was distributed via the Russian social networking platform VKontakte (VK): Friis, 'Beyond Anything We Have Ever Seen', 725.

²⁷¹ Friis notes analysed both still images and video content of over 100 individuals being beheaded between August and December of 2014, shared on platforms such as 'LiveLeak, YouTube, BareNakedIslam and Syrian Fight': Friis, 'Beyond Anything We Have Ever Seen', 732.

²⁷² Sarah Redmond et al., 'Who Watches an ISIS Beheading—And Why', *American Psychologist* 74, no. 5 (July 2019): 557, <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000438>.

²⁷³ Andrew Barr and Alexandra Herfroy-Mischler, 'ISIL's Execution Videos: Audience Segmentation and Terrorist Communication in the Digital Age', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no. 12 (December 2018): 957, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1361282>.

²⁷⁴ Ingram, Whiteside and Winter, *The ISIS Reader*, 216.

²⁷⁵ Ingram, Whiteside and Winter, *The ISIS Reader*, 218.

multiple audiences, ensured that within less than 24 hours, the US President held a press conference. Within months, airstrikes were being launched in Syria and Iraq. Sella eloquently captured the penetrative power of *Message to America* in writing, ‘but virtually no one, anywhere on the political spectrum, denies that the James Foley video changed everything. The beheading seared into our minds, led us to dark rooms of our national psyche, rooms that are better left bricked over. And a picture is worth a thousand troops.’²⁷⁶

The next chapter provides an overview of the research method adopted within this dissertation, as well as articulating the approach adopted for the case selection. After a discussion of paradigmatic case selection, it proceeds to explain how three selected cases constitute instances of paradigmatic instances of terrorism.

²⁷⁶ Marshall Sella, ‘How ISIS Went Viral’, *Matter* (blog), 11 March 2015, <https://medium.com/matter/the-making-of-the-worlds-most-effective-terrorist-brand-92620f91bc9d>.

Chapter Four: Method and Case Study Selection

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology utilised in addressing the research question of this dissertation. It briefly addresses the underlying research paradigm that informs the overall approach before outlining the reasons for adopting the case study method more generally. It also acknowledges some limitations, shortcomings and critiques of case study methods in social science research. It then articulates the justifications for the more specific adoption of the structured, focused comparison method, as advocated by George and Bennett.²⁷⁷ Following the outline of the adopted research method, this chapter then proceeds to justify the case selection and the reasoning for these determinations. It expands substantially on the brief reasons provided above and argues why each of the three cases constitutes paradigmatic manifestations of terrorism, thus warranting selection regarding the application of the conceptual framework while acknowledging the inherently contested nature of determining paradigmatic case status in case study research.

Research Paradigm

Before addressing the specific methods-focused component of this chapter, it is appropriate to briefly discuss the question of the underpinning paradigm or worldview that informs the dissertation. In the fourth edition of his *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, Creswell and Poth note that paradigms or worldviews have been referred to as ‘philosophical assumptions, epistemologies, and ontologies; broadly conceived research methodologies; and alternative knowledge claims’.²⁷⁸ They constitute ‘beliefs about ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified), axiology (the role of values in research), and methodology (the process of research)’.²⁷⁹

This dissertation is anchored in a pragmatist paradigm or worldview. Creswell describes the pragmatist interpretive framework²⁸⁰ as possessing a ‘focus on the outcomes of the research—the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry’²⁸¹ and ‘instead of a focus on methods, the important aspect of research is the problem being studied and the questions

²⁷⁷ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*.

²⁷⁸ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2018), 49.

²⁷⁹ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 49.

²⁸⁰ Creswell’s preferred term for paradigms or worldviews.

²⁸¹ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 53.

asked about this problem.’²⁸² Creswell further highlighted a number of core characteristics of the pragmatic interpretive framework. He summarised the overall perspective succinctly in noting:

the individual using this worldview will use multiple methods of data collection to best answer the research question, will employ multiple sources of data collection, will focus on the practical implications of the research, and will emphasize the importance of conducting research that best addresses the research problem.²⁸³

Creswell summarised his section on paradigms in tabular form. Concerning the pragmatic approach, he noted that its possible researcher goals constitute ‘to find solutions to real-world problems’; that potential researcher influences include an ‘appreciation for diverse approaches to collecting and analyzing and the contexts in which research takes place’; and that examples of researcher practices include ‘the most appropriate methods for addressing the research question’.²⁸⁴

Given the implied orientation of much of orthodox terrorism studies, the operational and policy orientation of the field, and this dissertation, a flexible, practical and outcome-oriented paradigm is entirely appropriate. Further, there is substantial value in focusing the research on ensuring the methods are appropriate, rather than having methods rigidly determined by adherence to a particular predetermined paradigm. The broader aperture that the pragmatic paradigm enables provides an additional level of suitability for this research, given the macro-level of analysis undertaken.

Case Study Methods

In the words of Gerring, case study methods are the ‘workhorse of most disciplines and subfields in the social sciences.’ Further, the use of case studies has been noted as being ‘solidly ensconced, perhaps even thriving’²⁸⁵ within the social sciences. Beyond the case study method as central to contemporary social science research, the justifications and benefits regarding its use in this dissertation are numerous. It is useful, however, before articulating the reasons for the adoption of case study methods, to note that Creswell and Poth conceive case study research as:

²⁸² Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 53.

²⁸³ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 54.

²⁸⁴ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 58.

²⁸⁵ John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.

a methodology: a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study as well as a product of the inquiry. Case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. The unit of analysis in the case study might be multiple cases (a multisite study) or a single case (a within-site study).²⁸⁶

They note in their comments prior to the above definition that case study methods have been contested as a method. This ambiguity about the case study method's legitimacy is further noted in Gerring's 2006 work, when he notes, 'apparently, the methodological status of the case study is still highly suspect. Even among its defenders there is confusion over the virtues and vices of this ambiguous research design ... The case study survives in a curious methodological limbo'.²⁸⁷

Despite an expansive methods literature detailing the practice of case study research and its prevalence within the social sciences, it remains the seemingly lesser cousin of more highly regarded, if not necessarily any more rigorous, research methods. In this regard, Flyvbjerg's²⁸⁸ 2006 article in *Qualitative Inquiry* is instructive. Flyvbjerg identifies five misunderstandings that have persisted in the case study research literature and seeks to provide counter-arguments to the 'conventional wisdom', that he notes is often 'so oversimplified as to be grossly misleading'.²⁸⁹ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully interrogate the various arguments put forward by Flyvbjerg, other than to endorse them and in particular the following remarks from the conclusion of his article. He notes that 'the case study is a necessary and sufficient method for certain important research tasks in the

²⁸⁶ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 103.

²⁸⁷ Gerring, *Case Study Research*, 7.

²⁸⁸ These five misunderstandings are: Misunderstanding 1: General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge; Misunderstanding 2: One cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development; Misunderstanding 3: The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, in the first stage of a total research process, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; Misunderstanding 4: The case study contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions; Misunderstanding 5: It is often difficult to summarise and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies. Bent Flyvbjerg, 'Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research', *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (April 2006): 221, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363>.

²⁸⁹ Flyvbjerg, 'Five Misunderstandings', 220.

social sciences, and it is a method that holds up well when compared to other methods in the gamut of social science research methodology'.²⁹⁰

This dissertation, the topic under consideration and the research question being addressed lend themselves to case study methods for reasons effectively articulated by Yin, who stated that '“how” and “why” questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to case studies ... as the preferred research method[s]'.²⁹¹ Yin furthered, 'if you focused on the “why” question in more than one terrorist act, you would probably be doing a multiple-case study'.²⁹² It is worth restating here that the central research question of this dissertation is *how does terrorism achieve strategic effect* and that Yin emphasises the appropriateness of case studies for research questions that include 'how'. More explicitly, Bartlett and Vavrus argue that the case study method, or more specifically their comparative case study approach, is ideal for studies that 'consider how social actors, with diverse motives, intentions, and levels of influence, work in tandem with and/or in response to social forces to routinely produce the social and cultural worlds in which they live'.²⁹³

Researching terrorism (undertaken by social actors), especially from the broader, macro perspective being taken here, is well disposed to research methods that can consider a variety of motivational drivers and the relationships existing between environments, contexts (social and cultural worlds) and the actions of individuals and organisations. Bartlett and Vavrus' approach also advocated for 'horizontal comparison'²⁹⁴ of cases. They further explained this as a process whereby comparison or analysis seeks to 'compare the way that similar phenomena unfold in distinct, socially-produced locations that are connected in multiple and complex ways'.²⁹⁵ Given the intentionally diverse and distinct case studies utilised in this dissertation, adopting a research method that facilitates analysis of 'similar phenomena' is necessary. Case study research methods enable the focused consideration of the distinct and diverse case studies utilised herein and enable consideration of the shared characteristics of those cases. This research, in seeking to demonstrate an enduring nature to terrorism across multiple and distinct cases while also demonstrating they possess unique, contextually

²⁹⁰ Flyvbjerg, 'Five Misunderstandings', 241.

²⁹¹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th ed., Applied Social Research Methods, vol. 5 (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2009), 27.

²⁹² Yin, *Case Study Research*, 10.

²⁹³ Note the authors propose three approaches: horizontal comparison, vertical comparison and transversal. Lesley Bartlett and Frances Vavrus, *Rethinking Case Study Research: A Comparative Approach* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016), 52.

²⁹⁴ Bartlett and Vavrus, *Rethinking Case Study Research*, 52.

²⁹⁵ Bartlett and Vavrus, *Rethinking Case Study Research*.

determined characteristics as a manifestation of their ‘distinct socially-produced locations’, case study methods are ideally suited, particularly small-*n* case study methods. The comparative approach discussed by Bartlett and Varvuz is substantially similar to that of the seminal work of George and Bennett, whose *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* has been influential in the research design of this dissertation.

The selection of a case study approach is also informed by the frequent use of case study analysis within the field of terrorism studies specifically. As Hamm and Spaaij noted in their contribution to *The Handbook of the Criminology of Terrorism*, ‘the most commonly used method in qualitative research on terrorism is the case study,’ which ‘has the capacity to analyze in depth a small number of cases’.²⁹⁶

Either singular case studies²⁹⁷ or multiple case study analyses²⁹⁸ have been frequently deployed, dominating the literature. Additionally, most of the highly regarded history of terrorism²⁹⁹ literature utilises case study approaches. These case study approaches range across various levels of analysis and include publications focused on individuals,³⁰⁰ organisations,³⁰¹ countries and regions.³⁰² Beyond the terrorism-focused literature, a number of important works that have sought to explain how weak actors can succeed in campaigns against stronger enemies have also used case study methods. Arreguin-Toft’s, *How the Weak Win Wars*³⁰³ and Merom’s, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*³⁰⁴ made valuable

²⁹⁶ Mark S. Hamm & Ramón Spaaij, ‘Paradigmatic Case Studies and Prison Ethnography: Future Directions in Terrorism Research’, in *The Handbook of the Criminology of Terrorism*, ed. Gary LaFree and Joshua D. Freilich (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 207, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118923986>.

²⁹⁷ For example, Pape, *Dying to Win*; Gerges, *Far Enemy*; Whelehan, *The Dynamiters*.

²⁹⁸ For example, Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5hhm51>; Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*; Shapiro, *The Terrorist’s Dilemma*; English, *Does Terrorism Work?*

²⁹⁹ For example, Chaliand and Blin, *History of Terrorism*; Carr, *The Infernal Machine*; Law, *Terrorism*; Michael Burleigh, *Blood and Rage: A Cultural History of Terrorism*, rev. ed. (London: Harper Perennial, 2009).

³⁰⁰ Peter Bergen, *The Rise and Fall of Osama Bin Laden*, 2021; Brisard, *Zarqawi*; Muntasir Al-Zayyat, *The Road to Al-Qaeda: The Story of bin Laden’s Right-Hand Man*, ed., Sara Nimis, trans. Ahmed Fekry (London: Pluto Press, 2004), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10479734>; Thomas Hegghammer, *The Caravan: Abdallah Azzam and the Rise of Global Jihad* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1017/91139049375>.

³⁰¹ Stephen Tankel, *Storming the World Stage: The Story of Lashkar-e-Taiba* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), ProQuest Central; J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA*, rev. 3rd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997); Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: Macmillan, 2003); Levitt, *Hezbollah*.

³⁰² Mark Ensalaco, *Middle Eastern Terrorism: From Black September to September 11* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Julie Chernov-Hwang, *Why Terrorists Quit: The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018); Anthony Anemone, *Just Assassins: The Culture of Terrorism in Russia* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv43vsd6>.

³⁰³ Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

contributions to the literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency. They further demonstrated the frequency of use and the utility of case study methods for developing and testing theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Structured, Focused Comparison

The adoption of case study methods for this dissertation is informed by George and Bennett's structured, focused comparison approach.³⁰⁵ Reflecting the pragmatic paradigm that informs the research method, George and Bennett stated explicitly:

The method and logic of structured, focused comparison is simple and straightforward. The method is 'structured' in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings in cases possible. The method is 'focused' in that it deals with only in certain aspects of the historical cases examined.³⁰⁶

The conceptual framework provides the necessary structure for the cases under analysis within this dissertation. The analysis is, by extension, focused on the specific elements of the framework present in the cases. George and Bennett further note that the method of structured, focused comparison seeks to 'draw the explanations of each case of a particular phenomenon into a broader, more complex theory'.³⁰⁷ As this dissertation seeks to demonstrate the utility of a conceptual framework in explaining a specific phenomenon manifested in three paradigmatic cases and, in the process, evidence the consistency of the framework's applicability, the structured, focused comparison approach is ideally suited. These considerations indicate that a case study approach is appropriate for this research and that using a small-*n* case study approach is likely to provide an opportunity for the conceptual framework to be tested across an appropriate range of ideological and historical contexts.

What is a Case?

Drawing from the previous discussion regarding the contested nature of case study research, the social sciences remain ambiguous concerning any agreed definition of what constitutes a case. In the Introduction to the influential *What is a Case: Exploring the Foundations of*

³⁰⁴ Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars*.

³⁰⁵ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*.

³⁰⁶ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, 67.

³⁰⁷ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, 67.

Social Inquiry,³⁰⁸ Ragin noted that ‘the term “case” and the various terms linked to the idea of case analysis is not well defined in social science, despite their widespread usage and their centrality to social scientific discourse’.³⁰⁹ As with the previous parameter-setting exercise on definitions of terrorism, it is necessary to provide boundaries of some sort around the conceptualisation of a case, if only for the purpose of progressing the research undertaken. For the purposes of this research, George and Bennett’s definition of a case as ‘an instance of a class of events’ with the class of events further clarified as a ‘phenomenon of scientific interest, such as revolutions, types of governmental regimes, kinds of economic systems, or personality types that the investigator chooses to study with the aim of developing theory (or generic knowledge) regarding the causes of similarities or differences among instances (cases) of that class of events’³¹⁰ informs the research method being adopted. Settling on a definition, albeit imperfect by reference to the preceding comments, is necessary and requires selecting a definition that is appropriate for the research being undertaken. Thus, it provides a conceptually appropriate definition and a definition suitable for the broad field in which this dissertation is situated.

Case Selection

As mentioned, the small-*n* case sample for this research consists of three case studies of different periods of terrorist praxis, with distinct ideological motivations and historical contexts. The three cases—anarchist terrorism from the mid to late 1800s through to the early 1900s, Palestinian terrorism from 1967 onwards and the ongoing Salafi-Jihadist-inspired terrorism milieu—all reflect paradigmatic periods of terrorist activity and comport to the conceptualisation of a terrorist campaign articulated previously. As Hamm and Spaaij noted, ‘selection of paradigmatic cases is still an under-used strategy that holds particular promise for terrorism research’. Specifying the nature of a paradigmatic case has been a point of ongoing contention. However, Flyvbjerg provided a concise definition, stating that paradigmatic cases are those ‘that highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question’.³¹¹ Yet, he also acknowledged, ‘no standard exists for the paradigmatic case because it sets the standard’.³¹² Pavlich noted that a paradigmatic case ‘shows or reveals key

³⁰⁸ Charles C. Ragin and Howard Saul Becker, eds., *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

³⁰⁹ Ragin and Becker, *What is a Case?*, 1.

³¹⁰ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, 17–18.

³¹¹ Flyvbjerg, ‘Five Misunderstandings’, 232.

³¹² Flyvbjerg, ‘Five Misunderstandings’, 232.

elements of that phenomenon'.³¹³ The status of each of the chosen case studies as paradigmatic is elucidated in further detail below.

While this analysis does not rely on nor necessarily endorses the wave framework advocated by Rapoport,³¹⁴ his framework does provide a useful description of the features that bind disparate manifestations of terrorism together. In the 2004 version of his 'four waves' articulation, he referred to 'international character; similar activities occur in several countries, driven by a common predominant energy that shapes the participating groups' characteristics and mutual relationships.³¹⁵

This macro-level of analysis parallels the terrorism campaign approach identified earlier, which allows for terrorism activity motivated by a commitment to anarchist or Palestinian liberation ideology to be linked despite disparate geographical manifestations or variations in the discrete individual ideological adherence of the perpetrators. In this way, different terrorist campaigns can be conceived as part of a coherent body of activity and thus coherent for the purposes of case study analysis. While this analysis does not seek to utilise or endorse the waves framework, nor the characteristics that it articulates for each of those waves, it recognises that Rapoport's work has been influential in terrorism studies. The framing of various periods of terrorism history has been instructive in determining the case study selection herein and shaping the macro-level analysis of the research.

This macro-level perspective enables the analysis to consider, for instance, Salafi-Jihadist terrorism as a broad-based campaign, rather than necessarily focusing on organisational or meso-level enterprises such as IS or AQ in the Arabian Peninsula. To emphasise the necessity of this broader perspective, it is noteworthy that over the life course of Salafi-Jihadist terrorism, numerous organisations have existed, with a diversity of perspectives and specific interpretations of the broader ideological framework and various fusions of local and global objectives and a range of characteristics regarding their relationship with an overarching entity like AQ. While AQ is accepted as the bedrock of modern Salafi-Jihadist terrorism, its birth was the function of a merger of various organisations with, for instance, Tanzim al-Jihad, the Salafi-Jihadist organisation then led by now-AQ Commander-in-Chief, Ayman al-

³¹³ George Pavlich, 'Paradigmatic Cases', in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, ed. Albert Mills, Gabrielle Durepos and Elden Wiebe (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397>.

³¹⁴ Rapoport, 'Four Waves of Modern Terrorism', in *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, ed. Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 46–73.

³¹⁵ Cronin and Ludes, *Attacking Terrorism*, 47.

Zawahiri, and traditionally oriented towards the ‘near enemy’ that, for Tanzim al-Jihad, was the Egyptian state.³¹⁶ Since the attacks of 2001, AQ’s franchise approach to terrorism has ‘introduced branches throughout the Muslim world, beginning in Saudi Arabia ... in Iraq (2004), Algeria (2006), Yemen (2009), Somalia (circa 2010), Syria (2012), and the Indian subcontinent (2014)’.³¹⁷

Recognising that terrorist organisations are dynamic, evolutionary entities that manifest in various guises within a broader movement while maintaining a common ‘energy’ is essential to a holistic appreciation of how the phenomenon materialises. For instance, it would be remiss in any analysis of Salafi-Jihadist-informed terrorism to ignore the precursor to AQ, the Maktab al-Khidamat (Services Bureau) established by influential and revered Salafi-Jihadist cleric Abdullah Azzam,³¹⁸ or ignore the substantial influence of thirteenth-century religio-legal scholar, Ibn Taymiyya. Fishman argued the latter significantly influenced the modern Salafi-Jihadist interpretation of the concept of takfir.³¹⁹ When combined with a paradigmatic case study selection, the macro-level approach enables a broader perspective to be taken, allowing the strategic perspective to prevail while maintaining depth and focus.

A: Anarchist Terrorism

The first case study considered in this research is anarchist terrorism, which is generally recognised as having come into existence in Russia in the 1870s. As Verhoeven argued:

The standard story—and experts agree on this—is that it [terrorism] was invented in imperial Russia when, in the late 1870s, members of the revolutionary party Semelia I Volia (Land and Freedom) had a falling out over the use of political violence. They organised a summit, had a debate, took a vote, and agreed to disagree: one faction persisted with peaceful propaganda; the other, Naronaiia Volia, wrote up a political program that explicitly embraced ‘terrorist activities’, and then put this program into practice.³²⁰

The focus of this case study is justified by the significance of the anarchist wave for the initial conceptualisation of the idea of ‘propaganda by the deed’. This idea, as identified above, has been foundational in much of modern terrorism, either implicitly or explicitly. The importance of this idea in shaping much of the terrorism activity of the previous two

³¹⁶ Gerges, *Far Enemy*, 57–59.

³¹⁷ Mendelsohn, *Al-Qaeda Franchise*, 2.

³¹⁸ Gerges, *Far Enemy*, 134.

³¹⁹ Fishman, *Master Plan*, 61.

³²⁰ Verhoeven and Karakozov, *Odd Man Karakozov*, 4–5.

centuries is difficult to overstate, and its clarification and articulation by anarchist thinkers, philosophers and revolutionaries have provided a conceptual foundation upon which much of the doctrinal work of modern terrorism has been built. As Merari argued, ‘the essentials of the psychological basis of a terrorist struggle have changed little since the nineteenth century, when anarchist writings first formulated the principles of this strategy. The basic idea was phrased as “propaganda by deed”’.³²¹

Writing in 1880, Russian anarchist activist, revolutionary and philosopher, Peter Kropotkin, captured the essence of the idea of propaganda by the deed when he authored *Spirit of Revolt*. In words echoed in the comments of Abu Daoud cited above, he argued:

Indifference from this point on is impossible. Those who at the beginning never so much as asked what the ‘madmen’ wanted, are compelled to think about them, to discuss their ideas, to take sides for or against. By actions which compel general attention, the new idea seeps into people’s minds and wins converts. One such act may, in a few days, make more propaganda than thousands of pamphlets.³²²

The importance of the anarchist wave of terrorism in providing the doctrinal and strategic basis on which modern terrorism has evolved justifies a focus on this period. In particular, the period of anarchist terrorism further lays the foundation for recognising the key elements of the conceptual framework. Numerous authors have recognised the convergence of dynamics that contextualised the emergence of anarchist terrorism, particularly the discovery of dynamite and the emergence of the rotary printing press yet have not extrapolated from this to suggest a broader, enduring nature to the phenomenon.

While the conceptualisation of anarchist terrorism emerged and coalesced in Russia, it spread across Europe and ultimately to the US over time. The globalisation of the ideas, tactics, and strategies of anarchist terrorism informed actors and entities across the Western world, shaping and influencing political discourse and policy formation in multiple jurisdictions. As Jensen highlighted, ‘while during the 1880s, the most prominent acts of anarchist terrorism took place in Germany, Austria, and the United States, in the next decade the geography of terrorism shifted. During the 1890s a few bombs shook Greenwich, Constantinople, and

³²¹ Merari, ‘Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency’.

³²² Petr Kropotkin, *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 2002), 58.

Zurich, but terrorism centred in western and southern continental Europe—in France, Belgium, Spain, and Italy, and to a lesser degree, Portugal’.³²³

Given the conceptual framework articulated here and the enduring influence this period of terrorist activity had on terrorism practice, interrogating the nature, character and mechanics of anarchist terrorism is essential to developing a rich conceptual understanding of terrorism as a phenomenon. Anarchist terrorism represents a paradigmatic period in the preliminary development of terrorism while additionally providing the foundational undergirding of contemporary terrorism praxis.

B: Palestinian Terrorism

The second case study, focused on Palestinian terrorism, is partly determined on similar grounds to the anarchist case study. The wave of anarchist terrorism had significant consequences on the broader nature and character of terrorism beyond merely the period in which it took place, informing the strategy and tactics of terrorism beyond its demise. Similarly, Palestinian terrorism has had significant impacts on the character of terrorism, informing and influencing the strategies and tactics of numerous terrorist entities beyond the Israel/Palestine conflict and beyond the period of intensive operational activity. Palestinian terrorists have innovated regarding the application of violence, exploited the emergence of new media ecosystems, understood the importance of communicative and narrative dynamics and continue to demonstrate ongoing adaptability and flexibility in their engagement with information and communication technology. Palestinian terrorism, at its peak, was formative in the ongoing evolution of terrorism praxis. As Hoffman argued on the 1968 hijacking of El Al Flight 426 from London:

The El Al hijacking differed significantly from all previous ones ... through the combination of dramatic political statement, ‘symbolic’ targeting, and crisis-induced de facto recognition, the terrorists discovered that they had the power to create major media events—especially when innocent civilians were involved. As Zehdi Labib Terzi, the PLO’s chief observer at the United Nations, reflected in a 1976 interview, ‘The first several hijackings aroused the consciousness of the world and awakened the media and world opinion much more—and more effectively—than 20 years of pleading at the United Nations’.³²⁴

³²³ Jensen, *Battle against Anarchist Terrorism*, 33.

³²⁴ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 65–66.

The internal doctrines of the various elements within the broader wave of Palestinian terrorism and activism demonstrate a willingness to embrace the use of terror, among other forms of asymmetric warfare. For instance, the Platform of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine identifies several key principles on which it seeks to prosecute its offensive operations and activities. Among others, it articulates the following four principles:

1. Conventional War is the war of the Bourgeoisie. Revolutionary War is the People's War.
2. Guerrilla Struggle can be a form of pressure for the 'Peaceful Solution'.
3. There can be no Revolutionary War without a Revolutionary Theory.
4. The war of liberation is a class war guided by Revolutionary Ideology.³²⁵

In recognition of the solidarity expressed and actioned among the philosophical and political leadership of the Popular Front and numerous other 'Third-Worldist' liberation movements, but in particular, with the Vietnamese People's Army, their platform closes with the words, 'this is the only way in which Amman can become an Arab Hanoi—a base for the revolutionaries fighting inside Palestine'.³²⁶

Understanding the transnational relationships that existed between the various Palestinian factions and other liberation movements is important for being able to develop an appreciation of the broader influence these various Palestinian entities had on their contemporaries. The provision of weapons, training and broader political solidarity with a diversity of movements, organisations and individuals is detailed by Alexander. He highlighted the breadth and diversity of these relationships and the centrality of the Palestinian cause in facilitating and supporting a range of terrorist causes:

Clearly, the most elaborate European-Middle Eastern terrorist connection was developed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) ... through its affiliate members such as Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), and Palestine Popular Struggle Front (PPSF) ... [who] collaborated with various European groups. In the 1970's and early 1980's, for example, German and Italian terrorists were trained in the Palestinian Houmirriya camp south of Damascus in Syria. PLO arms were sent to the IRA. And

³²⁵ Walter Laqueur, ed., *Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Other Terrorists from around the World and throughout the Ages* (New York, NY: Reed Press, 2004), 149–52.

³²⁶ Laqueur, *Voices of Terror*, 152.

AD [Direct Action], which was responsible for nearly eighty bombings and other terrorist acts in France between 1979 and 1987, established ties with the PLO.³²⁷

The much-venerated former PLO Head, Yasser Arafat, who, in 1985, condemned ‘all types of terrorism’ while distinguishing these from what he referred to as ‘legitimate armed struggle which every nation living under occupation is entitled to,’³²⁸ had been a key leader in the internationalisation of the Palestinian struggle and efforts to ensure it was conceived and perceived as part of a broader, morally justified struggle against colonisation and imperialism. Chamberlin highlighted the 1970 meeting between the then-Chair of the PLO Executive Committee, Yasser Arafat, his deputy, Salah Khalaf, and the North Vietnamese Politburo members, including an audience with General Võ Nguyên Giáp. Chamberlin quoted the latter as stating, ‘the Vietnamese and Palestinian people have much in common ... just like two people suffering from the same illness.’³²⁹

The international significance and impact of the Palestinian struggle and its impact on Israel specifically and on Middle Eastern regional dynamics and international engagement with the region forms part of the justification for the focus of this case study. The capacity for the Palestinian struggle to transcend a variety of waves of terrorism—with nationalism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, left-wing Marxist-Leninist politics and Salafi-jihadism all motivating and characterising Palestinian terrorism during various periods—reflects the effectiveness and adaptability of the organisations facilitating the struggle and the ongoing resonance and exploitability of underlying grievances. The presence of the Israel/Palestine struggle simultaneously within the narratives of left-wing activists and extremists in the West and the narrative of contemporary Salafi-Jihadist organisations further demonstrates the salience of the cause and the ongoing importance of organisations that still support and undertake terrorism in its name or, at the very least, refer to it rhetorically and propagandistically. An analysis of terrorism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that did not give adequate focus to the Palestinians would be incomplete. Last, terrorism and political violence inspired by the Palestinian struggle have remained adaptive and innovative in terms of their tactical and strategic considerations. The enduring presence of various

³²⁷ Yonah Alexander, ‘The European: Middle East Terrorist Connection’, *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 13, no. 2 (January 1, 1989): 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.1989.9688912>.

³²⁸ Randall D. Law, *The Routledge History of Terrorism* (Routledge, 2019), 251.

³²⁹ Paul Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cary: Oxford University Press USA – OSO, 2012), 1.

actors, entities and strategies owe much to the ongoing determination of the Palestinian movement.

C: Salafi-Jihadist Terrorism

Within the religious terrorism wave, Salafi-Jihadist entities have dominated the post-9/11 period. In terms of operational tempo, innovation in strategy, tactics, organisational structure and resilience, there has been little competition. Further, the sophisticated understanding and appreciation for the contemporary media ecosystem and a willingness to embrace and exploit the online environment has meant that AQ and its fellow Salafi-Jihadists have maximised their capabilities and substantially impacted adversaries. The tactical innovations that AQ has facilitated have also proliferated, being replicated by various elements within the Salafi-Jihadist current. The recent spike of low capability attacks within Western jurisdictions reflects the adaptive capacity of the Salafi-Jihadist manifestation of terrorism and the strategic insights that have gained traction across the broader movement.

AQ's willingness to embrace innovation and share it across the diffuse jihadist current has been one of its strengths. As Ranstorp and Normark put it, 'one of the most distinguishing features of al-Qaeda's terrorist operations is its propensity for remarkable innovation'.³³⁰ Along with those it has influenced, inspired or assisted, AQ has provided a blueprint for contemporary media-oriented operations that continues to demand focus and attention not just on the organisation responsible but on its messaging. The example of 'beheading videos' highlighted previously is just one example of Salafi-Jihadist innovation. The nature of this innovation is also adaptive in that it has accommodated and recognised the need to accept the post-9/11 counterterrorism environment in which operations are now undertaken. This has resulted in the promotion of individual and small cell tactics as one element of their overall strategy. The promotion of tactics such as vehicular ramming, stabbing and other low capability, minimal planning operations have been a crucial innovation in the context of sustained counterterrorism pressure. It has similarly facilitated dramatic increases in operational tempo since 2014, particularly within Western jurisdictions. The use of social media and increasingly encrypted platforms as part of this effort only reinforces the adaptive and innovative capacities of the Salafi-Jihadist manifestation of terrorism.

³³⁰ Ranstorp and Normark, *Understanding Terrorism Innovation*, 1.

Much of the strategic and organisational innovation that have facilitated these tactical innovations are the product of Salafi-Jihadist strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, whose *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*, released online in December 2004, has dramatically shaped and influenced much of the contemporary terrorist environment. Michael Ryan states in regards to al-Suri that he 'is as important today for understanding al-Qaeda and global jihad as he was before his capture and subsequent disappearance'.³³¹ His contribution, which spans both military doctrine and organisational theory, played a substantial part in enabling the Salafi-Jihadist movement to embrace, within elements of their organisational structure, more open, accessible approaches to engagement with potential recruits and with those who might undertake operations within Western countries. This approach, which experiences its first successful manifestation with *Inspire* magazine, laid much of the groundwork for the system that IS refined with the use of social media,³³² the propagation of dynamic multimedia content, and the incorporation of key narrative touch points such as the impending apocalypse. This system effectively contributes to the recruitment of individuals to participate in terrorist activities abroad and to undertake inspired operations within Western jurisdictions. The innovation and adaptability of this manifestation of terrorism, in the context of a highly dynamic technological environment, warrants analysis while also demanding contextualisation within the broader history of terrorism and terrorist innovation.

As a corollary of Jihadist innovation at the strategic and organisational level, jihadists' embrace of the media and new media environments has proven deft and highly effective. Within the jihadist movement, arguably the most influential individual in this domain has been Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born, self-styled Salafi-Jihadist preacher. Awlaki's early engagement with the online environment, charismatic delivery, English-language sermons and simplified articulation of complex theological topics enabled him to become a central player in the second phase of AQ-affiliated terrorism. Despite his ultimate removal from the battlefield in a 2011 drone strike, Shane argues, 'no figure in jihadist propaganda has eclipsed his well-established brand. He remains as relevant to a new generation of

³³¹ Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 160.

³³² Levi J. West, '#jihad: Understanding Social Media as a Weapon', *Security Challenges* 12, no. 2 (July 2016): 9–26.

American Jihadis inspired by the Islamic State as he was to their predecessors whose allegiance was to al-Qa`ida'.³³³

Awlaki's role in providing an overarching figure for Salafi-Jihadist adherents to access remotely and with relatively limited risk has played a substantial role in facilitating recruitment and operational engagement. His initial forays into the digital domain were leveraging platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, where he advocated for his interpretation of individualised jihad and targeted Muslim audiences in the West. Stern and Berger argued, 'through a combination of communication savvy and his careful cultivation of an ambiguous relationship to terrorism over the course of many years, Awlaki established himself on social media years before the broader jihadist community made the transition'.³³⁴

In understanding the significance of Awlaki, it is important to appreciate the theological role that he played in advocating and legitimising individualised jihad to Western-based audiences and recognise the key role he played, in partnership with Samir Khan, a Saudi-born Pakistani raised in New York, in developing and publishing *Inspire* magazine. *Inspire* was first published in 2010, with the most recent edition released in August of 2017. *Inspire* is an English language weapon and instruction manual, combined with theological and political content, fighters' stories, senior figures' profiles and detailed reflection on previous operations. *Inspire* has played a key role in the radicalisation of many Western-based jihadists. MI5 assessed that the magazine has 'been read by those involved in at least seven out of the ten attacks planned within the UK since its first issue [in 2010]. We judge that it significantly enhanced the capability of individuals in four of these ten attack plots.'³³⁵

Awlaki is also considered an essential conduit from the AQ model to the IS model of jihadism, both by reference to the sophisticated online propaganda campaign undertaken by IS and their embrace of social media to facilitate the recruitment of foreign fighters and domestic terrorist attacks. He is also considered an overarching jihadist figurehead for Western recruits to the movement. Hoffman goes as far as to state Awlaki 'has a timeless and even universal message of radicalization and resistance that is completely separate to

³³³ Scott Shane, 'The Enduring Influence of Anwar Al-Awlaki in the Age of the Islamic State', Combating Terrorism Center, 27 July 2016, <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-enduring-influence-of-anwar-al-awlaki-in-the-age-of-the-islamic-state/>.

³³⁴ Shane, 'The Enduring Influence'.

³³⁵ Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, *Report on the Intelligence Relating to the Murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2014), 60.

whatever organization he hitched his fortunes to'.³³⁶ Despite having no formal religious qualifications and lacking any substantive combat experience, Awlaki provided the template for a key innovation of IS: the cultivation and deployment of a number of key online facilitators, or what Hughes and Meleagrou-Hitchens referred to as virtual entrepreneurs.³³⁷ In terms of recognising Awlaki's place within the senior cadre of the broader Salafi-Jihadist movement, Bourke states, 'if al-Awlaki was the propagandist who did most to shape today's threat against the West, and al-Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi are currently the most influential commanders, then al-Suri is the strategist of greatest relevance'.³³⁸

The ongoing impact of Salafi-Jihadist-inspired terrorism in the West and across the Middle East is reflected in its capacity to have once again influenced the decisions of the US, Russia and be engaged militarily in the Middle East and in the dramatic escalation in domestic terrorist activity within Western jurisdiction in the period following the declaration of the Caliphate by IS. The unprecedented levels of activity have led to additional policy, legislative and budgetary responses and the reinforcement of the overall public concern with the threat of terrorism. In addition, Western jurisdictions have witnessed a concomitant rise in right-wing extremism and increased traction for populist and nationalist political positions. Miller-Idriss noted in relation to 9/11:

The attacks were a gift to peddlers of xenophobia, white supremacism, and Christian nationalism: as dark-skinned Muslim foreigners bent on murdering Americans, al Qaeda terrorists and their ilk seemed to have stepped out of a far-right fever dream. Almost overnight, the United States and European countries abounded with precisely the fears that the far right had been trying to stoke for decades.³³⁹

As the leading proponents and practitioners of terrorism in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and having had an unprecedented impact on international and national security and society more broadly, Salafi-Jihadist terrorism demands a case study within this dissertation.

³³⁶ Greg Miller, 'Al-Qaeda Figure Seen as Key Inspiration for San Bernardino Attacker', *Washington Post*, 18 December 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/al-qaeda-figure-seen-as-key-inspiration-for-san-bernardino-attacker/2015/12/18/f0e00d80-a5a0-11e5-9c4e-be37f66848bb_story.html.

³³⁷ Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hughes, 'Threat to the United States'.

³³⁸ Burke, *The New Threat*, 164.

³³⁹ Cynthia Miller-Idriss, 'From 9/11 to 1/6: The War on Terror Supercharged the Far Right', *Foreign Affairs* 100, no. 5 (October 9, 2021): 54–64.

The following section provides an articulation and analysis of the identified case studies, with each case study separated across two chapters. Chapters Five, Seven, and Nine each provide ideological, doctrinal, and operational context to the respective case studies, with Chapters Six, Eight, and Ten articulating the application of the conceptual framework to the cases. Before proceeding it is worthwhile restating that each of the following case studies will utilise the identified framework to structure the overall case study and will also undertake a consistent, structured approach to the introduction of each case study to provide a consistent approach to articulating the historical context of the distinct case studies under investigation. The introductions to all three case studies will provide an overview of the social and political milieu from which the broader ideological current emerged, articulate the development or adoption of the relevant doctrine that the ideological current subsequently embraced or propagated and provide an overview of a sample of the terrorist violence that was undertaken in its name. Regarding the last aspect of this introductory contextualisation, the overview of terrorist activity will focus on the preliminary actions of the movements, the high-profile attacks that reflect the peak of the operational capability of the campaigns undertaken in the name of the ideology and briefly identify any signature tactical or targeting practices that became associated with the movement or with organisational manifestations of the ideology and doctrine. These introductions are provided to situate the case studies in their appropriate social, political and technological context and to demonstrate the consistency and comparability between the cases and the enduring nature of terrorist praxis across disparate manifestations.

Part II

Chapter Five: Reading Anarchist Terrorism: Ideology, Doctrine and Operations

*Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.*³⁴⁰

*Upon the horizon there appeared a gloomy form, illuminated by a light as of hell, who, with lofty bearing, and a look breathing forth hatred and defiance, made his way through the terrified crowd to enter with a firm step upon the scene of history. It was the Terrorist.*³⁴¹

This chapter provides a macro-level overview of the development of anarchist ideology, the doctrine of propaganda of the deed, and the coalescence of anarchist terrorism in Russia during the mid-to-late 1800s. Additionally, it places the emergence of these phenomenon in their historical context.

It is necessary to distinguish between the emergence of anarchism as an ideological tract within European revolutionary thought, the emergence of propaganda of the deed as a doctrine of revolutionary practice and the subsequent operational coalescence and violent manifestations of these ideas. This chapter will thus provide an introductory social and political contextualisation for the development of anarchist ideology, the doctrine of propaganda of the deed and the operationalisation of these concepts into anarchist terrorism. It then applies the conceptual framework articulated in Chapter Three to evidence the crucial role the three elements of the framework played in enabling anarchist terrorism to achieve substantial strategic effects in Russia during its initial coalescence and subsequently across Europe and in the US. In doing so, this chapter will analyse the importance of dynamite to the success and contagiousness of terrorism as a novel form of revolutionary violence and an act that could be readily replicated with relative ease and frequency; the influence and operationalisation of the concept of propaganda of the deed in shaping the communicative

³⁴⁰ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed., David MacLellan, repr. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1978), 300.

³⁴¹ Stepniak, *Underground Russia: Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*, 2nd ed. (London: Smith, Elder, & Co, 1883), 31.

considerations of terrorist activity and in developing and reinforcing a coherent contextual ideological narrative throughout the period; the vital role played by Russian, European and Transatlantic literary cultures, the accessibility and affordability of printing technology to socialist and anarchist ideologues and by the developing print news media in the emergence and propagation of anarchist terrorism as an idea and a threat. In doing so, this chapter will seek to demonstrate that anarchist terrorism was dependent on not only the revolutionary sentiment that permeated Europe through the late-1800s but on the successful integration of the three elements identified above in being able to develop a replicable and consequential practice that ultimately provided the foundational model for the practice contemporaneously known as terrorism. While unable to achieve its ultimate objectives, it had a significant strategic effect on its adversaries.

It is generally recognised across the terrorism studies literature³⁴² that terrorism as a modern phenomenon, and certainly in its organisational and operational sense, successfully coalesced with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 in St. Petersburg by Narodnaya Volya (People's Will).³⁴³ While this assessment holds a great deal of merit in the strict sense, it is worth recognising and analysing the circumstances and structural conditions that enabled the incident to manifest and identify the broader contextual factors and presence of more specific factors that resulted in the incident manifesting in its specific form. Anarchism as an ideology did not merely appear in a vacuum but rather came about as the result of a range of transformative processes throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the intellectual and political responses to those changes. To understand the broader context that enabled this incident to take place, which allowed for the incident to be communicated to and properly comprehended by the broader public and for it to have provided the operational and ideological inspiration for the wave of terrorism that ultimately spread across Europe and the Atlantic to the US, it is necessary to view the incident, at least initially, from a wider

³⁴² Anna Geifman, *Death Orders: The Vanguard of Modern Terrorism in Revolutionary Russia* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010), 12; Walter Laqueur and Bruce Hoffman, *A History of Terrorism*, 2016, 11; Martin A. Miller, 'Entangled Terrorism in Late Imperial Russia', in Randall D. Law, *The Routledge History of Terrorism* (Routledge, 2019), 97; Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), 5.

³⁴³ While there exists some discussion as to the first terrorist organised terrorist enterprise, the literature on the history of terrorism generally refers to Narodnaya Volya as the first organisation. Additionally, the assassination of the tsar in 1881 is overwhelmingly considered the first major international terrorist attack. There is a broader literature within the history of terrorism literature that dates the earliest manifestations back to the Sicarii and the Zealots in Roman occupied Jerusalem, and the Persian Assassins 10th through 12th Centuries, however this research is focused on modern terrorism. Lindsay Clutterbuck, "The Progenitors of Terrorism: Russian or Extreme Irish Republicans," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 154–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550490457917>.

aperture. This requires a brief analysis of two interlinked periods of history. These periods provided the economic, political and social context for the emergence of the broader revolutionary sensibilities that infused the mid to late nineteenth century. These periods constitute, in the first instance, the Industrial Revolution and subsequently what Hobsbawm refers to as the Age of Revolution.³⁴⁴ These will be briefly described and analysed in turn. These two interrelated phenomena provide an ideal lens for understanding the milieu from which anarchism, propaganda of the deed, and ultimately, anarchist terrorism emerged as an idea and a practice.

The Age of Revolution and Revolutionary Ideas

The aftermath of the French Revolution and the emergence of the ‘social question’ provided crucial contributions to the period known as the ‘age of revolution’ and the eventual coalescence of what came to be understood as terrorism. The period itself witnessed a multitude of revolutionary activity across Europe in particular and culminated with the Europe-wide revolutions of 1848. As Hobsbawm commented in his influential work *The Age of Revolution*, ‘never in European history and rarely anywhere else, has *revolutionism* (emphasis added) been so endemic, so general, so likely to spread by spontaneous contagion as well as by deliberate propaganda’.³⁴⁵

This period, and the substantial and frequently uneven changes to social relations and economic conditions associated with the Industrial Revolution, laid the preliminary groundwork for the emergence of socialism, and subsequently anarchism, and the prominence of the social question.

Authors such as Hoffman,³⁴⁶ Chaliand and Blin³⁴⁷ have previously referred to the role of the Industrial Revolution as fermenting the turmoil and upheaval that gave birth to the grievances culminating in the revolutions of 1848. These ultimately produced the revolutionary ideologies of socialism and communism, and by way of divisions and disagreements within the socialist movement, anarchism. The scale of the changes that the Industrial Revolution imposed, particularly on the working classes of society, is difficult to overstate. However, Hobsbawm articulates forcefully what this period constituted in stating that, ‘sometime in the

³⁴⁴ Eric John Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848*, repr. (London: Abacus, 1995).

³⁴⁵ Hobsbawm, *Age of Revolution*, 138.

³⁴⁶ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 5.

³⁴⁷ Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, ‘The Invention of Modern Terror’, in *The History of Terrorism*, ed. Chaliand and Blin, 111.

1780s, and for the first time in human history, the shackles were taken off the productive power of human societies, which henceforth became capable of the constant, rapid, and up to the present limitless multiplication of men, goods and services.’³⁴⁸

A more specific and succinct articulation of the Industrial Revolution is provided by Musson and Robinson, who referred to ‘the transformation of a predominantly rural, agricultural, and handicraft society into a predominantly urban, industrial, and mechanized society’.³⁴⁹ These two conceptualisations address the central elements of the Industrial Revolution: its transformative nature and, concomitantly, the revolutionary changes it wrought regarding economic and employment arrangements and the beginnings of the urbanisation of the populace. In seeking to understand the revolutionary fervour of the French Revolution and the broader Age of Revolution, understanding the impact of the Industrial Revolution, first in Britain and then (albeit unevenly) across Europe, assists in understanding the revolutionary sentiment that emerged during this period and its appeal to the burgeoning intelligentsia and the masses. As the Industrial Revolution imposed fundamental change on the very existence of substantial proportions of the populace,³⁵⁰ political and ideological responses began to emerge to reflect the grievances of those increasingly experiencing the negative consequences of these changes.

These processes gave birth to the social delineations that were subsequently articulated by socialists, namely between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Additionally, the technological innovations and the incentivisation associated with the economic application of these innovations ultimately produced inventions such as dynamite and innovations such as the industrialisation of printing technology, which enabled the ultimate culmination of anarchist revolutionary thought into anarchist terrorism in 1881. For the purposes of this analysis, it is sufficient to recognise that the economic consequences of the Industrial Revolution and the

³⁴⁸ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, 43.

³⁴⁹ A. E. Musson and Eric Robinson, *Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution*, Classics in the History and Philosophy of Science, vol. 3 (New York, NY: Gordon and Breach, 1989), 60.

³⁵⁰ Phyllis Deane, *The First Industrial Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Deane cites the following characteristics, which highlight the depth and breadth of Industrial Revolution(s): (1) widespread and systematic application of modern science and empirical knowledge to the process of production for the market; (2) specialization of economic activity directed towards production for national and international markets rather than for family or parochial use; (3) movement of population from rural to urban communities; (4) enlargement and depersonalization of the typical unit of production so that it comes to be based less on the family or the tribe and more on the corporate or public enterprise; (5) movement of labour from activities concerned with the production of primary products to the production of manufactured goods and services; (6) intensive and extensive use of capital resources as a substitute for and complement to human effort; (7) emergence of new social and occupational classes determined by ownership of or relationship to the means of production other than land, namely capital.

associated expansion of capitalist modes of production in part facilitated the technological innovations that subsequently informed the emergence of anarchist terrorism capabilities. In contrast, the social and political consequences of these changes provided the undergirding grievances that socialism, communism and, ultimately, anarchism came to articulate and respond to. The revolutionary sensibility of the period was shaped as much by the economics of the Industrial Revolution as it was by anything else.

Recognising the role that the revolutionary fervour of the mid to late 1800s played in the conceptualisation and propagation of anarchist thought is essential to a fulsome appreciation of the social and political context that gave birth to anarchist terrorism itself. Without the social and political changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution, the utopianism and sense of possibility associated with the initial successes of the French Revolution and the broader sense of social grievance articulated by and capitalised on by socialist and communist revolutionaries, anarchism itself would unlikely have emerged as a distinct political and ideological current. While beyond the scope of analysis undertaken here, the French Revolution played a vital role in demonstrating that revolutionary activity, anchored in the grievances identified above, was not only possible but that it could be successful. As Hobsbawm stated, ‘the most formidable legacy of the French Revolution itself was the set of models and patterns of political upheaval which it established for the general use of rebels anywhere’.³⁵¹

As revolutionary activity became increasingly prevalent across Europe and the propagation of ideas that justified and encouraged this activity was increasingly shared and accessed, revolutionary sentiment grew across numerous jurisdictions in Europe. The American and French revolutions, the subsequent period of revolutionary activity in Europe throughout the mid-1800s and the centrality of the ‘social question’ distinguished this period of discontent from earlier periods. As Arendt highlighted:

the social question began to play a revolutionary role only when, in the modern age and not before, men began to doubt that poverty is inherent in the human condition, to doubt that the distinction between the few, who through circumstances or strength or fraud had succeeded in liberating themselves from the shackles of poverty, and the labouring poverty-stricken multitude was inevitable and eternal.³⁵²

³⁵¹ Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, 141.

³⁵² Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963; reis., London: Faber & Faber: 2016), 15.

The overarching shape and colour of this period reflected the disappointments with the failures and shortcomings of efforts to implement the Enlightenment's romantic ideals and liberate the masses from the impositions of the existing social and economic conditions. Repeated efforts to establish a more equitable social contract had been, at best, marginally successful. These frustrations, as much with the existing power structures as with those willing to compromise with those power structures, resulted in the emergence of the body of thought that coalesced as anarchism. Anarchism did not emerge in isolation but rather was the consequence and culmination of a broader series of frustrations by intellectuals and revolutionary activists who had witnessed, and participated in, the litany of unsuccessful revolutions across Europe throughout the 1800s.

Anarchist Ideology

Anarchism as a distinct body of thought is notoriously difficult to describe with specificity, partly due to the multitude of branches of thought captured by the broader term and the frequent internal contradictions characteristic of the ideological framework. Numerous authors recognise the longer history of ideas that have informed or at least parallel those that ultimately form what can be conceived as a canon of anarchist thought. Authors such as Graham have dated the broad idea of the absence of governance or coercive authority to circa 300 CE, highlighting, for example, the ideas of Bao Jingyan.³⁵³ Joll has referred, among others, to the Stoics and the Anabaptists.³⁵⁴ Woodcock makes a key point about the extensive pre-anarchist lineage, stating, 'what has so often been represented as the prehistory of anarchism is rather a mythology created to give authority to a movement and its theories'.³⁵⁵

Thus, the emphasis here is on the more discrete set of ideas that emerged in Europe in the mid to late 1800s that provided the ideological justifications for what, in parallel with the doctrine of propaganda of the deed, resulted in the wave of anarchist-inspired terrorism in Russia, Europe and the US. This will be analysed through the lens of the conceptual framework outlined above, drawing on the core authors who contributed to the preliminary articulation of the ideological framework of anarchism to provide broad parameters, if not a definition of anarchism.

³⁵³ Graham, *Anarchism*.

³⁵⁴ James Joll, *The Anarchists*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1979).

³⁵⁵ George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview, 2004), 22.

Conceptualising anarchism can be undertaken by focusing on a small number of key actors and their articulations of what anarchism constituted. This section will cite Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, recognised as the first person to refer to himself as an anarchist; Mikhail Bakunin, referred to by his biographer as ‘the most notorious radical of the nineteenth century’;³⁵⁶ and Peter Kropotkin, referred to by Laqueur as ‘once one of the most outspoken advocates of terrorism’.³⁵⁷ These three individuals exercised dramatic influence over the anarchist movement of the period on the emergence, embrace and deployment of propaganda of the deed and, ultimately, the development and subsequent evolution of violent revolutionary activity throughout modern history. As with any ideological tract or statement, the scope for interpretation, misinterpretation and exploitation of ideas is immense, while the capacity for either specific ideas or ideological frameworks to inspire actors towards action, violent or otherwise, is a complex and multifarious process. As such, while the authors cited above are generally considered the forebears of anarchist ideology, their direct culpability for encouraging the wave of, at times, loosely connected anarchist-inspired terrorism that occurred is, in certain cases, much more tenuous. For instance, Kropotkin would later recant his support for terrorism, or at least begin to ‘reconsider the effectiveness of terrorist acts’.³⁵⁸ In seeking to draw direct lineage between anarchist ideology, the doctrine of propaganda of the deed and the terrorism that occurred, it is necessary to keep the words of Laqueur at the forefront of consideration. About anarchism and the wave of violent action that took place, he wrote, ‘there was no global conspiracy, no high command, no ‘party discipline’; each individual Anarchist, each group, felt free to register his protest in the form and at the time he saw fit’.³⁵⁹

Proudhon was an early contributor of those authors who articulated core ideas that informed anarchism’s subsequent development. He provided the movement with an enduring slogan when he wrote in his 1840 work, *What is Property*, that ‘property is theft’.³⁶⁰ However, for the purposes of conceptualising anarchism, his comments in *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* are particularly instructive regarding anarchist

³⁵⁶ James Mark Leier, *Bakunin: The Creative Passion*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 1.

³⁵⁷ Laqueur and Hoffman, *History of Terrorism*, 53.

³⁵⁸ Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, 116.

³⁵⁹ Laqueur and Hoffman, *History of Terrorism*, 53.

³⁶⁰ Note that the full statement is ‘What is property? May I not likewise answer, It is theft, without the certainty of being misunderstood; the second proposition being no other than a transformation of the first’: Proudhon, P. ‘What is Property?’ in Graham, *Anarchism*, 33–38.

sentiment for the government specifically and authority more generally. In 1851, Proudhon published the following:

To be governed is to be kept in sight, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue to do so... to be governed is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, forbidden, corrected, punished... That is government.³⁶¹

Proudhon, who had taught himself multiple classical languages and read widely across philosophy and religion as an apprentice printer,³⁶² was a contemporary of Marx and Bakunin and influenced deeply by Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau. His ideas had gained substantial traction among his contemporaries, and he managed to provoke a formal critical response from Marx to his 1847 *The System of Economic Contradictions, or The Philosophy of Poverty*. However, as Chaliand and Blin have highlighted, Proudhon was ‘more reformist than revolutionary’.³⁶³ It wasn’t until Mikhail Bakunin, upon his return from imprisonment in Russia, that in the words of Kropotkin, ‘established, in a series of powerful pamphlets and letters the leading principles of modern anarchism. The complete abolition of the State ... was the watchword he boldly proclaimed’.³⁶⁴

Bakunin led the anti-authoritarian faction within the International Workingmen’s Association that resulted in the schism that permanently divided the broader socialist movement and more formally distinguished anarchism as a unique body of revolutionary ideology—separate, yet still part of, the broader socialist revolutionary movement. Bakunin articulated the general critique of established social structures and the Marxist socialist revolutionary position. He called for the total abolition of existing authority structures, believing that all efforts, including socialist revolutionary efforts, would ultimately result in the replacement of those currently occupying positions of power and authority, with others equally susceptible to the corrupting influence of power, and that the oppression and subjugation he believed inherent in government itself would persist. In his *Critique of the Marxist Theory of the State*, Bakunin articulated this proposition at some length:

³⁶¹ P.-J. Proudhon, John Beverley Robinson and Robert Graham, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* (London; Winchester, MA: Pluto Press, 1989).

³⁶² Joll, *The Anarchists*, 62.

³⁶³ Chaliand and Blin, *The History of Terrorism*, 116.

³⁶⁴ Peter Kropotkin, ‘Modern Science and Anarchism’, in Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 165.

Such are our ideas as social revolutionaries, and we are therefore called anarchists. We do not protest this name, for we are indeed the enemies of any governmental power, since we know that such a power depraves those who wear its mantle equally with those who are forced to submit to it. Under its pernicious influence the former become ambitious and greedy despots, exploiters of society in favor of their personal or class interests, while the latter become slaves.³⁶⁵

Bakunin's most substantial contribution to the violence and terrorism that anarchism came to inspire was the doomed relationship he briefly maintained with Sergey Nechaev. This will be dealt with in greater detail in the next section on propaganda of the deed. Still, it was Nechaev, and his exploitation of the ideas of Bakunin, and his association with him, who most explicitly associated anarchist ideology with terrorist violence.

The last voice to assist in a coherent articulation of anarchist ideology is Peter Kropotkin. Much like Bakunin, who sought to fuse theoretical and ideological rumination with action, Kropotkin, in the first instance, was a prolific writer and activist. In 1879, he established the influential periodical *Le Revolte*,³⁶⁶ which played a central role in propagating the ideas of revolutionary anarchism. In his most famous work, the 1880s *The Spirit of Revolt*, he made the argument for addressing what he referred to as 'that abyss which, for the greatest part of humanity, lies between reasoning and action, thought and will—the urge to act'.³⁶⁷ He called for action to bring forth the vision of a society absent the constraints of government authority, stating, in prose that resonated with the decentralised elements of contemporary terrorism:

Men of courage, not satisfied with words, but ever searching for the means to transform them into action—men of integrity for whom the act is one with the idea, for whom prison, exile, and death are preferable to a life contrary to their principles—intrepid souls who know that it is necessary to *dare* in order to succeed—these are the lonely sentinels who enter the battle long before the masses are sufficiently roused.³⁶⁸

Incendiary tracts such as this provided important contributions to the articulation of anarchist principles and proved integral to the radicalisation of those who came to take violent action in the name of anarchism. In more specific terms related to capturing the essence of what anarchism constitutes, Kropotkin would contribute a chapter to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*

³⁶⁵ Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin and Sam Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1972), 328.

³⁶⁶ Petr Kropotkin and Roger N. Baldwin, *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets: A Collection of Writings* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1970), 21.

³⁶⁷ Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 38.

³⁶⁸ Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 39.

of 1910, in which he succinctly stated that anarchism is ‘the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government’.³⁶⁹

Importantly, anarchist ideology spread through intellectual and revolutionary circles in Russia, throughout Britain and Western Europe, and across the Atlantic to the US. The spread of these ideas was intimately linked to the burgeoning infrastructure of the maturing Industrial Revolution. The advent of railways and rail travel and particularly affordable print technology underpinned prolific ideologues of the anarchist and broader socialist movement’s ability to articulate and distribute their ideas, often illicitly, in multiple languages to a wider audience. The establishment of periodicals such as *Le Revolte*, one of numerous radical publications, provided a platform for distributing incendiary ideas that would otherwise have been limited to direct engagement with audiences. The specifically anarchist and socialist press was paralleled by what was known as the *Dynamite Press* in support of the Fenian cause and included publications such as *Ireland’s Liberator* and *Dynamite Monthly*.³⁷⁰ The affordability of print material and the capacity for transnational distribution of radical and subversive ideas was a crucial component of the anarchist movement’s transnationalisation and the concomitant transnationalisation of anarchist-inspired political violence and terrorism.

As an ideology, anarchism came to represent a body of ideas that, despite its internal contradictions, its utopian sensibility regarding human nature and the infeasibility of its vision, appealed to many revolutionaries, both intellectuals and activists. The prospect of a wholesale dissolution of the existing systems of authority, tradition and governance was crucial in setting forth an ideological proposition that necessitated action and maintained sufficient malleability that it could be embraced, claimed and exploited to justify a litany of directly and indirectly inspired terrorist and insurrectionist action. Taken in conjunction with the body of doctrinal work associated with propaganda of the deed, which was equally pliable, anarchism came to be associated both directly and justifiably, in that there was a legitimate threat of anarchist terrorism, and in the social imaginary of the public as the result of the articulation of a mythologised caricature of the ‘crazed man dressed in black with a dynamite bomb in his hand’ by the popular press and the political class. As Laqueur claimed, ‘Anarchism was a riddle as far as Western European public opinion at the time was

³⁶⁹ Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 284.

³⁷⁰ Whelehan, *The Dynamiters*, 167.

concerned. The newspapers reported the existence of a mysterious society of ruthless men who had as their watchword the murder of monarchs and the overthrow of governments'.³⁷¹

Propaganda of the Deed

Propaganda of the deed was, at the time of its emergence and actualisation, a contested concept with interpretations ranging across a spectrum of practices, with a diverse body of intentions associated with it. Debate raged among proponents of the practice regarding the role of conventional propaganda, the purpose of the violence undertaken and the strategic utility of the idea. In its preliminary manifestations, propaganda of the deed did not necessarily refer explicitly or exclusively to acts that would be considered terrorism. However, it certainly articulated the supremacy and necessity of actions over ideas. Proponents of the concept reflected the growing sense of frustration among revolutionaries of the time, convinced of the righteousness of their ideological position on the failure of conventional propaganda methods to sufficiently inspire a broader embrace of their revolutionary fervour by the masses. As Brousse wrote, reflecting the general idea of propaganda of the deed in 1877:

Yet Proudhon had written magnificent books. Who read those books? A handful of literati. But once the idea was brought out into the open air... it shook the peasant in his cottage, the worker at his fireside, and peasants and workers alike had to reflect on this huge question mark posted in the public square ... for or against, everybody has picked his side.³⁷²

Propaganda of the deed, as an idea rather than a fully formed doctrine directly associated with anarchism or terrorism, first emerged among frustrated and impatient revolutionaries in Italy. Its first specific articulation of the idea was expressed by Italian socialist revolutionary Carlo Pisacane in his posthumously published *Political Testament*.³⁷³ Pisacane, influenced by then-emerging socialist thought, including the work of proto-anarchist Proudhon, made the case that the masses could only be awoken to the ideas of revolution, in this case, a revolution towards national unification and towards the implementation of anarchist principles, through 'deeds' rather than further theorising. In his broader writing on revolution, Pisacane reflected on the failures of 1848 and argued for the prioritisation of action over further education or

³⁷¹ Laqueur and Hoffman, *History of Terrorism*, 152.

³⁷² Paul Brousse, 'Propaganda of the Deed', in Graham, *Anarchism*, 150–51.

³⁷³ Robert Graham, "Carlo Pisacane: Propaganda by the Deed (1857)," Robert Graham's Anarchism Weblog: Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas (blog), 2011, <https://robertgraham.wordpress.com/2011/09/22/carlo-pisacane-propaganda-by-the-deed-1857/>.

additional conventional propaganda. His view, which was later adopted and directly quoted by anarchist advocates of propaganda of the deed, reflected a belief that these deeds could act as the spark that ignited a society-wide revolution—collectively, deeds could constitute the revolution.³⁷⁴

The re-emergence of propaganda of the deed in the 1870s is attributed in the first instance to Bakunin.³⁷⁵ Bakunin stated in his 1870 *Letter to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis*, that ‘all of us must now embark on stormy revolutionary seas, and from this very moment we must spread our principles, not with words but with deeds, for this is the most popular, the most potent, and the most irresistible form of propaganda’.³⁷⁶

Of those advocating propaganda of the deed, and as a demonstration of the close proximity of the relationships that existed between these advocates and ideologues, Cafiero’s *Action*, published in 1880 and printed in *Le Revolte*, the newspaper founded 12 months prior by Kropotkin and others. Cafiero was more explicit than his contemporaries and called for ‘permanent rebellion, by word, by writing, by dagger, by gun, by dynamite ... every weapon which can be used for rebellion’.³⁷⁷

Some authors attribute the initial articulation of the idea of propaganda of the deed to the infamous work of Sergey Nechaev.³⁷⁸ However, this is not generally reinforced by the broader literature on the emergence of propaganda of the deed. This is not to diminish the influence of Nechaev’s publications, his mystique and their impact on those who subsequently sought to prioritise action over theory and to justify violence against perceived enemies. Nechaev’s contributions have been largely subsumed by focusing on the misconceptions regarding authorship of his most well-known contribution, the *Catechism of a Revolutionary*,³⁷⁹ often attributed to Bakunin. This has been part of a broader focus on those voices exclusively calling for propaganda of the deed with the explicit terminology, or a focus on those who either maintained an adherence to the anarchist ideology of the time or could be considered anarchists themselves. Much of Nechaev’s contribution was to prioritise

³⁷⁴ Pietro Di Paola, ‘Carlo Pisacane’s La Rivoluzione. Revolution: An Alternative Answer to the Italian Question’, *Anarchist Studies* 21, no. 2 (2013): 115–16.

³⁷⁵ Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872–1886*, 1st paperback ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 76.

³⁷⁶ Bakunin, ‘Letters to a Frenchman’, in Graham, *Anarchism*, 101.

³⁷⁷ Carlo Cafiero, ‘Action’, in Graham, *Anarchism*, 152.

³⁷⁸ Alexander Sedlmaier, ‘The Consuming Visions of Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Anarchists: Actualising Political Violence Transnationally’, *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’Histoire* 14, no. 3 (September 2007): 284, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507480701611563>.

³⁷⁹ Laqueur, *Voices of Terror*.

the need for immediate action in response to an existential threat rather than the need to maintain ideological coherence or purity, such as other pragmatic doctrinal contributions from authors such as Zaichnevesky, who in his *Young Russia*, published in 1862, had declared that ‘anyone who is not with us is against us, and an enemy, and enemies must be ex- terminated by all means’.³⁸⁰

Pomper refers to Zaichnevesky’s pamphlet as ‘the most bloodthirsty pamphlet of the period 1861–62’.³⁸¹ While Nechaev largely avoided explicit references to either the core principles of anarchist ideology or the conventional doctrine of propaganda of the deed, his work, along with that of other revolutionaries, contributed to a general legitimisation of violent action and the broader belief that the revolution itself warranted fermentation through acts of revolutionary insurrection. While the actions of those who interpreted propaganda of the deed to mean violence and terrorism at times diverged from the initial intentions of those who had advocated the idea, the role of the legitimising ideological framework of anarchism, and the call to arms that propaganda of the deed as it came to be interpreted, contributed substantially to the emergence and coalescence of terrorism as a distinct phenomenon. In this sense, Russia provides a useful example of the trajectory of ideology and doctrine as interpreted and manifested by various actors and culminating with the successful assassination of Tsar Alexander II in March 1881.

Propaganda of the deed became increasingly removed from a coherent and considered element of anarchist thought or an element of the idea that a calibrated act of revolutionary insurrection could inspire a broad-based specifically anarchist revolution against the state. Increasingly, in terms of the doctrinal ideas being advocated and propagated and the actions being undertaken in their name, propaganda of the deed came to act as a rudimentary justification for violence, disconnected from ideological or strategic considerations. Nechaev’s *Catechism*, Zaichnevesky’s *Young Russia* and, most importantly, Morozov’s 1880 *The Terrorist Struggle*³⁸² came to explicitly call for violence and terrorism. Meanwhile, Morozov called for the terrorist movement to ‘clarify theoretically the idea of “terroristic

³⁸⁰ A full translation of *Young Russia* is contained in Jeffrey Rooney, ‘The Question of Revolutionary Organization in the Career of Petr Grigor’ Evich Zaichnevskii’, *The Russian Review* 41, no. 1 (1982): 47–59, <https://doi.org/10.2307/129564>.

³⁸¹ Philip Pomper, ‘Nechaev and Tsaricide: The Conspiracy within the Conspiracy’, *The Russian Review* 33, no. 2 (1974): 130, <https://doi.org/10.2307/128282>.

³⁸² Nikolai Morozov, ‘The Terrorist Struggle’, in Laqueur, *Terrorism Reader*, 72.

struggle” and show in practice the usefulness of the means it employs’. Among the closing remarks of his incendiary contribution:

the party should bring about the final disorganization, demoralization, and weakening of government for its actions of violence against freedom. This should be achieved through a consistent, punishing system used by terrorists. This system should make the government weak and incapable of taking any measures for the oppression of freedom.³⁸³

While the above is generally in keeping with the broad ideological parameters of an anarchist critique of authority and the broad principle of propaganda of the deed, authors such as Morozov managed to simplify and systematise the ideas circulating in the broader revolutionary movement, and to enable individuals, not necessarily deeply schooled in anarchist or socialist thought, or appreciative of the strategic potentiality of revolutionary violence, to participate in acts of what they and their audience could perceive as quasi-endorsed revolutionary practice, and explicitly referred to as terrorism. The Russian experience culminated with the campaign’s eventual success to assassinate the Tsar, but this came about only after numerous attempts and in the context of an increasingly active militant component within the Russian revolutionary movement. This intertwined with the intellectual, doctrinal and practical evolution of propaganda of the deed across Europe. The Russian experience would come to dramatically shape the entire anarchist terrorism phenomena, in terms of refining the practice of terrorism itself, but additionally in demonstrating its feasibility and effectiveness, and in developing an appreciable and contextualised practice that a multitude of audiences was capable of understanding.

Karakozov

Even before the 1866 assassination attempt on the life of the Tsar by Karakazov, the perpetrator had joined what was known as ‘The Organisation’, established between 1865 and 1866, within which had emerged a smaller cell known as Hell. Hell, Venturi claims, was established for the specific purpose of terrorism.³⁸⁴ Verhoeven emphasises incorporating the idea of regicide into Hell via Karakazov’s cousin Ishutin.³⁸⁵ The nominal leader of Hell ultimately confessed to being the primary advocate for regicide within the terrorist cell

³⁸³ Laqueur, *Terrorism Reader*, 78.

³⁸⁴ Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 336.

³⁸⁵ Verhoeven and Karakozov, *Odd Man Karakozov*, 20.

existent in the broader organisation.³⁸⁶ In reference to Hell, Venturi explicitly states, ‘its goal was terrorism aimed at those members of the government and land-owning classes who were particularly hated by the people’.³⁸⁷ Ishutin most explicitly advocated for ‘naked terrorism’ and the targeting of ‘particularly hated members of the government and nobility, with the Tsar as the target-in-chief’.³⁸⁸ Karakazov’s attempt, while ultimately unsuccessful in its effort to assassinate the Tsar, laid a blueprint that was refined and replicated until its successful deployment in 1881. Karakozov conceived of his action as ‘factual propaganda’.³⁸⁹ In addition to the pistol with which he had sought to undertake his regicide, he was arrested in possession of a manifesto entitled ‘To My Worker Friends’, which stated in part, ‘I decided to terminate the tsar-villain and to die for my beloved people. If I succeed, I will die with the idea that my death will be of use to my dear friend, the Russian peasant ... My death will be an example and inspiration for them’.³⁹⁰

Along with a substantial body of commentary that sought to understand what had happened when Karakozov, despite the protests of his fellow revolutionaries, attempted and failed to assassinate the Tsar in 1866, Dostoevsky’s *Devils*, published in 1871, around the time of Nechaev’s arrest, assisted in making the actions of what would come to be understood as terrorism comprehensible to a broader audience. Verhoeven emphasised this point sharply when referring to Karakazov’s ‘unheard of’ act and refers to the process by which his act ‘became the subject of a cacophonous onslaught of commentary. Law, literature, media, medicine, fashion, fine arts, and religion—none were left unaffected, all sought to make sense of what seemed a senseless story’.³⁹¹

Karakazov’s act provides the preliminary anchoring of an understanding of something resembling terrorism for a multitude of audiences. The incident itself was limited in its impact by its fundamental novelty, in that the idea of a citizen taking it upon themselves to attack, least of all seek to assassinate, the absolute monarch remained unprecedented and incomprehensible. As Verhoeven argued, it was Karakazov’s attempted assassination that constitutes the first manifestation of something that can meaningfully be considered as

³⁸⁶ Adam B. Ulam, *In the Name of the People: Prophets and Conspirators in Prerevolutionary Russia* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1977), 158.

³⁸⁷ Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 336.

³⁸⁸ Ronald Seth, *The Russian Terrorists: The Story of the Narodniki* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966), 28–29.

³⁸⁹ Verhoeven and Karakozov, *Odd Man Karakozov*, 5–7.

³⁹⁰ D. Karakozov, ‘To My Worker Friends’, in Verhoeven and Karakozov, *Odd Man Karakozov*, 60.

³⁹¹ Verhoeven and Karakozov, *Odd Man Karakozov*, 6.

terrorism and provided the beginnings of a series of interconnected events that culminated with the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II.

Nechaev

Understanding the role of Sergey Nechaev in the broader evolution of anarchist informed terrorism is best encapsulated in the words of Cannac, who stated, ‘Nechayev’s importance should be gauged not by his influence—which was brief, sporadic, and short-lived—but by his keen and prophetic vision of revolutionary struggle’.³⁹² The compounding influences of events, ideological propagation, and doctrinal refinement increased the likelihood of terrorism being undertaken and made it an increasingly appealing course of action to those militant members of the revolutionary movement. Nechaev contributed to this, albeit not in the directly consequential manner he envisaged. Karakazov’s attempted assassination provided substantial inspiration to Nechaev, one of the most divisive figures among the Russian revolutionaries, but nonetheless, a figure whose influence would echo well beyond the small circle of devotees he amassed during his active revolutionary activity. Nechaev himself, while never successful in mobilising sufficient revolutionary resources to undertake an actual attack, played a key role in advocating for a pragmatic, amoral approach to revolutionary insurrection and terrorism. His 1869 *Catechism of the Revolutionary* would ultimately shape and inform radical discourse regarding the need for action rather than ongoing theoretical debate in Russia and beyond. His words would be republished in the US in Johann Most’s *Freiheit* and Alan Parson’s *The Alarm*³⁹³ and would endure well beyond the period of anarchist terrorism. In his 1968 autobiographical *Soul on Ice*, Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver wrote of his prison reading and stated, in addition to reading Lenin, ‘I fell in love with Bakunin and Nechayev’s Catechism of the Revolutionist—the principles of which, along with some of Machiavelli’s advice, I sought to incorporate into my own behavior. I took the Catechism for my bible’.³⁹⁴

The Black Panthers would ultimately reprint Nechaev’s *Catechism* in the mid-1960s,³⁹⁵ embracing, as would numerous other terrorists and revolutionaries, the ‘ends justify the

³⁹² René Cannac, *Aux Sources de la Révolution Russe: Netchaiev, du Nihilisme au Terrorisme*, 169, cited in Chaliand and Blin, *History of Terrorism*, 139.

³⁹³ Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 171.

³⁹⁴ Eldridge Cleaver and Ishmael Reed, *Soul on Ice*, repr. (New York, NY: Dell, 1999), 31.

³⁹⁵ Dana M. Williams, ‘Black Panther Radical Factionalization and the Development of Black Anarchism’, *Journal of Black Studies* 46, no. 7 (2015): 683; David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The*

means' rationalisation of all and any methods of revolutionary activity that was embodied in his work. Nechaev continued a more militant line of advocacy in keeping with the lineage of Morozov and others and of Karl Heinzen, whose 1849 *On Murder* restated classical justifications for tyrannicide. The text called for 'new inventions—explosives, underground chambers, bombs planted under pavements, containers filled with poison—devices that might rain destruction on whole regiments of supporters of tyranny'.³⁹⁶

Beyond his revolutionary vision and ongoing agitation within the broader revolutionary current, Nechaev provides a linkage³⁹⁷ between manifestations of preliminary anarchist terrorism. Vera Zasulich, whom Nechaev had cynically professed his love to shortly after their first meeting to recruit her to his cause, wrote of him that rather than having a deep intellectual appreciation for the circumstances that justified the revolution or for the ideological framework developed in response to those circumstances, the:

source of his revolutionary energy were [*sic*] not views carried from contact with this milieu [the intelligentsia], but burning hatred, and hatred not only of the government, of institutions, not only of the exploiters of the people, but of entire society, of all the educated strata, of all these sons of gentlemen, rich and poor, conservative, liberal and radical.³⁹⁸

Nechaev himself never successfully coordinated a sustained organisation or circle, nor did he or any of his acolytes even undertake an attempted attack. Nechaev's influence was more in his explicit, unapologetic advocacy for action for the sake of action. Pomper highlights that significant sections of *Narodnaia Rasprava* (People's Justice), the journal that Nechaev published two editions of and that shared its name with his short-lived, small cell of revolutionaries,³⁹⁹ focused substantially on Karakozov. The second edition dedicated substantial column length to his story.⁴⁰⁰ The journal published an explicit homage to Karakozov in 1870, when it wrote in endorsing tones, 'a general uprising of the tormented

Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party, 1st ed. (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Comp, 1993), 180–81.

³⁹⁶ Carl Wittke, *Against the Current: The Life of Karl Heinzen (1809–80)* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 74.

³⁹⁷ Pipes highlights the small network of actors that were involved in revolutionary activity when he highlights that 'Vera's sister, Alexandra, married Petr G. Uspenskii, one of Nechaev's most loyal adherents and followed him to Siberia after he had been sentenced to hard labor. Her other sister, Ekaterina, also became involved with Nechaev through her husband: she was arrested in 1869'. Richard Pipes, 'The Trial of Vera Z', *Russian History* 37, no. 1 (2010): 24.

³⁹⁸ Pipes, 'Trial of Vera Z', 24.

³⁹⁹ James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1980), 399.

⁴⁰⁰ Pomper, 'Nechaev and Tsaricide', 130–31.

Russian people is inevitable and at hand ... The beginning of our sacred task was laid in the morning of April 4, 1866, by Dmitri Karakozov'.⁴⁰¹

It was around the time of Nechaev's eventual arrest that Dostoevsky published *Devils*,⁴⁰² in which the author channels and reflects Nechaev through the novel's protagonist, Pyotr Verkhovensky. During the writing process, the author made working notes that referred explicitly to Nechaev, upon whom much of the story arc revolves, as being 'not a socialist but a rebel. His ideal is insurrection and destruction and then, whatever might come'.⁴⁰³ At his trial, Nechaev refused to abandon his stance, continuing to defy the court's authority and shouting, 'I refuse to be a slave of your tyrannical government ... I do not recognize the Emperor and the laws of this country'.⁴⁰⁴ At his civil execution⁴⁰⁵ following his extradition from Switzerland as a common criminal, he declared, 'Down with the Tsar, down with despotism! Long live freedom! They've made me, a political criminal, a simple murderer'!⁴⁰⁶

The most explicit demonstration of Nechaev's enduring influence and appeal to the militantly oriented elements of the revolutionary movement is in the correspondence between him and the members of Narodnaya Volya (NV) in the period prior to their assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Nechaev had successfully established a means to smuggle letters out of the Peter and Paul Fortress to which he had ultimately been sentenced after his trial. Nechaev's ability to undertake what Hingley refers to as a 'correspondence course in tsaricide for the benefit of *People's Will*'⁴⁰⁷ is confirmed by Vera Figner, who reflected on the excitement of

⁴⁰¹ Ulam, *In the Name of the People*, 184.

⁴⁰² Also known as *Devils*, or *The Possessed*.

⁴⁰³ Vinokur, V. 'All of a Sudden: Dostoevsky's Demonologies of Terror', in *Just Assassins*, ed. Anemone.

⁴⁰⁴ Paul Avrich, *Bakunin & Nechaev*, 2nd ed. (London: Freedom Press, 1987), 25.

⁴⁰⁵ 'Civil executions of "state criminals" during the reign of Alexander II were intended to underline the absolute supremacy of the autocracy and the legal and moral defeat of individuals who dared to challenge it. They choreographed ceremonies of collective condemnation from the assembled crowds who represented the wider community of the tsar's subjects ... Yet when at the civil executions of revolutionaries both convicts and spectators departed from the state's script of public humiliation and orderly opprobrium, the performance of monarchical power and autocratic justice proved liable to subversion. Eyewitness testimony, legal commentaries and official reports reveal how Russian radicals and their supporters could succeed in hijacking the ceremony in order to repudiate the symbolic power of the state, proclaim their ideals and demonstrate political commitment and solidarity. The civil executions of revolutionaries expose the collapsing hierarchies and diminishing moral and judicial authority of the autocracy in the reign of Alexander II.' Daniel Beer, 'Civil Death, Radical Protest and The Theatre of Punishment in the Reign of Alexander II', *Past & Present* 250, no. 1 (February 2021): 173, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtaa003>.

⁴⁰⁶ Patyk, *Written in Blood*, 100.

⁴⁰⁷ Ronald Hingley, *Nihilists: Russian Radicals and Revolutionaries in the Reign of Alexander II (1855–81)* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), 59.

her organisation when they received correspondence from Nechaev, and on the reconstruction of his reputation by her and her fellow terrorists, when she wrote⁴⁰⁸:

The letter made a strange impression. The dark stain on Nechayev's name suddenly disappeared ... that whole net of lies, in the name of the end sanctifies the means, were forgotten. We saw a mind which was neither enfeebled nor clouded by many years of solitary confinement; a will which the heavy burden of a cruel punishment had been unable to break; an energy that had not been weakened by failures.⁴⁰⁹

Zasulich

The 1866 failed assassination was the beginning of what has been referred to as the 'Emperor hunt'.⁴¹⁰ Through the 1870s, numerous radical publications appeared in Russia, predominantly published by émigré populations in Geneva, Paris and London.⁴¹¹ These publications played a crucial role in informing and shaping radical discourse within Russia and transnationally while debating the various competing methodologies for facilitating the revolution. By the mid-1870s, the second manifestation of Land and Freedom, the organisation from which NV would eventually splinter, had been established. By 1877, Vera Zasulich would attempt to assassinate the governor of St. Petersburg.⁴¹²

Compared to the 'unheard of' assassination attempt of Karakozov, Zasulich became a celebrity of sorts within radical circles and with the broader public; he had become equipped to interpret the act as being inherently revolutionary and as terrorism, albeit without the implied pejorative connotations of contemporary understandings. As Hardy notes, 'Zasulich received enormous publicity; her name became a household word among the radicals of her day. In Russia, the radical press and public saw her act as a deed of highest heroism ...

⁴⁰⁸ It should be noted that these reflections are referred to in all the following texts but without specific references to page number or editions of Figner's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*. Nomad, cited below, quotes directly from her memoirs, but again, does not reference this. Subsequent searches of both the hard copy and electronic copy of her memoirs are unable to locate the sections referred to. Patyk, *Written in Blood*; Avrich, *Bakunin & Nechaev*; David Footman, *Red Prelude: A Biography of Zhelyabov*, 2nd ed. (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1968); Seth, *Russian Terrorists*. Also cited in Radzinsky's *Alexander II and Siljak's, Angel of Vengeance: The Girl Who Shot the Governor of St. Petersburg and Sparked the Age of Assassination* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 2009).

⁴⁰⁹ Max Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1961), 252.

⁴¹⁰ Claudia Verhoeven, 'Time of Terror, Terror of Time on the Impatience of Russian Revolutionary Terrorism (Early 1860s–Early 1880s)', *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 58, no. 2 (2010): 269.

⁴¹¹ Martin A. Miller, 'The Transformation of The Russian Revolutionary Emigre Press at the End of the Nineteenth Century', *Russian History* 16, no. 2/4 (1989): 197–207.

⁴¹² Zasulich, and the assassination itself, is dealt with at length in Jay Bergman, *Vera Zasulich: A Biography* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1983); Siljak, *Angel of Vengeance*.

Abroad, in the émigré journals of Switzerland, she was hailed as a heroine, and in the radical press of France her case was followed in detail.’⁴¹³

Zasulich’s attempt began to demonstrate the interpretability and quasi-legitimacy of, as a function of shifts in public sentiment towards the social question and the failure of the authorities to address public grievances,⁴¹⁴ a practice that would come to be a crucial component of revolutionary activity, both in Russia specifically, but across Europe and the US. Zasulich’s terrorism, now much more capable of being coherently interpreted, understood and vastly more effective in implicitly and explicitly communicating its justifications and ideological associations, was the beginning of a more formally considered act that more closely reflects terrorism as the phenomenon manifests itself in a contemporary context. Most importantly, when understood as possessing continuity with the actions of Karakozov, it emphasises the refinement of the practice as it began to emerge and coalesce. This continuity is reinforced when the radicalising influence of Nechaev on Zasulich is considered. In her own words, Zasulich said of her early 1869 meeting with Nechaev: it constituted ‘my first serious conversation about the revolution, my first step towards the cause’.⁴¹⁵ Further evidence of the more sympathetic response to Zasulich’s attack is reflected in her relative freedom in Geneva after the incident and the coverage of revolutionary newspapers such as *Obschee Delo*. The paper wrote of her as possessing ‘a heroic nature from the stock of Charlotte Corday, but more exalted than her because she acted not under the influence of religious fanaticism promising eternal salvation, but in the name of insulted human dignity’.⁴¹⁶

The recently established *Obshchina* published commentary from its editor⁴¹⁷ and soon-to-be infamous Sergey Stepnyak-Kravchinsky.⁴¹⁸ Overemphasising the significance of Zasulich’s actions, Stepnyak-Kravchinsky wrote, ‘The Russian autocracy has been killed; March 31 was the last day of its existence’.⁴¹⁹ Zasulich’s celebrity went as far as to inspire Oscar Wilde’s

⁴¹³ Deborah Hardy, *Land and Freedom: The Origins of Russian Terrorism, 1876–1879* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1987), 61.

⁴¹⁴ Her target, Trepov, had already survived an attempt on his life in 1869 and had a reputation for brutal counter measures against protesters and revolutionaries.

⁴¹⁵ Vera Zasulich, in Barbara Alpern Engel, ed., *Five Sisters: Women against the Tsar: The Memoirs of Five Young Anarchist Women of the 1870’s* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 73.

⁴¹⁶ Alfred Erich Senn, ‘The Russian Émigré Press: From Herzen’s Kolokol to Lenin’s Iskra’, *Media Transformations* 4 (2008), <https://www.vdu.lt/cris/bitstream/20.500.12259/31736/1/ISBN9789955124702.pdf>, 68.

⁴¹⁷ Hardy, *Land and Freedom*, 69.

⁴¹⁸ Hereby referred to as Stepniak, as per his 1882, *Underground Russia*.

⁴¹⁹ Quoted in Senn, ‘Russian Émigré Press’, 69.

first dramatic play, *Vera; Or the Nihilists*, written at least partly from genuine political motivation. He later emphasised that he was trying to ‘express within the limits of art that Titan cry of the peoples for liberty, which ... is threatening thrones, and making governments unstable from Spain to Russia’.⁴²⁰ The framing of Zasulich’s actions as legitimate and morally defensible was an important component of the initial representations of terrorism. In addition to her actions alone, her trial played a crucial role in shaping the public’s perception of both her and the broader movement and their claims of justified violence. As French journalist Valbert wrote at the time, ‘during 48 hours, Europe forgot about war and peace, about Bismarck, Lord Beaconsfield and Prince Gorchakov ... to occupy itself exclusively with Vera Zasulich and the strange judiciary adventure of which this unknown [woman] was the heroine.’⁴²¹

Stepniak (Stepnyak-Kravchinsky)

In August 1878, Stepniak stabbed Metzentsev, Head of the Third Section, the Russian secret police. Six months before his successful attack, Land and Liberty, whose journal Stepniak coedited with Morozov, published a communiqué inspired by the actions of Zasulich. It declared that the social and political context had changed, and the time for action had arrived. Violence and assassination were now a legitimate component of revolutionary action. This was not an isolated conceptualisation as a growing body of radical press, but a sympathetic cultural output had been making a case for, at the very least, the legitimacy of the social question, if not explicitly representing terrorist violence in a positive light. In their own words, Land and Liberty stated, ‘Death to Trepov! Death to other such scoundrels! Death! It is time to get them off the face of the earth, then truth will triumph on earth, time is moving in this direction now’.⁴²²

Stepniak’s attack was a further manifestation of the increasingly refined, coherent and understood practice of terrorism. This action was significant for multiple reasons beyond the symbolic nature of the target selection. Patyk described the determination to engage in a stabbing attack as drawing substantially on the traditions associated with the practice of tyrannicide, traditionally perceived as at least quasi-legitimate, and on the literary

⁴²⁰ Elizabeth C. Miller, *Framed: The New Woman Criminal in British Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1353/book.6420>, 194.

⁴²¹ G. Valbert in *Revue des Deux Mondes, Troisième Période*, vol. 27 (May 1878), 216, cited in Pipes, ‘Trial of Vera Z’, 1.

⁴²² Cited in Verhoeven, ‘Time of Terror’, 261.

representations of these acts, and in the process seeking to legitimate not only the act itself but the ideological justifications embedded within the act and the lineage of actions that it sought to build upon.⁴²³ Stepniak's attack was innovative: it was the first terrorist attack to directly publish a claim of responsibility. In the pamphlet *Death for Death* published shortly after the incident, Stepniak defied his colleagues' advice and remained in Russia to ensure the publication of his justifications. His pamphlet stated:

The chief of gendarmes, the leader of a gang that has all of Russia under its heel, has been killed. Few have not guessed whose hands dealt the fatal blow. But in order to avoid any confusion, we announce for general information that gendarme chief Adjutant General Mezentsov was in fact killed by us, revolutionary socialists ... We tried the perpetrators and inciters of the brutalities done to us. The trial was as just as the ideas we are defending. This trial found Adjutant General Mezentsov deserving of death for his villainous deeds against us, and the sentence was carried out on Mikhailovsky Square on the morning of August 4, 1878.⁴²⁴

Reflecting the ongoing connectivity of the small cadre of Russian revolutionaries engaged in terrorist violence, Senn claims that in the aftermath of Stepniak's attack, he and Zasulich fled Russia to Geneva together.⁴²⁵ Despite their ideological differences, Zasulich and Stepniak remained friends and colleagues well into the 1880s, first in Geneva and then in London, where Stepniak established himself as a recognised authority on the Russian revolutionary movement, particularly with the publication of his *Russian Underground*.⁴²⁶ This series of precursor incidents laid the operational background for the emergence of NV, the first formerly constituted terrorist organisation, which would ultimately undertake the spectacular attack that defined Russian revolutionary terrorism and anarchist terrorism in the minds of authorities and the general public. The stereotypical representation of an anarchist terrorist as a bomb-carrying madman drew much more substantially from the assassination of the Tsar by NV than the perceived-as-justified or defensible revolutionary acts of earlier Russian and European terrorists. More substantially, while Russia was by no means alone in its experiences of anarchist terrorism, as incidents and movements were emerging across Europe, Russia demonstrated the feasibility of terrorism as a practice, codified it in doctrinal terms, and ultimately undertook an act of sufficient transnational consequence that the

⁴²³ The author cites Pierre Corneille's *Cinna*, Voltaire's *Brutus*, Pushkin's *Kinzhalt*. Lynn Ellen Patyk, 'Remembering "The Terrorism": Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinskii's "Underground Russia"', *Slavic Review* 68, no. 4 (2009): 765, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25593788>.

⁴²⁴ Édvard Radzinskiĭ, *Alexander II: The Last Great Tsar* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2005), 283.

⁴²⁵ Senn, 'Russian Émigré Press', 69.

⁴²⁶ Stepniak, *Underground Russia*.

linkage between Russia, anarchists and terrorism became an indelible component of the overall perception and understanding of terrorism by publics, counterforces and practitioners.

Narodnaya Volya

By the time NV formed as a distinct entity separate from its parent organisation, Zemlya i Volya, its members had become largely disillusioned by the strategies of its parent organisation. However, before the formalisation of the split, individuals who were still members of Land and Liberty had begun engaging in terrorism. In April 1879, a new publication that published the work of Morozov and others, *Listok Zemli i Voli*, which reflected their views regarding shifting from an exclusively defensive conceptualisation of terrorism to a more offensive orientation, began production and distribution. Hardy highlights that the leaflet published articles that ‘openly justified terrorism’.⁴²⁷ This publication reflected the views of a faction within Zemlya i Volya known as Liberty or Death, which would ultimately coalesce after the formal split in the organisation into what was known as the Executive Committee of NV. By June the same year, after the failure to reconcile the differences within the organisation, NV was formed. As Seth explicitly recounts, ‘it was agreed those who supported terrorism should form themselves into a new Party, to which they gave the name *Narodnaya Volya*, the *Will of the People*’.⁴²⁸

Following their formation, NV engaged in a broad range of activities, including publishing five editions of their journal bearing the same name as their organisation. Offord emphasised how the newly formed organisation relied both on the traditional justifications anchored in ideas of tyrannicide and tsaricide but also sought democratic and constitutional reforms in Russia. He cites the Executive Committee program that demanded, in part, ‘complete freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, association and electoral agitation’.⁴²⁹ Regardless of its more defensible goals, NV was explicit in their embrace of terrorism. Beyond directly and enthusiastically referencing the attempted assassinations associated with the revolutions of 1848, in his 1880 *The Terrorist Struggle*, Morozov made numerous calls for terrorism and specifically for assassinations. He referred to the activities of NV as ‘terroristic revolution’,⁴³⁰ inciting his readers with phrases such as: ‘Do not be afraid of the

⁴²⁷ Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 640.

⁴²⁸ Seth, *Russian Terrorists*, 64.

⁴²⁹ Derek Offord, *The Russian Revolutionary Movement in the 1880s*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, UK ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29.

⁴³⁰ Laqueur, *Voices of Terror*, 76.

Tsar, do not be afraid of despotic rulers because all of them are weak and helpless against secret sudden assassinations'.⁴³¹

As identified earlier, NV was not immediately successful in their efforts to assassinate the Tsar. It would require multiple plots before they could achieve both their direct objectives and their broader indirect objectives. It is also necessary to note that there had been additional terrorist attacks before the formal splintering of Land and Liberty, such as Goldenberg's assassination of the Governor-General of Kharkov in February 1879.⁴³² Ultimately, the Tsar would survive eight attempts on his life,⁴³³ including the bombing of the Tsar's Winter Palace in February 1880 by Stephen Khalturin. The latter had gained employment as a carpenter at the palace and progressively brought dynamite into the palace. A delayed dinner guest meant that while the attack succeeded in detonating the device, the Tsar was not in the dining room underneath where Khalturin had placed the explosives.⁴³⁴ While this was not the first instance of explosives being used by revolutionaries, with so-called Orsini bombs⁴³⁵ having been deployed previously, along with infamous plots such as the Gunpowder Plot targeting King James I, what NV achieved was of vastly greater consequence. A distinction can be made between these previous instances and the activities of NV. In the attempt referred to above and the successful assassination of the Tsar in March 1881, they were the 'first to use dynamite on a wide scale'.⁴³⁶ As Laqueur further highlights, dynamite did not become the dominant weapon of late-nineteenth-century terrorists, despite the sensationalist hype of popular perception, the optimism and hope of terrorists and their propagandists. What transpired was that dynamite became so intimately linked with terrorism in the public's mind and as part of a broader narrative on anarchist terrorism that whether an explosion was linked to terrorism, or anarchism specifically, became of secondary importance. Dynamite was at the centre of the ability of NV to make an international statement and to force themselves and their ideology, dynamite, assassination and terrorism onto the front pages of the international press and to the forefront of the operational calculus of radicals the world over. As NV member, Mikhail Frolenko, is quoted as having stated, 'this assassination would not have

⁴³¹ Laqueur, *Voices of Terror*, 77.

⁴³² Hardy, *Land and Freedom*, 74.

⁴³³ Astrid von Borcke, 'Violence and Terror in Russian Revolutionary Populism: NV 1879–83', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Gerhard Hirschfeld, *Social Protest, Violence and Terror in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, 1982, 53.

⁴³⁴ Burleigh, *Blood and Rage*, 47–50.

⁴³⁵ 'Orsini bombs' were designed to remove 'the uncertainty of slow burning fused weapons' by employing highly sensitive fulminate of mercury triggers 61 of the sort that were increasingly used by gunsmiths in the early nineteenth century'. Revill, *Improvised Explosive Devices*, 7.

⁴³⁶ Laqueur and Hoffman, *History of Terrorism*, 92.

created the same impression; it would have been interpreted as an ordinary murder, and would not have expressed a new stage in the revolutionary movement'.⁴³⁷

The successful assassination in 1881 forced dynamite and anarchism into the broader international public discourse regarding social conditions, labour rights and broader questions of democratic rights and representation. The success of the assassination also facilitated and heightened the broader spread of anarchist-inspired terrorism and, by extension, discourse regarding the social ills it claimed to address across Europe and the US. In the US, in particular, in the years leading up to the infamous 1886 Haymarket Square bombing, radicals in Chicago generally regarded as the centre of anarchist and socialist agitation, would hold 'annual fetes that celebrated the 1871 Paris Commune and the 1881 dynamite assassination of Russia's Czar Alexander II'.⁴³⁸

Of those who came to become most intimately associated with the advocacy of dynamite and the value it offered was German socialist and anarchist who migrated to the US just as anarchism and socialism began to entrench themselves within the broader immigrant labour communities affected by the same Industrial Revolution processes identified earlier. As Adamic has stated, Johann Most 'became the chief exponent of the ideas of Bakunin, Nechayev and other European "propagandists of the deed"'.⁴³⁹

Transatlantic Anarchism

While Russia and Europe contributed substantially to the development and articulation of propaganda of the deed, similar permutations were underway in the US. Similar societal changes shaped by the Industrial Revolution were producing substantial sympathy for anarchist ideas, and the confrontations emerging between labour and capital shaped much of the politics of the time. Radical newspapers, much as they were in Europe, were a primary platform for sharing both the ideological and the doctrinal principles of anarchism. It is important to briefly recognise two of the most influential from among the numerous publications, in multiple languages, that were being published. By the early 1880s, anarchist periodicals and journals were being produced in a diversity of languages and catering to a

⁴³⁷ Ze'ev Iviarsky, 'Individual Terror: Concept and Typology', *Journal of Contemporary History* 12, no. 1 (1977): 47.

⁴³⁸ Jeffery A. Clymer, *America's Culture of Terrorism: Violence, Capitalism and the Written Word* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 35.

⁴³⁹ Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America*, rev. ed. (Edinburgh, UK: AK Press, 2008), 31.

wide array of audiences, but particularly to the expanding masses of low paid labour that were inhabiting the larger cities, especially Chicago, which would become the symbolic centre of American anarchism, especially in the aftermath of the Haymarket bombing and the subsequent execution of those known as the ‘Haymarket martyrs.’⁴⁴⁰ Anarchism in the US emerged partly through immigrant communities, especially German immigrant communities. These communities were frequently employed in lower-paying labouring jobs, enabling socialist and anarchist ideology to leverage the grievances of industrialised labour.

Two of the most consequential periodicals of the time were Johann Most’s *Freiheit* (in German), originally established in 1879 in London before Most migrated to the US and resurrected the journal in New York; and Alan Parson’s *The Alarm*, one of the few English-language anarchist papers, established in 1884 in Chicago. Both newspapers were explicit in their support of propaganda of the deed, and more specifically, the use of dynamite in the name of the anarchist cause. Both Most and Parsons were involved, Parsons albeit more directly as one of those prosecuted and executed, in the controversies associated with the trial of the Haymarket affair. Most was perceived as implicated, at least in an inspirational role, in the events at Haymarket. As his biographer notes, ‘he had much to do with Haymarket indirectly. He gave speeches, wrote articles, and distributed pamphlets ... he was seen at the bottom of Haymarket’.⁴⁴¹

Most, nicknamed ‘Dynamost’⁴⁴² by his detractors, was most well-known for his infamous *Revolutionäre Kriegswissenschaft* (Science of Revolutionary Warfare). He sought employment in an explosives factory to undertake the research necessary to author the document.⁴⁴³ *Revolutionary Warfare* had first been serialised in German in his *Freiheit* periodical before being translated and published in Parson’s *The Alarm*. Before he arrived in the US, Most was sentenced to 16 months’ incarceration by British authorities for his publication of *Freiheit* in the aftermath of the assassination of Alexander II. Most’s response to the assassination was considered beyond the pale by British authorities, who had been comparatively tolerant of anarchist agitators within their jurisdiction until that point. Most

⁴⁴⁰ James R. Green, *Death in the Haymarket a Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing That Divided Gilded Age America* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2007), 305.

⁴⁴¹ Frederic Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror: A Biography of Johann Most* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1980), 130.

⁴⁴² Roger Griffin, *Terrorist’s Creed: Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁴⁴³ Beverly Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terror* (Oxford ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 49.

wrote of the assassination ‘Sterling propaganda-by-the-deed!... Let more monarchs be killed...until the last tyrant, the last plutocrat, and the last priest are dead’.⁴⁴⁴ The headline, published on March 19 and framed in red, declared ‘AT LAST’, and Triumph! Triumph! One of the vilest tyrants corroded through and through by corruption, is no more’.⁴⁴⁵ Most’s reputation was well established before his arrival in the US.

He became a celebrity in his own right, having established a substantial reputation as a popular speaker in radical circles and a provocative and incendiary publisher. His *Freiheit* was an explicit endorser of not just propaganda of the deed but of dynamite as the weapon of choice for those who embraced the doctrine. Avrich described *Freiheit* as ‘the most uninhibited radical paper of the day, preaching the gospel of revolutionary conspiracy and propaganda of the deed’.⁴⁴⁶ Of his numerous incitements, anarchist journal *Liberty* translated and published the following from *Freiheit*, wherein Most exalted his readers that, ‘the existing system will be quickest and most radically overthrown by the annihilation of its exponents. Therefore, massacres of the enemies of the people must be set in motion’.⁴⁴⁷

Most was committed, at least rhetorically, to the most extreme manifestation of propaganda of the deed before his ideological conversion to anarchism. While still based in London and publishing the earlier socialist iteration of *Freiheit*, his newspaper ran the abovementioned supportive headline in response to the assassination of Alexander II. This action and the associated call for readers to engage in acts of tyrannicide resulted in Most being sentenced to 16 months in prison in the UK. Most subsequently relocated to New York, arriving in 1882, and delivering a radical sermon on the evening of his arrival, to an audience of thousands in Manhattan, where he spoke of the how ‘the spirit of revolution was rising ... and the workers of the world must be ready to act’.⁴⁴⁸ By the time of his arrival, Goyens notes that his ideological position ‘consisted of a mixture of Marxist-Blanquist and Bakuninist ideas ... advocated a revolutionary seizure of power’.⁴⁴⁹ Most’s affiliation with terrorism was partly anchored by his recognition of the utility of print media to propagate anarchist ideology, the

⁴⁴⁴ Trautmann, *Voice of Terror*, 45.

⁴⁴⁵ Deaglan O. Donghaile, *Blasted Literature: Victorian Political Fiction and the Shock of Modernism* (Edinburgh, UK : Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 138.

⁴⁴⁶ Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 64.

⁴⁴⁷ Cited in Wendy McElroy, *The Debates of Liberty: An Overview of Individualist Anarchism, 1881–1908* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 33.

⁴⁴⁸ Tom Goyens, ed., *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab’s Saloon to Occupy Wall Street* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 12.

⁴⁴⁹ Tom Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880–1914* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 94.

doctrine of propaganda of the deed and the explicit endorsement of assassination⁴⁵⁰ and dynamite. Most was attuned to commercial media, considering it a fact that ‘news of Johann Most sold newspapers.’ Most was largely responsible for introducing the militant ideas of propaganda of the deed and the explicit advocacy of militant action to the US.⁴⁵¹ As Adamic notes in his history of class conflict in the US, ‘the story of dynamite—the actual “stuff”—in the United States, as a weapon of the have-nots in their warfare against the haves, dates from Most’s arrival in the country’.⁴⁵²

Most’s influence is further evidenced by the proliferation of other anarchist publications that carried similar sentiments about terrorist violence and sought to inspire and endorse various acts of insurrectionary violence, all contextualised by the call for social revolution. More generally, Most and his fellow publishers, editors and spokespersons for the anarchist cause, and more specifically for the violent anarchist cause, were venerated by their supporters. Popular songs praised both Most and dynamite concurrently with *Freiheit* and other publications such as *Alarm* and *Vorbote*⁴⁵³ publishing lyrics and poems such as:

Dynamite today, dynamite tonight. Most tells how, he shows where. He says all in Freiheit. And his good little book on warfare⁴⁵⁴

Parson’s *The Alarm* famously published a lengthy ode to dynamite in February of 1885, which read in part:

Dynamite! Of all the good stuff, that is the stuff! Stuff several pounds of this sublime stuff into an inch pipe (gas or water pipe), plug up both ends, insert a cap with a fuse attached, place this in the immediate vicinity of a lot of rich loafers who live by the sweat of other people’s brows, and light the fuse ... In giving dynamite to the downtrodden millions of the globe science has done its best work.⁴⁵⁵

Through the International Working People’s Association, held in Pittsburgh in 1883, Parsons, Most and August Spies, who was also ultimately executed in association with the Haymarket

⁴⁵⁰ Most published an edition of *Freiheit* hours before the assassination of President McKinley in which he praised tyrannicide and ran a reprint of Karl Heinzen’s 1849 article *Murder*, which he noted as being ‘still true today’. See Trautmann, *Voice of Terror*, 213.

⁴⁵¹ Timothy Messer-Kruse, *The Haymarket Conspiracy: Transatlantic Anarchist Networks* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 92.

⁴⁵² Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America*, Episodes of Violence in U.S. History, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Chelsea House, 1983), 48.

⁴⁵³ *Vorbote* published a poem that read in part ‘Hurrah for science! Hurrah for dynamite!—the power which in our hands shall make an end of tyranny’. *Alarm* published ‘The slave that hath no other weapon; But the dagger, or dynamite, Is justified in using both, To snap the chain that binds him tight’. Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 167–68.

⁴⁵⁴ Trautmann, *Voice of Terror*, 124.

⁴⁵⁵ Adamic, *Dynamite*, 2008, 35.

affair, would codify their common cause. As co-authors of *To the Workingmen of America*, known colloquially as the *Pittsburgh Manifesto*, Most and Parsons consolidated the revolutionary platform of American anarchism. In what would be an instrumental and consequential statement, they closed the main body of the manifesto with the declaration that the ‘struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie must have a violent revolutionary character ... that the one remedy for the evils of capitalism was FORCE’.⁴⁵⁶ Of the six key objectives contained in the manifesto, the first began with ‘Destruction of the existing class rule, by all means, i.e., by energetic, relentless, revolutionary and international action’.⁴⁵⁷

The next chapter applies the conceptual framework to anarchist terrorism, initially with a focus on the adoption of dynamite as a manifestation of revolutionary terrorism. Subsequently, this chapter then evidences the manner in which early anarchist terrorists, ideologues and practitioners, conceived of the communicative and narrative aspects of their praxis. Lastly, the chapter discusses the emergence of the print news media, the radical presses, and of Russian literature, and the crucial role they played in framing the distinctly novel phenomena of terrorism.

⁴⁵⁶ Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 75.

⁴⁵⁷ Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 75.

Chapter Six: Reading Anarchist Terrorism: Applying the Framework

Identifying a single causal enabler of anarchist terrorism would be as impossible as it would be reductionist. The purpose of the following section is to demonstrate the utility of the aforementioned framework in explaining how it was that anarchist terrorism achieved its impacts at a strategic level. In doing so, this section will also seek to evidence how the three elements of the framework were necessarily integrated, and that by manipulating and exploiting these elements in the planning and operational design of their actions, anarchist terrorism not only forged a ‘new stage in the revolutionary movement’⁴⁵⁸ but demonstrated an entirely new mechanism by which the ‘have-nots’ could exercise and express their resistance to existing power structures and authority. Through the integrated exploitation of dynamite technology; the exploitation of the emergent print technologies that enabled the sharing of anarchist ideology via radical newspapers, the framing and interpretation of terrorism through the distribution of literature, the coverage and anarchist and radical actions by the print news media and the implementation of the doctrine of propaganda of the deed through the consideration of the communicative and narrative dynamics of their operations, anarchist terrorism was able to achieve a disproportionate global presence. It became perceived as a threat to the existing order in numerous domestic jurisdictions and transnationally. It provoked a range of draconian responses, which in multiple instances assisted in strengthening the broader revolutionary sentiment of which anarchist terrorism was a component. In Russia, the ultimate success of the Russian Revolution was, at least, partly dependent on the preliminary examples of the earlier anarchist revolutionaries and their demonstration of the capacity for significant resistance. If not for their active participation⁴⁵⁹ while in the US, the linkages between the labour movement, the socialist and anarchist movements and anarchist terrorism were vital to the ultimate effectiveness of the campaigns for workers’ rights. As Jensen noted, ‘the allure of propaganda by the deed was most effectively countered by undermining and devaluing this image and by opening up alternate outlets for the energies of discontented proletarians and middle-class idealists.’⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Iviansky, ‘Individual Terror’.

⁴⁵⁹ Paul Avrich, ‘The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution’, *The Russian Review* 26, no. 4 (1967): 341–50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/126893>.

⁴⁶⁰ Jensen, *The Battle against Anarchist Terrorism*, 341.

Most substantially, anarchist terrorism developed an enduring blueprint for terrorism as a phenomenon, evidencing the capacity of a small group of individuals suffering considerable asymmetric disadvantage to achieve substantial effects on their targets and adversaries.

The symbolic importance and power of dynamite, exploiting its global anarchist co-option through the 1881 assassination of the Tsar, came to communicate the grievances of a broad swathe of disaffected and underprivileged agitators, coming to represent to these 'have-nots' a vehicle for investing their aspirations for liberation. Dynamite became something more than a weapon in the strictly kinetic sense, although it was highly effective as such. It came to represent the very idea of justified resistance to injustice. Through its associated ideological claims of anarchism and broader ideologies associated with the social question in Russia, the US and beyond, dynamite became the means by which social injustice could be felt to be addressed. It enabled the oppressed and those who perceived themselves to be oppressed to take some form of action against the state. Dynamite addressed the asymmetry between the means of the state and the capabilities of revolutionaries. While it did not equalise capability, it enabled revolutionaries to possess *some* capability.

Through the advocates of anarchist ideology and the doctrine of propaganda of the deed and of dynamite and terrorism, the late 1800s and early 1900s came to be shaped as much by the stereotypical representation of anarchist terrorists as by the actual actions undertaken. This element of terrorist action, the means by which it created and exploited public sentiment, shaped by the newly established print media, was central to its capacity to achieve effect. Additionally, the same technologies that enabled the emergence of the print media industry also enabled the production of numerous radical newspapers and periodicals, which enabled the transnational distribution of ideological content, as well as the propagation of the doctrine of propaganda of the deed in both its classical form and its more virulent, terrorism advocating form. Print technologies also provided the means by which terrorism could evolve from the 'unheard of' attack of Karakozov in 1866 to the clearly understood, contextualised and interpreted assassination of the Tsar in 1881. The embrace of propaganda of the deed, the explicit consideration of the utility of violence as a communicative tool and the communicative dynamics necessary for terrorism to achieve anything at all, least of all strategic effect, was the final necessary element in anarchist terrorism that led to its ultimate enduring legacy.

Innovative Forms of Violence

When considered from a holistic perspective, the anarchist movement was responsible for multiple key innovations with regards to the development and deployment of terrorism, which can be analysed through the lenses that the previously articulated conceptual framework provides. Specifically, the framework provides three relevant manifestations of innovation in a terrorism context that apply to the terrorism that occurred through the late 1800s and early 1900s. The following section will use these elements to demonstrate how anarchist terrorism engaged in a variety of crucial forms of innovation that played a critical role in achieving strategic effect at a national and transnational level, and most substantially in demonstrating the baseline feasibility of revolutionary terrorism as a practice. The innovations that occurred during the phase of anarchist terrorism were unique. They represented sui generis of revolutionary action, distinct from other forms of insurrectionist violence, and thus constituted the preliminary form of revolutionary innovation. Additionally, across the movement as a whole and within NV, anarchist terrorism was a manifestation of incremental, internal innovation, whereby beginning with the actions of Karakozov in 1866, terrorist praxis incrementally evolved over time. The multiple attempts on the Tsar by NV demonstrated substantial internal innovation and refinement. Each of these will be expanded upon in the following sections.

Revolutionary Innovation

As was articulated in Chapter Three, revolutionary innovation refers to innovative forms that fundamentally alter the tactical or targeting options of a terrorist organisation. In the case of anarchist terrorism, the eventual successful deployment of dynamite in the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander served to demonstrate the feasibility of dynamite as a tool of revolutionary violence and terrorism, and that through its novelty, in the discrete sense of its first use in terrorism, but additionally through the broader novelty of dynamite's social perception, the tactical decision was able to achieve substantially disproportionate effects, well beyond the death of the Tsar. Numerous authors⁴⁶¹ have discussed the importance of explosives on warfare generally and on terrorism specifically. However, Bown argues, 'the true great era of

⁴⁶¹ Revill, *Improvised Explosive Devices*; Stephen R. Bown, *A Most Damnable Invention: Dynamite, Nitrates, and the Making of the Modern World*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: T. Dunne Books, 2005); Adamic, *Dynamite*, 2008; Cronin, *Power to the People*.

explosives, when they radically and irrevocably changed the world, began in the 1860s with the remarkable intuition of a sallow Swedish chemist named Alfred Nobel'.⁴⁶²

This technical innovation, initially developed to assist in mining and railway construction, provided the necessary developments that subsequently informed the emergence and refinement of terrorism. Nobel's 1867 success and the subsequent availability of dynamite was driven as much by the 'industrial (railway construction and major public works in general) and geopolitical (power relations between the major world governments) circumstances'⁴⁶³ of the period as it was by the technical aspects of the discovery. Chouteau, Forest and Nguyen further identified the broader sentiment of the time as the ideas and consequences of the Industrial Revolution emerged. They referred to this as 'characterized by a new effervescence in the creation of enterprises and a new perception of what technical progress was likely to bring to the well-being of human societies'.⁴⁶⁴ This broader excitement and enthusiasm for science and the power of technical knowledge shaped the enthusiasm of revolutionaries on the abandonment and destruction of the existing power structures through the power of their new ideas and the novel application of innovations born of these ideas, such as propaganda of the deed. Dynamite was not only practically useful, but it was also ideally suited in the manner in which it was an almost a stereotypically representative product of the zeitgeist. In this regard, it is worth citing Cole at some length. She successfully articulates this sentiment in her work *At the Violet Hour*:

From the moment of its inception, dynamite violence became an immediate and ever-escalating sensation, with its stunning ability not only to kill and maim, but within seconds to level an entire landscape. The violence of dynamite reverberated across the sensory spectrum as something novel (hence sensational in that way, too), from its chemical smell, to its shattering sound, to its extreme tactile effects, and it held pronounced political associations, quickly becoming associated with terrorism. It shattered, exploded, ripped, and tore; it created its own palpable and recognizable form of wreckage; and its employment for radical causes suggested a future with unknowable and potentially frightful contours. In sum, dynamite violence added a potent new element to the modern imaginary.⁴⁶⁵

Dynamite offered numerous benefits to the aspiring revolutionaries of the time. As Cronin identified, dynamite was 'so accessible, cheap, easy to use, easy to transport, and easy to

⁴⁶² Bown, *A Most Damnable Invention*, 2.

⁴⁶³ Marianne Chouteau, Joëlle Forest and Céline Nguyen, eds., *Science, Technology and Innovation Culture*, vol. 3 (Wiley, 2018).

⁴⁶⁴ Chouteau, Forest and Nguyen, *Science, Technology and Innovation Culture*.

⁴⁶⁵ Sarah Cole, *At the Violet Hour: Modernism and Violence, in England and Ireland* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83–84.

hide. It could be bought off the shelf and stuffed in a pocket'.⁴⁶⁶ It was not necessarily the exclusive tactic of anarchists.⁴⁶⁷ Still, it captured the imaginations of revolutionaries internationally, particularly after the news of the Tsar's assassination was published across the world's news media. Cronin identified 1291 bombings between 1867 and 1934.⁴⁶⁸ Cronin identified three primary cohorts of revolutionaries responsible for these operations, namely 'Russian revolutionaries, Irish nationalists, and anarchists.'⁴⁶⁹

While the period was by no means dominated exclusively by anarchist operations, the use of dynamite and bombings more generally became synonymous with anarchist ideology. Most substantially, the anarchists of NV undertook what is generally recognised as the first modern terrorist attack. They deployed the very modern terrorist tactic of a dynamite bombing and successfully had their operation and ideology propagated across the world. This revolutionary innovation would reverberate throughout modern history and lay the foundation for the numerous variants that evolved from this first act. As Cronin observed, 'the group's successful assassination of the tsar became a model for the unprecedentedly violent wave of anarchist terrorist attacks that followed'.⁴⁷⁰

It is important to note that the initial successful dynamite attack by NV did not simply manifest in isolation. Rather, it reflected an incremental internal process of innovation, defined previously as innovations developed and deployed within a terrorist organisation. The development and refinement of terrorism itself took place within the broader movement of which NV was a part, evolving since the attempted assassination by Karakozov. Various targeting and tactical refinements were incorporated into operatives' operational considerations across the movement. Vera Figner reflected that numerous individuals had been advocating terrorism and the use of dynamite as early as the mid-1870s.⁴⁷¹ Figner goes on to recall that the 'Natanson program', which she claimed was responsible for advocating:

⁴⁶⁶ Cronin, *Power to the People*, 74.

⁴⁶⁷ See Clutterbuck, 'The Progenitors of Terrorism'; Fearghal McGarry, 'Political Violence in Ireland', in *The Cambridge History of Terrorism*, ed., Richard English (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 254–83, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108556248.011>.

⁴⁶⁸ This is the period identified as the 'first wave' of terrorism by Rapoport.

⁴⁶⁹ Cronin, *Power to the People*, 74.

⁴⁷⁰ Cronin, *Power to the People*, 74.

⁴⁷¹ Hardy references 'Valerian Osinskii, one of the Southern Bakunists who participated in the debates of 1876, must have been one of the strong proponents of terrorism; throughout his revolutionary career, he favored violent solutions', and quotes Figner directly in reference to Iosif Ivanovich Kablits, as having 'busied himself with thoughts of dynamite, and had gone to England in order to become acquainted with its preparation': Hardy, *Land and Freedom*, 48.

Not only the innovative idea of actively rebuffing the government in the person of its high ranking gendarmes, judges and administrators...but also the idea of the need for a 'blow to the centre' simultaneous with the successful popular attack. By this blow they meant a direct attack on the tsar and his family.⁴⁷²

This evidences the preliminary conceptualisation of targeting the Tsar. When contextualised by the early advocacy of using dynamite by revolutionaries such as Kablits, the beginnings of the successful 1881 assassination plot can be seen as manifesting among the broader current of Russian anarchists. Kablits is recognised as having 'conceived his own terrorist scheme ... His new idea was the use of dynamite, which he holds the distinction of introducing to the Russian revolutionary movement'.⁴⁷³ As early as 1874, dynamite-based plots were being conceived,⁴⁷⁴ and this informed the operational conceptualisation of dynamite-based plots more broadly. In the lead up to the successful dynamite operation of 1 March 1881, NV had made multiple previous attempts on the life of the Tsar using dynamite. These plots, the 1879 train plot attempts⁴⁷⁵ and the successful⁴⁷⁶ bombing of the Winter Palace, were informed in part by the ideas of Kablits in 1874 and likely by the earlier so-called 'Elizavetgrad affair' of 1869, which Schenk referred to when he states that 'Tsar Alexander II luckily escaped a sophisticated bomb attempt on his train in the autumn of 1869'.⁴⁷⁷

Across the spectrum of terrorist attacks and assassinations generally, Russian terrorist tactics evolved from pistols and bladed weapons to incorporate emplaced dynamite bombs. Additionally, the decisive plot of 1881 saw the use of smaller, more targeted explosive devices, delivered by operatives close to the target rather than placed at a predetermined location and set to detonate at a predetermined time.⁴⁷⁸ This was dependent, at least partly, on NV's explosive expert, Nikolai Kibalchich,⁴⁷⁹ being 'one of the few pioneering nineteenth-century dynamiters capable of creating a bomb with both the necessary destructive power and mobility to be thrown'.⁴⁸⁰ This final innovation ultimately informed the tactical and kinetic success of NV. It resulted in the death of the Tsar, with the use of dynamite, the

⁴⁷² Hardy, *Land and Freedom*, 49.

⁴⁷³ Richard Wortman, *The Crisis of Russian Populism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 174.

⁴⁷⁴ Jane E. Good and David R. Jones, *Babushka: The Life of the Russian Revolutionary Ekaterina K. Breshko-Breshkovskaia (1844–1934)* (Newtonville, MD: Oriental Research Partners, 1991), 75.

⁴⁷⁵ Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 681–87.

⁴⁷⁶ The bombing itself was successful; however, the Tsar was not present as expected and thus survived.

⁴⁷⁷ Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, 'Attacking the Empire's Achilles Heels: Railroads and Terrorism in Tsarist Russia', *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 58, no. 2 (2010): 232–53.

⁴⁷⁸ Avrahm Yarmolinsky, *Road to Revolution: A Century of Russian Radicalism*, 2014, 272–73.

⁴⁷⁹ For a detailed profile of Kibalchich see Lee B Croft, *Nikolai Ivanovich Kibalchich: Terrorist Rocket Pioneer* (Tempe, AZ: Institute for Issues in the History of Science, 2006).

⁴⁸⁰ Revill, *Improvised Explosive Devices*, 26.

communicative and narrative related considerations regarding targeting and tactics and the understanding of the news media's likely coverage of the operation resulting in the 1881 assassination being a global event that subsequently shaped revolutionary and terrorist action both in the immediate aftermath and beyond.

Propaganda of the Deed and Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

At the centre of NV's considerations in targeting the Tsar and using dynamite were considerations of both pragmatic operational capacity and effectiveness. The operation needed to be feasible, with a likelihood of success in the discrete sense and an understanding that an inherent purpose of the operation was propagandistic and communicative. It sought to achieve several second and third-order effects. These included but were not necessarily limited to mobilising the broader population towards revolutionary sentiment, coercing the Tsarist regime to expedite the implementation of reforms and exposing the vulnerabilities of not just the Russian regime but of authority structures more generally. As the Program of the Executive Committee stated:

The aim of such activity is to break down the prestige of government, to furnish continuous proof of the possibility of pursuing a contest with the government, to raise in that way the revolutionary spirit in the people, and finally, to form a body suited and accustomed to warfare.⁴⁸¹

The terrorist attack of 1 March 1881 was the culmination and coalescence of decades of articulation, consideration and refinement of the doctrinal proposition of propaganda of the deed, an inherently communicative act born of the assessed shortcomings of conventional propaganda distribution. These shortcomings were well understood by the revolutionary movements of the 1800s. Over many decades and across many jurisdictions, they established, then frequently had shut down, numerous radical periodicals and publishing houses. This publishing capability had been central to propagating anarchist and, more broadly, socialist ideas and facilitating the debates regarding doctrinal positions, especially propaganda of the deed and violence. The economic and commercial limitations of bespoke, underfunded enterprises, the limited production and distribution capacities associated with their limited scale, their infiltration by authorities and the censoring of their publications meant that despite their ongoing efforts, radical printing presses had substantially limited scope to shape

⁴⁸¹ Cited in Iviansky, 'Individual Terror', 46.

broad political discourse and had not succeeded in inspiring the broader populace to revolution—ideological or otherwise.

This did not mean that revolutionaries and their militant offshoots did not see value in conventional propaganda. For example, NV was still publishing the ‘leaflet’ variation of their journal in the lead up to the March 1881 assassination, with the fifth ‘leaflet’ published as late as February that same year.⁴⁸² This commitment to the ongoing dedication of resources and the ongoing engagement of additional risk associated with managing a publishing capability demonstrates that conventional propagandising remained a substantial consideration of NV, even amid operational preparations for acts of violent propaganda and under substantial counterterrorism pressure.

While dynamite was central to the capacity of anarchist terrorism to undertake the types of spectacular operations necessary for this period to be experienced as a ‘globally disruptive force’,⁴⁸³ it was mutually necessary that these operations be informed by a consideration of their communicative and narrative dynamics. Propaganda of the deed was at the core of this, and much of the calculus of anarchists across Russia, Europe and ultimately the US. Shortly after the 1881 assassination of Alexander II, in May that same year, the Anarchist Congress was held in London, whereby propaganda of the deed was adopted through an official resolution. Of the resolutions passed in this regard, the following details the emphasis on propaganda of the deed and the importance of the ‘technical and chemical sciences’, terminology frequently used to refer to dynamite:

It is absolutely necessary to exert every effort towards propagating, by deeds, the revolutionary idea and to arouse the spirit of revolt in those sections of the popular masses who still harbor illusions about the effectiveness of legal methods.

Those who no longer believe that legality will bring about the revolution will have to use methods that are in conformity with that belief.

The persecutions directed against the revolutionary press of all countries prove the necessity of organizing an underground press.

Whereas the agricultural workers are still outside the revolutionary movement, it is absolutely necessary to make every effort to win them to our cause, and to keep in mind that a deed performed against the existing institutions appeals to the masses

⁴⁸² Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 665.

⁴⁸³ Cronin, *Power to the People*, 93.

much more than thousands of leaflets and torrents of words, and that ‘Propaganda by Deed’ is of greater importance in the countryside than in the cities.

Whereas the technical and chemical sciences have rendered services to the revolutionary cause and are bound to render still greater services in the future, the Congress suggests that organizations and individuals affiliated with the International Workingmen’s Association devote themselves to the study of these sciences.⁴⁸⁴

These ideas were subsequently published in numerous radical publications, including *Le Revolte, Freiheit, Liberty* and *Vorbote*.⁴⁸⁵ As important as conventional propaganda was to the anarchist movement, ‘central to its plans was a willingness to employ violence as a propaganda tactic’.⁴⁸⁶

In understanding the inherently communicative nature of anarchist terrorism, it is essential to recognise that language such as ‘propagating, by deeds, the revolutionary idea’ reflected conceptualising violence as a communicative act as understood by anarchists of the day. While targeting a tsar or president served to target a political figurehead considered responsible for the social conditions that informed anarchist ideological propositions, the doctrinal justifications for violence concentrated on a high-profile target. This provided a means by which the message of revolutionary, in this instance anarchist, ideology could be more effectively communicated to the masses. This understanding is further evidenced in the above resolution, which states, ‘keep in mind that a deed performed against the existing institutions appeals to the masses much more than thousands of leaflets and torrents of words.’

The exploitation of assassinations of high-profile heads of states for communicative purposes during the so-called ‘golden age of assassination’⁴⁸⁷ was driven as much by ideologically informed justifications as it was by the desire to effectively create spectacles that would drive media coverage and more effectively demand focus and attention towards anarchist ideals and principles. Targeting decisions were shaped by these considerations, as were tactical decisions. The decision to either use dynamite or exploit the heightened sensibilities

⁴⁸⁴ *Le Revolte*, No. 11 (23 July 1881), 1–2, cited in Andrew R. Carlson, *Anarchism in Germany* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1972); Messer-Kruse notes that Messer-Kruse, *Haymarket Conspiracy*, 85.

⁴⁸⁵ Messer-Kruse, *Haymarket Conspiracy*, 84.

⁴⁸⁶ Messer-Kruse, *Haymarket Conspiracy*, 84.

⁴⁸⁷ David C. Rapoport, ed., *Terrorism: Critical Concepts in Political Science* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 8; Whitney Kassel, ‘Terrorism and the International Anarchist Movement of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 3 (March 2009): 237–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100802671009>.

regarding its potential use was frequently a determinant consideration by anarchist terrorists seeking to ensure that their actions obtained coverage and reporting in mainstream commercial media outlets. As early as 1857, Pisacane, who had articulated this approach on the attempted assassination of King Ferdinand of Naples, wrote that this ‘was a more effective propaganda than a thousand volumes penned by doctrinarians who are the real blight upon our country and the entire world’.⁴⁸⁸ The Russian anarchists, and subsequently anarchists worldwide, embraced and sought to enact these very principles.

In recognising the inherently communicative nature of anarchist terrorism and acknowledging the narrative dynamics of these actions, it is necessary to situate a spectacular incident such as the assassination of the Tsar in its narrative context. The incident did not simply manifest itself in isolation. Rather, it was the culmination of both explicit efforts to construct a justificatory narrative, the repeated efforts at assassinating the Tsar specifically, and the numerous other acts of propaganda of the deed. Contrasting the ‘unheard of’ attack of 1866 with the implicitly understood attack of 1881 demonstrates the successful construction of a narrative surrounding radical anarchist ideology and action. The consistent production of radical periodicals and journals articulating the ideological justifications, and discussing these ideas within an internal intellectual discourse, assisted in providing a degree of interpretive capability among the commentariat. Meanwhile, the ongoing series of attacks provided a narrative frame that enabled the public to clearly understand the ideological justifications and intent of the eventual success of 1881. Additionally, the frequent provision of letters or manifesto-esque documents that explained the basis for these actions further reinforced the narratives regarding anarchist justifications for terrorism.

The movement had also effectively leveraged the prosecutorial processes of those charged, either for attacks or for conspiring. The public platform these provided, especially for the mainstream media outlets, were important additional contributions to the establishment, refinement and maintenance of a broad narrative context within which 1881 could be interpreted and understood. As Gabriel has noted, ‘the rituals of the legal system provided anarchists the opportunity to speak during their trials, and, for those condemned to death,

⁴⁸⁸ Pisacane cited in Graham, *Anarchism*, 8; Note regarding translation error in ‘Carlo Pisacane: Propaganda by the Deed’, *Robert Graham’s Anarchism Weblog* (blog), 22 April 2012, <https://robertgraham.wordpress.com/carlo-pisacane-propaganda-by-the-deed/>.

before their executions as well. Anarchists embraced these moments of speech as chances to witness to their faith'.⁴⁸⁹

In further evidence of the perceived need to maintain the explanatory justifications for their actions and to further the existing narrative regarding anarchist terrorism as a rational, defensible action, NV went as far as to send a letter to Alexander II's son and successor, Alexander III, and subsequently published it in the last edition of the leaflet version of NV.⁴⁹⁰ That letter reflects on the events of the preceding decade, and the subsequent narrative development those events and associated discourse had created: 'the sanguinary tragedy of the Catherine canal was no mere chance occurrence, and could have surprised no one. After what has happened during the last ten years, it appeared inevitable; and therein lies its profound significance'.⁴⁹¹

The prioritisation of the publication of the open letter to the new Tsar, of which some 13,000 copies were distributed, as well as copies for the Tsar and other senior officials on 'special paper',⁴⁹² further demonstrated the ongoing propagandistic orientation of the leadership of NV, and their prioritisation of communicating their ideological justifications for their actions and ensuring continuity and contextualisation concerning their narrative. In conjunction with the manifesto published immediately before the attack, which stated in part, 'that is why he was killed. A tsar should be a good shepherd, ready to devote his life to his sheep. Alexander II was a ravening wolf and a terrible death overtook him'.⁴⁹³ NV prioritised the propagandistic aspects of their activities to an extent equal to the strictly tactical and targeting elements of their operations. This approach would remain a defining characteristic of transnational anarchist terrorism for the duration of the period of sustained tempo into the early 1900s. The replication of terrorism as demonstrated by NV would be reflected in actions taken across Europe, in France in particular, and in the US.

The fusion of violence and communicative and narrative considerations provided the blueprint for the emergence of modern terrorism. A blueprint that would endure throughout history has shaped and informed terrorist practice ever since. The Russian approach would be

⁴⁸⁹ Elun Gabriel, 'Performing Persecution: Witnessing and Martyrdom in the Anarchist Tradition', *Radical History Review*, no. 98 (2007): 35.

⁴⁹⁰ Stepniak, *Underground Russia*, 287–95.

⁴⁹¹ Stepniak, *Underground Russia*, 287–95, 288.

⁴⁹² Yarmolinsky, *Road to Revolution*, 292–93.

⁴⁹³ David Footman, *The Alexander Conspiracy: A Life of A. I. Zhelyabov* (LaSalle, Ill: Open Court, 1974), 267–68.

emulated across temporally and spatially diverse contexts by ideologically disparate actors, utilising a continually adapting and evolving suite of tactics and targets. At its core, the approach refined by NV established the enduring nature of terrorism. While it has accommodated differing historical, social and political contexts, it has remained the core of the practice.

Exploitation of Emergent Information and Communications Technology

The final element of the framework that assists in explaining and understanding anarchist terrorism is the exploitation of emergent information and communications technology. This was articulated in Chapter Three as the *exploitation of emergent forms of information and communication technology that have sufficiently diffused to have shaped and informed the relevant cultural and social practices associated with them*. In demonstrating the way these technologies were exploited and how cultural and social practices associated with them were a factor in the effectiveness of Russian anarchist terrorism, the focus of the following section will be on three primary manifestations of printing technologies in the nineteenth century: print news media, radical journals, periodicals and the popular literature of the time. Through these three mediums, anarchism and anarchist terrorism were able to be interpreted by the various audiences that consumed these outputs in a manner that, to varying extents, anarchist ideologues and terrorists could either influence or outright control. The following section will highlight the role of the print media, radical presses, and literature in framing an emergent phenomenon and how anarchist terrorists sought to exploit these mediums to support their ends.

The increasingly prevalent print news media was the first significant enabler of anarchist terrorism as both an effective domestic propaganda action and as a genuinely transnational action. While the emergence of this new industry was distinctly shaped in the Russian experience compared to the primary markets of the US, France and the United Kingdom, the process and underlying dynamics of the beginnings of a press, in the news media sense, in Russia, reflected the dynamics in these jurisdictions. In his work on the development of the news in Russia, McReynolds draws on the seminal work of Walter Lippman and articulates the following, ‘Under autocracies, governments controlled communications by publishing information that they wanted circulated. As social estates began demanding rights of

representation and displacing autocrats, organized political interest groups began to dominate published communications.’⁴⁹⁴

It is also worth noting that in the transnational context, the emergence of the free press as a component of democratic society had become increasingly enshrined over the nineteenth century, shifting from being ‘an idea’ to becoming an ‘enshrined institution’.⁴⁹⁵

The media coverage of Vera Zasulich’s trial is instructive of the newly minted role that newspapers and the comparatively free press played in interpreting and framing terrorism-related events for the public. As the first woman in Russia to be put on trial for terrorism offences, Zasulich’s trial was as unprecedented as the heightened media coverage and feverish public interest that accompanied it. Frequently referred to as the ‘trial of the century’, the Russian media and public alike were captivated by the story of Zasulich and the justifications for her actions articulated during her brief trial. Pipes goes as far as to refer to the trial as ‘The most important judiciary event in the history of Imperial Russia with profound repercussions on both the Tsarist regime and public opinion, especially radical youth’.⁴⁹⁶ The newly established media ecosystem in Russia had only emerged in 1863, with the advent of the first commercially independent newspaper, *Golos*.⁴⁹⁷ While mass-circulation had existed before the 1860s, McReynolds highlights the step change that took place during the second half of the 1850s, as a result of the ‘spirit of reform’ associated with Alexander II,⁴⁹⁸ which saw a five-fold increase in the number of periodicals, the precursors to commercial newspapers, published in Russia. The centrality of newspapers to the broader reform efforts of the Tsar is well articulated by McReynolds and worth quoting at some length:

All the reforms bore at least indirectly on newspaper publishing ... reforms to the army and education system increased both the ability and desire to read ... journalism acquired added importance because periodicals reported information about the reforms, and newspaper reading became a prerequisite for mastering life in the new society. The censorship laws were revised in 1865 not only to allow greater freedom of expression but also to facilitate the mechanics of publishing.

⁴⁹⁴ McReynolds, *News under Russia’s Old Regime*, 11.

⁴⁹⁵ Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper: An International History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 105.

⁴⁹⁶ Pipes, ‘Trial of Vera Z’.

⁴⁹⁷ McReynolds, *News under Russia’s Old Regime*, 30.

⁴⁹⁸ McReynolds, *News under Russia’s Old Regime*, 18.

Russia was experiencing substantial social and political change during the period of the Great Reforms,⁴⁹⁹ and as suggested above, transformations in communications technology were an integral component of these changes. These structural changes created the space in which newspapers could expand and diversify the ‘reading public’, moving beyond the exclusivist audiences of the ‘thick journals’⁵⁰⁰ that were oriented towards the intelligentsia.

The trial of Zasulich, reported extensively by the Russian press, was a genuinely transnational event. Pipes quoted the French *Revue des Deux Mondes*: ‘during 48 hours, Europe forgot about war and peace, about Bismarck, Lord Beaconsfield and Prince Gorchakov ... to occupy itself exclusively with Vera Zasulich and the strange judiciary adventure of which this unknown [woman] was the heroine’.⁵⁰¹

The trial was reported across Europe and the US, with numerous newspapers reporting on the trial and the verdict.⁵⁰² In her biography of Zasulich, Siljak emphasised the sympathetic and sensationalist newspaper coverage of the trial by numerous Russian newspapers, with *Golos* journalist Gradovskii the most enthusiastic and influential. As Siljak detailed, his trial account portrayed Zasulich as ‘the suffering victim of regime abuse, and in turn, the regime and society were placed in the dock as the accused’.⁵⁰³ In demonstrating the role of the press in framing Zasulich’s trial in a broadly sympathetic manner and heightening the atmosphere of disaffection with the regime, Siljak discussed the coverage by the *Northern Messenger*, which she refers to as demanding ‘not less dissent but more. The public needed legal outlets to express their dissatisfaction ... otherwise, the *Northern Messenger* implied, they would release their frustrations in other, more violent ways’.⁵⁰⁴

The trial itself was not the sole creator of the public sentiment that in part shaped the jury’s decision to acquit Zasulich, nor of the broader disaffection increasingly shaping the public’s view of the regime. The trial itself was a reflection of a number of converging sentiments within Russian society, with the spectacle of trials of radicals having become an aspect of modernising, sophisticated Russian society circles. Maxwell noted that ‘fashionable ladies who had for weeks been sending their requests on delicately colored scented notepapers to

⁴⁹⁹ Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1995), 269.

⁵⁰⁰ McReynolds, *News under Russia’s Old Regime*, 30.

⁵⁰¹ *Revue des Deux Mondes*, *Troisième Période*, 216, cited in Pipes, ‘Trial of Vera Z’, 1.

⁵⁰² Szilvia Nagy, ‘Vera Zasulich: The Legacy of a Female Terrorist’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Women and Gender in Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union*, 1st ed., ed. Melanie Ilic (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-54905-1>.

⁵⁰³ Siljak, *Angel of Vengeance*, 254.

⁵⁰⁴ Siljak, *Angel of Vengeance*, 255.

the presiding judge',⁵⁰⁵ joined the numerous senior officers and representatives of the regime in the courtroom. Notably, in the designated section for journalists sat the foreign correspondent of *The Times* of London and Fyodor Dostoevsky.⁵⁰⁶ Reflecting further on the consequences of the trial and the perception of Zasulich and, by extension, her actions, Ulam wrote how Zasulich became the 'toast of not only of revolutionary, but of liberal, and even society circles. Poems and radical broadsides celebrate her as another William Tell or Charlotte Corday'.⁵⁰⁷

The newspapers of Russia and other jurisdictions and their reporting on Zasulich's case provide an insight into the key role the print news media played, especially liberal newspapers sympathetic to the reformist agenda of the radical movement, in shaping and interpreting the events of the late 1800s for the reading public. Through their interpretation and framing of events, they substantially shaped the public's capacity to understand the events themselves, the justifications for the events and elicited degrees of sympathy or understanding for the cause in whose name the actions were undertaken.

The telegraph had become a crucial component of an increasing number of newsrooms during the 1860s,⁵⁰⁸ enabling newspapers to report all but instantaneously on events worldwide. This underpinning technological development enabled events such as Zasulich's trial to be reported by newspapers across Europe and the Atlantic, as identified above, as evidenced by the presence of *The Times'* foreign correspondent at the trial. The emergence and coalescence of these information and communication technologies enabled the ideology and actions of the anarchist movement in Russia to become genuinely transnational and have an effect and impact beyond Russia itself. The assassination of the Tsar sought to exploit these capabilities. It was carried out in the knowledge that the event would be sensationally reported by newsrooms across the continent and the Atlantic. These same technologies enabled institutional outputs by legitimate and recognised mainstream publications and the development and consolidation of radical underground presses operated by anarchist ideologues and terrorists throughout the period, both within Russia and beyond.

⁵⁰⁵ Margaret Maxwell, *Narodniki Women: Russian Women Who Sacrificed Themselves for the Dream of Freedom*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Pergamon Press, 1990), 5.

⁵⁰⁶ Maxwell, *Narodniki Women*, 6.

⁵⁰⁷ Ulam, *In the Name of the People*, 270.

⁵⁰⁸ Tom Parker and Nick Sitter, 'The Four Horsemen of Terrorism: It's Not Waves, It's Strains', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 28, no. 2 (March 2016): 197–216, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2015.1112277>.

The radical presses of the period were instrumental in facilitating the sharing of ideological and doctrinal content and ultimately in sharing news and celebrations of attacks and attempted attacks that members of the movement had undertaken. In their more mature manifestations, they came to explicitly advocate for, in particular, the use of dynamite and targeting specific individuals and entities. The emergence and development of a multilingual ecosystem of anarchist presses across Europe and the US played a key role in the broader transnationalisation of anarchism, propaganda of the deed, and anarchist terrorism more explicitly. The extent and importance of these radical presses, published in multiple languages, enabled the anarchist movement to exert some degree of control over the portrayal of their movement and their actions. They provided a mechanism by which anarchism could be more directly explained to the receptive audiences of these publications. The content, much like the digital manifestations of the twenty-first century, included explicitly ideological content, political discourse and at times, more direct incitement towards action and violence.

To contextualise the emergence of the Russian radical press, it is necessary to briefly explore the censorship regime in Tsarist Russia. In the aftermath of the attempted coup by the Decembrists,⁵⁰⁹ then-Tsar Nicholas I implemented an expanded censorship regime. Previously, censorship had focused on upholding ‘morals and family honour’⁵¹⁰ and preventing the influence of external, particularly European, ideas. The regime of Nicholas I established the ‘Chief Administration of Censorship and asserted official control over printed words and the technology that produced them’.⁵¹¹ This restrictive environment ultimately gave birth to Alexander Herzen’s London-based Russian Free Press, established in 1853 and providing a blueprint for the extensive radical press that would become dominated by exiled activists and ideologues, fleeing terrorists and other important revolutionaries. As Senn has argued regarding the Russian Free Press:

Eventually his newspaper, *Kolokol* (The Bell), became the standard by which later generations of publications were to be judged. Herzen essentially inspired the network of Russian émigré, revolutionary periodicals that at the beginning of the

⁵⁰⁹ ‘In December 1824, a group of officers from the most distinguished families tried to place it either with a constitutional monarchy or a republic. The mutiny was quelled in no time at all’: Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 184.

⁵¹⁰ McReynolds, *News under Russia’s Old Regime*, 22.

⁵¹¹ McReynolds, *News under Russia’s Old Regime*, 22–23.

twentieth century culminated in the particular character of Vladimir Ulianov-Lenin's *Iskra* (The Spark).⁵¹²

Herzen's launch of *Poliarnaia Zvezda* (Polar Star) only days after the death of Nicholas I in 1855 consolidated years of unsuccessful efforts at penetrating heavily censored Russia with his various publications. As Ulam has noted, very few copies of Russian Free Press publications could make their way into Russia.⁵¹³ The publication adopted the same title as an almanac published by the Decembrists⁵¹⁴ and was dedicated to 'the question of Russian liberation and to the dissemination of a free form of thought in Russia'. In 1865, Alexander II would ultimately revise the censorship regime in Russia. By this stage, the émigré press had become much more sophisticated and was successfully soliciting contributions to their publications and obtaining improved distribution within Russia.

The expansion of the radical press in London would come to encompass a wide range of editorial positions, be that socialist or anarchist. Still, all of these publications shared a perspective regarding revolutionary sentiment towards the Tsarist regime. Alston highlighted that between 1855 and 1917, some 50 different Russian language publications were produced in London alone.⁵¹⁵ As the Russian language press matured, and the establishment of effective smuggling routes and increased provision of Russian based contributions came to shape Herzen's project, he launched the vastly more successful *Kolokol* (The Bell). *Kolokol* became the dominant example revolutionary periodical, both among revolutionaries and literate Russians travelling through London, and later Geneva when Herzen relocated there. While Herzen remained a substantial and, at times, dominant figure within the broader émigré press community, the more substantive focus here is necessarily on adopting these practices by anarchists of the period. In particular, the likes of Bakunin and Kropotkin emerged as central characters in the emergence of a dedicated anarchist émigré press.

The importance of radical presses to the anarchist movement and their capacity to share their ideological, doctrinal, and operational perspectives and experiences is difficult to overstate. Ferguson captures this well:

⁵¹² Senn, 'Russian Émigré Press', 5.

⁵¹³ Ulam, *In the Name of the People*, 37.

⁵¹⁴ Senn, 'Russian Émigré Press', 11.

⁵¹⁵ Charlotte Alston, 'News of the Struggle: The Russian Political Press in London 1853–1921', in *The Foreign Political Press in Nineteenth-Century London: Politics from a Distance*, 1st ed., ed. Constance Bantman and Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 155.

Printers and presses were central to the physical and social reproduction of the classical anarchist movement from the Paris Commune to the Second World War. Anarchist communities usually organized around their publications. The technology of publishing required many skilled printers, and commercial print shops often rejected anarchist materials, so the movement needed its own printers and presses. Consequently, printing was one of the most common occupations of anarchists. Anarchists produced an environment rich in printed words by creating and circulating hundreds of journals, books, pamphlets, leaflets, cards, and posters in dozens of languages.⁵¹⁶

As highlighted previously, the development of anarchism as a distinct ideological framework and the consolidation of propaganda of the deed as a doctrinal position largely played out in the pages of various radical newspapers and journals. When Herzen's *Kolokol* wound up in 1867, new publications came to dominate the émigré press, including *Narodnoe Delo* (People's Cause), published by Mikhail Bakunin and Nikolai Zhukovskii.⁵¹⁷ When discussing the second generation of the Russian émigré press, Zuckerman refers to figures such as Bakunin and Stepniak-Kravchinskii as developing 'broad reputations as writers and thinkers. Still, they wrote often and eloquently about the plight of the Russian people living under Tsarist repression'.⁵¹⁸ Bakunin became the dominant influence on the anarchists living among the émigré colonies in Britain and Switzerland. As highlighted earlier, he 'established, in a series of powerful pamphlets and letters, the leading principles of modern anarchism'.⁵¹⁹ *Narodnoe Delo* would represent the peak of Bakunin's reputation among the émigré press community.⁵²⁰ Shortly after the launch of *Narodnoe Delo*, Bakunin and others would become acquainted with Nechaev, which would have enduring impacts on anarchism, the revolutionary movement and terrorism more generally.

The coalescence of propaganda of the deed can be tracked through a series of publications, beginning with Pisacane's *Testamento Politico* in 1857, Bakunin's 1870 *Letters to a Frenchman* and more explicitly in the anarchist context through Brousse's publications. In reference to propaganda of the deed, Crenshaw stated, 'there is little doubt that it was brought to public attention initially through the articles of Paul Brousse in 1877'.⁵²¹ These articles

⁵¹⁶ Kathy E. Ferguson, 'Anarchist Printers and Presses: Material Circuits of Politics', *Political Theory* 42, no. 4 (May 2014): 391–92, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591714531420>.

⁵¹⁷ Miller, 'Transformation of The Russian Revolutionary Emigre Press', 197.

⁵¹⁸ Fredric Scott Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police Abroad: Policing Europe in a Modernising World* (Basingstoke, UK; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 43.

⁵¹⁹ Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 165.

⁵²⁰ Senn, 'Russian Émigré Press', 30.

⁵²¹ Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 42.

were published in titles such as *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne* and *L'Avant-Garde*. However, it is worthy of note that Brousse, as with many of his contemporaries, was involved with a litany of publications during the period. He had been involved, to varying degrees, with *Les Droits de l'Homme*, *La Liberté*, *La Solidarité Révolutionnaire*, *Die Arbeiter-Zeitung*, among numerous others.⁵²²

The centrality of radical presses in Western Europe is further demonstrated by Kropotkin's editorial role at *Le Revolte*, Nechaev's establishment of the short-lived *Narodnaia Rasprava* and the ongoing publication of the leaflet version of NV in the aftermath of the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander. As a vehicle to circumvent the unwillingness of institutional publications to print their ideas or to report favourably on their activities, the admittedly internally preoccupied and tumultuous universe that was the radical presses remained a high priority for the revolutionaries of the period. The ability to directly propagandise, shape and inform the narrative regarding their actions and debate and discuss their positions was an invaluable tool for the revolutionary movement as a whole, especially for the anarchist revolutionaries in Russia.

The emergence of popular fictional literature is the final element of print technology that contributed to the effectiveness of anarchist terrorism and its capacity to be interpreted by the multitude of audiences to whom it was addressed. As highlighted above, Dostoevsky, among others, was crucial in shifting and shaping the interpretation of terrorism and propaganda of the deed from Karakazov's 'unheard of' attack in 1866 to the contextualised, understood and unsurprising fatal attack on Tsar Alexander in 1881. Although Dostoevsky constitutes the most well-known of the authors of the period, it is equally important to recognise that this process was multifaceted, contributed to by a litany of literary actors. This section will briefly highlight the role of Chernyshevsky's *What is to be Done* and what Patyk refers to as Dostoevsky's terrorism trilogy,⁵²³ which included *Crime and Punishment*, *Demons* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In doing so, this final section will seek to evidence how, in addition to the aforementioned radical press and print news media, understanding and interpreting terrorism was additionally framed through information and communications technologies, specifically print technology manifested through the serialised literature of Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky. As Marks states, 'books were the main medium for the spread of knowledge

⁵²² David Stafford, 'Paul Brousse', *International Review of Social History* 17, no. 1 (1972): 381–86, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859000006581>.

⁵²³ Lynn Patyk, 'Dostoevsky's Terrorism Trilogy', in *Terrorism and Literature*, ed. Herman.

about Russian terrorism. The violence of the Russian populists spawned a whole sub-genre of literature, which expressed the fascination and fear of the public and also publicized terrorist techniques and organizational configurations.’⁵²⁴

The authors analysed herein each played different roles in influencing and framing the actions of revolutionaries and terrorists in Russia, both to their domestic Russian audiences and to the broader transnational reading public. In doing so, these authors—the obscure yet deeply influential Chernyshevsky and the Russian audience shaping Dostoevsky—each produced a series of important contributions to the overall capability of audiences to understand the actions of terrorism in the late 1800s and beyond.

Before analysing the role of these specific literary contributors in shaping the public’s understanding of revolutionary violence and terrorism, it is worth noting that from the very earliest manifestations of Russian revolutionary sentiment, a literary and intellectual orientation was present. The Decembrists, so-called for the month in which they launched the ‘first truly political movement ever to be directed against the established system’,⁵²⁵ were venerated by those who continued to prosecute the revolutionary cause. In his first publishing venture, Herzen reflected this narrative continuity, naming his periodical *The Polar Star*, the same title the Decembrists had given their literary journal. Herzen’s first edition featured images of the key participants of the Decembrist uprising.⁵²⁶ In reflecting on the scholarly and intellectual character of key actors within the Decembrist movement, Trigos cites Yakushkin, a participant, reflecting on his colleagues of the period: ‘We passionately loved antiquity—Plutarch, Livy, Cicero, Tacitus and others were for each of us almost in constant reference’.⁵²⁷ Aside from their fluency in Latin and ancient Greek, the Decembrists were well versed in the justificatory positions advocated through the tyrannicide literature of, particularly Plutarch, and ‘cast themselves as *tiranobortsy* (fighters against tyranny), in the tradition of the heroic figures of Greco-Roman history’.⁵²⁸ Russian revolutionary circles’ literary and intellectual tradition had a history that extended prior to the emergence of

⁵²⁴ Marks, *How Russia Shaped*, 19.

⁵²⁵ Edward Crankshaw, *The Shadow of the Winter Palace: Russia’s Drift to Revolution, 1825–1917* (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1976), 18.

⁵²⁶ Ludmilla A. Trigos, *The Decembrist Myth in Russian Culture*, 1st ed., Studies of the Harriman Institute (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 18–19.

⁵²⁷ Ludmilla A. Trigos, ‘Historical Models of Terror in Decembrist Literature’, in *Just Assassins*, ed. Anemone, 32.

⁵²⁸ Trigos, ‘Historical Models of Terror’, 32.

anarchist and socialist revolutionary sentiment and extended back to at least the ‘first truly political movement’ in the early 1800s.

Chernyshevsky published *Chto Delat* (What is to be Done?) in 1863. The work is recognised as a deeply influential literary contribution to the emergence of the broader radical milieu in Russia that subsequently produced the terrorist actions of NV and others. The novel was authored while Chernyshevsky was incarcerated in the Peter and Paul Fortress, having been arrested on ‘fabricated evidence’,⁵²⁹ and the journal in which it had been initially serialised, *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) was required to suspend publication. Of the various laudatory commentary regarding *Chto Delat*, it is worth highlighting those of the highly influential anarchist Kropotkin, whom Patyk cited as stating, ‘no novel of Turgenev and no writings of Tolstoy or any other writer ever had such a wide and deep influence upon Russian society as this novel had. It became the watchword of Young Russia, and the influence of the ideas it propagated has never ceased to be apparent since’.⁵³⁰

Through one of its otherwise minor characters, Rakhmetov, the novel provided an archetype of the aesthetic and philosophical disposition that ‘influenced every generation of Russian radicals from its publication in 1863 onward’⁵³¹ or as Venturi stated, ‘moulded a whole generation of Populist students and revolutionaries’.⁵³² The austere and unadorned existence of Rakhmetov and its role in providing an archetype of revolutionary character is evidenced by the character’s behaviour. Rakhmetov ‘gave away his inherited wealth, allowed himself only peasant fare to eat, and slept on a bed of nails to test his own endurance, was an ascetic, single-minded hero with no life beyond the cause’.⁵³³

Many engaged in the broader radical and revolutionary community adopted this aesthetic and philosophical disposition. However, of this broad population, there is evidence of the direct influence of *Chto Delat*. In reference to the 1866 ‘unheard of’ attempt on the Tsar, Verhoeven stated, ‘Karakazov and his friends indeed imitated the novel’.⁵³⁴ Further, Siljak identified the explicit influence *Chto Delat* had on Ishtun, in emphasising he:

⁵²⁹ Patyk, *Written in Blood*, 60.

⁵³⁰ Peter Kropotkin, *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1915), <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-ideals-and-realities-in-russian-literature>.

⁵³¹ Sally A. Boniece, ‘The Spiridonova Case, 1906’, in *Just Assassins*, ed. Anemone, 132.

⁵³² Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 178–79.

⁵³³ Boniece, ‘The Spiridonova Case’.

⁵³⁴ Verhoeven and Karakozov, *Odd Man Karakozov*, 40.

recognized that formal education did not suit his excitable temperament. He needed to find a new path to success ... It was finally revealed to him the following year, in the pages of *What is to Be Done?* One of Chernyshevskii's most devoted acolytes, Ishutin once declared: 'There have been three great men in the world, Jesus Christ, Paul the Apostle, and Chernyshevskii'.⁵³⁵

The enduring appeal of the book and the venerated status of its author are perhaps most explicitly demonstrated by the actions of NV in the aftermath of their eventual successful assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Amid efforts to continue publishing their leaflets, the remaining members sent a letter to the newly anointed Tsar Alexander III, seeking to negotiate a cessation of their terrorist activities. Among the various outcomes sought by the substantially diminished terrorist organisation was the release of Chernyshevsky from his Siberian exile.⁵³⁶ Verhoeven succinctly captured the role of the novel: 'in the beginning, therefore, were Chernyshevsky's words—and then came the act, and the act was a form of violence eventually known as terrorism'.⁵³⁷

The role of literature in enabling terrorism to be understood and accurately interpreted by the broader audiences with which it sought to communicate is further reinforced through an analysis of what Patyk refers to as Dostoevsky's 'terrorism trilogy'.⁵³⁸ Before discussing Dostoevsky as a specific manifestation of fiction serving as an interpretive lens for reality. On the more general role that fiction plays in complementing 'reality' in shaping the public's understanding of it, it is worthwhile to recall the words of Hayden White and his discussion of the work of Giambattista Vico. In his 1973 article, White discussed how it is possible to 'regard the "true" and the "fabulous" as simply different ways of signifying the relationship of the human consciousness to the world it confronts in different degrees of certitude and comprehension'.⁵³⁹

In describing Dostoevsky's work and its role in shaping the imaginary of modern terrorism, Patyk comments that his trilogy of works, *Crime and Punishment*, *Demons* and *The Brothers Karamazov* 'coincide with and reflect upon watershed moments in the emergence of terrorism'.⁵⁴⁰ In detailing the parallels between the publication of these works and the 'watershed moments' she is referring to, Patyk emphasised Karakazov's 1866 assassination

⁵³⁵ Siljak, *Angel of Vengeance*, 80–81.

⁵³⁶ Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 183.

⁵³⁷ Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, 183.

⁵³⁸ Patyk, 'Dostoevsky's Terrorism Trilogy', in *Terrorism and Literature*, ed. Herman, 230–45.

⁵³⁹ Hayden White, 'The Irrational and the Problem of Historical Knowledge in the Enlightenment', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 2, no. 1 (1973): 315, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sec.1973.0016>.

⁵⁴⁰ Patyk, 'Dostoevsky's Terrorism Trilogy', 232.

attempt, Nechaev's 1869 murder of Ivanov and the NV campaign to assassinate the Tsar between 1879 and 1881.⁵⁴¹ In terms of Dostoevsky's most enduring contribution to public interpretations of terrorism, Patyk made the crucial point regarding language in identifying, 'Dostoevsky's own poetics of the deed curiously aligned with and anticipated these forms of political violence'. Through literature, Dostoevsky succeeds in providing the public with an interpretive frame to understand and interpret the events that were transpiring within Russian politics and society. In his own words, Dostoevsky reflected on the role that the Nechaev affair played in informing *Devils* and his purpose in its publication when he wrote:

Several of our critics have observed that in my novel I used the plot of the well-known Nechaev affair. But they hastened to add that my book did not contain any actual portraits or a literal reproduction of the Nechaev history—having taken an event, I tried only to clarify its possibility in our society, and precisely as a social event, not as an anecdote, not as a description of a particular occurrence in Moscow. All this, I may observe, is quite correct. In my novel I have not handled the well-known Nechaev and his victim Ivanov in any personal way.⁵⁴²

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to evidence how the three elements of the framework, as manifested in the context of mid-to-late nineteenth-century Russia, were instrumental to the effectiveness of anarchist terrorism during the period. It is sufficient to state here that anarchist terrorism, as refined by the Russian revolutionaries of the period, succeeded in propagating the 'the Russian way' or the 'Russian method' ⁵⁴³ across numerous jurisdictions. It demonstrated for the first time that substate terrorism could be deployed against the state and that it was possible to replicate the organisational, tactical and strategic elements of what NV specifically and various other Russian anarchist terrorists engaged in. Demonstrating the feasibility of violent resistance against the regime was substantial in the Russian context and ultimately shaped the development of the broader revolutionary movement that culminated with the successful 1917 revolution.

The deployment of dynamite, the consideration and incorporation of communicative and narrative dynamics into operational design and the exploitation of the burgeoning print

⁵⁴¹ Patyk, 'Dostoevsky's Terrorism Trilogy', 232.

⁵⁴² Cited in Joseph Frank, *Through the Russian Prism: Essays on Literature and Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 139.

⁵⁴³ Ekaterina Stepanova, 'Terrorism in the Russian Empire: The Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', in *The Cambridge History of Terrorism*, ed. Richard English (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 284, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108556248.012>.

industry, represented by the print media, radical presses and serialised fiction, all coalesced to amplify and disseminate the ideology and methodology of Russian anarchist terrorism transnationally and develop an archetype that has been endlessly replicated and imitated, while also evolving to adapt to context. The next chapter provides historical and ideological, doctrinal, and operational context to the emergence and evolution of terrorism motivated by the so-called liberation of Palestine.

Chapter Seven: Watching Palestinian Terrorism: Ideology, Doctrine and Operations

*Of the available forms of theater, few are so captivating figuratively, as well as literally, as skyjacking. The boldness of the action, the obviousness of the danger, the numbers of people involved as hostages and therefore potential victims, the ease with which national boundaries can be traversed and international incidents created, the instantaneous radio and television linkages, all these combine to make this crime one of the most immediately attractive forms of terrorist action.*⁵⁴⁴

The subject of terrorism in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict is notoriously fraught and frequently affected by individual and collective bias, historical and contemporary traumas, the legacies of colonisation, regional and international geopolitical agendas and a multitude of secular and religious ideological agendas. The violence perpetrated by multiple parties, both state and non-state, within, around and in the name of the Israel/Palestine conflict ensure that it remains one of the most complex and consequential unresolved issues in international affairs. It is in this context that any analysis of terrorism undertaken in the name of the liberation of Palestine, secular or religious, must be attuned to. The analysis contained herein does not seek to make any substantive claims regarding any of the various controversies associated with the conflict, nor does it seek to suggest that either party ought to be absolved of contributing responsibility. Rather, it seeks to analyse the terrorism undertaken in the name of the liberation of Palestine, in the narrow sense and the context of broader agendas. The purpose of this caveat is to highlight that the analysis undertaken here does not seek to make determinations concerning the justifiability of the violence undertaken by Palestinian actors in the context of the conflict but rather seeks to analyse the actions of organisations and networks whose actions are recognised as terrorism. These caveats also seek to recognise that in the context of a conflict as fraught as the Israel/Palestine conflict, it is necessary to recognise that legitimate protest, dissent and resistance do not, in and of themselves, constitute terrorism, while equally recognising that acts that do constitute terrorism ought not to be diminished in their severity by reference to claims of legitimate resistance or illegitimacy regarding the target of terrorist violence. Even within the paradigm of non-state violence, it is possible to make reasonable assessments about the legitimacy, proportionality or necessity of the actions undertaken. As Gross has insightfully suggested, ‘there is room to speak of just guerrilla warfare. It is not always what guerrillas practice, but

⁵⁴⁴ Peter St. John, ‘The Politics of Aviation Terrorism’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10, no. 3 (September 1998): 27–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559808427467>.

neither are its tactics and strategies the heinous practices that state powers often portray them to be'.⁵⁴⁵

With Gross's point informing the approach undertaken here, it is necessary to highlight that the following analysis of terrorism by Palestinian organisations and networks does not imply illegitimacy regarding the ideological proposition of the organisations and networks, nor does it imply legitimacy concerning the countermeasures implemented in response or propose legitimacy or illegitimacy to the methods undertaken by either party. The conflict and the violence, state and non-state, are immeasurably complex. The contested perspectives on the actions of Palestinian, Israeli, regional and international actors within the conflict are as numerous as they are frequently ill-informed. The following analysis accepts that there are and have been acts and campaigns of terrorism undertaken by organisations and networks sympathetic to or supportive of the liberation of Palestine. Further, it seeks to identify the mechanisms by which these actions contributed to the movement's objectives in whose name they were undertaken.

Much like the need to distinguish between the broad ideology of anarchism, the doctrine of propaganda of the deed and the manifestations of anarchist terrorism, it is also equally necessary to distinguish between the idea of Palestinian liberation and the ideologies associated with that cause, the revolutionary armed struggle that was adopted as a broad doctrinal approach to achieving strategic objectives and the specific manifestations of terrorism that took place in the name of Palestinian organisations and networks. Making the Palestinian case additionally complex is the existence of a litany of militant entities within the broader movement, motivated by secular and religious ideologies, including periods of internecine conflict between members and entities from within the broader movement. At the same time, Yasser Arafat's PLO was the organisation most synonymous with the Palestinian cause. It provided the overarching leadership structure for the movement; important entities within the PLO or breakaway factions of the PLO were responsible for some of the highest-profile and successful operations undertaken. Organisations such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP),⁵⁴⁶ the Black September Organization (BSO) and the Abu

⁵⁴⁵ Michael L. Gross, 'The Ethics of Insurgency: A Brief Overview', *Journal of Military Ethics* 14, no. 3/4 (October 2015): 249.

⁵⁴⁶ As with the Anarchist movement, the Palestinian movement was by no means a homogenous, ideologically coherent movement. As Rubin notes, "...Petit-bourgeois" leaders like Arafat inevitably failed, said Habash, because they did not adopt Marxism, transform conventional war into peoples' guerrilla war, or overthrow the Jordanian, Lebanese, and Saudi regimes." The PFLP urged class struggle; Arafat sought to bring all Palestinians together in a broad nationalist struggle. The PFLP feared that the West Bank/Gaza elite would make peace with

Nidal Organization were all responsible for substantial numbers of terrorist incidents and the ongoing refinement of the character of terrorism generally within its relevant social, political and technological contexts. However, the PLO was not the first resistance enterprise undertaken in the name of Palestinian liberation. The resistance can be traced back to the period before 1948, motivated by anti-Zionist sentiment within what was then the British Mandate of Palestine.

This section tracks the interrelated development of the ideological and doctrinal underpinnings of the Palestinian cause. The ideal of a liberated Palestine became, over time, intimately intertwined with a broader Third-Worldist ideological milieu. As such, this section analyses their concurrent evolution during the post-1967 period, with a particular emphasis on the dominance of the Third Worldist perspective and the 'revolutionary armed struggle' doctrine that the movement embraced. Understanding how the Palestinian cause internationalised itself, how that internationalisation enabled the coherency and interpretation of its terrorist attacks and how it came to exploit contemporary visual media platforms forms the core of this chapter's content, particularly the second part of the chapter wherein the conceptual framework is applied. The Palestinian movement's innovations in terrorist violence, its embedding of communicative and narrative dynamics into its operational considerations and its visual media orientation were intimately linked to the movement's ideological and doctrinal perspectives.

Well before Yasser Arafat's keffiyeh became an internationally recognised symbol of resistance and synonymous, at least from a Western perspective, with Middle Eastern terrorism and plane hijacking, Palestinian resistance efforts had been active in and around the region for decades. The pre-1948 period in what was then-British Mandated Palestine witnessed extensive violence perpetrated by British forces and Jewish⁵⁴⁷ and Palestinian

Israel in ex-change for a Palestinian state in the territories. While young men from refugee camps were fighting Israel, it charged, "The merchants on the West Bank were seeking to link their interests anew with the enemy state." Instead of Fatah slogans like, "We are all commandos!" or "No rich and no poor so long as we remain homeless!" the PFLP insisted that workers, peasants, and refugees must be the leading forces. Abu Iyad ridiculed the PFLP and other smaller PLO member groups as demagogues and adventurers. He insisted that class conflict and Marxism were irrelevant for the Palestinians. The PLO's victory, Abu Iyad argued, would automatically bring social revolution and transform the Arab states. The struggle itself was transforming Palestinians from "poor helpless refugees" into heroic combatants. At any rate, Fatah's goal was not to overthrow Arab regimes, he said, but to stop them from dominating the Palestinian cause." Yet Arafat always found the threat from Arab states as difficult to resolve as the smaller groups' challenges. Barry M. Rubin, *Revolution until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), 33.

⁵⁴⁷ For a detailed treatment of pre-1948 Jewish terrorism, see Bruce Hoffman, *Anonymous Soldiers: The Struggle for Israel, 1917–1947*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015).

entities. In terms of recognised periods of violence in response to increased Zionist activity in Palestine, there were periods referred to by Khalidi as ‘demonstrations, strikes, and riots, with violence flaring notably in 1920, 1921, and 1929, each episode more intense than the previous one’.⁵⁴⁸ More substantially, and as a consequence of the recruitment efforts of Sheikh Izz ad-Din al-Qassam,⁵⁴⁹ the first organised resistance against Zionism and the British mandate emerged, adopting the name *Black Hand* and a religiously informed jihadist approach to resistance. Kimmerling claims that by 1935, *Black Hand* had recruited ‘several hundred followers, in cells of no more than five men each’.⁵⁵⁰ Qassam’s death at the hands of the British would partly inspire the Arab Revolt in Palestine, which ran from 1936 until 1939. Swedenburg referred to this as the ‘last great popular rebellion in Palestine before the *intifada* erupted in 1987’.⁵⁵¹ While Qassam’s *Black Hand* and the inspirational role his death played in fermenting the Arab revolts of 1936–1939 are not central to the period of Palestinian terrorism that is the focus of this case study, it is appropriate to acknowledge the long history of religious and secular resistance to Zionism, the external occupation among the Palestinian population and the enduring legacy of these early efforts.

In demonstrating the enduring influence of Qassam’s preaching and organising and the violence that it inspired among the Palestinian population, it is noteworthy that Hamas’ 1988 *Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement*, originally published in 1988, includes the following:

The Islamic Resistance Movement is a link in [a long] chain of the Jihad against the Zionist occupation, which is connected and tied with the initiation [of the Jihad] of the Martyr ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his Mujahid brothers in 1936. And the chain continues on to connect and tie another episode to add to the jihad of the Palestinians and the jihad of the Muslim Brotherhood in the war of 1948 and the Jihad operation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1968 and thereafter.⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁸ Rashid Khalidi, *The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest and Resistance* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2020), 31–32.

⁵⁴⁹ For a detailed profile of al-Qassam, see Mark Sanagan, *Lightning through the Clouds: ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 1st ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2020).

⁵⁵⁰ Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 2009), 67.

⁵⁵¹ Ted Swedenburg, ‘Popular Memory and the Palestinian National Past’, *Golden Ages, Dark Ages: Imagining the Past in Anthropology and History*, ed. in Jay O’Brien and William Roseberry (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 153.

⁵⁵² Muhammad Maqdsi, ‘Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) of Palestine’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no. 4 (1993): 124, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538093>.

Further, the military arm of Hamas is known as the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades,⁵⁵³ explicitly referencing the inspiration of the Palestinian Arab Revolt. Since 2001, Hamas has used ‘Qassam rockets’ as part of their arsenal of weapons in operations against Israel.⁵⁵⁴ In addition, the symbolism of the black and white keffiyeh made famous by Yasser Arafat can be traced back to the Palestinian Arab Revolt. On this, Swedenburg stated, ‘photographic evidence suggests that the kaffya was an important part of the uniform of the fighters in the Arab Revolt’.⁵⁵⁵

The above seeks to evidence both the longer history of violent Palestinian resistance and the continuity within the broader movement that acts in the name of Palestinian liberation, be it religious or secular. Within the discourse regarding the history of resistance activity by Palestinian organisations, several key historical events and decisions are crucially important. The enduring memory of the specific actions, particularly the ongoing resonance of documents and decisions such as the Balfour Declaration⁵⁵⁶ and the Sykes-Picot agreement,⁵⁵⁷ the legacies of the 1948 War of Independence (or *nakba*: catastrophe)⁵⁵⁸ and with particular regard to the current analysis, the broader consequences of the 1967 Six-Day War (or *naksa*: setback),⁵⁵⁹ are all deeply significant events within the contemporary history of the Palestinian resistance movement, and the conflict more broadly.

This case study focuses on the Palestinian resistance movement’s use of terrorism, or the ‘armed struggle’,⁵⁶⁰ in the phrasing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The particular focus is on the period following the Six-Day War in 1967 and how the movement’s tactical, strategic, ideological diversity and innovation coupled with their explicit embrace and

⁵⁵³ Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010), 117.

⁵⁵⁴ Ove Dullum, ‘The Rocket Artillery Reference Book’ (Oslo: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), 2010), 70, <http://rapporter.ffi.no/rapporter/2009/00179.pdf>.

⁵⁵⁵ Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Fayetteville, Ark.: University of Arkansas Press, 2007), 31, <http://www.vlebooks.com/vleweb/product/openreader?id=none&isbn=9781610752633>.

⁵⁵⁶ Arthur James Balfour, ‘The Balfour Declaration’, in Gregory S. Mahler and Alden R. W. Mahler, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: An Introduction and Documentary Reader* (London: Routledge, 2009), 51.

⁵⁵⁷ ‘Sykes-Picot Agreement’, in G. Mahler and A. Mahler, *Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 49–50.

⁵⁵⁸ ‘In a study such as this, terminology can carry a lot of baggage. A classic case in point is the names that are applied to wars. To Jews, the Jewish-Arab war of 1947–1948 is the War of Independence (*milchemet ha’atzma’ut*). To Arabs, and especially Palestinians, it is the *nakba*, or calamity.’: Reuven Firestone, *Holy War in Judaism: The Fall and Rise of a Controversial Idea* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 10.

⁵⁵⁹ Josef Olmert, ‘A Half Century of Occupation: Israel, Palestine, and the World’s Most Intractable Conflict’, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 113–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2018.1454152>.

⁵⁶⁰ ‘Armed struggle’ was formally adopted September 1964, with the first PLO operation beginning on 31 December 1964. Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949–1993*, repr. (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

consideration of communicative and narrative dynamics into their operational planning, as well as their increased exploitation of visual imagery through both the explicit exploitation of and orientation towards, television news and through their embrace of the Third Cinema movement,⁵⁶¹ enabled them to achieve substantial strategic effects concerning their adversaries. The trajectory of the Palestinian movement broadly, the PLO specifically and Yasser Arafat and the globalisation of the ‘armed struggle’ all reflect the successes of the multi-decade efforts of Palestinian militants.

The approach taken herein reflects two substantial characteristics of the Palestinian movement, broadly construed. The first of these reflects the point highlighted earlier regarding the specific entities that constitute the Palestinian movement. In his extensive treatment of what he referred to as the ‘Palestinian national movement’, Sayigh included a complex ‘genealogical diagram of Palestinian organizations’ that includes nearly 50 distinct entities of both secular and religious orientations, both high profile and relatively obscure.⁵⁶² Chamberlin provided similar caveats in his work. He stated, ‘the PLO is an umbrella organization first created in 1964 that brought together a number of different bodies’.⁵⁶³ As briefly referenced above, the approach here is the analysis of terrorism and militant action undertaken by organisations and networks that seek to fight against the existence of Israel, or to provide a form of resistance against Israel’s existence or their policies and operations, generally in the name of Palestinian liberation. This analysis includes all organisations and networks, irrespective of their specific internal ideology. Where relevant, this analysis will include a discussion, for instance, of Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad, both religiously motivated organisations.

Given the purpose here is not to undertake a full-spectrum analysis of each and every various Palestinian militant organisation, nor is it to undertake a specific analysis of any particular organisation within the broader Palestinian national movement, the lens adopted herein is necessarily broad. In much the same way that the anarchist movement came to refer to a litany of organisations, networks, operatives and ideologues, so too will the approach to the Palestinian movement analyse a diversity of organisations, networks, operatives and

⁵⁶¹ Yaqub cites the manifesto of Solanas and Getino when she states that third cinema constitutes ‘a filmmaking practice that is both inextricably bound to a political revolutionary movement and committed to radical change in the funding, production, conceptualization, distribution, and viewing of films as practiced within the global, commercially motivated reach of Hollywood’: Nadia G. Yaqub, *Palestinian Cinema in the Days of Revolution*, 1st ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2018), 49–50.

⁵⁶² Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*.

⁵⁶³ Paul Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 11.

ideologues. Here the focus is on their terrorist activities, communicative and narrative orientation and their use of emergent information and communications technology.

Second, the approach undertaken here reflects that articulated by Chamberlin, who recognised the transnationalisation of the Palestinian resistance and its ultimate immersion within a broader Third Worldist context,⁵⁶⁴ manifesting itself ideologically, doctrinally, operationally and symbolically. Nash sought to define Third Worldism as:

the political theory and practice that saw the major fault-line in the global capitalist order as running between the advanced capitalist countries of the West and the impoverished continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and saw national liberation struggles in the Third World as the major force for global revolution.⁵⁶⁵

This context is evidenced across a range of elements of the Palestinian movement. Arguably one of the most explicit manifestations of this characteristic of the movement is described by Chamberlin, who highlights that ‘Palestinian fighters sought to apply the principles of writers like Franz Fanon, Mao Zedong, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Che Guevara to their own liberation struggle’.⁵⁶⁶ This Third Worldist contextualisation and framing enabled the Palestinian cause to coherently be portrayed and perceived as a transnational conflict, resulting in operations and orientations well beyond the discrete theatre of operations that was Israel and Palestine. This contextualisation was as much informed by ideology and doctrine as it was communicated and manifested through operations, targeting decisions and tactical innovations. As Burleigh has commented, ‘most of these radical Palestinian factions believed in internationalising their cause through the tactic of air piracy’.⁵⁶⁷ Malley also captures the importance of Third Worldism to terrorist and militant organisations of the period. He commented, ‘it was more than political doctrine; it was all encompassing ideology that permeated fields of intellectual knowledge and militant activism’.⁵⁶⁸

The secondary component of contextualising the Palestinian struggle is to recognise its place within what Rapoport famously referred to as the ‘New Left’ wave of terrorism. He described this wave as fundamentally shaped by the Vietnam War controversies and discussed how it

⁵⁶⁴ Paul Chamberlin, ‘The Struggle Against Oppression Everywhere: The Global Politics of Palestinian Liberation’, *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 1 (January 2011): 25–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263201003590300>.

⁵⁶⁵ Andrew Nash, ‘Third Worldism and Internationalism’ (Address, Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association, South Africa, 2002), http://www.codesria.org/IMG/pdf/05_Aina.pdf.

⁵⁶⁶ Chamberlin, ‘Struggle Against Oppression’, 27.

⁵⁶⁷ Burleigh, *Blood and Rage*, 158.

⁵⁶⁸ Robert Malley, *The Call from Algeria: Third Worldism, Revolution, and the Turn to Islam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 2.

‘produced the psychological requisites’ for the period of terrorist activity that manifested in the so-called Third World and within Western jurisdictions. In the context of the Cold War, the animating ethos of Third Worldism and the New Left–inspired wave of terrorism are central to any understanding of the broader social, political and historical milieu of the period under consideration. The Vietnam War provided a unifying source of grievance among young people in Western jurisdictions. It also provided a template for effective resistance to what was frequently portrayed and perceived as imperialism. The following from Jeremy Varon captures the myriad ways in which revolutionary sentiment permeated the period and is worth quoting at some length:

New Leftists were not only implicitly united across national boundaries by their shared opposition to oppression, their commitment to democratic participation, and their use of militant direct action as a means of protest; they were also consciously internationalist. In what amounted to a global crusade, students and youths throughout the world protested the Vietnam War. They assimilated dimensions of Black Power and Third World revolutionary ideologies, in which they saw near-universal appeal and relevance. They created an international protest culture organized around master texts, chiefly those of Karl Marx, Mao Tse-tung, and Herbert Marcuse, and ‘revolutionary’ icons like Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh. And, in instances, they responded directly to the triumphs and failures experienced by their foreign New Left comrades. In their wildest dreams, they saw themselves waging a revolution that would overthrow both the U.S.-led imperialism of the West and the ossified, bureaucratic communism of the East.⁵⁶⁹

In further demonstrating the integration and transnationality of the various conflicts of the period, it is worth briefly noting a key engagement that reflects the relationships between the various revolutionary entities that existed during this period. As described in detail by Chamberlin, Yasser Arafat and a delegation of senior PLO officials travelled to Hanoi in 1970, where they met with General Võ Nguyên Giáp of the Vietnamese People’s Army. Giáp was famous for having contributed substantially, in conjunction with Hồ Chí Minh, to the evolution of insurgent strategy. Hammes commented that ‘Ho and Giap developed the ability to take the political war to their distant enemy’s homeland and destroy his will to continue the struggle’.⁵⁷⁰ As early as 1968, after the turning point that was the Six-Day War, the PLO built ties to a litany of Third World liberation movements and multiple major powers. While support from major states such as China materialised in the provision of arms, the PLO also

⁵⁶⁹ Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 1.

⁵⁷⁰ Hammes, *Sling and the Stone*, 56.

had its fighters trained in locations such as Algeria.⁵⁷¹ Officers underwent leadership training in China⁵⁷² and support and training from the Soviet KGB.⁵⁷³ The Chinese leadership began to encourage the PLO leadership to model its struggle on the Vietnamese experience. In private advice provided by Giáp to Arafat, Giáp reportedly stated, ‘Stop talking about annihilating Israel ... and instead turn your terror war into a struggle for human rights. Then you will have the American people eating out of your hand’.⁵⁷⁴ This is but a single demonstration of how the Palestinian movement consciously sought out international support and was advised and adopted advice regarding how they ought to both prosecute and frame their struggle.

Last, it is necessary to highlight the pivot point of 1968 regarding the Palestinian movement specifically and the broader context of Third Worldism, the New Left and international affairs. 1968 represents a substantial social, political and cultural marker in modern history, particularly concerning protest and resistance movements. Across 1968 explicitly, but through the late 1960s, an immense body of revolutionary activity and sentiment manifested. Given the transnationally contextualised approach adopted on understanding the Palestinian movement and the terrorism associated with it, it is necessary to approach the broader context in a similar manner. In determining 1968 as a point of departure for this analysis, beyond the importance of the 1967 Six-Day War, the following comments from Wallerstein were significantly influential:

The revolution of 1968 was a revolution; it was a single revolution. It was marked by demonstrations, disorder, and violence in many parts of the world over a period of at least three years. Its origins, consequences, and lessons cannot be analyzed correctly by appealing to the particular circumstances of the local manifestations of this global phenomenon, however much the local factors conditioned the details of the political and social struggles in each locality.⁵⁷⁵

It is beyond the scope of this work to detail the litany of substantial and consequential manifestations of revolutionary and dissenting action that took place across this period. However, if only briefly, it is worth noting that in addition to the general strike in France of

⁵⁷¹ Barry M. Rubin, *Revolution until Victory? The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 11.

⁵⁷² Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 61–62.

⁵⁷³ Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2005), 145.

⁵⁷⁴ Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 62–64.

⁵⁷⁵ Immanuel Wallerstein and Sharon Zukin, ‘1968, Revolution in the World-System: Theses and Queries’, *Theory and Society* 18, no. 4 (1989): 431–49.

May 1968⁵⁷⁶ and the global protests held in solidarity with those events, Katsiaficas highlighted the Prague Spring, the Tet Offensive and the assassination of Martin Luther King⁵⁷⁷ in 1968. By 1970, Western-based terrorist organisations such as the Red Army Faction⁵⁷⁸ and the Weather Underground⁵⁷⁹ had emerged, reflecting the increasingly militant aspects of Western and transnational revolutionary movements.

Although the Arab League initially established Palestine Liberation Organisation at the behest of Egyptian leader Jamal Abd al-Nasser⁵⁸⁰ in 1964, and what would become its dominant faction, Fatah,⁵⁸¹ whose origins trace as far back as 1959,⁵⁸² it was not until 1968 that it emerged in its more familiar form. Becker has commented on how ‘in its first four years, only its rhetoric was militant’.⁵⁸³ Fatah’s first attempt to manifest its newly adopted ‘armed struggle’ doctrine was the failed attempt to strike Israel with infiltrating teams of *fedayeen* from ‘all neighboring states’.⁵⁸⁴ This attempt, which resulted in only two *fedayeen* teams successfully penetrating Israeli territory, and a failed attempt to detonate an improvised explosive device at a water facility⁵⁸⁵ did not deter Fatah, under the auspices of its military wing *al-Asifah* (the Storm), from releasing its ‘first military communique on 1 January 1965’.⁵⁸⁶ These early efforts at militant action, and the willingness to produce and distribute propagandistic outputs despite the failure of the operation, led Byman to state, with reference to Fatah, that the organisation had ‘from its start cared more about publicity than operational effectiveness’.⁵⁸⁷ Additionally, and again despite the failure of the operation itself, 1 January ‘was subsequently celebrated by all Palestinian organizations as the launch of the armed

⁵⁷⁶ Angelo Quattrocchi and Tom Nairn, *The Beginning of the End: France, May 1968* (London; New York, NY: Verso, 1998).

⁵⁷⁷ George N. Katsiaficas, Kathleen Cleaver and Carlos Muñoz, *The Global Imagination of 1968: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2018), 2.

⁵⁷⁸ Stefan Aust, *The Baader-Meinhof Complex*, 2008, 9.

⁵⁷⁹ Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 50.

⁵⁸⁰ Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Organization* (AuthorHouse, 2014), 35.

⁵⁸¹ For a detailed analysis of the emergence of Fatah, and the ultimate establishment of the PLO, see Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949 - 1993*, Reprinted (Oxford New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 80-87.

⁵⁸² Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War on Palestine*, 90.

⁵⁸³ Becker, *The PLO*, 14.

⁵⁸⁴ Byman, *A High Price*, 32.

⁵⁸⁵ Byman, *A High Price*, 32.

⁵⁸⁶ Abū Iyād and Eric Rouleau, *My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1981), 44.

⁵⁸⁷ Byman, *A High Price*, 32.

struggle'.⁵⁸⁸ In its earliest manifestations, the Palestinian liberation movement was attuned to communicative and narrative dynamics.

The preliminary failures by no means acted as a deterrent for the Palestinian struggle. Cross-border 'infiltrations' continued, but they achieved marginal impact on the Israelis and certainly failed to raise the Israeli Government's attention or those of the surrounding Arab countries. Speaking in late 1966, then-Israel Defense Force Chief-of-Staff, Yitzhak Rabin, commented, 'there is no major wave of infiltration today. Just because several dozen bandits from al-Fatah cross the border, Israel does not have to get caught up in a frenzy of escalation.'⁵⁸⁹

In the aftermath of the Six-Day War, from 5 June to 10 June 1967, the Palestinian movement assessed that achieving Palestinian liberation through the successes of the militaries of Arab governments was no longer viable and that independent 'armed struggle' by non-state actors was the only feasible means by which they could envisage achieving their desired end state. It should be noted that this determination was not a radical departure from existing strategic and doctrinal positions. As early as 1959, some of the first propaganda produced by Fatah, *Our Palestine*, stated, 'the only manner in which Palestine could be regained was through military violence'.⁵⁹⁰ However, Fatah held the unique distinction of not being tethered to an Arab government, as the balance of then-existent Palestinian commando entities were. The dominance of Fatah within the Palestinian movement and ultimately within the PLO would substantially shape the overall approach of the movement.

In the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict, the consequences of the overwhelming victory of Israeli Forces over the militaries of Egypt, Jordan and Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War served as a catalyst that shifted the trajectory of the PLO specifically and of the broader militant Palestinian movement. As Chamberlin has stated, 'it was out of this milieu that groups such as Fatah, the ANM, and the PFLP would emerge'.⁵⁹¹ By September of 1967, with the war having ended in June with the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, Fatah was distributing a manifesto across the occupied territories that explicitly made reference to:

⁵⁸⁸ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 108.

⁵⁸⁹ Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81.

⁵⁹⁰ Riyād Najīb Rayyis and Dunia Nahas, *Guerrillas for Palestine* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 28.

⁵⁹¹ Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 19.

the legendary resistance of Algeria ... Let us take as our model the struggle of the Vietnamese people ... We must set up secret resistance cells...For even one fighting cell ... has the power to inflict great losses upon the enemy.⁵⁹²

Ultimately, two events in 1968 truly catalysed the Palestinian movement: the Battle of Karamah on 21 March and the 22 July hijacking of El Al Flight 426 from Rome to Tel Aviv by terrorists from the PFLP. Hoffman referred to the PFLP as ‘one of six groups that then constituted Palestine Liberation Organisation’.⁵⁹³ The Battle of Karamah, and more substantially, the legend of the battle, are considered the ‘foundation myth of the Palestinian commando movement’.⁵⁹⁴ The battle came to be a celebrated legend for the Palestinians due to the actual outcome of the fighting and the successful construction of a narrative regarding resistance fighting. Morris notes that ‘Karamah was to serve a generation of Palestinian fighters as a symbol of heroic resistance and proof of the IDF’s vulnerability’.⁵⁹⁵ This mythology is further highlighted by Khalidi, who notes that ‘the battle of al-Karama was a case of a failure against overwhelming odds brilliantly narrated as heroic triumph’.⁵⁹⁶

Later in 1968, and in stark contrast to the relative continuity maintained by Palestinian militants in their cross-border raids and actions, the PFLP undertook what would be noted as a substantial pivot point in the trajectory of terrorist praxis, both Palestinian and globally. As Hoffman noted, the hijacking of Flight 426 constituted ‘the advent of what is considered modern, international terrorism’.⁵⁹⁷ The hijacking of Flight 426 marked the beginning of a substantial shift in the practices of terrorist organisations. While it was by no means the first plane hijacking, nor the first plane hijacking for ideological purposes,⁵⁹⁸ it differed in that it constituted an explicitly transnationally oriented communicative act. It aimed at highlighting the grievances of the Palestinian cause to a wider audience. With this act, the PFLP forced the issue of Palestine onto the world stage, registering the grievance to a transnational audience and beginning the process of transforming a dualistic conflict into an issue of concern for multiple parties across the international community.

⁵⁹² Ehud Yaari, *Strike Terror: The Story of Fatah* (New York, NY: Sabra Books, 1970), 133–34.

⁵⁹³ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 65.

⁵⁹⁴ Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 196.

⁵⁹⁵ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1999*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Knopf, 1999), 369.

⁵⁹⁶ Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 197.

⁵⁹⁷ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 65.

⁵⁹⁸ Veilleux-Lepage argues that the first instance of ‘hijacking as an act of political contention’ was in Peru in 1930. Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terror Evolves*.

Operation Revolution Airport⁵⁹⁹

Of the terrorist spectacles perpetrated by the Palestinian movement, and the PFLP more specifically, their escalation, internationalisation and media orientation are evidenced most demonstrably through the multiple plane hijackings of 1970. One event, known as Dawson's Field hijackings, in reference to the remote former Royal Air Force landing strip in the northeast of Jordan where the hijacked flights were ultimately forced to land, would produce images and footage that would hold the world's attention for the duration of the event and would launch the Palestinian question into international political discourse in a manner that was largely unprecedented. The PFLP, who was responsible for the conceptualisation and actioning of the incident, referred to the location as 'Revolution airport'.⁶⁰⁰ The operation had been conceptualised with explicit considerations regarding news media coverage and the necessity for video and photographic imagery to be distributed across the news ecosystem. Reflecting on the calculus that Wadi Haddad and his colleagues engaged in as they planned the operation, former senior PFLP figure, Bassam Abu-Sharif and spokesperson for the PFLP at Revolution airport, noted, 'by now we had the world by the throat. Our operations had transformed the situation in the Middle East ... The mighty Israelis had been obliged to back down and meet our demands, they'd had to release our prisoners, *broadcast our statements ... we knew that American hostages had the highest news value*' (emphasis added).⁶⁰¹

In addition to the communicative conceptualisation of aviation terrorism and plane hijacking espoused by Haddad previously, this incident can be contextualised by a number of other media products. Al-Hadaf, the Ghassan Kanafani-edited publication of the PFLP, would refer to the 'hijacking carnival' and argued that it was necessary and that 'there had to be a series

⁵⁹⁹ Operation Revolution Airport, or the Dawson's Field hijackings initially involved a plan to hijack three aircraft all bound for New York. Beginning on 6 September 1970, flights from Frankfurt and Zurich were successfully hijacked. The third plane, an El Al flight departing from London was not successful, and the two hijackers, Leila Khaled and Sandinista member Patrick Arguello, were prevented from hijacking the flight. Two other operatives who had not been able to board the El Al flight, subsequently hijacked a Pan Am flight, also bound for New York. This flight was too large to land at Dawson's field in Jordan and was subsequently rerouted to Cairo, via Beirut, and blown up with explosives. On 11 September, an additional flight was hijacked en route from Bombay to London, by PFLP sympathiser, acting independently. This flight was diverted to Dawson's field, resulting in three aircraft, crew and passengers, all being held hostage. The three planes, once emptied of crew and hostages, were destroyed with explosives on 12 September. The incident ended on 30 September when the British Government agreed to release Leila Khaled from prison in the UK. See Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terror Evolves*, 88–90.

⁶⁰⁰ Yoram Schweitzer, 'Appendix IV: Innovation in Terrorist Organizations: The Case of PFLP and its Offshoots', in Maria J. Rasmussen and Mohammed M. Hafez, 'Terrorist Innovations in Weapons of Mass Effect: Preconditions, Causes, and Predictive Indicators', Workshop Report (Washington, DC: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 2010), 89, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=9908>.

⁶⁰¹ Abū Sharif and Mahnaimi, *Best of Enemies: The Memoirs of Bassam Abu-Sharif and Uzi Mahnaimi*, 1st ed. (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co, 1995), 80–81.

of operations to penetrate ... the Arab and international media and political conspiracy'.⁶⁰² The first formal statement issued by the PFLP regarding Dawson's Field reflected their frustrations with attaining the necessary support among the masses for the revolutionary cause. It stated unequivocally that, at least in part, the operation was designed to 'disseminate a revolutionary atmosphere',⁶⁰³ further demonstrating the communicative considerations of the operation, as well as their enduring commitment to revolutionary doctrine. Their media considerations and their intention to produce video footage were clear when they succeeded in having multiple Western journalists and camera crews present at Dawson's Field, with whom they engaged extensively. Bassam Abu-Sharif was the PFLP spokesperson at Dawson's Field, and he and colleagues engaged extensively with the journalists present.⁶⁰⁴ Gerald Seymour, a correspondent for British Independent Television News and one of the first journalists to arrive at Revolution Airport, noted 'the PFLP spokesman had decided that having got the media there—and our ranks had swelled during the course of the day—what he needed to do was to have a news conference'.⁶⁰⁵

This press conference, delivered to the approximately 60 journalists now present at the remote airfield, was held by Abu-Sharif. The press was permitted to ask questions of the hostages.⁶⁰⁶ While the incident had been, at least in part, designed to provide the necessary leverage to negotiate the release of several Palestinian hostages, it had also been staged as an internationally oriented media event. As the crisis unfolded, the PFLP achieved two dramatic outcomes. The hijacking of an additional final plane, albeit unplanned and not part of PFLP's original proposal, dramatically increased the proportion of British hostages being held. This enabled the PFLP to force the British Government into releasing Leila Khaled, detained after her unsuccessful attempt to hijack an El Al flight out of London. Distinct from the release of other Palestinian prisoners, her release was symbolically important for the PFLP as her iconic image had become central to media representations of the Palestinian struggle. All the theatrics and the successful efforts to have Palestinian prisoners released had succeeded; however, the final mediated act was yet to manifest.

⁶⁰² *Al-Hadaf*, September 1970, cited in Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 257.

⁶⁰³ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 257.

⁶⁰⁴ Ilan Ziv, *American Experience: Hijacked*, Documentary (Public Broadcasting Service, 2006); Kai Bird, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956–78* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2010), ProQuest Central.

⁶⁰⁵ Ziv, *American Experience*.

⁶⁰⁶ PBS, 'Hijacked: The People Involved and Affected', accessed 3 August 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/people-involved-and-affected/>.

With concerns mounting among the PFLP regarding the possibility of joint Israeli and American action being taken, all hostages were taken off the planes and moved to safety. At Abu-Sharif's instruction, journalists and cameramen were placed safely away. On 12 September, the planes were destroyed with explosives,⁶⁰⁷ producing the iconic video footage and photographs that inscribed the event in the international public's conscience. From the perspective of Bassam Abu-Sharif, the PFLP spokesperson who had handled much of the media relations during the event, there was no question regarding the operation's success. In his words:

Dawson's Field finally put the PFLP and, far more importantly, the issue of Palestine, on the map. All of our demands were met, all of our imprisoned fighters were released. The British even allowed Leila Khaled to go free. As for me, I had become notorious. I had given half a dozen lectures to the passengers during the hijack, as well as press and TV interviews. Mistakenly, some journalists saw me as the mastermind behind the whole show. I even finished up on the cover of *Time* magazine, under the headline, 'Pirates of the air', shouting at the passengers through my trusty megaphone. I had become 'The face of terrorism.'⁶⁰⁸

Operation Deir Yassin⁶⁰⁹

While the multiple plane hijackings of 1970 constituted a clear and direct example of a highly mediated terrorist operation—conceived and undertaken with strong consideration of news media dynamics and the power of video and photography—it resulted in dramatic increases in airport security protocols, especially for El Al flights. These changes made the hijacking of planes increasingly difficult. They resulted in an expansion of the targeting considerations of the PFLP and others and prompted the use of non-Palestinian operatives. The Lod Massacre provides an additional demonstration of the mediated orientation of the operational planners, highlighting the PFLPs efforts to communicate its contextualised ideological position within a broader Third World revolutionary milieu. The use of Japanese Red Army (JRA) operatives, the production and distribution of *Sekigun-PFLP: Sekai Senso Sengen* (the

⁶⁰⁷ Aviva Guttman, *The Origins of International Counterterrorism: Switzerland at the Forefront of Crisis Negotiations, Multilateral Diplomacy, and Intelligence Cooperation (1969–1977)*, *New Perspectives on the Cold War*, vol. 2 (Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill, 2018), 47.

⁶⁰⁸ Abū Sharīf and Mahnaimi, *Best of Enemies*, 88.

⁶⁰⁹ On 30 May 1972, three Japanese Red Army operatives landed at Lod Airport (now Ben-Gurion Airport) and, using automatic rifles and grenades they had in their luggage, attacked the arrivals area, killing 26 people and wounding 80 others. Two of the operatives were killed during the incident, and the third was injured and arrested. See Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terror Evolves*, 92–94.

Red Army/PFLP: Declaration of World War),⁶¹⁰ additional attacks using JRA operatives and German members of the Revolutionary Cells and the 2 June Movement,⁶¹¹ were further efforts to reinforce the transnational nature of the Palestinian movement and demonstrate globalised solidarity with other revolutionary and liberationist movements.

The Lod Massacre demonstrates what had become standard practice for Palestinian terrorist attacks. After the attack, the Kanafani-edited *al-Hadaf* published the front-page headline ‘Red Army-PFLP-World War Declaration’ in Japanese.⁶¹² Subsequently, the PFLP pressured the founder and leader of the JRA, Fusako Shigenobu, to announce the involvement of her organisation in the operation.⁶¹³ They then released a communiqué stating, ‘the only way to achieve results ... is to shock the world right down to its socks’⁶¹⁴ and that ‘We in the Red Army declare anew our preparedness to fight hand-in-hand with the Palestinians and wage joint onslaughts at any time to defeat the Israeli enemy ... Only revolutionary violence will enable us to defeat imperialists throughout the world’.⁶¹⁵

These media-oriented actions were central to the efforts of the PFLP and, concomitantly, the JRA to position and contextualise themselves and their struggle against Israel as part of a globally oriented liberation movement. Beyond the entirely practical benefits of circumventing the Israeli airport security measures, which focused on vigilance concerning Arab persons of interest, the attack successfully demonstrated that the Palestinian struggle resonated internationally with revolutionaries as far removed from the geography of Israel and Palestine as Japan. By successfully providing the media with a coherent and contextualised action, the PFLP was again able to force the issue of the Palestinian struggle into the international headlines. It is also worth noting on broader narrative considerations of the operation, the PFLP referred to the Lod Massacre operatives as the ‘Squad of the Martyr Patrick Arguello’⁶¹⁶ and the operation was referred to as the Deir Yassin Operation,⁶¹⁷ an

⁶¹⁰ Author’s copy of full documentary film:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/82etlv4h264v819/Red_Army_PFLP_Declaration_of_World_War_1971.mp4?dl=0.

⁶¹¹ Tricia Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 96.

⁶¹² Yoshihiro Kuriyama, ‘Terrorism at Tel Aviv Airport and a “New Left” Group in Japan’, *Asian Survey* 13, no. 3 (1973): 337, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2643041>.

⁶¹³ Patricia G. Steinhoff, ‘Transnational Ties of the Japanese Armed Left Shared Revolutionary Ideas and Direct Personal Contacts’, in Alberto Martin Alvarez and Eduardo Rey Tristán, *Revolutionary Violence and the New Left: Transnational Perspectives* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2016), 227.

⁶¹⁴ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 260.

⁶¹⁵ Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*, 88.

⁶¹⁶ Ensalaco, *Middle Eastern Terrorism*, 65; Patrick Arguello, a Nicaraguan-American member of the Sandinista movement’ who attempted, with Leila Khaled, to hijack El Al flight 707 as part of the Dawson’s Field

explicit reference to events that took place in 1948.⁶¹⁸ It is claimed that members of Irgun and Lehi there massacred some 200 Palestinians.⁶¹⁹

Shigenobu's involvement with the PFLP was fundamentally propagandistic, and her propaganda activities dated back to her initial involvement with the group. She had originally volunteered with the PFLP working on *al-Hadaf* and authored material on Palestine for publication in Japan.⁶²⁰ Shigenobu also organised the visit of two Japanese filmmakers, Wakamatsu Kōji and Adachi Masao, to visit Beirut on their return from the 1971 Cannes Film Festival. These two filmmakers proceeded to interview Ghassan Kanafani and Leila Khaled, as well as visit numerous refugee camps and guerrilla bases in Southern Lebanon. Their captured footage would ultimately be edited into the Red Army/PFLP: Declaration of World War.⁶²¹ In addition to using the iconic explosion footage of the Revolution Airport Operation in 1970, the film, in the words of Yaqub, was 'informed directly by spectacular acts of violence'.⁶²² During this period, Shigenobu was also involved in the production of *The Arab Guerrillas and the World Red Army*,⁶²³ which included translating numerous PFLP documents into Japanese.⁶²⁴

The PFLP had established the Committee for Central Information in 1971,⁶²⁵ only shortly before the aforementioned *Declaration of War* film was screened at Japanese universities to recruit radicalised Japanese students to travel to Palestine for training with the PFLP. As the PFLP's undated document *The Cinema and the Revolution*⁶²⁶ explicitly articulates, part of the

operation. He was shot dead. Sarah Irving, *Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation*, Revolutionary Lives (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 11.

⁶¹⁷ Dennis A. Pluchinsky, *Anti-American Terrorism: From Eisenhower to Trump—A Chronicle of the Threat and Response: Volume I—The Eisenhower through Carter Administrations* (World Scientific (Europe), 2020), 62, <https://doi.org/10.1142/p1058>.

⁶¹⁸ For a detailed discussion of these events see Appendix II of Yo'av Gelber, *Palestine 1948: War, Escape and the Emergence of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 2nd rev. ed. (Brighton; Portland; Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2006).

⁶¹⁹ Dana Adams Schmidt, '200 Arabs Killed, Stronghold Taken; Irgun and Stern Groups Unite to Win Deir Yasin—Kastel is Recaptured by Haganah', *New York Times*, 10 April 1948, <https://www.nytimes.com/1948/04/10/archives/200-arabs-killed-stronghold-taken-irgun-and-stern-groups-unite-to.html>.

⁶²⁰ Alvarez and Tristán, *Revolutionary Violence*, 226.

⁶²¹ Yuriko Furuhashi, *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 149–50, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822377535>.

⁶²² Yaqub, *Palestinian Cinema*, 51.

⁶²³ Central Intelligence Agency, 'Emergence of the Japanese Red Army', published 1974, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000105163.pdf.

⁶²⁴ Alvarez and Tristán, *Revolutionary Violence*, 226.

⁶²⁵ Hamid Dabashi, ed., *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema* (London; New York, NY: Verso, 2006), 35.

⁶²⁶ Kay Dickinson, *Arab Film and Video Manifestos: Forty-Five Years of the Moving Image amid Revolution*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, 2018), 95–96.

purpose of producing revolutionary cinema was to instruct them and train them to ‘use the camera side by side with the rifle in the battle for liberation’.⁶²⁷ The film was screened not only in Japan but across Europe and in Palestine. Reflecting the broader cultural resistance agenda of Kanafani (discussed in Part Two of this chapter) and *al-Hadaf*, the PFLP engaged in a broader program of film screenings, obtaining films from the ‘Russian, Chinese, and Cuban embassies in Beirut’.⁶²⁸ Further, *Declaration of War* made numerous references to the various struggles that were elements of the Third Worldist revolutionary movement, including the Black Panther party, the Tupamaros and the Viet Cong.⁶²⁹

The film itself adopts and reinterprets a ‘newsreel’ approach and actively co-opts and reframes footage from Dawson’s Field and the so-called Yodogō Incident of March 1970, wherein members of a precursor organisation of the JRA hijacked Japan Airlines Flight 351 and redirected it to North Korea. More substantially, in its content and orientation, it is an explicit effort to emphasise the Third-Worldist context within which both the PFLP and the JRA sought to position themselves and their actions. Additionally, the film sought to legitimise and explain the actions of both organisations, retrospectively and concerning any prospective operations. The film’s opening scenes also include narration that states, ‘this is a news film for the construction of the World Red Army’, further evidencing the globally oriented perspectives of the film, the groups involved, and their actions. While the film sought to communicate an ideological justification for the terrorist actions being undertaken, it also sought to communicate the doctrinal underpinning of the actions of both groups. As the colour footage of the three planes exploding at Dawson’s Field is screened, a doctrinal declaration is displayed in the centre of the screen, which reads ‘The Best Form of Propaganda Is Armed Struggle’.⁶³⁰ The film sought to establish an alternative media discourse that transcends and circumvents traditional media, capable of controlling the narrative frame through which action, doctrine and ideology are transmitted.

The evolution of the mediatised and performative aspects of Palestinian terrorism continued. While the PFLP would continue armed actions, their activities would be subsumed by the activities of Black September and, in particular, the September 1972 attack on the Munich

⁶²⁷ Dickinson, *Arab Film and Video Manifestos*, 96.

⁶²⁸ Yaqub, *Palestinian Cinema*, 127.

⁶²⁹ Sheng Zhang, ‘The Making of Goliath: How the Chinese and Japanese Far Left Perceived Israel as the “Frontier” of Global Revolution in the 1950s–1970s’, *The International History Review*, 12 November 2021, 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2021.2003420>.

⁶³⁰ Furuhashi, *Cinema of Actuality*, 154.

Olympic Games, known in Western parlance as the Munich Massacre. This attack consolidated the learnings and experiences of the previous years of transnational Palestinian terrorism. It produced one of the most consequential acts of terrorism undertaken by any of the factions within the Palestinian liberation movement. The operation itself, analysed below, would become the benchmark for terrorist activity for many decades. In terms of exposure and mediatisation, it was only eclipsed by the attacks on the US in 2001.

Operation Iqrit and Biri'm⁶³¹

Understanding the mediatised orientation of the Munich attacks⁶³² and the enduring impact these had on terrorism and counterterrorism is best undertaken by briefly deconstructing the operation and analysing the various elements of the strategic calculus of the attack. The Munich attack was a calculated endeavour that sought to exploit the concentrated presence of global media at the Olympics. While not an instance of aviation terrorism in the strict manner that previous PFLP operations had been, the operational planning still sought to exploit aviation as part of the original operational plan. What Munich did achieve, given the operation is frequently referred to as an operational and tactical failure,⁶³³ was to demonstrate that an appropriately choreographed operation deployed against an appropriate target could demand global attention and serve as a platform to broadcast the message, explicit or implicit, of the terrorist entity responsible, achieving strategic objectives. Munich would serve as a highly influential example of terrorist best practice. Jihadist strategist, Abu Ubayd al-Qurashi, noted the mediatised and propagandistic purpose and orientation of the operation and the centrality of television to its success. His 2002 analysis of the operation, published in AQ's online journal *al-Ansar*, included the following:

It was the greatest media victory, and the first true proclamation to the entire world of the birth of the Palestinian resistance movement ... In truth, the Munich

⁶³¹ 'The two men [Abu Iyad and Abu Daoud] also gave the attack a code name. It was to be known as Operation Iqrit and Biri'm, the names of two ancient Arab Christian villages in Northern Israel which were evacuated by the Israeli army in 1948, because of "security concerns"': Simon Reeve, *One Day in September: The Story of the 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre and Israeli Revenge Operation 'Wrath of God'* (London: Faber, 2005), 52.

⁶³² Hoffman provides a succinct description of the attacks and writes that 'The incident began on September 5, 1972, shortly before 5:00 A.M., when eight terrorists belonging to the PLO's Black September Organization (BSO) burst into the Israeli's dormitory, killing two athletes immediately and taking nine hostages ... Fifteen hours of negotiations followed until a deal, brokered by the West Germans, was struck. The terrorists and their hostages, it was agreed, would be transported in two helicopters to the air base at Furstenfeldbruck, where they would board a Lufthansa 727 aircraft and depart for Cairo': Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 69.

⁶³³ 'The real lesson of Munich, however, was a somewhat counterintuitive one. The Olympic tragedy provided the first clear evidence that even terrorist attacks that fail to achieve the ostensible objectives can nonetheless be counted successful provided that the operation is sufficiently dramatic to capture the attention of the media': Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 70–71.

operation was a great propaganda strike ... Thus, 900 million people in 100 countries were witness to the operation by means of television screens. This meant that at least a quarter of the world knew what was going on in Munich; after this, they could no longer ignore the Palestinian tragedy ... new organizations sought to imitate the success of the Palestinian organization—particularly the publicity the Palestinian cause garnered after Munich.⁶³⁴

The Munich attacks did not deploy aviation terrorism as a centrepiece of the operation compared to Dawson's Field or the Lod Massacre, which explicitly placed aviation at the centre of the operation design. Most directly, aviation's role in the Munich attack was related to the planned conclusion of the attack. In Reeve's interviews with Jamal al-Gashey, the sole surviving member of the Black September team that perpetrated the attacks, the terrorist noted the plan involved, as the final phase of the attack, that should there be no successful negotiation regarding prisoner releases, operatives were to 'ask for an aeroplane to take us and the hostages to an Arab country'.⁶³⁵ In fact, the letter of demands provided to German police by the operatives explicitly referenced the provisioning of 'three long-distance planes put at the commandos disposal by the Federal government'.⁶³⁶ Had the operation not ended in the catastrophic manner in which it did, the perpetrators and the hostages would have undertaken a more conventional aviation-oriented element of terrorist practice by leveraging international aviation, the coherence and narrative familiarity established by PFLP and others to further reinforce their message, extending the duration of the event and further coercing the target governments into conceding to their more specific demands.

Regarding the operation's objectives and informing the tactical and operational assessments of the operation, Black September explicitly prioritised its objectives in a letter dropped from the balcony of the Israeli dormitory. It read: 'The revolutionary organization Black September, demands that by 9:00 AM, the Israeli military regime free the 236 revolutionary prisoners whose names are listed herewith'.⁶³⁷ From this perspective, the operation failed. The prisoner release, however, only had, in the words of al-Gashey, 'symbolic value ... The

⁶³⁴ Barry M. Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, eds., *Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East: A Documentary Reader* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 273.

⁶³⁵ Reeve, *One Day in September*, 55.

⁶³⁶ Serge Groussard, *The Blood of Israel: The Massacre of the Israeli Athletes, the Olympics, 1972* (New York, NY: Morrow, 1975), 62.

⁶³⁷ Groussard, *Blood of Israel*, 61–62.

only aim of the action was to scare the world public during their “happy Olympic Games” and make them aware of the fate of the Palestinians’.⁶³⁸

In addition, the operation had a strategic objective regarding communicating the Palestinian struggle to an international audience within its Third Worldist narrative context. From this perspective, the operation is generally recognised as enormously successful. In an overt demonstration of its commitment to Third Worldist and New Left agendas, the list of prisoners identified for release included Kozo Okamoto, the surviving JRA member involved in the Lod Massacre, four French women known as the ‘Easter Commando’⁶³⁹ and two surviving female members of the team that hijacked Belgian Airlines Flight 571 in 1971. Finally, and most pointedly given the German location of the attack, the operatives demanded the release of the recently incarcerated Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader, leaders of the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (Red Army Faction, or Baader-Meinhof Group), arrested in June 1972.⁶⁴⁰

Ulrike Meinhof most clearly communicated the solidarity that Black September sought to demonstrate. While incarcerated, she penned *The Action of Black September at Munich—Towards the Strategy of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle*. That document explicitly references the conflict in Vietnam and other anti-colonial struggles and repeatedly references the Third World, imperialism, colonialism and capitalism. In praising the actions of Black September at Munich, Meinhof declared:

With their action at the Olympic Village, they brought the conflict between the imperialist metropole of Israel and the Palestinians from the periphery of the system into its centre ... and revealed the true objective nature of imperialism’s facade: that they are waging war against the liberation movements of the Third World and that their final objective is strategic extermination and fascism. Through this action, the Arab people were mobilized for anti-imperialist struggle. They celebrated the revolutionaries as heroes, and their will to struggle received an enormous boost.⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁸ Don Yaeger, ‘When the Terror Began’, Sports Illustrated Vault, accessed 10 August 2021, <https://vault.si.com/vault/2002/08/26/when-the-terror-began-thirty-years-later-the-hostage-drama-that-left-11-israeli-olympians-dead-seems-even-more-chilling-and-offers-grim-reminders-to-todays-security-experts>.

⁶³⁹ The ‘Easter Commando’ involved a plan for four women, smuggling explosives in their underwear and toiletries to ‘blow up nine tourist hotels in Israel during the crowded Easter ceremonies of 1971’: Christopher Dobson, *Black September: Its Short, Violent History* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1974), 138.

⁶⁴⁰ Dobson, *Black September*, 138; Groussard, *Blood of Israel*, 62; Aust, *Baader-Meinhof Complex*, 161, 175; Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 69.

⁶⁴¹ André Moncourt, J. Smith and Ward Churchill, eds., *The Red Army Faction: A Documentary History*, vol. 2 (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2009), 214–15.

Published on 11 September 1972, the Black September communiqué encouraged sympathisers in Palestine ‘not to lay down your weapons’ and closed with the Third Worldist refrain of ‘LONG LIVE THE WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION FOR FREEDOM’.⁶⁴² The Third Worldist contextualisation of the Munich operation is evidenced in the demands of the operatives regarding prisoner releases and the communiqué released after the incident. Ensuring that the action could be interpreted as part of a broader, cohesive, global struggle rather than an operation exclusively focused on the Israel/Palestine conflict was a central agenda item of the attack. This agenda was successfully broadcast to a global audience by hijacking the media that was concentrated on the Olympic Games.

In reflecting on the strategic calculus, and the communicative and narrative considerations of this operation, it is worth noting a number of comments from those who planned and conceived the operation and from the organisation to which it is attributed. Abu Iyad, co-planner of the operation and leader of Black September,⁶⁴³ noted that among objectives for the operation, part of the purpose of the Munich operation was to ‘give our cause resounding coverage—positive or negative, it mattered little—by taking advantage of the extraordinary concentration of mass media at Munich’.⁶⁴⁴ In assessing the effectiveness of the operation, and before blaming the West German Government for the deaths that occurred during the failed effort to resolve the incident, he further notes that the operatives achieved at least one of their objectives. He noted, ‘world opinion was forced to take note of the Palestinian drama, and the Palestinian people imposed their presence on an international gathering’.⁶⁴⁵ Further reinforcing this communicative orientation, Abou Daoud, the recognised mastermind of the operation, recounted in his book that he and co-conspirators ‘were looking for a way to attract the attention of the world on the Palestinian problem’.⁶⁴⁶ Even the perpetrators acknowledged the objectives of the operation, with the only surviving operative, Jamal al-Gashey stating in an interview many years later that ‘the name of Palestine was repeated all over the world that day’.⁶⁴⁷ In a letter published in the *al-Sayad* newspaper three days after the attack and frequently attributed to George Habash, Black September spoke in effusive language, claiming:

⁶⁴² Moncourt, Smith and Churchill, *Red Army Faction*, 206.

⁶⁴³ Dobson, *Black September*, 44.

⁶⁴⁴ Abū Iyād and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*.

⁶⁴⁵ Abū Iyād and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*, 112.

⁶⁴⁶ Abou Daoud and Gilles Du Jonchay, *Palestine: De Jérusalem à Munich* (Paris: Carrière, 1999), 671.

⁶⁴⁷ Simon Reeve, *One Day in September*, 293.

In our assessment, and in light of the result, we have made one of the best achievements of Palestinian commando action. A bomb in the White House, a mine in the Vatican, the death of Mao Tse-tung, an earthquake in Paris could not have echoed through the consciousness of every man in the world like the operation at Munich. The Olympiad arouses the people's interest and attention more than anything else in the world. *The choice of the Olympics, from the purely propagandistic viewpoint, was 100% successful* [emphasis added]. It was like painting the name of Palestine on a mountain that can be seen from the four corners of the earth.⁶⁴⁸

The strategic purpose of the operation was to communicate the Palestinian struggle, contextualised within a Third Worldist narrative, to a global audience. In doing so, the operatives drew on the earlier operations undertaken by the PFLP and its efforts to establish and reinforce a global-oriented, revolutionary 'brand' or narrative and exploited sympathies and elicited solidarity from fellow Third Worldist revolutionary movements, New Left resistance movements in the West and major powers who opposed US foreign policy. From a communicative and narrative development perspective, the Munich operation was an overwhelming success. It hijacked television screens across the Western world in an unprecedented way while simultaneously communicating the commitment of the Palestinian movement to the ongoing struggles of their fellow revolutionaries. Achieving this necessarily depended, at least in part, on effectively exploiting the newly developed technologies referred to earlier, especially the capacity for live television broadcasting to be undertaken on a global scale.

For the Munich attack to be simultaneously experienced by a global audience in real-time, it required the operation to be conceived with the intent that the incident would capture the attention of the world's media, concentrated in Munich to broadcast the Olympic Games. The Munich Olympics, with the slogan of the 'cheerful games',⁶⁴⁹ had been intentionally designed to starkly contrast the 1936 Berlin Olympics, held while Germany was under the cloak of the Nazi regime. The attempt to reposition Germany as a fully rehabilitated member of the international community was reflected in the design, conception and even the deployed colour schemes. It contrasted the Nazi-themed reds and blacks of 1936 with a 'sea of fluttering Olympic banners in tranquil pastels.'⁶⁵⁰ Beyond setting a crucial visual theme able to be starkly juxtaposed by the attack, the underpinning information and communication

⁶⁴⁸ Reeve, *One Day in September*, 293–94; Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 71–72.

⁶⁴⁹ David Clay Large, *Munich 1972: Tragedy, Terror, and Triumph at the Olympic Games* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 2.

⁶⁵⁰ Large, *Munich 1972*, 2.

technologies that were exploited truly elevated the Munich attack to a transformative act of terrorist practice.

It was the technological capabilities themselves, and the event, in conjunction that enabled the broadcast of the operation to a global audience. The event attracted the world's media to Munich, and the technologies enabled the media to broadcast, in particular to television screens, live from Munich. It was the event that justified the investment of man hours, and focused television cameras on Munich and the venues associated with the games.

As Reeve pointed out:

At least four thousand newspaper, magazine, and radio journalists travelled to the Bavarian capital, along with another two thousand journalists, announcers, and crews. They fed tales of grit and courage to an audience of nearly one billion souls in more than one hundred countries around the world. New satellite technology made it the mass-media event of the century.⁶⁵¹

An entire industry was present at the Munich Games, including journalists able to mediate and frame the attack, and camera crews and production teams, including technical personnel. This strengthened the likelihood of the attack dominating global news broadcasts as the entirety of the global news media, covering the Games itself and the story of a rehabilitated Germany were present and operational. They were thus able to pivot immediately to cover the attack itself, but also the broader issues of who was perpetrating the attack and why would they commit these attacks. Only hours after the attack had begun, journalists and television reporters began broadcasting news of a terrorist attack on the Olympic Games worldwide.⁶⁵²

The broadcast was novel in additional ways. It was not only that the world's news media was present and therefore able to broadcast with ease from the site of a terrorist attack. New technologies made it feasible to broadcast live and uninterrupted as the events unfolded. This aspect limited the constraints that may have otherwise limited or edited the coverage. The increasingly commercial orientation of most, particularly the Western world's media, meant that sensational stories such as a terrorist attack on the Olympic Games would dominate the news services broadcasts. This sensibility is reflected in the decision-making of those in Munich, producing and broadcasting the news. Reeve captured Boone Arledge's reflections,

⁶⁵¹ Reeve, *One Day in September*, xiv.

⁶⁵² Reeve, *One Day in September* 20.

who decided to continue the live broadcast of the attack. His decision to leave a television camera pointed at 31 Connollystrasse, the Israeli dormitory in which the Black September terrorists held the Israeli athletes hostage, was crucial to how the event was depicted in the media. In reflecting on those events, he noted, ‘I didn’t dare move that camera ... We just stayed right on that shot. And it just went on and on and on and we just stayed with it’.⁶⁵³

A singular image came to represent the Munich attacks in the collective mediated imaginary. The balaclava-clad operative on the balcony of the Israeli dormitory graced the cover of numerous non-fiction accounts of the events, graced the covers of magazines and newspapers and, in the words of Diffrient ‘came to metonymically represent the entirety of the event: that of a solitary terrorist standing on a balcony of the besieged building and gazing at the Olympic officials, German authorities, police forces and news correspondents below him, a wool ski hat pulled over his face and masking his identity’.⁶⁵⁴

However, it is important to recognise that while it was a static image that came to iconify the attacks, the event itself and its live and ongoing coverage, an event unto itself, caused the effects that BSO desired. In understanding this dynamic relationship between terrorism and its audiences, with the news media as the intermediary by which this relationship is formed, framed and defined, it is necessary to recognise that the operational planners had made accurate assessments of how the media would respond and how their messages would be broadcast.

The events in Munich demanded coverage, exploited the abundance of media resources present due to the Olympics and effectively exploited the event itself and all the associated symbolic meaning conveyed by attacking it. What BSO calculated most effectively was that the underpinning logics of commercial news media would mean that the necessity of dramatic framing of news and the adherence to sensationalistic approaches⁶⁵⁵ would ensure the attack in Munich would be broadcast globally and that the communicative purposes of the operation would be successful. None of this would have been possible without the technological developments, the media industry’s cultural practices, and the inculcation of the audiences.

⁶⁵³ Reeve, *One Day in September*, 83.

⁶⁵⁴ David Scott Diffrient, ‘Spectator Sports and Terrorist Reports: Filming the Munich Olympics, (Re)Imagining the Munich Massacre’, *Sport in Society* 11, no. 2–3 (March 2008): 316, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430430701823562>.

⁶⁵⁵ Jonathan Andre Matusitz, *Terrorism and Communication: A Critical Introduction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2013), 63–64.

The live, unfiltered broadcast had additional downside consequences beyond the limitless broadcast of the agenda of BSO and the Palestinian cause. The feedback loop created by broadcasting the actions of German counterterrorism efforts on television, viewed by the BSO operatives holding the Israeli athletes hostage, created additional problems for the response of the German authorities. This issue would repeat itself during the 2008 Mumbai attacks, perpetrated by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), resulting in LeT's pre-emption of the assault on Chabad House by the Indian National Security Guard commandos.⁶⁵⁶ The same commercial news values⁶⁵⁷ that had informed the live broadcast of the Munich attack would still drive the broadcasting decisions during the Mumbai attacks. This produced a range of negative consequences regarding the operational effectiveness of counterterrorism teams in Munich and Mumbai. Television, and especially live broadcasts of terrorist spectacles, had been demonstrated as an effective mechanism for 'hijacking' the airwaves and dictating what an audience witnesses in real-time and for an extended period of exposure. This lesson would inform terrorist operational planning for decades beyond 1972.

Last, and drawing on the reference to 'conceptual frameworks' that van Creveld makes in his articulation of the relationship between war and technology, it is necessary to make some observations regarding the cultural practices that had emerged among the audience of the event and the media professionals responsible for the broadcast of the Munich attack. The 'conceptual frameworks employed by our brains to think about'⁶⁵⁸ the broadcasting of the attack and the perception and interpretation of the attacks were shaped by the technology of the times and the cultures they produced.

Concerning the public, it is necessary to emphasise that, by 1972, the estimated viewing public had become accustomed and enculturated to both the possibility of watching large-scale events like the Olympic Games in real-time, regardless of where they were hosted and to the increased centrality of live broadcast news globally, including conflict zones. However, the Munich attacks via ABC News constituted the 'first live, international coverage of a terrorist act'.⁶⁵⁹ The Munich attack, and in a different way, the events at Dawson's Field, truly brought international terrorism into the loungerooms and, by extension, into the politics

⁶⁵⁶ Tankel, *Storming the World Stage*, 218–19.

⁶⁵⁷ Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge, 'The Structure of Foreign News', *Journal of Peace Research* 2, no. 1 (1965): 64–91.

⁶⁵⁸ van Creveld, *Technology and War*, 1.

⁶⁵⁹ Bethami A. Dobkin, *Tales of Terror: Television News and the Construction of the Terrorist Threat* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1992), 5.

of the US and the Western world. Through the growing commercial logics of the media industry, content that met Galtung and Ruge's news values⁶⁶⁰ was prioritised within the news culture.

The media industry was especially well catered for at the Munich Games. Schiller and Young emphasised the extensive efforts of German Olympic officials in providing journalists with subsidised expenses for daily consumables while ensuring that the global media was appropriately accommodated in terms of equipment in various languages.⁶⁶¹ As Mandell reflected regarding the press centre for the Games, it was:

filled with hundreds of typewriters in all the world's scripts, more hundreds of compliant, many-languaged hostesses, a restaurant seating 1,000, a place to buy the world's newspapers, telex machines, banks of long-distance phones, conversation pits with deep upholstered furniture, acres of carpeting and bars with deliberately enforced low prices.⁶⁶²

This reflects the substantial investment that both Games organisers and media companies made in ensuring that the live broadcast of the Games was truly international and experienced by as many viewers as possible. This reflected the growing commercialisation of the Games themselves, the media industry and the increasingly integrated commercial advertising industry upon which the media industry depended. By 1972, substantial proportions of the media industry were private, for-profit corporations, having moved well beyond traditional public broadcaster and public interest models. This incentivised and informed the broadcasting calculus relating to the Munich attack and the decisions to continue broadcasting the event.

The success of the Munich operation lay in the exploitation of innovative forms of violence, the explicit consideration of communicative and narrative dynamics and the exploitation of the technologies associated with international broadcast television. In assessing the success of the operation, it is worth revisiting the words of Abu Ubeid al-Quarashi and his post-9/11 assessment:

⁶⁶⁰ The authors identify a number of factors that they assess to be likely to increase the likelihood of a story or event being deemed newsworthy: frequency, timeliness, familiarity, negativity, conflict, unexpectedness, unambiguity, personalization, meaningfulness, eliteness, superlativeness and consonance: Galtung and Ruge, 'Structure of Foreign News'.

⁶⁶¹ Kay Schiller and Christopher Young, *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520262133.001.0001>.

⁶⁶² Richard D. Mandell, *The Olympics of 1972: A Munich Diary* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 14.

[As a result of the Munich attack] thousands of young Palestinians were roused to join *the fedayeen* organizations ... The number of organizations engaging in international ‘terror’ increased from a mere eleven in 1968 to fifty-five in 1978. Fifty-four percent of these new organizations sought to imitate the success of the Palestinian organization—particularly the publicity the Palestinian cause garnered after Munich.⁶⁶³

The next chapter applies the conceptual framework to Palestinian terrorism. As such it focuses on Palestinian hijacking of aircraft and targeting of aviation infrastructure, their intentional contextualisation of their violence within a broader Third Worldist narrative, and their embrace and prioritisation of visuality and filmic sensibilities and in particular the use of video, from the earliest days of the “armed struggle.”

Chapter Eight: Watching Palestinian Terrorism: Applying the Framework

This chapter applies the conceptual framework to the previously articulated manifestations of the Palestinian liberation movement and their efforts to prosecute the so-called armed struggle. In doing so it provides an analysis of their integrated embrace of aviation terrorism, Third Worldist and New-Left narratives, and the inherently performative and visualist orientation of their propaganda and their violence.

Innovative Forms of Violence

In assessing innovative practices related to Palestinian terrorism, this section will focus on two core aspects of the Palestinian resistance movement’s activities. In the first instance, the initial 1968 hijacking of El Al Flight 426, the subsequent campaign of hijackings by the PFLP and other Palestinian entities will be articulated as a form of revolutionary innovation, in terms of the practice itself and also concerning the broader elements of the practice such as its use for expressly communicative purposes, hostage-taking, negotiation and media attention.⁶⁶⁴ Second, this section will assess how the revolutionary innovation of plane hijacking intersected with the strategic innovations related to the embrace of Third Worldism by the Palestinian movement. In doing so, it will articulate how this transnational orientation and contextualisation assisted in ensuring plane hijackings that diverted aircraft to third-party

⁶⁶³ Rubin and Rubin, *Anti-American Terrorism*, 275.

⁶⁶⁴ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*.

countries, utilised operatives from non-Palestinian organisations or networks or targeted Israeli or Jewish targets beyond the jurisdiction of Israel and Palestine, were underpinned by a coherent strategic logic. This strategy innovation ensured that for the multitude of audiences these actions had in mind, regional and international, they were coherent and comprehensible acts contextualised within a broader strategic agenda, of which the Israel/Palestine conflict was a component and a manifestation. These innovations would have far-reaching consequences for terrorism, the Palestinian resistance movement and international affairs more broadly.

Revolutionary Innovation

The hijacking of El Al Flight 426 in 1968, as highlighted above, is recognised as representing the birth of ‘modern, international terrorism’.⁶⁶⁵ However, to understand the revolutionary nature of the tactic itself, it is necessary to consider the hijacking of Flight 426 in the context of the campaign launched by the PFLP in 1968 as a result of the limitations of the ongoing Palestinian cross-border raids.⁶⁶⁶ The campaign launched by the PFLP, but ultimately undertaken by various Palestinian militant organisations and affiliated, non-Palestinian organisations, included 33 attacks on aviation affiliated targets, including 16 plane hijackings between 1968 and 1976.⁶⁶⁷ This broader conceptualisation is important and reflects the symbolic calculus regarding air travel and television news coverage, discussed in greater detail below. While hijacking was certainly a key element of the approach, further conceptual innovation expanded the remit of the actions. It recognised the symbolic importance of airports and other affiliated infrastructure, which widened the list of potential targets. As Pedhazur has highlighted, El Al staff were targeted at airports in ‘Athens, Brussels, Istanbul, and Rome’.⁶⁶⁸ The revolutionary innovation to what was termed ‘spectacular operations’ was underpinned by the assessments of PFLP founder George Habash and his deputy Wadi Haddad.⁶⁶⁹ This shift reflected a revolutionary change in the militant practices of the

⁶⁶⁵ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 65.

⁶⁶⁶ Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*, 64.

⁶⁶⁷ Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Secret Services and the Struggle against Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009), 35–36.

⁶⁶⁸ Pedahzur, *Israeli Secret Services*, 36.

⁶⁶⁹ ‘Haddad presciently predicted “spectacular operations will focus the world’s attention on the problem of Palestine. The world will ask, What the hell is the problem in Palestine? Who are these Palestinians? Why are they doing these things”? Likewise, the PFLP’s founding leader George Habash argued, Wadi’ and I were trying to determine how world opinion could be awakened to the injustice that has been done to the Palestinian people. Wadi’ came up with the hijacking idea ... We wanted to attract world attention through some action’: Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*, 64.

Palestinian resistance as much as it reflected revolutionary innovation in terrorist practice more generally. As was the case with dynamite and anarchism, the symbolic value of the practice resulted in it becoming, along with a generalised association with Palestinian or generically ‘Middle Eastern’ operatives, the perceived dominant practice of the period, regardless of whether it empirically constituted this mantle.

As briefly mentioned above, Plane hijacking itself has a history that reaches back well before the PFLP operation of 1968. In conceiving this event as an act of revolutionary innovation, it is necessary to distinguish between the type of hijacking that occurred in the periods before and after 1968. We must also emphasise how the specific type of hijacking that took place post-1968 was enabled by specific social, political and technological contexts. These, in turn, exploited aspects of this same context. In doing so, post-1968 plane hijacking manifested itself as a discrete and distinct practice, constituting a revolutionary shift in the praxis.

Plane hijacking has a longer history than the period of heightened activity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As Holden highlighted, plane hijacking, or ‘attempts to divert aircraft from their scheduled flight plans through force or threats of force’,⁶⁷⁰ experienced a period of frequency during 1968 and 1972 that involved some 326 attempts globally, with an attempt occurring approximately every five and a half days.⁶⁷¹ While this data includes hijackings with criminal and ideological motivations, it demonstrates the high frequency of the practice in the period relevant to Palestinian organisations’ adoption of the practice. The use of plane hijacking by PFLP was by no means the first instance of an ‘attempt to divert aircraft’ though.

In his extensive treatment of the phenomenon, Veilleux-Lepage identified two periods of history where plane hijacking underwent periods of heightened activity. These two periods, Peru in the 1930s and the late stages of the Cuban Revolution,⁶⁷² are further reflected in the work of Laqueur. He emphasised the first plane hijacking in Peru in 1931, the period of hijacking that involved ‘refugees from Iron Curtain countries’⁶⁷³ and the numerous US aircraft coerced to divert to Cuba in the 1960s. Despite these previous iterations of aircraft hijacking, Hoffman effectively articulated, in part, the distinction that can be made between

⁶⁷⁰ Robert T. Holden, ‘The Contagiousness of Aircraft Hijacking’, *American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 4 (January 1986): 874–904, <https://doi.org/10.1086/228353>.

⁶⁷¹ Holden, ‘Contagiousness of Aircraft Hijacking’.

⁶⁷² Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terror Evolves*.

⁶⁷³ Laqueur and Hoffman, *History of Terrorism*, 108.

the historical instances of hijacking and those experienced in 1968 and beyond. Hoffman stated that one component of these distinguishing factors was the ‘technological advances of the time ... had transformed the speed and ease of international commercial air travel’.⁶⁷⁴

In recognising the increased routinisation of air travel and growing familiarity and cultural representation of air travel, it is pertinent to reflect on the growth of passenger numbers in the domestic US market alone. Filburn reflected on this: ‘As the jet era began in earnest in the USA, airline passenger traffic continued to grow at a prolific rate. US airlines carried 57.7 million passengers in 1960, representing a 345% growth in passengers since 1949’.⁶⁷⁵

The transatlantic route was to become the busiest air route in the world. However, there was more to the consolidation of air travel in the minds of the general public. It increasingly became a normalised, if still romanticised, aspect of modern existence. This integration and veneration of air travel were further reflected in the changing articulations and manifestations of cultural representations of flight itself, and over time, of commercial flight and public participation in the rituals and practices of air travel, represented by the glamour of air cabin crew, duty-free shopping and airports more generally, as well as the exoticisation of international travel. As Durante highlighted in her discussion of fictional and cinematic representations of flight and the imaginary of air mobility, ‘it was only in the early twentieth century that the introduction and increasing flow of airplanes (airmail, military, and commercial) changed the direction and perception of our gaze and our way of conceiving ourselves as humans that can fulfill the dream of takeoff and flight’.⁶⁷⁶

By the late 1960s, not only that commercial transcontinental air travel had become frequent and relatively routine, concomitantly, it had become a ubiquitous component of modern existence both in the practised sense and in the broader imaginary of public and popular discourse. This and the international mobility associated with air travel informed the embrace of plane hijacking as a practice of transnationally oriented terrorism. Reflecting on the banality of international travel, former ‘minister of propaganda’ for the PFLP, Abu-Sharif, recounted the arrival of Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhoff at his office in Amman. From his perspective, ‘their presence confirmed the international dimension of the Palestine

⁶⁷⁴ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 66.

⁶⁷⁵ Thomas Filburn, ‘Commercial Aviation History’, in *Commercial Aviation in the Jet Era and the Systems That Make It Possible*, ed. Thomas Filburn (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 1–14, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20111-1_1.

⁶⁷⁶ Erica Durante, *Air Travel Fiction and Film: Cloud People* (Cham: Springer International, 2020), 3.

people's struggle. They showed we had allies inside Western society'.⁶⁷⁷ In addition to Abu-Sharif's observation that 'in the late 1960s, in the age of revolution, there were plenty of volunteers',⁶⁷⁸ this visit reflected the 'speed and ease of international commercial air travel.' The increasingly transnational orientation of their struggle and the communicative considerations of their operations had additional and specific consequential impacts for the PFLP and the broader Palestinian cause. Leila Khaled, the female hijacker famous for her involvement in the 1969 hijacking of TWA Flight 840 from Rome to Tel Aviv, which she dubbed 'Flight PFLP Free Arab Palestine',⁶⁷⁹ and the 1970 Dawson's Field synchronised hijacking of three, ultimately four, international aircraft, reflected on the hijacking of Flight 426 in 1968. She stated: 'This operation was an eye-opener for me. It was the beginning of the end of my exile. I was about to be liberated; I had found an alternative to Fateh, and I sought to make contacts with the PFLP'.⁶⁸⁰

The normalisation of transnational travel is further reflected in the dynamics of the operation targeting Flight 426, which itself reflected the ease of international movement and air travel. The operation deployed Palestinian commandos, likely trained and based in Jordan, to Italy to board an Israeli El Al flight to Tel Aviv, subsequently diverted to Algeria.⁶⁸¹ As hijacking by Palestinian organisations evolved over the following period, this transnationality would remain a key feature of the practice. By 1970, when the Dawson's Field operation took place, the operational plan involved hijacking three planes, departing from Frankfurt, Zurich and Amsterdam, representing American, Swiss and Israeli airlines. Two of these flights were successfully hijacked; however, the El Al flight hijacking was unsuccessful. Leila Khaled and a member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front were subdued in their efforts to hijack the El Al flight, and two of the four hijackers were denied boarding. These two hijackers successfully took control of a Pan Am flight that, for it not being too large to land there, would have also been forced to land at Dawson's Field, which the PFLP had renamed Revolutionary Airport.⁶⁸² As the operation unfolded and diplomatic efforts progressed regarding hostage and prisoner releases, a PFLP sympathiser hijacked a fourth plane, travelling from Bombay to London and diverted it to Dawson's Field. As Veilleux-Lepage

⁶⁷⁷ Abū Sharīf and Mahnaimi, *Best of Enemies*, 66.

⁶⁷⁸ Abū Sharīf and Mahnaimi, *Best of Enemies*.

⁶⁷⁹ Eileen MacDonald, *Shoot the Women First*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 1991), 107.

⁶⁸⁰ Leila Khaled and George Hajjar, *My People Shall Live: The Autobiography of a Revolutionary* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), 108.

⁶⁸¹ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 63–65.

⁶⁸² Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*, 76.

highlighted, the arrival of this additional flight in Jordan ‘increased the number of UK citizens from two to thirty-eight, increasing pressure on the UK government to release Khaled’.⁶⁸³ The success of Palestinian hijacking in relation to the release of prisoners, both by Israel and third parties, is additional evidence of the increasing transnationality of the practice.

The revolutionary innovation that the PFLP was most responsible for was hijacking as a form of hostage-taking. Unlike the 1930 Peruvian example, which involved commandeering a flight to distribute propaganda material, or the hijackings used to escape Eastern Bloc countries or flee to Cuba, Palestinian hijackings focused on two key innovations. The first was finding a way to target Israel indirectly that did not involve direct confrontation with the Israeli Defense Force. Second, they used hijacking as a mechanism by which they could effectively coerce Israel into providing concessions, specifically the release of Palestinian prisoners. By indirectly targeting Israel and incorporating an international cohort into hostage demographics, Palestinian hijackers were able to reinforce the transnationality of the conflict and impose costs on those they perceived as complicit or sympathetic with Israel. Analysing data on plane hijackings of Israeli airliners and air travel-related terror attacks, such as the targeting of El Al check-in counters at airports or El Al offices and staff, the overwhelming majority of these attacks, of which there were nearly 60 between 1968 and 2010,⁶⁸⁴ took place in Europe. While this is partly a result of the difficulty of accessing flights and airport infrastructure from within Israel, it is also part of the broader strategic realignment that the Palestinian movement engaged in.

The ongoing refinement and evolution of their hijacking methods and the expansion to include targeting El Al desks at airports, El Al offices in third-party countries and international airlines en route to Israel all facilitated an ongoing and successful campaign against Israeli interests, as well as the effective demonstration of the transnational orientation and contextualisation of the Palestinian struggle within a broader Third Worldist ideological framework. Landing flight 426 in Algeria; the involvement of Sandinista fighters in the failed hijacking of El Al Flight 219 as part of the Dawson’s Field operation; the use of fighters from the JRA who attacked, as proxies of the PFLP, what was then known as Lod Airport⁶⁸⁵ using automatic weapons and grenades brought with them on their flight from Rome, all reinforced

⁶⁸³ Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terror Evolves*, 90.

⁶⁸⁴ Community Security Trust, *Terrorist Incidents against Jewish Communities and Israeli Citizens Abroad 1968–2010* (London: Community Security Trust, 2011).

⁶⁸⁵ Now Ben-Gurion Airport.

the alignment of the Palestinian movement with fellow Third Worldist and New Left entities and spread the targeting of their operations beyond the discrete theatre of operations in Israel and bordering countries. The Lod Airport attack killed 26 people and injured 80. PFLP-EO, a splinter of the PFLP and leader of the JRA, Fusako Shigenobu, ‘publicly announced the involvement of the JRA’.⁶⁸⁶ The PFLP intended to communicate its cooperation with other terrorist and militant organisations directly through joint operations and explicit propaganda acts. In doing so, it sought to reinforce its international orientation and ensure the Palestinian struggle was perceived as part of a broader transnational struggle waged by Third World militants and Western-based terrorist organisations alike.

Strategic Innovation

The Palestinian movement engaged in a substantive strategic innovation when they embraced, and were embraced by, Third Worldist and New Left ideological frameworks that subsequently reorientated their struggle, in terms of strategic guidance and inspiration, the ideological and narrative frame through which they represented the struggle, and in practical terms regarding substantive cooperation and engagement with a wide array of fellow revolutionaries.

Strategic innovation, as defined in Chapter Two, constitutes an innovation in strategic approach or strategic objective that enables new tactical or targeting opportunities, and the Palestinian embrace of Third World revolutionary movements and their strategies, as well as their embrace of those superpowers that supported Third World revolutionary movements, constitutes a manifestation of this. These innovations were central in determining the character of the Palestinian militant movement during this period. They deeply influenced the way the movement began to perceive the conflict it was engaged in, how it portrayed itself to the wider global audience and the types of operations it engaged in. The militant movement did not abandon the notion of Israel as its primary target and adversary, but the embrace of a globalised conflict frame that portrayed Israel as a colonial power, an extension of imperialism and oppressor of the dispossessed and disenfranchised, enabled the Palestine issue to gain traction with a much broader audience, both within the Third World but also with Western audiences.

⁶⁸⁶ Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terror Evolves*, 92.

Before providing an analysis of how the embrace of Third Worldism constituted and facilitated Palestinian strategic innovation, it is necessary to expand on what exactly Third Worldism constituted. It is well beyond the scope of this analysis to provide a full-spectrum description of the multiple generations of Third Worldism⁶⁸⁷ and the intricacies, divisions⁶⁸⁸ and splinter movements that existed within it. Malley is succinct in addressing the difficult challenge of capturing what Third Worldism constituted as, unlike Marxism or Maoism, it lacked a clearly espoused ideological tract to act as a unifying text. He sought to articulate the movement's broad contours, explaining:

the belief in the revolutionary aspirations of the Third World masses, in the inevitability of their fulfilment, and in the role of strong, centralized states in this undertaking...it was more than political doctrine; it was all-encompassing ideology that permeated fields of intellectual knowledge and militant activism.⁶⁸⁹

The importance of Third Worldism to the Palestinian armed struggle is not explicitly tangible, but rather is best understood by highlighting the way in which the embrace, or at least the contextualisation of their struggle within a narrative heavily shaped by Third Worldist perspectives, of the loose ideology that was Third Worldism and the associated strategies of revolutionary war drawn from the Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban and Algerian experiences shaped their approach and manifested in their propaganda. Of greater importance was the role that Third Worldism played in providing the ideological, strategic and cultural imaginary that the Palestinian cause was able to contextualise itself and its manifestations of political violence within. This process, through which the Palestinian movement inserted itself into the discourse of international affairs, enabled it to transform the Israel/Palestine conflict and what the movement considered its resistance, into a component of a much greater global struggle, with geopolitical consequences. Chamberlin eloquently characterises these resistance actors and their commonalities when he states that 'these uprisings had in common a vision of revolutionary politics drawn from a shared culture of Third World national liberation'.⁶⁹⁰ As the Palestinian movement successfully projected itself into international political discourse, most acutely and forcefully through its Western-oriented terrorism actions, symbolic representations and iconic images came to embody and communicate much

⁶⁸⁷ Mark T. Berger, 'After the Third World? History, Destiny and the Fate of Third Worldism', *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 9–39.

⁶⁸⁸ Liu Kang, 'Maoism: Revolutionary Globalism for the Third World Revisited', *Comparative Literature Studies* 52, no. 1 (2015): 18, <https://doi.org/10.5325/complitstudies.52.1.0012>.

⁶⁸⁹ Malley, *Call from Algeria*, 2.

⁶⁹⁰ Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 5.

deeper and broader components of the collective Third Worldist struggle rather than merely the struggle of the Palestinians. The communicative power of the keffiyeh, the iconic images of Leila Khaled and Yasar Arafat in his ‘uniform’ of sunglasses and fatigues, came to be as symbolic and popular as the classic stylised image of Che Guevara in communicating the struggle of the oppressed rather than merely of the Palestinians or the Cubans. These images, embraced by Western New Left activists, militants and cultural icons, all served to more effectively communicate and frame the grievances of the Palestinians, among others, to a wider international audience.

In understanding the substantive embrace of Third Worldist and New Leftist ideologies and strategies, it is useful to begin the analysis with an appreciation of the involvement of superpowers in supporting, sympathising with, and ultimately arming and training a diverse array of actors from across what would now be referred to as the Global South. It is vital to acknowledge that the period under consideration is contextualised by the ongoing dynamics of the Cold War and that the actions of the primary protagonists in that conflict—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the US—were enormously influential in shaping the behaviour and capability of the both the Israelis and the Palestinians. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to provide substantial discussion of the Cold War or US support to Israel.⁶⁹¹ However, it is instructive to provide some preliminary discussion of the relationship between the Palestinians and the USSR, and to a lesser extent, China briefly referred to above.

The relationship between the USSR and Palestine has historically suffered from its context within the Cold War, whereby any claims of relationships between Palestinian organisations or other key Palestinian actors and the USSR were assessed through the binary lens of the conflict and frequently perceived as less than genuine in their nature or their intent. With the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent publication of *The Mitrokhin Archives*, numerous rumours, innuendo and accusations have been verified. In this sense, it is now well documented there was a substantial relationship between the various Palestinian militant movements and the Soviets, specifically through their intelligence service, the KGB.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ For an excellent treatment of the broader dynamics of the Cold War with particular reference to strategic support by the US and USSR, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁶⁹² Soviet relations with the Third World are detailed extensively in Andrew and Mitrokhin, *World Was Going Our Way*.

It is worth contextualising the Soviets' relationship with Third World revolutionaries more broadly before discussing the Palestinians specifically. In this regard, it is useful to consider the lens through which the USSR undertook these actions, which was in support of a strategic confrontation with the US, albeit portrayed through a lens of solidarity and shared anti-imperialism. In demonstrating the Soviet approach, Andrew and Mitrokhin note:

the belief that the Cold War could be won in the Third World transformed the agenda of Soviet intelligence ... The youthful and dynamic chairman of the KGB ... won Khrushchev's support for the use of national liberation movements and forces of anti-imperialism in an aggressive new grand strategy against the 'Main Adversary' (the United States) in the Third World.⁶⁹³

With reference to the above considerations, it is important to recognise that any support the Soviets provided to specific Palestinian movements to specific Palestinian activists and operatives, and any broader political and public communicative support was primarily part of their 'grand strategy against the Main Adversary' as opposed to a shared belief in the liberation of Palestine. Ginat and Bar-Noi highlighted the radical change in Soviet attitude toward the Palestinians after the Six-Day War. They noted that in the aftermath of the battle of Karameh, 'the Soviets now referred to the Fida'iyyun warmly, labeling them "partisans" and "a popular resistance movement"'.⁶⁹⁴ While initial Soviet engagement with the PLO was somewhat measured, there was substantial engagement with senior figures in the PFLP. Recognising the depth of Wadi Haddad and the PFLP's relationship with the USSR is articulated, again by Ginat and Bar-Noi, when they stated that the USSR:

had advance notice of the PFLP's planned terrorist activities, and sometimes even advised it on how to carry them out ... Moreover, the PFLP's gunmen were used as proxies for the KGB's special operations, including the abduction and assassination of suspected American and Israeli agents in Lebanon.⁶⁹⁵

The transactional nature of any intelligence service-agent relationship was mutually reflected. While the USSR saw opportunities to prosecute their broader strategy against the 'main adversary', Palestinian terrorists such as Haddad equally exploited the relationship. Andrew and Mitrokhin detailed this when they stated Haddad's 'reasons for becoming a

⁶⁹³ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *World Was Going Our Way*, 9.

⁶⁹⁴ Rami Ginat and Uri Bar-Noi, 'Tacit Support for Terrorism: The Rapprochement between the USSR and Palestinian Guerrilla Organizations Following the 1967 War', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 2 (April 2007): 265, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701248756>.

⁶⁹⁵ Ginat and Bar-Noi, 'Tacit Support for Terrorism', 275.

KGB agent was probably to obtain Soviet arms for the PFLP'.⁶⁹⁶ While Haddad was formally recruited in 1970, Andrew and Mitrokhin suggest that it was likely in the aftermath of the hijacking of Flight 426 that he was first contacted by the KGB, noting that while the source files do not specify the month of first contact, it was in 1968.⁶⁹⁷ As part of the relationship between the PFLP specifically, but the Palestinian movement more broadly, and the USSR, both parties maintained a veneer of shared revolutionary intent and an anti-imperialist agenda while engaging in a conventional, transactional intelligence relationship.

The USSR did not maintain exclusivity regarding viewing the Palestinians as a useful proxy in the context of the Cold War, nor in seeking to leverage Third World revolutionaries for their anti-American strategies. This approach, albeit to a different extent with differing strategic objectives, was also adopted by China. Chinese support for the Palestinian cause was partly informed by efforts to counter the USSR,⁶⁹⁸ but the relationship was underpinned by a shared anti-imperialist sentiment regarding international affairs. The Chinese Government consistently provided a range of support for various Third World revolutionary movements. Brazinsky reflected on this, stating, 'Beijing consistently sought to help revolutionaries emulate the Chinese experience and offered weapons and guidance to those who tried to do so'.⁶⁹⁹ Exporting the successful model of the Chinese Revolution became a central mechanism by which China sought to shape and assist revolutionary movements and provide training and materiel.

It is important to distinguish between the, at times, tepid support of the USSR for the Palestinians, especially the PLO and Arafat, and that of the Chinese. The Chinese relationship with the Palestinian movement can be traced to at least 1965, when the first chairman of the PLO travelled to China. It was on this visit that Mao Tse-tung, then-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and successful leader of the 'War of Liberation' that had led to the declaration of the People's Republic of China, made remarks that have come to encapsulate much of the character of the Palestinian-China relationship. The famous revolutionary and by then, statesman commented:

⁶⁹⁶ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *World Was Going Our Way*, 247.

⁶⁹⁷ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *World Was Going Our Way*.

⁶⁹⁸ Lillian Craig Harris, 'China's Relations with the PLO', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7, no. 1 (1977): 127, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2536531>.

⁶⁹⁹ Gregg Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 231–32.

Imperialism is afraid of China and of the Arabs. Israel and Formosa⁷⁰⁰ are bases of imperialism in Asia. You are the front gate of the great continent and we are the rear. They created Israel for you, and Formosa for us Their goal is the same ... Asia is the biggest continent in the world, and the West wants to continue exploiting it. The West does not like us, and we must understand this fact. The Arab battle against the West is the battle against Israel.⁷⁰¹

This visit was formalised with the signing of a ‘pact ... for Chinese diplomatic, military, and economic support’.⁷⁰² Following on from their attendance at a Chinese leadership course in late 1968, a number of Fatah officers returned to Jordan, bringing with them a small number of firearms. This initial supply of weapons expanded both in volume and diversified in make-up. Chamberlin highlights that by 1970, Fatah was able to arm some 14,000 men, supplied predominantly with weapons procured from China, consisting of AK-47s, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. He notes that by the end of 1969, China had shipped weapons worth an estimated \$5 million.⁷⁰³ In addition, Cooley suggested that Chinese training, in addition to that which occurred in China, was likely delivered in third-party locations like Algeria, Syria and possibly Jordan.⁷⁰⁴

The relationship between the Palestinian militant groups and the Soviets and the Chinese was significant for several reasons. The provision of training and the expression of solidarity was important, and the provisioning of arms had substantial effects on the baseline capability of the *fedayeen*. While the relationships were complex and vacillated over time regarding their intensity and productiveness, support from larger states that shared, in varying ways, a commitment to either anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist agendas, provided substantial propagandistic and contextualisation benefits. The moral support provided at the leadership level alone played a crucial role as well, demonstrated by the ‘special message’ sent from then Vice Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party to then-Chairman of the PLO, Ahmad Shuqairy. Cooley reported this encouraged the Palestinians, as with the Vietnamese, to ‘fight on unflinchingly, resolutely and stubbornly until final victory’.⁷⁰⁵ It is important to note that the Palestinians served as much of a purpose for the Chinese and the Soviets in both cases, as the Chinese and Soviets did for the Palestinians. While there was ideological solidarity, these were primarily strategically informed relationships.

⁷⁰⁰ Taiwan.

⁷⁰¹ John K. Cooley, *Green March, Black September: The Story of the Palestinian Arabs* (London: Cass, 1973), 176.

⁷⁰² Cooley, *Green March*, 176.

⁷⁰³ Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 62.

⁷⁰⁴ Cooley, *Green March*, 178.

⁷⁰⁵ Radio Peking, 10, 11 and 13 June, in Cooley, *Green March*, 179.

The embrace of Third Worldist revolutionary strategies, an approach best encapsulated in the doctrine of ‘people’s war’, or ‘revolutionary war’, was a strategy that had as much to do with engagement between the Palestinian leadership and the Soviets and the Chinese as it did with the Algerians, the Vietnamese, the Cubans and other anti-colonial, anti-imperialist left-wing revolutionaries. While there is little doubt that the success of the Chinese Revolution was crucial in demonstrating the potential for success through revolutionary strategies, the Chinese Government certainly made substantial efforts to export, ideologically and doctrinally, the principles and methods of Mao’s guerrilla warfare.⁷⁰⁶ The broader Third Worldist movement was motivated equally by the successes in Algeria, Cuba and Vietnam. The influence of the Vietnamese cause on the Palestinians has been highlighted above, but in regard to the broader Third Worldist movement, the Algerian victory against the French provided a crucial élan. Malley noted it as ‘a defining moment in the history of Third Worldism, for the battle has lasted so long, had been so violent, and had been won by a movement so acutely aware of its international dimension’.⁷⁰⁷

The more tangible manifestations of the embrace of Third Worldism is best exemplified by the influence, adoption and reproduction of the doctrinal works of key revolutionary practitioners, and the explicit advocacy of their methods, by the Palestinian movement. In addition to clear articulations of both the rhetoric and strategies of revolutionary warfare and armed struggle within their propaganda and manifestos, the Palestinian movement as a whole explicitly referenced the experiences of fellow Third Worldist struggles. It reflected extensively on their successes and failures and the relevance of their strategies to the Palestinian context. In some of the earliest Palestinian militant propaganda, the Fatah newspaper *Filastinuna*, published from 1959, the movement ‘exposed our doctrine to the public through a monthly magazine ... which could be summarized as follows: revolutionary violence is the only way to liberate the homeland’.⁷⁰⁸ After discussing the importance of indoctrination in guerrilla warfare and the prolific nature of theoretical authorship among guerrilla warfare practitioners and leaders, Harkabi highlighted that among the various early publications by Fatah, ‘of particular importance is a series of pamphlets called

⁷⁰⁶ ‘Chinese leaders were convinced that their revolution would have great international as well as national ramifications and they eagerly encouraged others seeking to overthrow imperialism or foreign domination to emulate their experience. They pursued this objective through disseminating Mao Zedong’s writings on guerrilla warfare and providing weapons and material support for wars of national liberation’: Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*, 26.

⁷⁰⁷ Malley, *Call from Algeria*, 81.

⁷⁰⁸ Abū Iyād and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*.

“Revolutionary Lessons and Trials”, which incorporates Fatah’s basic ideas’.⁷⁰⁹ Harkabi made an important point regarding the terminology deployed within the broader Palestinian discourse that reinforces the centrality of the idea of revolutionary strategies to Palestinian conceptions of resistance, if not explicitly Third Worldist. He stated, ‘the war Fatah aspired to launch was designated indiscriminately by many names: “War of National Liberation”, “Armed Struggle”, “Armed Revolution”, “The Palestinian Revolution”, “People’s Revolutionary War”, “Guerrilla or Partisan War”, “Fedayeen War”, “Fedayeen Action”’.⁷¹⁰

The strongest demonstration of the doctrinal and strategic influence of fellow Third Worldist countries and those who supported the cause came from a series of publications entitled *Revolutionary Lessons and Trials* referred to above. Within this series of publications, Fatah outlined its strategic position and sought to articulate the ways in which it sought to achieve Palestinian liberation. In addition, the movement was explicit in referencing the influence of fellow guerrilla movements, emphasising those that had achieved recent success. In addition to Arabic translations of the key theoretical and doctrinal works of Guevara, Mao, Giáp and others, Fatah published a three-part series within *Lessons and Trials* entitled the *Chinese Experience*; the *Cuban Experience*; and the *Vietnamese Experience*,⁷¹¹ with a shorter publication detailing the Algerian experience.⁷¹² Further publications would further communicate and codify the influence and context of the period’s broader revolutionary and liberation movements, with ‘The Relationship of the Palestinian Revolution with the Arab Revolution and the World Revolution’ explicit in its purpose and focus. Chamberlin succinctly articulated the effort that these and other publications sought to support, which, in addition to indoctrinating an internal audience of Palestinians, ‘tried to ... explain the links between Palestinian and Third World revolutionary movements’.⁷¹³ In a 1969 interview in *Al-Tal’ia*, senior Palestinian official Abu Iyad directly stated, ‘as we know, the world is in practice divided into three parts: the Eastern Camp, the Western Camp and the Third World...The thing to which we aspire even more keenly is to find a deeper and wider response in the Socialist Camp and the countries of the Third World’.⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁹ Y. Harkabi, ‘Fedayeen Action and Arab Strategy: Introduction’, *The Adelphi Papers* 8, no. 53 (December 1968): 1–2, 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/05679326808448115>.

⁷¹⁰ Harkabi, ‘Fedayeen Action’, 8.

⁷¹¹ Harkabi, ‘Fedayeen Action’, 17.

⁷¹² Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 20.

⁷¹³ Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*, 20.

⁷¹⁴ Walid Khadurri, ‘International Documents on Palestine, 1969’ (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1972), 729–31, <https://oiipdf.com/download/52135>.

Outreach to and from these countries had begun in the earliest years of the movement, with the Algerians becoming ‘one of Palestine’s most important sources of assistance’,⁷¹⁵ and by 1972, Algerian officials were providing public strategic advice to the Palestinians. Former Front de libération nationale (FLN) spokesperson and representative in New York, Mohammed Yazid, commented that the Palestinians must:

wipe out the impression the imperialists and the Zionists have been trying to make, and that is that in the struggle between the Palestinians and the Zionists, the Zionist is the underdog. Now it is the Arab who is oppressed and victimized in his existence because he is not only facing the Zionists but also world imperialism.⁷¹⁶

In addition to the previously identified support from the USSR and China, the Palestinian movement explicitly drew direct and indirect strategic inspiration from the Third World revolutions taking place across the globe. It leveraged these revolutions in their propaganda output to contextualise their own struggle as part of a broader liberation movement, subsequently seeking to exploit the Third Worldist frame to define their enemy more broadly than territorially conceptualised Israel, in turn enabling a wider array of targeting opportunities. This addressed the challenge of Israeli effectiveness in defending their discrete assets. Having innovated beyond the opportunistic and limited actions of cross-border raids to a globally oriented strategic positioning, the Palestinian movement was subsequently able to frame, upon its embrace, its international terrorist actions as a coherent element of a broader revolutionary struggle against imperialism, colonialism and capitalism, justifying targets across Europe and against US and Western interests more broadly. In addition, and as a symbol of capitalism and imperialism, it enabled the targeting of Western aviation targets as part of the struggle.

The success of this strategic pivot meant that the Palestinian struggle came to have sympathetic audiences well beyond the Palestinian diaspora in the Middle East, as the issue came to be a component of New Left politics, associated with anti-Vietnam War sentiment, and also built a strong strategic and operational support network across the revolutionary Third Worldist community. At its most effective, the Third Worldist narrative was able to make Western militant organisations with only tangential connection to the actual ‘Third World’ not only acceptable but fashionable. As a demonstration of how this manifested

⁷¹⁵ Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 250.

⁷¹⁶ Mohammed Yazid and Edmund Ghareeb, ‘Mohammed Yazid on Algeria and the Arab-Israeli Conflict’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, no. 2 (1972): 3–18, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2535951>.

through Western New Left cultural activists expressing their sympathy for various Third Worldist and New Left causes, Joe Strummer, lead singer of the iconic and immensely popular and explicitly political and politicised punk band The Clash, has been recognised for the fact that his ‘fascination with terrorism was evident in “Tommy Gun” and on his custom-designed shirts referencing everyone from the IRA to the Baader-Meinhof Gang to the Brigade Rosse’.⁷¹⁷

In the aftermath of his appearance at the Rock Against Racism concert in London sporting a now-iconic, self-made T-shirt with ‘Brigate Rosse’ emblazoned upon it, along with the logo of the Red Army Faction, Strummer commented in reference to the Italian terrorist organisation: ‘well I think what they’re doing is good because it’s a brutal system anyway, and people get murdered by the system every day and no one complains about that’.⁷¹⁸ As a culmination of the success of the strategic effort to push the issue of Palestine into international discourse, the first single from The Clash’s second album, *Give ‘Em Enough Rope*, was ‘Tommy Gun’ with lyrics that included:

*You better strip it down for a custom run
Tommy gun
Waiting in the airport ‘till kingdom come
An’ we can watch you make it
On the nine o’clock news
Standing there in Palestine lighting the fuse
Whatever you want, you’re gonna get it.*⁷¹⁹

Propaganda of the Deed and Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

The Palestinian resistance movement incorporated a broad conceptualisation of communicative violence and of the importance of visual communication into its operational considerations from its earliest manifestations. Further, it has been demonstrably aware of the importance of building and shaping a narrative regarding its resistance activities by drawing on historical demonstrations of resistance activity and seeking to explicitly frame the narrative surrounding their own actions. The convergence between the emergence of the modern Palestinian resistance movement, especially post-1967, coincided with the dramatic expansion in television news coverage, or what Hoffman referred to as the ‘vastly improved

⁷¹⁷ Marcus Gray, *Route 19 Revisited: The Clash and the Making of London Calling* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), 191.

⁷¹⁸ Gilbert, *Passion is a Fashion*, 190.

⁷¹⁹ The Clash, *Give ‘Em Enough Rope*, LP (London: CBS, 1978).

... quality of television news footage and the promptness with which that footage could be broadcast around the globe'.⁷²⁰

This section will demonstrate the way Palestinian militant entities sought to exploit visual mediums and visual capabilities to communicate their message more effectively while also effectively establishing and subsequently reinforcing a narrative that intentionally sought to expand their area of operations and contextualise and frame their violence within a global agenda. This approach informed Palestinian resistance movement propaganda from its earliest manifestations and some of their earliest terrorism spectaculars, such as the hijacking of El Al Flight 426. Most explicitly, it directly shaped their operational considerations in the 1970 Dawson's Field operation and the pinnacle of Palestinian terrorist operations, the 1972 Munich attack.

While it is possible to distinguish between the communicative and narrative considerations of anarchists analysed in the previous chapter, the Palestinian case analysed here in terms of the mediums exploited and the focus on visual rather than textual communication, the emphasis here is to demonstrate the continuity that exists between the two cases. The effective communications outputs and narrative establishment and development requires calibration to the political, social and technological context of the time. With this continuity in mind, this section will demonstrate *how* the Palestinian resistance movement sought to engage in the same processes as the earlier anarchists did while adjusting those processes to suit their context. The focus here will be on the emergence of visual mediums, initially manifesting in static images such as photographs and artwork and culminating in moving video images, to inform the communicative considerations of the Palestinian resistance movement. Shaping and incorporating an explicit visual consideration into terrorist operations consolidated through the period of Palestinian political violence and contributed substantially to the evolution of overall terrorist praxis.

Communicative Dynamics

From the earliest manifestations of the Palestinian resistance movement, propaganda was understood as a central element of their work. The diasporic nature of the Palestinian population in the post-1948 context meant that in establishing a Palestinian resistance movement, those involved necessarily had to engage in the reconstruction and rearticulation

⁷²⁰ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 66.

of a collective sense of identity. In parallel, they had to create and disseminate a body of myths, symbols, and other signifiers that would allow a body of discourse to develop in both a coherent manner and in a manner anchored in historical contexts and linked to existing myths and realities. In the modern context, this meant providing linkages between the ‘thirty years of the British Mandate, marked by the desperate losing struggle ... against the greatest imperial power of the age’, and ‘the “lost years” between 1948 and the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1964’.⁷²¹ Additionally, the concept of the armed struggle, which Baumgarten has referred to as ‘the most crucial element of Fatah’s ideology and its central mobilizing myth’,⁷²² needed to be woven into the discourse of the Palestinian struggle.

A critical component of this process, developed in near parallel with the establishment of Fatah, was the founding of *Nida al-Hayat Filastinuna* (The Call of Life—Our Palestine), or *Filastinuna*, which published 40 issues between its launch in November of 1959 and its closure in 1964.⁷²³ Some of these earliest editions of *Filastinuna* included photos and images, albeit printed to a quality that reflected the state of technology at the time, budget and capabilities of what amounted to an underground press, based out of Beirut.⁷²⁴ By 1960, *Filastinuna* explicitly published Fatah’s position on the armed struggle and contextualised it within the broader Third-Worldist struggle. The publication editorialised:

Revolutions all over the world are inspiring us. The revolution in Algeria lights our way like a bright torch of hope. When the Algerians took up their revolution in 1954, they were only some hundred Arabs facing 20,000 French troops and well-armed settlers ... The revolution in Algeria proved to us that a people can organize itself and build its military strength in the very process of fighting.⁷²⁵

As Abu Iyad has commented, ‘we exposed our doctrine to the public through a monthly magazine called *Filastinuna* (*Our Palestine*)’.⁷²⁶ The role of the explicitly propagandistic publication would become a centrepiece of the movement’s mobilisation efforts. Iyad further notes that, at least in part, the campaign run by Fatah assisted in fermenting the disgruntlement amongst the Palestinian population and the sense of a ‘pressing need for a

⁷²¹ Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 177–78.

⁷²² Helga Baumgarten, ‘The Three Faces/Phases of Palestinian Nationalism, 1948–2005’, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no. 4 (2005): 33, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2005.34.4.25>.

⁷²³ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 84.

⁷²⁴ Page 87 of this article includes an image from the January 1960 edition of *Filastinuna*, entitled *With Eyes Towards the Plundered Homeland*, in Moshe Shemesh, ‘The Palestinian Society in the Wake of the 1948 War: From Social Fragmentation to Consolidation’, *Israel Studies* 9, no. 1 (2004): 86–100.

⁷²⁵ *Filastinuna* 11 (November 1960), 3, cited in Baumgarten, ‘Three Faces’, 33.

⁷²⁶ Abū Iyād and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*, 35.

purely fighting organisation'.⁷²⁷ More tangibly, Sayigh noted that by 1961, Fatah had built relationships with approximately 40 different organisations across the region. *Filastinuna* had been instrumental in bringing awareness of Fatah and its ideology and doctrine to the masses and other organisations associated with Palestinian resistance.⁷²⁸

This early propaganda work of Fatah was also part of their push to launch the armed struggle. It reflected their efforts to succeed in internal debates regarding the timing of armed action against Israel. In the July 1964 edition of *Filastinuna*, the authors stated, 'the Palestinian people is more convinced today than ever that the armed Palestinian revolution is the only solution to regain its stolen homeland...the unity of the Palestinian efforts will follow the first bullet of the armed revolution'.⁷²⁹

In late December of the same year, the largely unsuccessful first armed operation was launched, as detailed previously. This was followed shortly afterwards with the issuing of *Military Communique No. 1*, a brief single page statement, under the auspices of the *al-'Asifa (The Storm) Forces General Command*, which ignored the failures of the operation and instead engaged in propagandistic and grandiose language. It stated that 'our revolutionary vanguard has issued forth, in the belief that armed revolution is our only path to Palestine and freedom. Let the imperialists and Zionist know that the people of Palestine are still in the field of battle and shall never be swept away'.⁷³⁰

Despite the strategic and military orientation of elements of the publication, aesthetics was also a substantial consideration for those involved in the publication, ensuring that the communicative dynamics of the project, including consideration of the power of images and artwork, could be maximised. The owner of the original publishing licence that enabled *Filastinuna* to be launched reflected on the role of the famous Palestinian artist Ismail Shammout, who produced artwork placed on the last page of each edition of the magazine, with the express purpose of mobilising the audience.⁷³¹ As the body of propaganda began to diversify, images and photos became crucial to the movement's efforts. The 1970 edition of *Revolution Until Victory* featured the iconic image of men holding AK-47s aloft on the front

⁷²⁷ Abū Iyād and Rouleau, *My Home, My Land*, 40.

⁷²⁸ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 85.

⁷²⁹ Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 106.

⁷³⁰ Al-'Asifa Forces General Command, 'Military Communiqué No. 1', published 2016, <http://learnpalestine.politics.ox.ac.uk/uploads/sources/588c76198224f.pdf>.

⁷³¹ Hani Fakoury, interviewed 2012, <http://learnpalestine.politics.ox.ac.uk/uploads/sources/5891de8db5403.pdf>.

cover. The 1968 document, *The Freedom Fighters*,⁷³² had a photograph of a camouflaged fighter aiming his weapon on the cover and included photographs and biographical information on several Palestinian operatives who had died or been incarcerated.

This visual orientation was further reflected in the cultivation and propagation of the keffiyeh, popularised by Arafat and Leila Khaled, which would become an internationally recognised symbol of resistance.⁷³³ This symbol would become an important signifier of active resistance and solidarity among Palestinians and fellow revolutionaries across the world and reflected the beginning of the Palestinian movements embrace and cultivation of cultural and artistic practices and output as a central component of their propaganda efforts. This manifested in direct terms, with the incorporation of art and poetry into official propaganda, and indirectly through how the revolutionary sentiment of the movement came to shape much of the region's cultural discourse. Boullata, cited by Maasri, discussed how revolution and revolutionary sentiment shaped the artistic community that underpinned the communications capability of the Palestinian movement in both explicit terms and inspired organic artistic output that reinforced the propagandistic efforts of the movement. In his article, 'Towards a Revolutionary Arab Art', published in 1970, he referred to the impact of the 1967 *naksa* on the artistic community when he stated:

Arab artists, and especially Palestinian artists in exile, had to reconsider their place in society. Modes of expression held a new purpose for them and they changed their vocabulary in response. Some poets substituted machine guns for their typewriters, others abandoned poetry to write novels, and those who used to write love poetry began to write about social and political struggle. Experimental filmmakers now filmed events for documentary purposes ... Posters were everywhere, yet their creators remained anonymous; poetry appeared on some, yet the poet's name remained unknown ... One artist designed colourful stamps for Fateh, another designed a bold graphic symbol for the Popular Front [for the Liberation of Palestine], which became a widely recognized insignia.⁷³⁴

The centrality of the visual in the communication and propaganda efforts of the Palestinian movement came to define their approach to resistance activity. This is evident in their explicitly propagandistic activities and their operational considerations. As visual mediums

⁷³² Fatah, 'The Freedom Fighters', published 1968,

http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.freedom.fighters.pdf.

⁷³³ Ted Swedenburg, 'The Kufiya', in *Global Middle East: Into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 162.

⁷³⁴ Kamal Boullata, 'Toward a Revolutionary Arab Art', cited in Zeina Maasri, *Cosmopolitan Radicalism: The Visual Politics of Beirut's Global Sixties* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108767736>.

became increasingly important to the Palestinian resistance, they became an equally important consideration in their operational planning. After discussing the narrative dynamics they incorporated into their actions, this section highlights the reflections of key operatives within the movement and its considerations of the embrace of terrorist spectacles, particularly aviation terrorism, as a key vector to transmit these narratives of resistance and a principal vehicle for shaping and transforming international political discourse on the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Narrative Dynamics

Any effort to demonstrate the importance of narrative dynamics in Palestinian resistance activity must begin with a brief discussion of Ghassan Kanafani. Kanafani, most generously remembered as a Palestinian novelist and journalist, had also spent the majority of his adult life engaged with the Palestinian resistance movement, most prominently as the spokesperson and a senior leadership figure within the PFLP and editor of its weekly publication *al-Hadaf* (the Target).⁷³⁵ While his romanticised memory associated with his literary contributions should not be ignored, it is of fundamental importance to note that in the 1968 press conference held at the Beirut offices of the *al-Anwar* newspaper, Kanafani was the primary spokesperson for the PFLP, answering journalists' questions about the hijacking of Flight 426. He was flanked in the press conference by Wadi Haddad.⁷³⁶ His role within the PFLP was fundamentally ideological and strategic rather than operational. His articulation of the relationship between cultural resistance and armed resistance played an important part in shaping the broader undertaking of Palestinian resistance discourse. Kanafani's narrative sensibilities and his promotion of artistic and cultural content within Palestinian resistance propaganda helped develop an appreciation of the importance of narrative contextual coherence and framing in the operational considerations of the post-1967 movement. This became most acutely evident in developing the aviation terrorism deployed predominantly by PFLP from 1968 onwards.

Evidence of Kanafani's influence across strategic and doctrinal lines and his role in shaping the broader revolutionary discourse of the Palestinian movement is substantial. In his famous essay, *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine, 1948–1966*, he made a clear statement

⁷³⁵ Elizabeth M. Holt, 'Resistance Literature and Occupied Palestine in Cold War Beirut', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 50, no. 1 (January 2021): 3–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2020.1855933>.

⁷³⁶ John M. Lee, 'Hijacking Mastermind is No. 2 in the Popular Front', *New York Times*, 14 September 1970, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/09/14/archives/hijacking-mastermind-is-no-2-in-the-popular-front.html>.

regarding revolutionary cultural practices when he noted ‘the cultural form of resistance is no less valuable than the armed resistance itself’.⁷³⁷ After his assassination by the Israeli Mossad in 1973, the Lebanese *Daily Star* ran his obituary, which famously referred to him as the ‘commando who never fired a gun’, and ‘his weapon was a ballpoint pen and his arena newspaper pages. And he hurt the enemy more than a column of commandos.’⁷³⁸ Kanafani’s influence on shaping the narrative of the PFLP specifically. Still, the Palestinian movement more broadly is difficult to overstate. In a 1970 interview with Australian journalist Richard Carleton in his Beirut office surrounded by Marx, Lenin, Che and Ho Chi Minh posters, he explicitly shapes the narrative in his responses to questions. Correcting the terminology used by the interviewer, he noted, ‘it is not a conflict either. It is a liberation movement fighting for justice’.⁷³⁹

Kanafani’s influence extended across the PFLP’s entire body of propagandistic outputs. Of particular relevance to the aviation terrorism they undertook was their 1971 publication *The Popular Front and External Operations*.⁷⁴⁰ This document served the explicit purpose of justifying the aviation operations the PFLP undertook by contextualising it within the narrative propagated through the various cultural and propagandistic outputs of the PFLP specifically, the Palestinian movement more generally, and the wider resistance discourse that had been cultivated in Lebanon, across the Middle East and internationally. The document, in English, directly links Israel’s existence to the broader imperialist project in the Middle East, which they argued was predominantly oriented to ongoing ‘exploitation and plunder of wealth’.⁷⁴¹ The document then clearly explained the communicative and narrative dynamics of the operations, which they explain as follows: ‘the blow of one of these strikes is more far-reaching than any media offices or cultural or journalistic attaches, who spend money and efforts which could be utilized in the service of the Palestinian revolution, could be, and in fact escalated the level of media coverage even more’.⁷⁴²

The words of Kanafani are instructive in capturing the essence of the narrative that he, the PFLP and the Palestinian movement more generally sought to propagate and subsequently

⁷³⁷ Ghassan Kanafani, *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948–1966* (Beirut: Institute for Arab Research, 1982), cited in Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York, NY: Methuen, 1987), 11.

⁷³⁸ Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, 11.

⁷³⁹ Ghassan Kanafani, ‘PFLP Ghassan Kanafani interview with Richard Carleton, 1970’, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sd_8LagRSnY.

⁷⁴⁰ Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, ‘The Popular Front and External Operations’ (al-Hadaf, 1971), <http://pflp-documents.org/documents/PFLP-ExternalOperations-English1971.pdf>.

⁷⁴¹ Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, ‘The Popular Front and External Operations’, 2.

⁷⁴² Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, ‘The Popular Front and External Operations’.

contextualise its terrorist operations. The narrative agenda that Kanafani drove, through official and unofficial channels, through texts, sympathetic artistic output and broader cultural sensitivities was anchored in a Third Worldist perspective on the Palestinian struggle. The articulation and propagation of this narrative enabled the aviation terrorism of the late 1960s and 1970s to be portrayed and perceived as acts of justified resistance to not only Israel's occupation of Palestine but as acts of resistance against imperialism and capitalism, undertaken in solidarity with all the oppressed peoples of the world. Kanafani, in words encapsulating his perspective and a narrative intended to enshroud both the Palestinian cultural and armed struggle in, stated in 1972, 'the Palestinian cause is not a cause for Palestinians only, but a cause for every revolutionary, wherever he is, as a cause of the exploited and oppressed masses in our era'.⁷⁴³

The last aspect of the communicative and narrative dynamics of Palestinian terrorism is demonstrated through the articulation of key figures within the movement and their attitude to and justification of the terrorist actions they engaged in. Beyond the perspective identified above in the *External Operation* report published by the PFLP, senior actors from the PLO, Fatah, the PFLP and others have published comments that demonstrate the inherently communicative and narratively oriented conceptualisations they had of the operations they undertook from 1968 onward. This perspective is articulated by a range of individuals and about numerous operations, some of which will be discussed in further detail in the final section of this chapter. Most explicitly, George Habash was quoted as stating, 'when we hijack a plane it has more effect than if we killed a hundred Israelis in battle. For decades, world public opinion has been neither for nor against the Palestinians. It simply ignored us. At least the world is talking about us now'.⁷⁴⁴

Exploitation of Emerging Information and Communication Technologies

The convergence of plane hijacking, aviation terrorism more broadly and strategic innovation associated with the embrace of Third Worldist revolutionary ideology, doctrine and rhetoric continued to be refined over time. Beginning with the first plane hijacking by Palestinians in 1968, the practice continued to evolve its praxis by expanding its list of targeted airlines, passenger nationalities and the incorporation of aviation-related targets rather than

⁷⁴³ Ghassan Kanafani, 'The 1936–39 Revolt in Palestine', Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, published 1980, <http://pflp-documents.org/documents/PFLP-Kanafani3639.pdf>.

⁷⁴⁴ David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East*, 2nd ed. (London; Boston, MA: Faber and Faber, 1984), 304.

exclusively aviation hijacking. Additionally, the Palestinian movement came to embrace the use of third-party operators, most notably in the Lod Massacre and the use of terrorists from the JRA. In doing so, the Palestinian movement, and the PFLP more specifically, increasingly achieved the types of internationally acknowledged terrorist spectacles they had sought to perpetrate. From the earliest conceptualisations of plane hijacking by Wadi Haddad in 1967,⁷⁴⁵ the internationally oriented performative component of the actions was central to the strategic calculus, in addition to the media orientation and the inherent communicative aspects of this. From the first plane hijacking in 1968, the PFLP sought to frame the media coverage of its actions through press conferences, deploying the journalist mentioned above—author and official spokesperson Ghassan Kanafani—to explain and justify its actions and to shape the narrative regarding its operations.⁷⁴⁶

In addition to the clear orientation towards cultural and artistic representations of the Palestinian struggle and the explicit strategic calculus that sought to incite and exploit media focus on terrorist spectacles, particularly emphasising television news and video footage, the Palestinian movement established the Palestinian Film Unit (PFU) during the immediate post-*naksa* period. The PFU was responsible for the development and deployment of revolutionary filmic capabilities. At the time of its formation, the PFU began this aspect of the revolution by recruiting Egyptian cinematography student Sulafah Jad Allah to ‘create portraits of fida’yin before they embarked on missions’.⁷⁴⁷ The activities of the nascent PFU, initially based in Fatah headquarters in Amman, was in recording the events of the 1968 Battle of Karamah and proved as transformative for the PFU as it was for the movement more broadly. The ability to provide self-determined footage and images to the newly interested international press enabled the members of the PFU to convince Fatah leadership to purchase its preliminary camera equipment, wherein they set about capturing ‘images of everything they could. Demonstrations, training sessions, press briefings, and cultural events were all recorded on film by and for Palestinians’.⁷⁴⁸ Over the following years, various elements of the Palestinian movement would embrace the approach of the PFU, which ultimately came to generate output anchored within a Third Cinema perspective, shaped as much by the revolutionary cinematic practices of the Algerians and the Vietnamese as by other aspects of the Palestinian revolutionary movement were. Foundational member of the PFU, Mustapha

⁷⁴⁵ Abū Sharīf and Mahnaimi, *Best of Enemies*, 59–60.

⁷⁴⁶ Ensalaco, *Middle Eastern Terrorism*.

⁷⁴⁷ Yaqub, *Palestinian Cinema*, 53.

⁷⁴⁸ Yaqub, *Palestinian Cinema*, 54–55.

Abou Ali, was quoted as stating explicitly, ‘the Palestinian resistance believes that action through cinema is a natural extension of armed action’.⁷⁴⁹

This was not a uniquely Palestinian capability and reflected an embrace of Third Cinema witnessed across Third Worldist revolutionary and liberation movements.⁷⁵⁰ The embrace of Third Cinema in Palestine was an unsurprising occurrence given the embrace of Third Worldist revolutionary ideologies and the Kanafanist embrace of cultural resistance as an element of, and of equal importance to, the armed struggle. While the productions of the PFU and other Palestine-oriented film products never reached the levels of popularity of iconic Third Cinema productions such as *The Battle of Algiers*, its work substantially impacted the conceptualisation of terrorist spectacles and the mediatised sensibility and filmic orientation of their operational planning.

By 1972, the preliminary ideas regarding militant and revolutionary cinema had formalised their principles into the *Manifesto of the Palestinian Cinema Group*, which stated that their ‘main objective’ was ‘to produce Palestinian film committed to the cause and goals of the Palestinian revolution’.⁷⁵¹ The manifesto further stated that the first of their ‘practical objectives’ was to ‘make revolutionary films that will mobilize the masses for the revolution and acquaint the world with the struggle of our people’.⁷⁵² From the earliest days of the Palestinian revolutionary movement, across its two major factions, filmic considerations were present. The idea of cultural resistance, and more explicitly, of revolutionary cinema as a component of, or extension of, armed resistance came to be a key component of reframing the Palestinian struggle and framing and contextualising the armed operations that took place.

As a component of a broader revolutionary aesthetic, this overall visual orientation would inform some of the most spectacular terrorist operations of the period. It would have a lasting influence on terrorist praxis. The operations undertaken, beginning with the 1968 hijacking of El Al Flight 426 through to the Munich attacks in September of 1972, served to demonstrate the increasingly sophisticated and prioritised aesthetic, specifically the filmic, televisual, considerations of the Palestinian movement. These attacks, briefly discussed below, serve to highlight not only the way the strategic and revolutionary innovations of the Palestinians, and

⁷⁴⁹ Kay Dickinson, *Arab Film and Video Manifestos*.

⁷⁵⁰ Yaqub, *Palestinian Cinema*, 52–53; Ewa Mazierska and Lars Lyngsgaard Fjord Kristensen, eds., *Third Cinema, World Cinema and Marxism* (New York, NY; London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 2.

⁷⁵¹ Dickinson, *Arab Film and Video Manifestos*, 93–94.

⁷⁵² Dickinson, *Arab Film and Video Manifestos*, 93–94.

their communicative and narrative considerations, shaped their operational planning, but additionally an example of what Wieviorka refers to as a ‘media orientated strategy’.⁷⁵³

For terrorism to become oriented towards the visual, particularly towards video footage, it was necessary for several technological developments to have not only happened but to have ensconced themselves into the cultural practices of the relevant societies. Through this secondary process of change, audiences emerged as a substantial factor in terrorist operational planning and strategic calculus. In the late 1960s, several key technological developments took place, noted by Hoffman, on the 1968 launching of the first US television satellite, as ‘the second great revolution in mass communication that directly affected terrorism’.⁷⁵⁴ He goes on to highlight further technological developments, including smaller, more easily transportable camera equipment and equipment that enabled live crosses. These developments permitted ‘live television transmissions ... made directly from remote locations throughout the world and beamed instantaneously into the homes of viewers everywhere’.⁷⁵⁵ Without these technological developments and the emergence of cultural practices associated with them, both relating to audiences, but equally to the impact these technologies had on news production itself, the strategic calculus of much of the PFLP’s terrorism would have been unable to achieve the effects that it did.

Conclusion

The above has sought to demonstrate how terrorism inspired by Palestinian liberation and its strategic effects can be explained by the conceptual framework. It has demonstrated how the Palestinian cause globalised its message and achieved substantial strategic effects against its various adversaries using a combination of methods. The incremental innovations associated with airplane hijacking and the broader targeting of aviation infrastructure internationally was an essential component of their success. Additionally, by embracing a visualistic and filmic sensibility, and embedding their cause within the Third Worldist, globally orientated narrative, they were able to globalise their message and their operational coherency. The considered exploitation of satellite television as a crucial element of their operational art further strengthened their capacity to achieve substantial strategic effects.

⁷⁵³ Michel Wieviorka, *The Making of Terrorism* (Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 44.

⁷⁵⁴ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 187.

⁷⁵⁵ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 88.

The integration of all these elements, most acutely reflected in the Munich operation of 1972, further supports the proposition that terrorism, when it integrates the three elements of the proposed framework, can achieve substantial strategic effect. Additionally, it is possible to highlight the parallels between the actions of anarchist terrorism in Russia, their innovative use of dynamite, incorporation of communicative and narrative dynamics, exploitation of emergent print media technologies and the characteristics of Palestinian terrorism. These parallels further support the proposition that the nature of terrorism is enduring. While its character may adjust to suit political, social, and technological contexts, the fundamentals of the practice remain consistent.

The next chapter contextualises the violent, global Salafist-Jihadist movement. It briefly considers the associated terminology relating to the movement, as well as its extensive historical origins, before articulating its modern historical context, as well as the coalescence of its modern ideological, doctrinal, and operational character.

Chapter Nine: Tweeting the Jihad: Ideology, Doctrine and Operations

The enduring challenge that global jihadist terrorism presents to international security can be demonstrated by briefly revisiting the August 2014 release of the *Message to America* video by IS mentioned earlier. Having only two months prior declared itself a Caliphate and one-month prior captured Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, the organisation was able to reinsert jihadist terrorism into international security discourse. This succeeded in provoking the US and its allies to engage in combat operations in Iraq and Syria. Importantly, this capability was dependent on a well-established and embedded narrative regarding the presence and capability of jihadist terrorist organisations. This had been built and reinforced not only in the post-9/11 period but over a multitude of decades, with various propaganda activities, operations and campaigns, serving to frame and communicate jihadist strategic objectives, ideology and operational capability.

As with the previous case studies, the analytical perspective utilised herein is informed by a broad and strategic perspective. Therefore, it will undertake an analysis of jihadist terrorism, broadly defined, rather than exclusively focusing on specific entities such as AQ, IS or any of the myriad other franchises or *wilayat* (provinces) these central entities produced or embraced or the additional independent jihadist entities the movement has spawned. The focus will therefore be on the jihadist *movement*. It will initially provide a brief analysis of the overarching ideological parameters of the movement and an assessment of their operational history before applying the conceptual framework to their more contemporary actions. In doing so, it is also important to recognise how substantial of an outlier the 9/11 attacks were in terms of jihadist operations and the context of terrorism more generally. The scale of the attack's conception, the number of fatalities and the scope of the global response were unprecedented in the modern history of terrorism, beyond even the expectations of AQ.⁷⁵⁶

The analytical focus of this case study is ultimately on the post-9/11 period, considering how the movement has innovated and adapted to the substantial counterterrorism efforts that have

⁷⁵⁶ As acknowledged by Osama bin Laden in the November 2001 video released by the US Department of Defense, 'We calculated in advance the number of casualties from the enemy ... We calculated that the floors that would be hit would be three or four floors. I was the most optimistic of them all. Due to my experience in this field [construction] I was thinking that the fire from the gas in the plane would melt the iron structure of the building and collapse the area where the plane had hit and all the floors above it only. This is all that we had hoped for': Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 234.

been launched against it. While the preliminary aspects of the case study are orientated towards AQ and the emergence of the modern jihadist movement, the discussion of the movement's innovative violence, consideration of narrative and communicative dynamics and their exploitation of emerging information and communication technologies focuses on the influence of AQAP's Anwar al-Awlaki and IS' Western-oriented propaganda campaign. It thus forms the second part of this case study.

Before addressing the emergence of AQ and the formalisation of the organisations that would ultimately become synonymous with contemporary jihadist terrorism, it is necessary to address the terminology associated with the movement and distinguish between the rich history of jihad as an idea within Islam and the modern, violent, globally oriented Salafi-Jihadism that manifested in AQ and associated movements. The discourse associated with the terminology of jihadist terrorism has proven especially controversial over the two decades since the 9/11 attacks. The terminology deployed when describing the ideology has frequently, and regrettably, devolved into broader generalisations about Islam, either explicitly or implicitly. The following section will briefly provide an overview of the various interpretations of the term 'jihad' before emphasising the meaning used within this dissertation.

As with any concept and previously discussed concerning terrorism, universally accepted and recognised definitions tend, at best, to be illusive, regardless of their desirability. The etymological root of the term in Arabic is relatively well established, meaning 'to strive', 'to exert' or 'to fight'.⁷⁵⁷ Esposito states that the term's 'exact meaning depends on context'.⁷⁵⁸ Jihad can be understood, as it is by many, as striving to be a good Muslim. It can equally be understood by the fact that 'early in the development of Islam, jihad came to be associated particularly with fighting or making war "in the path of God"'.⁷⁵⁹ The association between the concept of jihad and principles of just war has a long tradition within Islam. A lengthy scholarly and institutionalised tradition and articulation explicates these ideas and principles from the perspective of something resembling 'the state' and its exercise of power regarding

⁷⁵⁷ John L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 159.

⁷⁵⁸ Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, 160.

⁷⁵⁹ *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 273–82.

warfare. As Amjad-Ali has noted, ‘the just war theory in Islam has its roots much earlier in the tradition than Christianity’.⁷⁶⁰

The focus here is not so much on the etymological roots of the term jihad, nor on the rich tradition of historical debates within Islamic jurisprudence and theology regarding just and unjust warfare, as much as it is on jihad-*ism*. The term, as deployed herein, utilises Firestone’s definition, which stated that jihadism constitutes:

a transnational movement of militant Sunni Muslim activists, often called jihadis, who feel that they must be engaged in a prolonged and perhaps even endless war with the forces of evil defined vaguely as the West, or the ‘Judeo-Christian’ or ‘Crusader-Zionist’ enemy ... Because of its genesis in response to conditions defined as globalism and because of its transnational reach, it is sometimes referred to as ‘global jihad’.⁷⁶¹

The benefit of this approach lies in the frequent deployment of the term jihadism and its associated derivatives being prevalent among the internal discourses of the jihadist movement itself. The International Crisis Group astutely noted its reluctance to use the term but also noted a distinguishable ideological framework that most jihadist groups subscribe to, at least in the broad sense. Most of the groups self-identify as jihadist or some variant thereof.⁷⁶² As Bunzel further noted:

the jihadis in fact describe themselves not only as mujahideen but as jihadis. They are, in their own words, ‘the jihadis’ (al-jihadiyyun) and their movement is ‘the jihadi current’ (al-tayyar al-jihadi), ‘the jihadi movement’ (al-haraka al-jihadiyya), or simply ‘jihadism’ (al-jihadiyya). The more elaborate ‘jihadi Salafism’ (al-salafiyya al-jihadiyya) is also sometimes used.⁷⁶³

Noting the indigenous nature of the term within the broader movement, its adoption here seeks to ensure that its meaning, when deployed, is not misconstrued or intended to cast negative connotations across the broader Islamic communities globally. Further, the content

⁷⁶⁰ Charles W. Amjad-Ali, ‘Jihad and Just War Theory: Dissonance and Truth’, *Dialog* 48, no. 3 (September 2009): 239, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6385.2009.00467.x>.

⁷⁶¹ Reuven Firestone, ‘“Jihadism” as a New Religious Movement’, in *The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements*, ed. Mikael Rothstein and Olav Hammer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 263–64, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521196505.018>.

⁷⁶² ICG highlight the following common ideological tenets: fighting to return society to a purer form of Islam, violence against rulers whose policies they deem in conflict with Islamic imperatives (as jihadists understand them) and belief in a duty to use violence when Muslim rulers abandon those imperatives: International Crisis Group, ‘Exploiting Disorder: Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State’, Crisis Group Special Report, 2016, 62.

⁷⁶³ Cole Bunzel, ‘Jihadism on Its Own Terms: Understanding a Movement’, *Islamism and the International Order* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 2017), 1, https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/jihadism_on_its_own_terms_pdf.pdf.

analysed in this case study is loosely conceptualised as a reflection of the dynamic nature of the jihadist movement itself and the organisational structures present within and across it. Some elements will be analysed in the sections regarding innovation and information and communications technology. However, it is worthwhile to discuss this aspect of the movement briefly.

The jihadist movement has manifested various organisational structures throughout its contemporary existence, ranging from traditional, hierarchically structured military-style organisations exercising direct command and control over operations and operatives through to embracing aspects of so-called lone-actor terrorism and its indirect facilitation or ‘inspiration.’ Complicating any assessment of the jihadist movement’s organisational dynamics is the concomitant adoption of centralised and decentralised approaches to organisational structure. Scholars have noted,⁷⁶⁴ as advocated by jihadist strategists,⁷⁶⁵ the dualistic approach of maintaining centralised command and control while simultaneously seeking to ‘inspire’ lone-actor terrorism that has been characteristic of modern jihadist entities. This has been most directly manifested in the activities of AQAP initially and subsequently, IS.

A broad approach to the analytical parameters adopted here is necessary to capture the disparate mechanisms by which the aforementioned organisational structures have directed or inspired acts of terrorist violence. The spectrum of models that have been operationalised through various command and control mechanisms includes the strictly hierarchical nature of the planning and execution of the 9/11 attacks by AQ;⁷⁶⁶ the coordinated and simultaneous attacks on Paris in 2015, planned in Syria and perpetrated by an IS cell based in Belgium,⁷⁶⁷ including returned foreign fighters from Syria;⁷⁶⁸ through to the various lone-actor operations

⁷⁶⁴ Ryan captures al-Suri multi-structured approach analytically and graphically in his chapter dedicated to al-Suri’s organisational and military thought. Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda’s Strategy*, 245.

⁷⁶⁵ For a preliminary analysis of al-Suri’s strategic ideas see Brynjar Lia, ‘Al-Suri’s Doctrines for Decentralized Jihadi Training – Part 1’, *Terrorism Monitor* 5, no. 1 (2007), <https://jamestown.org/program/al-suris-doctrines-for-decentralized-jihadi-training-part-1/>. For a comprehensive discussion of al-Suri, and for copies of the two key chapters of his masterwork, see Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*.

⁷⁶⁶ Mendelsohn notes, ‘over the years, al-Qaeda’s ranks swelled, but it remained a single, centralized organization (albeit one that provided services, particularly training, to many other jihadi terrorist organizations) with operational tentacles worldwide’: Mendelsohn, *Al-Qaeda Franchise*, 20.

⁷⁶⁷ Jean-Charles Brisard, ‘The Paris Attacks and the Evolving Islamic State Threat to France’, *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 11 (2015), <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-paris-attacks-and-the-evolving-islamic-state-threat-to-france/>.

⁷⁶⁸ Pieter Nanninga, ‘Meanings of Savagery: Terror, Religion, and the Islamic State’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Religion and Terrorism*, 1st ed., ed. James Lewis (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

inspired by online jihadist propaganda⁷⁶⁹ and those more substantially facilitated by online operatives.⁷⁷⁰ Since 2001, jihadist terrorism has included the most rudimentary of attacks, such as the 2014 Endeavour Hills stabbing of two Australian police officers by Numan Haider,⁷⁷¹ through to the exceedingly complex and ambitious 2017 attempt to bomb an Etihad flight out of Sydney, carrying approximately 400 passengers.⁷⁷² This spectrum of activity, the varying complexity of jihadist terrorism and the various levels of direct connectivity to a formal organisation or to ideological vectors⁷⁷³ justify the broad approach to conceptualising jihadism adopted within this dissertation.

With the above in mind, it is also important to note the emergence of the modern jihadist movement and some of the significant historical lineages that inform its ideological and doctrinal manifestations. While it is well beyond the scope of this analysis to provide a detailed articulation of the classical literature that has influenced the contours of jihadist ideology, like that produced by Ibn Taimiyyah,⁷⁷⁴ or to provide a detailed mapping of the ideological provenance of jihadist thought through its extensive and rich history,⁷⁷⁵ it is helpful to briefly articulate the beginnings of the modern transnational jihadist movement and the emergence of what would come to be known as AQ, and would subsequently birth the IS. The focus of much of the analysis that follows will be on post-9/11 trajectories, including AQAP and the IS and their Western-oriented actions. Regardless of focus, the contemporary

⁷⁶⁹ Levi J. West, ‘#jihad: Understanding Social Media as a Weapon’, *Security Challenges* 12, no. 2 (July 2016): 9–26; Paul Gill, *Lone-Actor Terrorists: A Behavioural Analysis*, (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

⁷⁷⁰ Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hughes, ‘Threat to the United States’; Levi J. West and Andrew Zammit, ‘Australia’s Most Dangerous Islamic State Member: The Arrest of Neil Prakash’, *Militant Leadership Monitor* 8, no. 12 (2017), <https://jamestown.org/program/australias-dangerous-islamic-state-member-arrest-neilprakash/>.

⁷⁷¹ James Dowling, ‘Inquest Finding into the Death of Radicalised Teen Numan Haider’, *Australasian Policing a Journal of Professional Practice and Research* 9, no. 2 (2017): 25.

⁷⁷² Andrew Zammit, ‘Operation Silves: Inside the 2017 Islamic State Sydney Plane Plot’, *CTC Sentinel* 13, no. 4 (2020), <https://ctc.usma.edu/operation-silves-inside-the-2017-islamic-state-sydney-plane-plot/>.

⁷⁷³ See page 307 for details of Monis’ relationship with Islamic State. Saira Ali and Umi Khattab, ‘Trans-Mediatized Terrorism: The Sydney Lindt Café Siege’, *Global Media and Communication* 14, no. 3 (December 2018): 301–23, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742766518811367>.

⁷⁷⁴ Gerges notes, ‘I have not met a former jihadi—or a potential one—who has not memorized Ibn Taimiyyah’s fatwas by heart. Jihadis fondly refer to Ibn Taimiyyah as the “Sheikh of Islam” and they credit his fatwas with inspiring and motivating Muslims to rise up and make jihad against the infidel Tartars (Mongols). Unaware of the pitfalls of drawing historical analogies, Faraj and his associates drew a parallel historical line between the Tartar rule and today’s system without regard to nuances and complexities. Jihadis borrow Ibn Taimiyyah’s words, which were written more than 700 years ago, and apply them in their entirety to current sociopolitical and religious conditions prevalent in Muslim countries. Faraj, Zawahiri, bin Laden, and others do that as if Islamic history, culture, and society were frozen in time and space. They also anoint themselves as spokespersons for the 1.3 billion Muslims worldwide.’: Gerges, *Far Enemy*, 330, n. 36.

⁷⁷⁵ Ingram refers to ‘complex chains of charismatic leaders, each of whom emerge in part by building on the charismatic capital of their predecessors’. He focuses on al-Banna, Qutb, Azzam, bin Laden and Awlaki. Haroro J. Ingram, *The Charismatic Leadership Phenomenon in Radical and Militant Islamism* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2016).

jihadist current has deep and substantial ties to the Afghan–Soviet conflict of 1979–1989. The role of Arab foreign fighters in that conflict played an almost exponentially important role in providing the foundations of modern twenty-first-century jihadism and the organisations and networks it has spawned.

Understanding the emergence of AQ and the transnational jihadist movement necessitates an analysis of the key figures who advocated and practised the ideological, strategic and doctrinal principles that would provide the foundation of the movement that so violently introduced itself to the world in 2001 and continues to be responsible for strategic consequences on the international stage. At the centre of the modern transnational jihad movement are Palestinian cleric and foreign fighter, Abdullah Azzam, and the resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As Hegghammer noted concerning Azzam’s intellectual and ideological legacy, ‘the prominence of these ideas in the jihadi movement today is testimony to Azzam’s enduring ideological influence. Azzam ... was a highly influential jihadi thinker’.⁷⁷⁶ While Azzam drew on the ideas of classical scholars such as Taimiyyah and Qutb,⁷⁷⁷ his ideas regarding foreign fighting and the globalisation of jihadism would echo well beyond the valleys of Afghanistan. Numerous authors have noted his doctrinal and strategic contributions. Gerges cited al-Sayyid, noting, he ‘possessed an internationalist outlook’.⁷⁷⁸ He quoted al-Sayyid directly as stating, ‘the outcome of this fusion...between these two extremist movements produced violent groups like Al Qaeda’.⁷⁷⁹ Azzam’s unflinching position regarding jihad is best captured through his maxim of ‘jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiations, no conferences, and no dialogues’.⁷⁸⁰ Of additional importance was Azzam’s advocacy of jihad as *fard ‘ayn* (individual obligation) and the benefits of *shahidin* (martyrs).⁷⁸¹ These operationally oriented dicta, combined with his organisational capabilities and propaganda efforts, meant that Azzam played a central role in establishing and shaping what would become the contemporary jihadist movement.

⁷⁷⁶ For the most comprehensive analysis of Azzam’s life and legacy, *The Caravan* is unparalleled. Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 327.

⁷⁷⁷ For comprehensive analysis of the life and legacy of Qutb see James Toth, *Sayyid Qutb: The Life and Legacy of a Radical Islamic Intellectual* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013); John C. M. Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (London: Hurst, 2010).

⁷⁷⁸ Gerges, *Far Enemy*, 132.

⁷⁷⁹ Gerges, *Far Enemy*, 133.

⁷⁸⁰ Note that Hegghammer attributes an alternative quote as possibly being the source of this phrase, frequently attributed to Azzam, but ‘he does not seem to have articulated in those exact terms’: Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 314.

⁷⁸¹ Andrew McGregor, “‘Jihad and the Rifle Alone’: ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam and the Islamist Revolution’, *Journal of Conflict Studies* 23, no. 2 (2003): 92–113.

Beyond Azzam's prolific authorship of religious and doctrinal materials, the most tangible and enduring manifestations of his contributions were establishing what was known as *Maktab al-Khidmat* (the Services Bureau) and its publication of *al-Jihad* magazine.⁷⁸² These two actions would lay the foundation for the modern jihadist movement that undertook the attacks of 2001, subsequently spawning entities such as IS. *Maktab al-Khidmat* would take what had been an intermittent and haphazard process and create an organisation that 'focused on media, fundraising, and religious education in support of the Afghan jihad'.⁷⁸³ Despite its eventual decline, especially after Azzam's death, *Maktab al-Khidmat's* legacy is difficult to overstate. Beyond Azzam's specific individual legacy, the organisation he built would train future jihadists such as Ramzi Yousef, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, demonstrating the importance that he, his ideas and his actions have had in shaping contemporary jihadist terrorism, ideologically, doctrinally and operationally.⁷⁸⁴

In the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and Azzam's assassination by the detonation of two roadside bombs in Peshawar in late 1989, what would become internationally understood as jihadist terrorism was truly born. Osama bin Laden had successfully established a reputation as a strong supporter, through financing and ideology, of the Afghan mujahadeen and the Arab foreign fighters whom *Maktab al-Khidmat* had supported in their efforts to reach the frontlines of the conflict. Following the withdrawal of the Soviets, the Arab contingent, which held a greatly inflated sense of its role in defeating the world's second superpower, faced a crossroads. Drawing on the beliefs of Azzam and his fellow Egyptian jihadist and now leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden would embrace 'global jihad against non-Muslims and Muslim apostates beyond Afghanistan's borders'.⁷⁸⁵ By 1988, as Law noted, bin Laden initiated the project to 'set up infrastructure for training and maintaining a band of elite, committed fighters—a private army dedicated to jihad'.⁷⁸⁶ It was this army that would ultimately coalesce as AQ.

There remains an absence of clarity or specificity regarding exactly who deployed the name *al-Qaeda* first and exactly what it may have been in reference to, at least in terms of continuity of organisation and purpose. On this matter, Hegghammer provided an

⁷⁸² This will be discussed in further detail in the section on Communicative and Narrative Dynamics.

⁷⁸³ Daniel Byman, *Road Warriors: Foreign Fighters in the Armies of Jihad* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 28.

⁷⁸⁴ Byman, *Road Warriors*.

⁷⁸⁵ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 288.

⁷⁸⁶ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 288.

authoritative proposition. He noted that while Azzam had authored an article in *al-Jihad* in 1988 entitled *al-qa'ida al sulba* (the Solid Base), he pointed out that this article does not provide the conceptual groundwork for the organisation bin Laden ultimately established. He further noted that the suggestion Azzam was present at preliminary meetings held in August 1988 is likely inaccurate.⁷⁸⁷ While it was at a meeting in August of 1988 that AQ was formally founded,⁷⁸⁸ it took additional time to properly organise. Hegghammer cited the testimony of Jamal al-Fadl,⁷⁸⁹ who had defected to the US and provided crucial insights into the early beginnings of AQ and noted that 'by late 1989 or early 1990 [AQ] was organized with a general leader (bin Ladin)'.⁷⁹⁰

The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait would come to play an outsized role in the trajectory of AQ and its leader. Bin Laden's efforts to convince the Saudi authorities of his nascent organisation's capacity to repel Iraqi conventional forces from Kuwait and the Saudi border was rebuffed by then-King Fahd and subsequently by Prince Sultan.⁷⁹¹ Coll recounts the reflections of then-Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Tukri. He noted that in the aftermath of bin Laden's failed pitch to Prince Sultan, he saw 'radical changes' and that 'he changed from a calm, peaceful and gentle man interested in helping Muslims into a person who believed that he would be able to amass and command an army to liberate Kuwait. It revealed his arrogance and his haughtiness'.⁷⁹²

The willingness of Saudi authorities to allow US troops to be based in the land of the two holy mosques would reinforce the reorientation of bin Laden's views towards *al-Adou al-Baeed* (the far enemy)⁷⁹³ and his view of the Saudi regime, which became increasingly intolerant of his behaviour and his views. The specifics remain contested; however, by 1991, bin Laden was forced to leave Saudi Arabia and relocate to Sudan, where the Sudanese Government welcomed him.

⁷⁸⁷ Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 354.

⁷⁸⁸ Daniel Byman, *Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 9.

⁷⁸⁹ Jane Mayer, 'Junior; Dept. of Law Enforcement', *The New Yorker*, 11 September 2006.

⁷⁹⁰ Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 355.

⁷⁹¹ Wright provides substantial detail on this offer, as well as bin Laden's 1989 offer to 'use his Arab irregulars to overthrow the Marxist government of South Yemen': Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Knopf, 2006), 145–62.

⁷⁹² Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005), 223.

⁷⁹³ Gerges, *Far Enemy*, 1.

During this period in Sudan, which lasted until pressure from the US forced the Sudanese Government to push bin Laden into exile in Afghanistan in 1996, AQ launched its first operations. By the time of AQ's arrival in Afghanistan, bin Laden was transparently providing media commentary to Western journalists. He told Robert Fisk of *The Independent*:

Not long ago, I gave advice to the Americans to withdraw their troops from Saudi Arabia ... Now let us give some advice to the governments of Britain and France to take their troops out—because what happened in Riyadh and Khobar showed that the people who did this have a deep understanding in choosing their targets. They hit their main enemy, which is the Americans.⁷⁹⁴

Bin Laden and AQ's transformation from a nascent Afghanistan focused force fighting against the Soviet occupation into a genuinely transnationally oriented organisation with demonstrated capability and, at least preliminarily, the attention of American intelligence was complete. Through their initial operational successes, albeit limited, and the beginnings of a media and communications strategy, AQ had begun the process of forcing global jihad into international discourse. It would take many more operations and, ultimately, the highly calibrated and refined attacks of 2001 before they could truly dominate international security agendas, international media discourse and have an overwhelming and disproportionate effect on the 'far enemy' and the international system.

Pre-2001 Operations

It is well beyond the scope of this analysis to undertake a detailed analysis of the operational successes of AQ in the period between their first attack in Yemen in 1992 and the attacks on the US in 2001. What is necessary to identify, albeit briefly, is the consistent targeting determination of AQ and the constant escalation concerning their operational ambitions. This section provides an overview of the six terrorist attacks AQ undertook before 2001, how these attacks evidence their commitment to targeting the US and their increasing operational sophistication and strategic calculus over this period.

Aden, Yemen: 29 December 1992

AQ's operational history begins in Yemen, where an operation targeting 'the hundreds of US servicemen transiting the country on their way to launch the ill-fated Operation Restore

⁷⁹⁴ Robert Fisk, 'Arab Rebel Leader Warns the British – "Get Out of The Gulf"', *The Independent*, last modified 3 November 2020, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/robert-fisk-osama-bin-laden-saudi-arabia-afghanistan-war-b1561291.html.

Hope’⁷⁹⁵ was undertaken. Bin Laden’s primary role in the operation was funding provisions to the ‘Afghan Arabs’, which Bergen called ‘more a collection of like-minded militants than a formal organisation’.⁷⁹⁶ This limited involvement did not stop bin Laden from taking credit, admittedly in relatively vague ways, for the operation. In a 1998 statement, he would note:

The United States wanted to set up a military base for US soldiers in Yemen so that it could send fresh troops to Somalia. The Arab mujahideen related to the Afghan jihad carried out two bomb explosions in Yemen to warn the United States, causing damage to some Americans staying in those hotels. The United States received our warning and gave up the idea of setting up its military bases in Yemen.⁷⁹⁷

The Aden attack demonstrates that even in its most preliminary operational manifestations, bin Laden and his burgeoning network were seeking strategic outcomes and were achieving substantial strategic effect. This trend of targeting symbols of American power would shape and inform the baseline targeting decisions of AQ and its communicative and narrative considerations considerably. Bergen noted that beginning around 1992, AQ began ‘issuing fatwas that called for attacks on American military targets in the country’.⁷⁹⁸

New York, World Trade Center: 27 February 1993⁷⁹⁹

The 1993 World Trade Center bombing presented an early manifestation of jihadist terrorism that was not directly coordinated or directed by the leadership cadre of AQ nor bin Laden himself. The primary perpetrators, Ramzi Yousef, and his uncle, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, were referred to by the 9/11 Commission Report as ‘rootless but experienced operatives.’⁸⁰⁰ Yousef was not officially a member of AQ, although he had trained at Khaldan Camp in Afghanistan in 1991,⁸⁰¹ which Williams claims was, at least by 2001, one of the hundreds of

⁷⁹⁵ Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 141–42.

⁷⁹⁶ Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 177.

⁷⁹⁷ Cited in Benedict Wilkinson, *Scripts of Terror: The Stories Terrorists Tell Themselves* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press 2020), 139.

⁷⁹⁸ Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.* (2002), 177.

⁷⁹⁹ The 1993 World Trade Center bombing occurred on 26 February 1993, when a car bomb was detonated below Tower One of the World Trade Center in New York City. The 1,500-pound urea nitrate-hydrogen gas-enhanced device was intended to knock the North Tower (Tower One) into the South Tower (Tower Two), bringing both towers down and killing thousands of people. It failed to do so, but it did kill six people and injure 1,042. Mitchell D. Silber, *The Al Qaeda Factor: Plots Against the West* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 169.

⁸⁰⁰ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, 59.

⁸⁰¹ Terry McDermott, ‘The Mastermind’, *The New Yorker*, 13 September 2010, 750411323, Performing Arts Periodicals Database; ProQuest Central.

jihadist camps across Afghanistan.⁸⁰² There, Yousef learnt the art of constructing improvised explosive devices, complementing his Electrical Engineering Degree obtained in the mid-80s.⁸⁰³ As Coll has identified, Yousef:

crossed into Afghanistan in late 1990 for training at an entry level jihadist camp called Khalden, run by and for Arab mujahadin, not Afghans. He trained for about six months. He learned weapons tactics, basic explosives, and military manoeuvres ... Yousef later moved to a graduate level camp for bomb makers where he could apply his skills in electronics to the art of remote controlled explosives.⁸⁰⁴

Despite the operation being once removed from direct AQ operational planning, Yousef nonetheless provided the *New York Times* with a letter claiming the operation had been undertaken by the 'Fifth battalion of the Liberation Army'.⁸⁰⁵ Despite his status as a 'rootless ... operative', the strategic objective was clearly articulated in this letter. It was very much in keeping with the general trend of the broader jihadist movement. The letter laid out three explicit demands:

1. Stop all military, economical and political aid to Israel.
2. All diplomatic relations with Israel must stop.
3. [Do] not interfere with any of the Middle East countries' interior affairs.

If our demands are not met, all of our functional groups in the army will continue to execute our missions against military and civilian targets in and out of the United States. This will also include some potential nuclear targets. For your own information, our army has more than hundred and fifty suicidal soldiers ready to go ahead.⁸⁰⁶

The 1993 operation is the first clear demonstration of jihadist capability to undertake operations within the continental US and the explicit communicative considerations the movement would come to incorporate into its operations. Those communicative considerations can manifest as egocentric considerations of individual operative profile as much as they can in relation to the ideological communication. As Hoffman has highlighted, when Yousef was finally arrested in Pakistan in 1995, he had in his possession 'two remote-

⁸⁰² Brian Glyn Williams, 'Talibanistan: History of a Transnational Terrorist Sanctuary', *Civil Wars* 10, no. 1 (March 2008): 47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240701835466>.

⁸⁰³ Silber, *Al Qaeda Factor*, 174.

⁸⁰⁴ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 249.

⁸⁰⁵ Benjamin and Simon, *Age of Sacred Terror*, 17.

⁸⁰⁶ Benjamin and Simon, *Age of Sacred Terror*, 13–14.

control explosive devices, along with a collection of newspaper articles detailing his exploits'.⁸⁰⁷

Operation Holy Kaaba and Operation al-Aqsa: 7 August 1998⁸⁰⁸

The twin embassy bombings⁸⁰⁹ are recognised as the first operation directly and uncontestably attributed to AQ and bin Laden. As Byman noted, 'the 1998 bombings were a truly global operation'.⁸¹⁰ In addition to the highly transnational character of the operation itself, with planning, financing, communications and propaganda all managed by cells in different jurisdictions, the attack also demonstrated a dramatic escalation in operational sophistication. Beyond the highly transnational character of the attack, the near simultaneousness of the bombings, occurring within 19 minutes of each other, would go on to become a frequent *modus operandi* of AQ.⁸¹¹ They would be most spectacularly demonstrated in the attacks on the US in 2001, the London bombings of 2005⁸¹² and the Madrid train bombings of 2004.⁸¹³ In addition, the attack sought mass casualties, confounding Jenkin's famous maxim regarding the theatrical orientation of terrorism. Unlike terrorist organisations before it, AQ wanted people watching *and viewed casualties as a means to achieving that*. This collapsing of their violence and their communicative and narrative considerations would define much of the character of late-twentieth-century and early-twenty-first-century terrorism.

It is also worthwhile to note that the twin embassy attacks witnessed the beginnings of a much more coordinated and integrated approach to propaganda and communications strategies. AQ had already begun a concerted effort to shape its narrative, with bin Laden doing interviews with Western journalists such as Robert Fisk. The latter interviewed him in

⁸⁰⁷ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 260–61.

⁸⁰⁸ 'The Nairobi operation was named after the Holy Kaaba in Mecca; the Dar es Salaam bombing was called Operation al-Aqsa after the mosque in Jerusalem': Wright, *Looming Tower*, 272. 'The Nairobi bombing occurred at 10:35. A Toyota Dyna truck carrying the bomb exploded near the rear of the U.S. Embassy, killing 12 Americans and 201 others ... Four minutes later, at 10:39, a white Suzuki Samurai truck blew up next to the US Embassy in Dar es Salaam, killing eleven people. Hundreds were injured in the two attacks': Ali H. Soufan and Daniel Freedman, *The Black Banners (Declassified): How Torture Derailed the War on Terror after 9/11* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020), 80.

⁸⁰⁹ Both Soufan and Stenersen provide excellent detail on the operatives and networks involved in this operation. See Soufan and Freedman, *Black Banners (Declassified)*, 75–96; Anne Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 149–56.

⁸¹⁰ Daniel Byman, *Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, 27*.

⁸¹¹ Kathleen Deloughery, 'Simultaneous Attacks by Terrorist Organisations', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 6 (2013): 79–89.

⁸¹² Marc Sageman, *The London Bombings* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

⁸¹³ Reinares, *Al-Qaeda's Revenge*.

Sudan as early as 1993.⁸¹⁴ While the first media or propagandistic coverage of bin Laden can be traced to the June 1987 edition of *al-Jihad* magazine,⁸¹⁵ by 1996, bin Laden had issued his first so-called *fatwa*, entitled *Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places*,⁸¹⁶ published in the London-based *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (Arab Jerusalem) newspaper. In February 1998, only months before the twin embassy bombings, the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders issued what has been noted as the first *fatwa* to ‘explicitly justify attacks on American civilians anywhere in the world’.⁸¹⁷ The *Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders*⁸¹⁸ was also published in *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*.

While the release of the 1998 *fatwa* was important regarding the timing of the twin embassy bombings, the attack itself had been in preparation since at least early 1994. This was when affiliates of bin Laden began to establish the relevant contacts and front organisations to enable early operational planning for what Soufan refers to as ‘attacks against U.S. targets across Africa’.⁸¹⁹

Reinforcing the sophistication and ambition of these early AQ plans, as well as the strategic calculus of the attack, bin Laden explicitly articulated that the twin embassy bombings targeted the embassy in Nairobi partly for the following reasons:

They [the Americans] had not sustained such a blow since the blowing up of the Marines in Lebanon. The Nairobi [US] Embassy was actually six embassies combined in one. The brutal US invasion of Somalia kicked off from there. Some 13,000 from among our brothers, women, and sons in Somalia were killed under the banner of the United Nations ... For the past few decades, plots have been hatched to partition Sudan from there. These plots are hatched in Nairobi. As is widely known, the US Embassy in Nairobi is the agency that is doing this. The greatest CIA center in eastern Africa is located at this embassy. Thanks to God’s grace to Muslims, the blow was successful and great. They deserved it. It made them taste

⁸¹⁴ Robert Fisk, ‘Anti-Soviet Warrior Puts His Army on the Road to Peace: The Saudi Businessman Who Recruited Mujahedin Now Uses Them for Large-Scale Building Projects in Sudan. Robert Fisk Met Him in Almatig’, *Independent*, 6 December 1993, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/anti-soviet-warrior-puts-his-army-road-peace-saudi-businessman-who-recruited-mujahedin-now-uses-them-large-scale-building-projects-sudan-robert-fisk-met-him-almatig-1465715.html>.

⁸¹⁵ Bergen notes that not only was the Battle of Jaji ‘lionised in *Jihad* magazine, but also in the mainstream Arab press, turning bin Laden into an authentic war hero’: Peter L. Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of al-Qaeda’s Leader* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006), 50; R. Kim Cragin, ‘Early History of Al-Qa’ida’, *The Historical Journal* 51, no. 4 (2008): 1055–56.

⁸¹⁶ Issued on 3 August 1996. bin Ladin and Berner, *Jihad*, 30–61.

⁸¹⁷ Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2001), 105.

⁸¹⁸ bin Ladin and Berner, *Jihad*, 67–69.

⁸¹⁹ Soufan and Freedman, *Black Banners (Declassified)*, 75.

what we tasted during the massacres committed in Sabra, Shatila, Dayr Yasin, Qana, Hebron, and elsewhere.⁸²⁰

Ultimately, bin Laden sought to provoke the US into a broader conflict that would both demonstrate AQ's significance in international affairs and enable them to engage in the guerrilla warfare strategies that they had advocated and believed had assisted them in achieving victory against the Soviets. While the embassy bombings certainly announced AQ on the international stage, the response from the US still fell short of the level of engagement and confrontation that bin Laden and his fellow jihadists desired. As such, they continued their operational escalation and refinement, and after failing in their first attempt, would ultimately succeed, in 2000, in targeting US naval assets in Yemen.

The 'Boats Operation': 12 October 2000⁸²¹

In the aftermath of the 1998 Embassy bombings, AQ engaged in a 'period of re-organization and expansion'.⁸²² This included consolidating its Afghanistan presence, ensuring the transmission of operational experience and knowledge and ongoing efforts at an operational activity. AQ experienced multiple failed operations in the latter part of the decade,⁸²³ including numerous elements of the highly complex and sophisticated *Millennium Plot*, which Riedel referred to as 'history's most ambitious effort at simultaneous terror around the world: in India, Jordan, Yemen, and the United States',⁸²⁴ all orchestrated by bin Laden from Kandahar, Afghanistan. While the vast majority of the plots associated with the *Millennium*

⁸²⁰ Salah Najm and Jamal Isma'il, 'Usama Bin Ladin, the Destruction of the Base', Transcript [FBIS], *Usama Bin Ladin, the Destruction of the Base*, Institutional Scholarship, published 10 June 1999, <https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/bitstream/handle/10066/16376/OBL19990610.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

⁸²¹ 'At 11:22 AM Yemen time, the USS *Cole*, a navy destroyer weighing 8,300 tons and carrying almost 300 sailors, was making a routine fueling stop in the Port of Aden. Suicide bombers pulled alongside the destroyer in a small boat and blew themselves up': Soufan and Freedman, *Black Banners (Declassified)*, 155.

⁸²² Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 155.

⁸²³ Brian Jenkins, 'Appendix B', in *Unconquerable Nation: Knowing Our Enemy, Strengthening Ourselves* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006), 185–92, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg454rc.11>.

⁸²⁴ 'Cell was planning multiple simultaneous attacks on a large hotel in Amman (the SAS Radisson), a border crossing between Israel and Jordan, and two Christian holy sites, Mount Nebo and the site of John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus on the Jordan River ... The mastermind of the plot was Jordanian Abu Musaib al Zarqawi ... Jordan was only one part of the larger plot bin Laden was orchestrating from Kandahar ... The next act unfolded inside North America. On December 14, 1999, a twenty-three-year-old Algerian, Ahmed Ressay, was arrested in Port Angeles, Washington, when he was found in a car loaded with explosives ... In collusion with several other Algerians living in Montreal, he devised a plan to attack Los Angeles International Airport on New Year's Day 2000 ... The third act of bin Laden's global plan was to take place in Aden Harbor in southern Yemen. An al Qaeda team planned to load a small boat with explosives and then ram it into an American destroyer in the harbor, the USS *Sullivan* ... The final plot also succeeded. On Christmas Eve 1999, five terrorists hijacked Air India flight 814 in Katmandu, Nepal. The terrorists were Pakistanis from the group Harakat ul Mujahedin (HuM), long supported by bin Laden': Bruce O. Riedel, *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press 2012), 57–59.

Plot were disrupted, the scope of the operation further evidences AQ's ambition and international orientation, as well as its consistent utilisation of suicide bombers in their operations. The deployment of suicide operatives in the embassy bombings, the USS *Cole* operation, the assassination of Ahmed Shah Massoud and ultimately the 9/11 attacks were an innovation that became a hallmark of AQ's terrorism. This will be discussed in further detail below. Still, the USS *Cole* attack was a further statement of intent regarding targeting US Government facilities and personnel, especially those associated with the defence and national security apparatuses.

The initial proposal to target a US vessel in the Port of Aden had been put to bin Laden as early as late 1998.⁸²⁵ By January of 2000, AQ would launch a failed operation that sought to attack the USS *Sullivans* while it was docked in Aden but failed when the operative's small boat loaded with explosives became stuck in the sand of the changing tides.⁸²⁶ It was around the same time that bin Laden recorded a video, released by *Jihad Media* and later broadcast by *Al Jazeera*, in which he prominently wore a *jambiya*⁸²⁷ for the first time. The prominence of the *jambiya* is a clear communicative signifier to the Arabian Peninsula more generally. In the same video, Ayman al-Zawahiri made explicit reference to Yemen, declaring:

Brothers, we have spoken much and done little. Today is the time of the great ones and the mujahidin to confront this heathen tyrannical power that do not [words indistinct] and have occupied our mosques and the two holy mosques. These heathens have spread their forces in Egypt, Yemen, and the Gulf killing our children, persecuting our scholars, soiling our holy shrines, and stealing our wealth. Dear brothers, let's start working and stop playing. Brothers, we have spoken much and done little.⁸²⁸

The failure of the operation against the USS *Sullivans* did not deter AQ. By December 2000, it successfully launched an operation against the USS *Cole*, again deploying a small craft loaded with explosives and two suicide operatives, resulting in the death of 17 US sailors. In a Foreign Broadcast Information Service translation of Arab media coverage of the wedding of one of bin Laden's sons, it is noted that bin Laden recited a poem during the second part of

⁸²⁵ Bergen, *Rise and Fall of Osama Bin Laden*, 131.

⁸²⁶ Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 157.

⁸²⁷ 'It is a name given by the Yemenis to a sort of a twisted dagger. It is worn around the waist in many cases towards the side ... It is a sign of loyalty to tribal norms and social prestige. The social importance of the Jambia led the Yemenis to make a lot of poems that describe the Jambia': Hassan Al-Zaidi, 'History of Yemeni Jambia', *Yemen Times*, 8 August 2005, ProQuest Central.

⁸²⁸ 'Bin Ladin, Other Pledge "Jihad" to Release Prisoners in US, Saudi Jails', Television, *Today's Harvest*, September 2000, 145 <https://irp.fas.org/world/para/ubl-fbis.pdf>.

the wedding ceremony, which took place on the 28 January 2001, roughly a month after the attack on the Cole. In part, the poem that bin Laden recited stated:

And your brothers in the East tightened their saddles, And so did Kabul; young men got well trained. A destroyer whose might is feared by strong men, And which nurtures fear when it anchors and sets sail, Ploughs the waves, driven by arrogance, haughtiness, and false power To its death it hurriedly sails, Surrounding itself with a great-false delusion, Toward a boat that the waves toss about, And that at times disappears with the wave and then appears again.⁸²⁹

Beyond demonstrating the capacity of AQ to strike US military targets, its ability to undertake operations in the Arabian Peninsula and tenacity to continue with operational imperatives despite failures and setbacks, the ‘boats operation’ was important as it inspired the production of one of the first video outputs by *As-Sahab* (the Clouds).⁸³⁰ The intention had been to record the bombing of the Cole⁸³¹ and incorporate this footage into a video release, but the operative tasked with this role allegedly fell asleep. This did not prevent *As-Sahab* from producing a two-part documentary-style video entitled *The Destruction of the American Destroyer USS Cole*, released in 2001. Elements of this video recording, which included excerpts from the wedding above, speeches from bin Laden and Zawahiri and narratives of Muslim suffering across the globe, would ultimately shape much of the early post-9/11 image of AQ. Footage from al-Farouq training camps in Afghanistan used extensively in the film would be used by numerous media outlets in much of the initial television news coverage of the group in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. In a portent of what would become core business for subsequent jihadist movements, the video would circulate in training camps and online Jihadist communities.⁸³²

⁸²⁹ Foreign Broadcast Information Service, ‘Compilation of Usama Bin Ladin Statements: 1994–January 2004’ (Washington, DC: Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 2004), 148–50.

⁸³⁰ Weimann and Hoffman, *Terrorism in Cyberspace*, 41–42.

⁸³¹ Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.*, 203–4.

⁸³² Cecilie Finsnes, ‘What Is Audio-Visual Jihadi Propaganda? An Overview of the Content of FFI’s Jihadi Video Database’ (Oslo: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), 2010), 21.

Assassination of Ahmed Shah Massoud: 9 September 2001⁸³³

On 9 September 2001, Afghanistan experienced what is recognised as the first suicide bombing in its bloody and violent history.⁸³⁴ The bombing, what Stenersen referred to as an AQ ‘special operation’,⁸³⁵ was the culmination of over a year of planning and logistics, including producing fraudulent endorsements from the Islamic Observation Centre, based in London,⁸³⁶ Belgian passports for the two Tunisian⁸³⁷ operatives posing as journalists⁸³⁸ and carrying a television camera with an explosive device inside it. The journalists sought to interview the notoriously media-savvy Massoud. They waited three weeks at his compound before finally being permitted an interview at his headquarters in Khoja Bahuddin in north-eastern Afghanistan.⁸³⁹ The journalists even had prepared questions for Massoud, including ‘Why do you call Osama Bin Laden a killer?’ and ‘If you take Kabul, what will you do with him?’⁸⁴⁰ Maley referred to the assassination of Ahmed Shah Massoud as ‘one of the most momentous events in recent Afghan history’. Despite its substantial overshadowing by the events of 9/11, it is an important demonstration of how AQ was now more than capable of long-term, complex, and strategically consequential operations. While the assassination of Massoud did not carry the transnational communicative and narrative elements of the types of attacks identified previously, the strategic consequences provide further demonstration of AQ’s capacity for strategic calculus, both concerning Afghanistan’s domestic environment and the forthcoming transnational consequences of the ‘September Operation’.⁸⁴¹

The analysis that proceeds from here operates from the assumption that the disruptive and reverberating effects of the 9/11 attacks are recognised, if only in terms of the event’s gravity.

⁸³³ ‘The military situation in Afghanistan remained a stalemate, the Northern Alliance forces having nowhere else to retreat, while Taliban troops were unable to crack Massoud’s small remaining territory. But then Osama bin Laden proved his worth to his Taliban hosts. In late summer, Massoud granted an interview to two Algerian journalists carrying credentials from Belgium. He had put them off for some time, but finally agreed to a meeting. During the interview a bomb hidden within the journalists’ camera exploded, mortally wounding Massoud. The Algerians had been members of Al Qaeda’: Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 2002), 287.

⁸³⁴ Anand Gopal, *No Good Men among the Living: America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2014), 19; David B. Edwards, *Caravan of Martyrs: Sacrifice and Suicide Bombing in Afghanistan* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 353.

⁸³⁵ Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 147–48.

⁸³⁶ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 575.

⁸³⁷ Aaron Y. Zelin, ‘When Tunisians Fired the Start Gun for 9/11’, The Washington Institute, September 2021, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/when-tunisians-fired-start-gun-911>.

⁸³⁸ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 3rd ed. (London: Red Globe Press, 2021), 202.

⁸³⁹ Brian Glyn Williams, *The Last Warlord: The Life and Legend of Dostum, the Afghan Warrior Who Led US Special Forces to Topple the Taliban Regime* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2013), 69–78.

⁸⁴⁰ Maley, *Afghanistan Wars*, 202.

⁸⁴¹ Williams, *Last Warlord*, 78; for a comprehensive account of the assassination of Massoud see Sandy Gall, *Afghan Napoleon: The Life of Ahmad Shah Massoud* (London: Haus Publishing, 2021), 23–25, 274–309.

It is again beyond the scope to litigate in full the enduring legacy, controversy and outrages of, for instance, Guantanamo Bay specifically or other tangible and intangible legacies of 9/11. The attacks themselves can be understood as the culmination of an entire period of terrorist practice. In conceptualising the attack, Khaled Sheik Mohammed (KSM) and AQ managed to escalate across a range of key fronts. In brief, they innovated in their tactical decisions, moved beyond plane hijacking for hostage purposes and transformed commercial airliners into suicide weapons of mass destruction. They explicitly considered narrative and communicative dynamics by targeting symbolic representations of American power, constructing an event that would command and demand the attention of the global media and embedding the operation within a broader, existing narrative of martyrdom. 9/11 remained relatively conventional in its orientation towards the existing information and communications technology landscape. However, the scale of the event and the changed nature of television news particularly resulted in innovation within the broadcast itself. The attacks were choreographed as much for television coverage as for operational effectiveness. Controversial British artist, Damien Hirst went as far as stating: ‘the thing about 9/11 is that it’s kind of an artwork in its own right. It was wicked, but it was devised in this way for this kind of impact. It was devised visually’.⁸⁴²

The following chapter applies the conceptual framework to jihadist terrorism. In doing so it analyses the events of 9/11 from the perspective of incremental innovation, and the structural innovations informed by the strategic and organisational theories of Abu Musab al-Suri. It then proceeds to discuss the long history of communicative and narrative considerations within the jihadist movement, as well as discussing the post-9/11 manifestations of this, through the lens of AQAP and IS. Lastly, it provides a discussion and analysis of the role of social media in enabling the sophisticated campaigns of the Islamic State during the Caliphate phase of that organisation.

⁸⁴² Rebecca Allison, ‘9/11 Wicked but a Work of Art, Says Damien Hirst’, *The Guardian*, 11 September 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/sep/11/arts.september11>.

Chapter Ten: Tweeting Jihadist Terrorism: Applying the Framework

This chapter will analyse how jihadist terrorism, fundamentally shaped by the events of the post-9/11 period, has subsequently innovated and adapted to its newly defined operating environment. In applying the conceptual framework to jihadist terrorism, the focus will be on the period beyond 9/11, which has driven a variety of innovations in violent terrorist praxis; narrative and communicative reinforcement, diversification and consolidation; and the embrace of numerous new information and communication technologies and the cultural and communicative practices they have enabled. As highlighted earlier, the analytical aperture is intentionally broad to recognise that while specific jihadist enterprises may be in conflict with each other or compete for resources, their overarching presence within the jihadist current enables them to be analysed and assessed through a shared analytical frame.

Subsequently, this chapter analyses two innovations in terrorist violence, namely the incremental innovation that was 9/11 and the structural innovation that was the adoption of the organisational and strategic ideas of Abu Musab al-Suri. These violent innovations, particularly the shift towards individual jihad in the West, are crucially linked to the other framework elements considered here. The globalisation of the narratives of jihadism and martyrdom were central to the ability of the individual jihad strategy to be functional, which was, in turn, dependent on the exploitation of digital technology and the online environment to disseminate the necessary propaganda to inspire, instruct, and perpetuate these operations. The success of the jihadist movement has been built on a range of additional innovations over its modern existence, many of which have been fundamental to its ability to continually achieve strategic effects against adversaries. There is a particular focus in this case study on the communicative and narrative dynamics and the exploitation of emergent information and communications technologies. These have been fundamental to enabling and empowering the relatively moderate forms of violence deployed in Western jurisdictions.

This chapter analyses how the integration of innovative forms of violence, the jihadist movement's incorporation of communicative and narrative dynamics into its overall operational and strategic considerations and its leading-edge adoption of emergent information and communications technology have ensured its continued ability to dominate international security agendas for more than two decades.

While jihadist utilisation of digital technologies and the online environment have been integral to their ongoing adaptive success, so too has its capacity to maintain consistent propagation of their narrative. Without these elements, its ability to maintain operational capacity within Western jurisdictions, and thus continued relevance to international and national security, would have been greatly diminished. As with the previous case studies, it seeks to demonstrate how the fundamental behaviours and strategic logic that has informed jihadist terrorism reflects the enduring strategic logic that informed anarchist and Palestinian terrorism. While there is a clear distinction between the character of each of these case studies, across all three elements of the framework, the emphasis of this dissertation has been to evidence the continuity of strategic calculus across the case studies.

Innovative Forms of Violence

Under the auspices of what would become known as the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the various conflicts and expansive loci of engagement during the post-9/11 period have acted as incubators and accelerators of terrorist innovation, manifesting in an equally expansive number of tactical, strategic, revolutionary and incremental ways. The following analysis will utilise the innovative forms of violence element of the conceptual framework to demonstrate and explain several important, influential, and consequential innovations that became embedded within terrorist praxis during, and as a function of, these conflicts, and in response to associated countermeasures.

The violent innovations analysed here constitute two discrete innovations: the incremental innovation of the 9/11 attacks and the structural innovation of decentralised facilitation of lone jihad and small cell terrorism. It is important to recognise that the jihadist movement has evolved within a unique operational context, resulting in a wide array of innovations that have provided necessary conditions for the innovations identified here. The duration of the movement itself and its high tempo engagement with its adversary in the post-9/11 context has meant that AQ and its affiliated entities, and the IS and its *wilayats*, have consistently been at the forefront of terrorist innovation for more than two decades. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to address the litany of innovations the jihadist movement has been responsible for. However, beginning with the strategic innovation of recalibrating to the far enemy targeting and the substantial consequences this produced, the jihadist movement has consistently adapted and recalibrated itself and its violence to ensure it could maximise its strategic effects.

Incremental Innovation: The Planes Operation

9/11 was arguably the pinnacle of terrorist innovation in how it integrated its innovative forms of violence with an explicit communicative and narrative orientation and a clear visuality designed to exploit information and communications technology. The innovation element of the operation has been detailed extensively in the literature, most recently by Veilleux-Lepage in *How Terrorism Evolves*,⁸⁴³ by Gunaratna on the influence of the Bojinka Plot⁸⁴⁴ and by Lewis, who discusses the globalisation of martyrdom as a consequence of 9/11.⁸⁴⁵ Further, Moghadam has written on the ‘synergistic interplay of both top-down and bottom-up innovation processes’.⁸⁴⁶ The following section briefly details the incremental innovation at the core of the 9/11 operations and teases out how it represents an archetypal demonstration of the integration of all three elements of the framework.

While Veilleux-Lepage and Dolnik have both acknowledged that 9/11 was by no means the first instance of commandeering an aircraft with the express intention of weaponising it and targeting a building,⁸⁴⁷ 9/11’s ambition, scale and sophistication of operational conceptualisation enables it to be assessed as a distinct manifestation that reflects a form of *incremental innovation*. As per conventional conceptualisation, it was a hijacking, infused with the principles of a suicide operation, conceived to dominate Western media. The operational conception did not, however, emerge in a vacuum. As Veilleux-Lepage noted, there is ‘clear evidence Khalid Sheikh Mohammed ... was directly influenced by the well-publicized 1994 hijacking of Flight 8969—and the failed plot to crash it into the Eiffel Tower—when planning the Bojinka Plot, which evolved into the plan for 9/11’.⁸⁴⁸

The presence of a previous attempt to utilise an airliner as a weapon of mass destruction that inspired KSM, and the relatively central role of the Bojinka Plot⁸⁴⁹ in spawning the 9/11

⁸⁴³ Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terrorism Evolves*.

⁸⁴⁴ Rohan Gunaratna, ‘Al Qaeda’s Lose and Learn Doctrine: The Trajectory from Oplan Bojinka to 9/11’, in Forest, *Teaching Terror*, 153–67.

⁸⁴⁵ Lewis, *Business of Martyrdom*.

⁸⁴⁶ Assaf Moghadam, ‘Top-Down and Bottom-Up Innovation in Terrorism: The Case of the 9/11 Attacks’ (International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), 2013), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09439>.

⁸⁴⁷ Note that the underlying distinction between state and non-state perpetrators makes references to Japanese kamikaze actions of limited relevance here.

⁸⁴⁸ Veilleux-Lepage, *How Terrorism Evolves*, 135.

⁸⁴⁹ ‘The Bojinka plot consisted of three phases of attacks, all to be carried out within a short time period. The first was the assassination of Pope John Paul II ... According to the plan, a suicide bomber was to dress up as a priest and detonate himself as the pope’s motorcade proceeded to San Carlos Seminary in Makati City... The second, and more ambitious, phase of the Bojinka plot involved what prosecutors later called wreaking “48 hours of terror in the sky”. KSM’s and Youssef’s scheme was to detonate eleven improvised explosive devices

attacks, demonstrate that while it was, in relation to its consequences, a substantial point of cleavage in terrorist praxis, there was incremental continuity in the planning phase and the operational conceptualisation. The 9/11 Commission Report notes that in the aftermath of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, Mohammed thought ‘he needed to graduate to a more novel form of attack’.⁸⁵⁰ In demonstrating the influential role that the Bojinka Plot had on the 9/11 operation, Mohammed further reflected, ‘he and Yousef began thinking about using aircraft as weapons while working on the Manila air/Bojinka plot, and speculated about striking the World Trade Center and CIA headquarters as early as 1995’.⁸⁵¹

As spectacular as the 9/11 operation was, it built substantially on the previous practices of targeting airliners for terrorist purposes, which dates to the earliest PFLP operations. The jihadist movement’s incremental innovation was central to the operation’s success, but the movement was by no means the first terrorist organisation to hijack an airliner. What the jihadist movement successfully did was to meld suicide operations, which they had deployed previously in Operation Holy Kaaba and Operation al-Aqsa in 1998 and the ‘boats operation’ in 2000. Both the suicide operation and airplane hijacking components of the attacks were incremental innovations. Both drew on previous terrorist praxis, within the jihadist movement and beyond.

The 9/11 attacks represent a consummate example of the kind of terrorism that the framework proposed herein seeks to understand and conceptualise. At the same time, the attack itself necessarily requires being understood as an outlier in terms of its sophistication, impact and scale. It is a paradigmatic example of the convergence of the three elements of the framework: the operational design fuses innovative forms of violence,⁸⁵² there is an explicit consideration of communicative and narrative dynamics⁸⁵³ and an unambiguous consideration of the visual representation of the event. As an exemplar of terrorist operational design, the 9/11 attacks represent an exceptional demonstration of consideration of the necessary elements of terrorism that can cause strategic effect, as they are proposed herein.

hidden in as many U.S. commercial airliners in midflight ... the third phase of the Bojinka plot, in which he (Murad) was to conduct a suicide attack on CIA headquarters by crash-landing a small, explosives-laden airplane on the agency’s premises in Langley, Virginia’: Assaf Moghadam, *Nexus of Global Jihad: Understanding Cooperation among Terrorist Actors* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2017), 225–27.

⁸⁵⁰ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, 153.

⁸⁵¹ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, 153.

⁸⁵² In this instance, the use of hijacked aircraft as ‘weapons of mass destruction’ as distinct from for the purposes of hostage negotiation.

⁸⁵³ In this case, through the targeting of symbolic targets such as the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in their original conceptualisation of the operation, the White House or the Capitol Building.

Nevertheless, the operations, especially the World Trade Center attack, exceeded even AQ's expectations. It had not calculated that either or both towers would collapse. In contrast, the operation would have arguably been even more spectacular had the fourth plane successfully reached its intended target.⁸⁵⁴ The most important aspect of understanding 9/11 is arguably its capacity to calibrate terrorism to maximise effect while remaining an outlier. In this sense, 9/11 was a genuinely unprecedented operation in terms of the number of fatalities, exceptionally ambitious regarding the synchronous nature of the operation and unparalleled in the effects it achieved and continues to achieve.

As a propagandistic undertaking,⁸⁵⁵ 9/11 was impactful on an unprecedented scale. The visuality of the attack's conceptualisation, estimated to have been viewed by at least some 80 million viewers in the US alone,⁸⁵⁶ was unique. The transformative power of the event, its visuality and tragedy, conspired to alter both the strategic orientation of the US and its allies and the international security agenda more fully. 9/11 impacted news and public discourse in minor yet consequential and fundamentally transformative ways. It changed the very manner in which news was broadcast and the place that news holds in society. The permanent arrival of the so-called 'news ticker'⁸⁵⁷ evidences the minor yet consequential changes that 9/11 wrought. The 'news-ticker's' omnipresence is an extension of the sense of constant crisis, live involvement and potential dramatic consequence that Ellsworth captured when she stated, on the initial real-time, near-ubiquitous coverage:

for those first two hours on Sept. 11, television's broken coverage exceeds the representational and entails the performative. Television news is no longer simply an artifact that represents something elsewhere, at some other time. Instead, it exists in the moment, and it exists, in part, as an appointment to witness that cannot be escaped.⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁴ The 9/11 Commission Report notes that the hijacker of United Flight 93's 'objective was to crash his airliner into symbols of the American Republic, the Capitol or the White House': National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *9/11 Commission Report*, 14.

⁸⁵⁵ The following sections draw on ideas from Richard Schechner, '9/11 as Avant-Garde Art?' *PMLA* 124, no. 5 (2009): 1820–29.

⁸⁵⁶ Lisa de Moraes, 'For an Extraordinary Week, Nielsen Puts the Ratings Aside', *Washington Post*, 20 September 2001, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/2001/09/20/for-an-extraordinary-week-nielsen-puts-the-ratings-aside/52bf74fc-af28-4c43-bbd8-d86509843b9c/>.

⁸⁵⁷ Paul Farhi, 'The "Crawl" Fed Our Need for Constant News on 9/11. It Never Went Away', *Washington Post*, 11 September 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/media/cable-news-crawl-ticker-911/2021/09/10/1219ccc8-0ce5-11ec-a6dd-296ba7fb2dce_story.html.

⁸⁵⁸ Elizabeth Ellsworth, 'Media and the Un-Representable: The Brief Time of Audience-as-Witness to 9/11' (Media in Transition 3: Television: Television in Transition International Conference, Cambridge, MA, 2003), 8.

9/11 created a deep cleavage in the conventional patterns of everyday existence. Not just through what would become the enduring presence of security and the associated practices and discourses, but through the impacts of a permanent war footing on a multitude of components of everyday life. Again, concerning the impacts on television news, Spigel observed the continual coverage that, on the major television networks in the US lasted for up to a week, ‘contributed to a sense of estrangement from ordinary life, not simply because of the unexpected nature of the attack itself but also because television’s normal routines—its everyday schedule and ritualized flow—had been disordered’.⁸⁵⁹

The transnationality of the event and the global nature of the broadcasting of the footage meant that as far away as the mountains of Afghanistan, members of the Taliban would rue the events and the inevitable consequences they foresaw. As Mullah Cable, a Taliban enforcer, noted to Anand Gopal, ‘everything changed when the planes hit. That was the biggest mistake that ever happened to us.’⁸⁶⁰ This transnationality is further demonstrated by the emergence, only three days post the attacks, of bootlegged DVDs of the attacks in video stores in China. As Hessler recounted, ‘they stocked them on the same racks as the Hollywood movies ... All of the 9/11 videos had been packaged to look like Hollywood movies. I found a DVD entitled *The Century’s Great Catastrophe*; the box front featured photographs of Osama bin Laden, George W. Bush and the burning Twin Towers.’⁸⁶¹

As a globally mediated event, anchored by its inherent and intentional visuality, 9/11 reverberated and continues to reverberate as an accelerated and amplified iteration of the processes that followed the 1881 assassination of Alexander II and the ‘hijacking’ of the 1972 Munich Olympics. The specificity of the choreographed, highly calibrated performative violence of 9/11 inspired German composer, Karlheinz Stockhausen, to comment only days after the attack that 9/11 was ‘the greatest work of art imaginable for the whole cosmos.’⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁹ Lynn Spigel, ‘Entertainment Wars: Television Culture after 9/11’, *American Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (2004): 237.

⁸⁶⁰ Gopal, *No Good Men among the Living*, 11.

⁸⁶¹ Peter Hessler, *Oracle Bones: A Journey between China’s Past and Present*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006), 311–12.

⁸⁶² His further remarks included, ‘Minds achieving something in an act that we couldn’t even dream of in music, people rehearsing like mad for ten years, preparing fanatically for a concert, and then dying; just imagine what happened there. You have people who are that focused on a performance and then 5,000 people are dispatched to the afterlife, in a single moment. I couldn’t do that. By comparison, we composers are nothing.’ The *New York Magazine* article cited here included a clarification from Stockhausen. Terry Castle, ‘Stockhausen, Karlheinz’, *New York Magazine*, 27 August 2011, <https://nymag.com/news/9-11/10th-anniversary/karlheinz-stockhausen/>.

The scale and audacity of the attacks would drive not only an enduring and globally operationalised counter-response but would shape and drive conflict for decades beyond the attack. The success of 9/11 was in AQ's provocation of the 'far enemy' and the international community into confronting the attack. Beginning in Afghanistan and expanding to a near-global, perpetual and expansive confrontation, the GWOT would fundamentally define the first decades of the twenty-first century. These conflicts would, in turn, drive an ongoing acceleration in the evolution and innovation of terrorist practice. It is to these conflicts and the practices of the terrorist organisations spawned by the GWOT that this analysis now turns, focusing on two particular terrorist organisations: AQAP and IS.

Structural Innovation: Individual and Small Cell Jihad

As post-2001 counterterrorism expanded and evolved in both scope and efficacy, the capacity of jihadist terrorists to successfully undertake operations within Western jurisdictions was substantially impacted. This impact was especially relevant for larger, complex, mass-casualty terrorist spectacles. The operational logistics of these types of attacks dramatically increased the opportunity for disruption, as did the comparatively extended planning cycle. In this context, the strategic and organisational theory of Syrian jihadist, Abu Musab al-Suri,⁸⁶³ deeply shaped the jihadist movement's strategic and operational thinking. Of all the various unique characteristics of al-Suri, the most consequential and representative of a broader cohort of strategists that emerged within jihadist ranks in the early 2000s⁸⁶⁴ was his preparedness to continue 'insisting that the use of violence should be based on a thorough, rational long-term strategy'.⁸⁶⁵ His approximately 1600 page tome, *da'wat al-muqawamah al-islamiyyah al-'alamiyyah* (The Global Islamic Resistance Call), would cement al-Suri as the 'one of the foremost jihadi strategists of our time',⁸⁶⁶ and significantly impact the strategic calculus of the jihadist movement, especially concerning striking within Western jurisdictions. His consistent advocacy of what he referred to as 'individual jihad and small cell terrorism',⁸⁶⁷ and what is now referred to as lone-actor terrorism within the broader

⁸⁶³ Al-Suri is the *nom de guerre* of Mustafa bin Abd al-Qadir Setmariam Nasar, see Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 1.

⁸⁶⁴ For the first articulation of this cohort and their work, see Lia and Hegghammer, 'Jihadi Strategic Studies'.

⁸⁶⁵ Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 3.

⁸⁶⁶ Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 4.

⁸⁶⁷ Lia's biography contains a translation of Chapter 8 of *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, entitled The Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call; and Theory on the Organization and System of Action in the Global Islamic Resistance Call. Al-Suri notes, 'this section is the heart of this two-volume book. The whole book was composed for the sake of this section, and all the prefaces and chapters were organized specifically for

public discourse, would come to constitute the overwhelming majority of actual manifestations of jihadist terrorism within Western jurisdictions, especially in the period following the declaration of the Caliphate by IS. Al-Suri's ideas would underpin a *structural innovation* by the jihadist movement, implemented initially by Anwar al-Awlaki and through the AQAP-published *Inspire* magazine and substantially enhanced by IS as a component of their full-spectrum propaganda campaign.

By the early 2000s, the jihadist movement had successfully innovated strategically and reorientated itself, or at least its operational vanguard, towards the far enemy. Repeated large-scale terrorist spectacles had demonstrated both their commitment and ability to target the far enemy, a commitment that culminated with the 9/11 operations. Additionally, the movement made martyrdom broadly and suicide operations specifically a central component of their global narrative. In doing so, they had made terrorism, jihadism and martyrdom culturally and symbolically interchangeable, succeeding in establishing a globally consequential discourse that would enable the structural innovation analysed here. The operationalisation of al-Suri's doctrine of individual jihad relied on the aforementioned targeting determinations and the established global narrative regarding martyrdom and suicide operations. These two previous innovations enabled the various audiences who witnessed the low capability operations that Awlaki's *Inspire* and IS's propaganda campaign facilitated to interpret these as acts of jihadist terrorism—perpetrated by committed operatives willing to sacrifice themselves for their ideology, regardless of the depth of their actual ideological commitment or comprehension.

While al-Suri was a strategist, his intellectual contribution straddled both military theory and organisational theory, with the latter enabling the operationalisation of his military thought. His famous epithet, *Nizam la Tanzim* (system, not an organisation),⁸⁶⁸ reflected his perspective on the need to reconceive how the jihadist movement and the organisations within it must be coordinated to facilitate and enable his concept of individual jihad. The perspective taken here is to focus on the aspects of al-Suri's work that advocated for and articulated how individual jihad could be facilitated and contextualised within a broader jihadist strategy. Al-Suri's concept is succinctly articulated by Ryan, who noted, 'al-Suri's intention in his new strategy is to give guidance and inspiration to individual Muslims,

this part. It contains the essence and substance of our idea'. This translation is from pages 347–484. Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 351.

⁸⁶⁸ Acharya and Marwah, 'Nizam, La Tanzim'.

mostly young men, to perform terrorism against those the jihadists consider to be enemies. These young men are to become terrorists in their own countries without belonging to an organization'.⁸⁶⁹

A central enabling element of this restructuring, whereby al-Suri divided the jihadist movement into three 'circles',⁸⁷⁰ was propaganda and the internet. In creating a 'system' that enabled the individuals and small cells within Western jurisdictions to become ideologically motivated and obtain something resembling training and education regarding terrorist tradecraft, the distribution of propaganda would be essential. As Ryan noted, al-Suri 'acknowledges that the Internet can facilitate the dissemination of training material for terrorism in a way that was not previously possible'.⁸⁷¹ Al-Suri goes as far as to recommend the establishment of 'secret propaganda or agitation unit[s]'.⁸⁷² Al-Suri himself wrote:

The mission of these units is to spread the Call to Resistance and distribute its literature and researches, and studies and various programs by secret means, especially the Internet. It should translate the researches [*sic*] and communications of the Resistance into ...world languages.⁸⁷³

Awlaki's operationalisation informs the preliminary focus here on these key concepts. His prototypical establishment, via his role in AQAP, of a system that sought to 'spread the Call to Resistance' was drawn substantially from the restructures advocated by al-Suri. Burke argued previously that Awlaki and al-Suri were deeply influential and consequential actors in the modern jihadist current, noting that 'if al-Awlaki was the propagandist who did most to shape today's threat against the West, and al-Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi are currently the most influential commanders, then al-Suri is the strategist of greatest relevance'.⁸⁷⁴

Additionally, al-Suri was not alone in his advocacy of individual jihad or of enhancing propaganda output to facilitate these types of operations. In 2006, Muhammad Khalil al-Hakaymah published *A New Strategic Method in the Resistance of the Occupier*, which included specific sections dedicated to advocating individualised jihad.⁸⁷⁵ Importantly, al-Suri was by no means the first or the only jihadi strategist or theorist to advocate the

⁸⁶⁹ Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 238.

⁸⁷⁰ Central Circle, Coordination Circle (Noncentralized Units), Call Circle (General Units if the Call to Global Islamic Resistance).

⁸⁷¹ Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 249.

⁸⁷² Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 250.

⁸⁷³ Al-Suri, cited in Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 250.

⁸⁷⁴ Burke, *The New Threat*, 164.

⁸⁷⁵ Al-Hakaymah, 'Toward a New Strategy in Resisting the Occupier', in Lacey, *Canons of Jihad*, 147–61.

importance of the media or propaganda more specifically. As early as the 1990s, writers such as Mohamed Atef provided what Melagrou-Hitchens called ‘the basic framework for the movement’s media strategy’.⁸⁷⁶ Melagrou-Hitchens also highlighted the later work of Abu Hudaifa, who in June 2000 wrote to bin Laden mounting an argument regarding ‘what he saw as a failure on the part of the movement to use alternative media to its advantage’.⁸⁷⁷ Awlaki is considered here in the context of continuity regarding media and propaganda activities that will be further analysed in the next section on narrative and communicative dynamics. This section focuses on Awlaki as a prototypical propagandist who embraced the online environment and explicitly sought to share and operationalise al-Suri’s individual jihad. The discussion herein necessarily reflects the interrelated nature of al-Suri’s concept of individual jihad, with propaganda itself and the exploitation of the online environment. It includes a preliminary historical context to jihadist propaganda and the exploitation of the online environment.

Phase 1: Anwar al-Awlaki and *Inspire*

There are few dissenting views on the proposition that the online environment has become a crucial vector for the radicalisation of Western jihadist terrorists, nor on the role of Anwar al-Awlaki in establishing the prototypical model of how to effectively inspire terrorist actions via digital means. Awlaki’s influence escalated through the mid and late 2000s, and he only began to explicitly endorse and advocate violence from 2005.⁸⁷⁸ It was not until 2010, with the publication of the first edition of *Inspire*, the English-language digital publication he co-published with fellow American, Samir Khan, that the project began to manifest in a way that would provide the foundation for IS’s refinement.

It is important to note that Awlaki and Khan were not the first to publish English-language jihadist magazines, either in hard copy or digitally. In the digital domain, Ingram and Lewis pointed out that this honour goes to the 1990s Australian publication *Nida’ul Islam*,⁸⁷⁹ followed a decade later by *Jihad Recollections*, also published by Samir Khan.⁸⁸⁰ It is further

⁸⁷⁶ Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement*, 136.

⁸⁷⁷ Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement*, 136.

⁸⁷⁸ Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement*, 95.

⁸⁷⁹ Copies of *Nida’ul Islam* are available at: <https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/tep/31890>.

⁸⁸⁰ Haroro J. Ingram and Jon Lewis, ‘The Founding Fathers of American Jihad: The Impacts and Legacies of Anwar al-Awlaki, Samir Khan and Ahmad Abousamra’, GW Program on Extremism, published 2021, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/The%20Founding%20Fathers%20of%20American%20Jihad.pdf>.

noted here that the second edition⁸⁸¹ of *Jihadi Recollections* contains what amounts to a book review of Brynjar Lia's biography of al-Suri, *Architect of Global Jihad*.⁸⁸² All three editions contain material authored by Awlaki. By 2009, when Khan and Awlaki began to prepare the first edition of *Inspire*, al-Suri's influence and ideas on enabling individual jihad were at the centre of their considerations. As Melagrou-Hitchens noted in his biography of Awlaki, 'the editors, led by Awlaki's protégé Samir Khan, saw their work as a direct extension and realization of al-Suri's vision and regularly reproduced sections of his book in the pages of the magazine'.⁸⁸³

By this point, Awlaki had already built a significant online presence, straddling the majority of available social media platforms of the period, including numerous YouTube sermons,⁸⁸⁴ a Facebook page and a website.⁸⁸⁵ His influence, anchored in the mediums he exploited and his cultivation of a charismatic, self-styled 'warrior-scholar'⁸⁸⁶ persona, meant that it was unsurprising that he 'became al-Qa'ida's most effective English-language recruiter ... For years, when an American or a Canadian or a Briton has turned up in jihadist terrorism, investigators have routinely discovered a long trail of al-Awlaki material on his computer'.⁸⁸⁷

Further evidencing the operationalisation of al-Suri's organisational principles and strategic thought is the frequent presence of extracts of al-Suri's writing in *Inspire*. The first edition contained the inaugural 'History and Strategy' section, which entailed an extract entitled *The Schools of Jihad* explaining al-Suri's explanation of the three primary organisational components for the broader jihadist movement, including what he referred to as 'The school of individual jihād and small cell terrorism'.⁸⁸⁸ Of the 17 published editions of *Inspire*, al-Suri is cited at length in nine. These constituted multipage extracts of his doctrinal writings on individual jihad and small cell terrorism, drawn directly from his *Global Islamic*

⁸⁸¹ *Jihad Recollections*, Iss. 2, 2009 http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_Fursan_Jihad_Recollections2.pdf [password protected].

⁸⁸² Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*.

⁸⁸³ Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement*, 138.

⁸⁸⁴ In late 2017, Google, the parent company that owns YouTube, acted to remove much of Awlaki's content from its platform. See Scott Shane, 'In "Watershed Moment", YouTube Blocks Extremist Cleric's Message', *New York Times*, 12 November 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/12/us/politics/youtube-terrorism-anwar-al-awlaki.html>.

⁸⁸⁵ Archived versions of his website are available here:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20080901042602/www.anwar-alawlaki.com>.

⁸⁸⁶ Craig Whiteside and Haroro J. Ingram, 'The Yemen Raid and the Ghost of Anwar Al-Awlaki the Enduring Propaganda Value of a Martyr', *The Atlantic*, 9 February 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/02/yemen-raid-trump-awlaki-al-qaeda-isis/516180/>.

⁸⁸⁷ Shane, 'Enduring Influence of Anwar Al-Awlaki', 15.

⁸⁸⁸ *Inspire*, vol. 01, Al-Malahem Media, 2010, 48. http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_AQAP_Inspire1.pdf [password protected]

Resistance Call.⁸⁸⁹ The explicit promotion, endorsement and leveraging of al-Suri's work served to provide an authoritative critical basis upon which the conceptualisation of individual jihad and small cell terrorism, or lone jihad, as *Inspire* would come to refer to it as, could be propagated and in turn, acted upon.

In addition to the explicit republishing of al-Suri's work on individual terrorism and small cell jihad, *Inspire* focuses extensively on promoting the 'brand' of what it referred to as 'lone jihad', as well as providing instructional material to enable those it 'inspired' to be capable of undertaking operations. The first edition was famous for providing instructional material for constructing the pressure cooker bomb, under the headline of 'How to Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom', used by the Tsarnaev brothers in perpetrating the Boston bombings of 2013.⁸⁹⁰

The Boston operation provides a useful case study in how instructional material and a broader legitimising narrative context contribute to the materialisation of individual jihadist operations. In addition to the admission of the surviving Tsarnaev brother on the instructions for the pressure cooker bomb, several other components of jihadist propaganda can be identified that potentially contributed to its radicalisation. Over the three years between the publication of the pressure cooker article and the Boston bombings, additional editions of *Inspire* contained material of relevance. For example, the ninth edition of *Inspire*, published in May 2012, contained an al-Suri extract entitled, 'The Most Important Enemy Targets Aimed at by the Individual Jihad'. In this section, al-Suri referred to 'targets such as crowded sports arenas, annual social events'.⁸⁹¹ Additionally, the tenth edition, published only a month before the attack, included a two-page section with a lengthy article entitled 'Knights of the Lone Jihad', opposite a full-page image of a hoodie-wearing individual foregrounded before a darkened evening skyline, with the phrase 'man, jihad, alone' superimposed on his hoodie and a stencil image of an AK-47. At the bottom left of the page: 'This is a lone-mujahid ad'.⁸⁹² Released shortly after the tenth edition of *Inspire*, the *Lone Mujahid Pocketbook*

⁸⁸⁹ There is no mention of al-Suri in editions 3, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 17. He is only quoted in no. 7 and mentioned only by name in 13.

⁸⁹⁰ Anne Speckhard, 'The Boston Marathon Bombers', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 3 (2013): 64–78; Hilary A. Sarat-St. Peter, '“Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom”: Jihadist Tactical Technical Communication and the Everyday Practice of Cooking', *Technical Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (January 2017): 76–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2016.1275862>.

⁸⁹¹ *Inspire*, vol. 09, Al-Malahem Media. 2012, 23. http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_AQAP_Inspire9.pdf [password protected]

⁸⁹² *Inspire*, Vol. 10, Al-Malahem Media, 2013, 25. http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_AQAP_Inspire10.pdf [password protected]

compiled all previous ‘Open Source Jihad’ sections of *Inspire* and included the following introductory remarks, speaking explicitly to the individual jihadi operational orientation of the publication. It stated:

R u dreamin’ of wagin’ jihadi attacks against kuffar? Have u been lookin’ 4 a way to join the mujahideen in frontlines, but you haven’t found any? Well, there’s no need to travel abroad, coz the frontline has come to you. Wanna know how? Just read ‘n’ apply the contents of this guide which has practical ‘n’ creative ways to please Allah by killing his enemies ‘n’ healing the believers’ chests.⁸⁹³

Awlaki provided a crucial form of continuity between the previous generation of jihadists and the current, technologically savvy generation. He also facilitated access to non-Arabic-speaking recruits, looking for simplistic endorsement rather than theologically measured considerations. Awlaki has transcended organisational transitions and fractures within the movement. To Western audiences, his position within AQAP was of far less consequence than his empowering and enabling message of individual action. Shane noted, ‘no figure in jihadist propaganda has eclipsed his well-established brand. He remains as relevant to a new generation of American jihadis inspired by the IS as he was to their predecessors whose allegiance was to al-Qa’ida’.⁸⁹⁴

The Counter Extremism Project estimates that Awlaki can be linked to nearly 100 terrorist attacks across the US and Europe.⁸⁹⁵ This influence ranges from the direct email communications he maintained with the Fort Hood shooter, Nidal Hassan,⁸⁹⁶ or the in-person influence of Awlaki on Cherif Kouachi, who, along with his brother, perpetrated the attacks on the offices of the French satirical newspaper, *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015. Kouachi told a French journalist: ‘I, Cherif Kouachi, was sent by al-Qaeda in Yemen ... I went there, and it was Sheik Anwar al-Awlaki who financed me’. In the more abstracted form of influence, Syed Rizwan Farook, a perpetrator of the 2015 San Bernadino shooting that killed 14 people, was alleged to have immersed himself in Awlaki’s output with his neighbour:

⁸⁹³ *Lone Mujahid Pocketbook*, Al-Malahem Media, 2013, 2.

http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_AQAP_Mujahid_Pocketbook.pdf [password protected]

⁸⁹⁴ Shane, ‘CTC Sentinel’.

⁸⁹⁵ Counter Extremism Project, ‘Anwar Al-Awlaki’, published 2019, <https://www.counterextremism.com/anwar-al-awlaki>.

⁸⁹⁶ Shane notes that for both Hassan and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, ‘Awlaki was not a passing influence but a guide who became, over the course of several years, the center of their ideological universe’: Scott Shane, *Objective Troy: A Terrorist, a President, and the Rise of the Drone*, 1st paper ed. (New York, NY: Tim Duggan Books, 2016), 190–91.

discussing the extremist views of the now-deceased imam and Islamic lecturer Anwar al-Aulaqi ... by 2011 ... spent most of his time at Farook's residence listening to lectures and watching videos involving radical Islamic content. Those materials included Inspire Magazine, the official publication of AQAP (AQAP), and videos produced by Al-Shabaab. In August 2011, Farook informed Marquez of his interest in joining AQAP in Yemen.⁸⁹⁷

Awlaki's transcendence of organisational divisions is best evidenced in the December 2013 release of 'From the Words of Scholars about the Project of the IS'.⁸⁹⁸ This took a 2008 lecture⁸⁹⁹ by Awlaki and overlaid an audio extract over footage of what was then referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) engaged in combat. The short audio consisted of Awlaki's commentary regarding the 2006 establishment of the 'Islamic State in Iraq', upon which he stated, 'I believe this to be a monumental event. It represents a move of the idea from the theoretical realm to the real world. The idea of establishing the Islamic rule and establishing Caliphate on earth is now not any more talk, it is action'.⁹⁰⁰

Awlaki was killed in a drone strike by the US Government in 2011, and numerous authors have discussed his enduring influence on Western jihadists, regardless of their specific organisational affiliations. His digitally available content, message and profile, enhanced by his 'martyrdom', have resulted in him having created a legacy that 'leveraged perceptions of crisis in his primary communities of potential support: Muslim Diasporas in the West'.⁹⁰¹ It would be these same 'Muslim Diasporas in the West' that IS and its Western-oriented propaganda campaign would seek to recruit and radicalise for *hijra*, and subsequently, *hijra or jihad*. The following section will provide a discussion of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, the two English-language publications most synonymous with ISs' efforts in the West and the numerous operations the organisation was able to 'inspire.'

Phase 2: IS, *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah* and Just Terror Tactics

Despite the perception that the James Foley video release created, IS did not simply appear in 2014. In fact, it has a much longer lineage, reaching back to the establishment of Jamā'at al-

⁸⁹⁷ Department of Justice, 'California Man Charged with Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Terrorism and Being 'Straw Purchaser' of Assault Rifles Ultimately Used in San Bernardino, California, Attack', 17 December 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/california-man-charged-conspiring-provide-material-support-terrorism-and-being-straw>.

⁸⁹⁸ *From the Words of Scholars about the Project of the Islamic State*, al-I'tisaam Media Foundation, 2013. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/isil-video-features-posthumous-clip-of-awlaki-promoting-islamic-state.html> [password protected]

⁸⁹⁹ Shane, *Objective Troy*, 316.

⁹⁰⁰ *From the Words of Scholars about the Project of the Islamic State*.

⁹⁰¹ Ingram, *Charismatic Leadership*, 199.

Tawhīd wa-al-Jihād (The Organisation of Monotheism and Jihad) by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 1999. After serving a sentence in prison in Jordan, he fled to Afghanistan, establishing a training camp in Herat.⁹⁰² Stenersen noted that even in Afghanistan in the late 90s, Zarqawi was renowned for his broad interpretation of the practice of *takfir*. The author cited senior AQ figure, Saif al'Adl,⁹⁰³ as having said 'al-Zarqawi was a controversial figure among al-Qaida's leaders, due to his "uncompromising" views on issues such as takfir'.⁹⁰⁴ This broad interpretation, which Fishman claimed 'continues to define the IS',⁹⁰⁵ would ultimately coalesce into two key concepts. First, a view that what constitutes a 'true Muslim' ultimately meant that 'the vast majority of the world's Muslims are considered apostates and deserving of death'.⁹⁰⁶ Second, 'a dramatic redistribution of ideological and political authority from a rarefied class of religious scholars to frontline jihadis'.⁹⁰⁷ It was, in part, this approach to *takfir* and the authority to determine the validity of theological interpretation that would underpin IS' approach to its military operations, use of violence and a broader propaganda campaign. The brutal, performative violence against westerners *and* fellow Muslims, demonstrated most spectacularly by the 2015 *Healing the Believer's Chests*⁹⁰⁸ video that depicted Jordanian fighter pilot, Muath al-Kasasbeh's, immolation, was an extension of these foundational ideological precepts, referred to Fishman by as 'Zarqawism'. Well before the brutality of *A Message to America*, and the litany of hyper-violent propaganda content generated by IS during its 'remaining and expanding' phase, Zarqawi was responsible for preliminary propaganda outputs of an equally, if not as professionally calibrated or choreographed standard, which would have deep and abiding impacts on jihadism in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries.

The propaganda video of the beheading of Nicholas Berg, released in 2004, would provide a prototypical demonstration of what would ultimately become one of the most synonymous and high-profile representations of the IS. Zarqawi's organisation understood the value of

⁹⁰² Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 118.

⁹⁰³ Soufan refers to al-'Adl as 'one of the most experienced professional soldiers in the worldwide jihadi movement'. Ali H. Soufan, 'Al-Qa'ida's Soon-To-Be Third Emir? A Profile of Saif al-'Adl', *CTC Sentinel* 14, no. 2 (2021), <https://ctc.usma.edu/al-qaidas-soon-to-be-third-emir-a-profile-of-saif-al-adl/>.

⁹⁰⁴ Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 119.

⁹⁰⁵ Fishman, *Master Plan*, 60.

⁹⁰⁶ Fishman, *Master Plan*, 60.

⁹⁰⁷ Fishman, *Master Plan*, 61.

⁹⁰⁸ The video is available at: *Healing of the Believers' Chests*, al-Furqan Media Foundation, 2015.

<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Multimedia/is-releases-video-showing-jordanian-pilot-mu-adh-al-kasasibah-being-burned-alive.html> For a description of the content of the video see Kraidy, particularly pages 1200–3. Marwan M. Kraidy, 'The Projectile Image: Islamic State's Digital Visual Warfare and Global Networked Affect', *Media, Culture & Society* 39, no. 8 (November 2017): 1194–1209, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717725575>.

propaganda and took advantage of the digital capabilities of the period. Zarqawi relied on the newfound capacity for sharing audio and video files. Fishman noted the work of *Irhabi 007* (Terrorist 007), whose real name was Younis Tsouli and who frequently reposted Zarqawi's output across various file-sharing sites to provide a degree of resilience in the face of counter efforts.⁹⁰⁹ The release of the infamous video of Nicholas Berg's beheading did not occur in a vacuum. It was part of an intentional campaign that Zarqawi had launched in the months prior. As Eedle has noted:

in little more than a month, during April and May of 2004, he rocketed to worldwide fame, infamy if you will, by a deliberate combination of extreme violence and Internet publicity. It began in early April, when al-Zarqawi issued a half-hour audio recording which explained exactly who he was, what he had done, and why he was fighting. It was a comprehensive, branding statement.⁹¹⁰

In May of 2004, the release of the video of Nicholas Berg kneeling in an orange jumpsuit and beheaded by Zarqawi went viral, catapulting Zarqawi to international infamy. It should be noted that Berg was not the only Westerner beheaded by Zarqawi and Tawḥīd wa-al-Jihād, with the organisation claiming at least nine additional beheadings.⁹¹¹ While Zarqawi was not the original innovator of these outputs, he was certainly the originator of their global presence as a discreet product.⁹¹² The choreographed, performative and highly calibrated violence of Zarqawi would distinguish his propaganda output from that of his predecessors. It demonstrated the power of the newly globally present visuality of jihadist propaganda and its scope to shape and drive international security discourse and narratives. As Eedle noted about the power and consequences of the release of the Berg video and subsequent replications, 'that moment started a withdrawal of foreign contractors which, with repetition, has paralyzed reconstruction work in Iraq and done as much if not more to undermine U.S. plans'.⁹¹³ Having captured the attention of allies and enemies alike, Zarqawi was, in the

⁹⁰⁹ Fishman, *Master Plan*, 56–57.

⁹¹⁰ Karen J. Greenberg, *Al Qaeda Now: Understanding Today's Terrorists* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 124.

⁹¹¹ Fishman, *Master Plan*, 57.

⁹¹² Burke notes, 'the pioneers of the genre were the Chechen militants in the late 1990s, but the first such production to come to wider attention was the execution of US journalist Daniel Pearl in Karachi in 2002, posted on the Internet by Pakistani militants led by Khaled Sheik Mohammed': Burke, *The New Threat*, 205.

⁹¹³ Greenberg, *Al Qaeda Now*, 126.

aftermath of the release and virality of the video, ‘endorsed by Osama bin Laden as “Emir” (i.e., leader) of al Qaeda in Iraq’.⁹¹⁴

The intertwined legacies of Zarqawi and beheading videos would come to be reflected in the immensely powerful propaganda campaign that IS would launch, including, but by no means limited to, the Western-orientated elements of that campaign. IS had been significantly operational within the Syrian Civil War theatre before its dramatic June 2014 ‘revival of the medieval Islamic institution of the caliphate’.⁹¹⁵ However, the distribution of the August 2014 *A Message to America* video catapulted the organisation into the centre of international security discourse. It prompted strategic responses from the US and its allies, who launched what would ultimately become Operation Inherent Resolve.⁹¹⁶ The immediate impact of the video, a press conference held by the US President and an escalation of US and allied responses to the conflict in Syria and Iraq, was intimately related to and shaped by the public perception of and response to the videos released by IS.⁹¹⁷ The videos became what Kozlowska, writing for the *New York Times*, referred to as ‘a modern guillotine execution spectacle, with YouTube as the town square’.⁹¹⁸

The beheading videos successfully thrust IS, jihadism, martyrdom and the context of the wars in Syria and Iraq into the headlines of the international news media, driving a substantial escalation in US-led military and intelligence responses. In addition, according to estimates by The Soufan Centre, foreign fighter numbers would dramatically increase from 2014 onwards. They estimated in 2014 that ‘over 12,000 foreign fighters have gone to Syria since the 3-year conflict began ... from at least 81 countries’ and that ‘about 3,000 foreign fighters are from Western countries’.⁹¹⁹ By 2015, according to updated assessments by The Soufan Group, ‘between 27,000 and 31,000 people have traveled to Syria and Iraq to join the IS and

⁹¹⁴ Maura Conway, ‘From Al-Zarqawi to al-Awlaki: The Emergence and Development of an Online Radical Milieu’, *CTX* 2, no. 4 (2012): 14.

⁹¹⁵ David J. Wasserstein, *Black Banners of ISIS: The Roots of the New Caliphate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 27.

⁹¹⁶ It should be noted that operations began before the operational name was determined. Margaret Hartmann, ‘The U.S. Can’t Come Up with a Name for the Operation Against ISIS’, *New York Magazine*, 3 October 2014, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2014/10/us-needs-a-name-for-the-operation-against-isis.html>.

⁹¹⁷ Hashim notes, ‘On September 14, 2014, a second video, with the same title, showed the beheading of another hostage ... On September 14, 2014, the organisation ran a third video, “message to America’s Allies”, in which IS members were shown beheading British hostage David Haines, followed by yet another video on October 3 that showed the beheading of a second British hostage ... a third American hostage ... was subsequently beheaded as well’: Hashim, *Caliphate at War*, 179.

⁹¹⁸ Hanna Kozlowska, ‘Should We Be Seeing Gruesome Acts? And If So, Where?’ *Op-Talk* (blog), 25 August 2014, <https://op-talk.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/08/25/should-we-be-seeing-gruesome-acts-and-if-so-where/>.

⁹¹⁹ Richard Barrett, ‘Foreign Fighters in Syria’ (Soufan Group, 2014), 6, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10783>.

other violent extremist groups'.⁹²⁰ While it is difficult to assert that the beheading videos themselves or the broader propaganda campaign was *the* driver of the dramatic escalation in foreign fighter inflows, what can be highlighted is that the propaganda campaign narratives contained a consistent focus on the call to *hijrah*. Ingram noted that editions three through seven of *Dabiq* magazine, IS' English-language digital product, published from 2014 onwards, focused on 'the obligation of all "true" Muslims to migrate to "their" Caliphate'.⁹²¹ He noted that the third edition featured a cover story entitled 'A Call to Hijrah'. The opening article quoted Zarqawi as stating, 'so I swear by the One to whom I will return, that there is no real jihad in Iraq except with the presence of the muhajirin [migrants], the sons of the generous ummah, those who have left their tribes, those who bring victory to Allah and His Messenger.'⁹²²

However, the focus here shifts beyond the historical lineage of the IS, its declaration of a Caliphate and the substantive foreign fighter inflows. Rather, it is the concerted effort to establish a capacity to 'inspire' sympathisers to undertake operations within Western jurisdictions, with a particular focus on lone-actor operations that is analysed. While IS was responsible for inspired attacks that achieved high numbers of fatalities, such as the 2016 Nice, France, truck-ramming attack that killed 84 people,⁹²³ the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando that killed 49 people and the sophisticated, multiphase mass-casualty incidents like the 2015 Paris attacks and the 2016 Brussels bombings, the overwhelming majority of its operational activity in Western jurisdictions were achieved through individual jihad and small cell terrorism—as per al-Suri's strategic and organisational theories. IS undertook a full-spectrum propaganda campaign that provided a litany of narratives and approaches to inspiring lone-actor terrorism. At the core of this campaign, and providing an ideal departure point for analysis, is the September 2014 audio release of *Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful*, delivered by Abu Muhammed al-Adnani.

It is difficult to demonstrate the same type of direct influence and lineage regarding al-Suri in IS' conceptualisation of lone-actor terrorism compared to the direct propagation of his writings that Awlaki and *Inspire* evidenced. Still, it is possible to demonstrate that al-Suri

⁹²⁰ Soufan Group, 'Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq' (Soufan Group, 2015), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10784>.

⁹²¹ Ingram, 'Islamic State's English-Language Magazines'.

⁹²² Ingram, 'Islamic State's English-Language Magazines', 12.

⁹²³ Petter Nesser, Anne Stenersen and Emilie Oftedal, 'Jihadi Terrorism in Europe', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 10, no. 6 (2016): 3.

significantly influenced IS, albeit in a more overarching manner. For instance, Ryan noted that al-Suri was ‘a major influence on the ISIS group’s military doctrine’. Whiteside noted that the foundational influence al-Suri had on Zarqawi ‘came mostly from Abu Musab al Suri’s work on the failed Syrian rebellion and Suri’s advocacy of revolutionary warfare’.⁹²⁴ Where al-Suri’s echoes are most prominent, again not as explicitly as *Inspire* or AQAP, is in the enhanced individual jihad campaign, launched in part by Adnani’s *Indeed* speech. Ingram et al. noted that in conjunction with the article ‘The Extinction of the Greyzone’, published in the seventh edition of *Dabiq* in 2015, IS was ‘strategically pivoting to globalise its struggle’.⁹²⁵ The explicitly operational and instructional component of Adnani’s speech, which would be indirectly referenced in numerous Amaq News Agency ‘press releases’ claiming responsibility for individual jihadist operations,⁹²⁶ stated:

Target the soldiers, the police of the tyrants and their supporters, their security forces and their allies. Destroy their dwellings and spoil their life for them. If you can, kill an American or a European disbeliever—especially the filthy hateful French—or an Australian or a Canadian or any other fighting disbelievers, including the citizens of the coalition of allies against the IS ...

defend your state in any manner you can, and the best that you can do is to devote your efforts to killing any French or American disbelievers or any of their allies. *O you who believe! Take your precautions, and either go forth (on an expedition) in parties, or go forth all together.* {Sura 4 (The Women), 71} If you are unable to use an IED or a bullet, then single out the French or the American disbeliever or any of their allies and smash their head with a rock or slaughter them with a knife, or run them over with your car or throw him down from a high place, or strangle them or poison them.⁹²⁷

IS ultimately launched a specific campaign more clearly aimed at providing a similar type of guidance to potential individual jihadists as that propagated by Awlaki and *Inspire*. ‘Just Terror Tactics’ would eventually constitute featured content in six of the 13 editions of *Rumiyah* magazine⁹²⁸ and would also include videos⁹²⁹ and extracted, independently

⁹²⁴ Craig Whiteside, ‘The Islamic State and the Return of Revolutionary Warfare’, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 5 (September 2016): 748, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1208287>.

⁹²⁵ Ingram, Whiteside and Winter, *The ISIS Reader*, 190.

⁹²⁶ Brown notes, ‘autonomous jihadists carried out 57 attacks in Europe, North America, and Australia. ISIL’s propaganda outlets—the Amaq news agency and the online magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*—chose to claim 38 of the attacks’: Joseph M. Brown, ‘Terrorist Peer Review: Which Autonomous Attacks Does ISIL Accept for Publication?’ *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1970891>.

⁹²⁷ Holbrook and Moore, *Al-Qaeda 2.0*, 165–66.

⁹²⁸ Note: the 13th edition of *Rumiyah*, 13, al-Hayat Media Center, 2017.

http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_Rumiyah13_EN.pdf published after Reed and Ingram’s article, refers to Just Terror Tactics as a component of the ‘Inside the Caliphate’ video series rather than as a full-page infographic. Alastair Reed and Haroro J. Ingram, ‘Exploring the Role of Instructional Material in AQAP’s

distributed infographics of both knife and truck tactics, and as the name of a Telegram channel.⁹³⁰ Claiming responsibility for the Manchester bombing, the tenth edition of *Rumiyah* would frame the operation in language that referenced ‘just terror’, noting that ‘a soldier of the Khilafah had carried out a Just Terror operation’.⁹³¹

Bunker highlighted that the primary function of *Dabiq* was to promote *hijra*, ‘with in-place lone jihadist attacks being a secondary consideration’.⁹³² He contrasted this with *Rumiyah*, which he noted ‘signifies a shift in IS strategy from extending the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq to one of engaging in lone wolf and small cell attacks primarily in the West’.⁹³³ Al-Suri’s presence within *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is vastly more subtle than its overt presence in *Inspire*. Additionally, the explicit advocacy of individual jihad is far less prominent in IS propaganda generally. Two distinct phenomena can explain this. As noted above, Awlaki ‘remains relevant to a new generation of ... jihadis’⁹³⁴ regardless of their specific organisational affiliation. Awlaki and his ideas, particularly due to their English language accessibility, meant that his advocacy of individual jihad remained legitimate and authoritative for Western or at least English-speaking audiences. IS’ tacit endorsement of Awlaki, in terms of propaganda and his 2011 martyrdom, all contributed to his identity and his ideas remaining a core component of modern-day jihadist praxis.

IS did not explicitly preclude calls for attacks in the West by locally based operatives, but it was a much less prominent component of their overall narrative. When it was present, it was explicit that it not only targeted a broad spectrum of ‘nonbelievers’ but that operatives be certain to ensure that the attack was attributed to IS. Their claiming of responsibility through *Amaq News Agency* would frequently use language such as ‘soldier of the IS who executed

Inspire and ISIS’ *Rumiyah*’ (The Hague: Europol, 2017), 8,
https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2017/06/reeda_ingramh_instructionalmaterial.pdf.

⁹²⁹ *We Will Surely Guide Them To Our Ways*, Islamic State Ninawa Povince, 2017.

<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Multimedia/is-video-demonstrates-newly-developed-weapons-features-american-belgian-canadian-fighters-inciting-lone-wolves.html> [password protected]

⁹³⁰ Bennett Clifford, ‘“Trucks, Knives, Bombs, Whatever”: Exploring Pro-Islamic State Instructional Material on Telegram’, *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 5 (2018), <https://ctc.usma.edu/trucks-knives-bombs-whatever-exploring-pro-islamic-state-instructional-material-telegram/>.

⁹³¹ *Rumiyah*, 10, al-Hayat Media Center, 2017, 5.

http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_IS_Rumiyah10_English.pdf. [password protected]

⁹³² Robert J. Bunker and Pamela Ligouri Bunker, *Radical Islamist English-Language Online Magazines: Research Guide, Strategic Insights, and Policy Response* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 2018), 26.

⁹³³ R. Bunker and P. Bunker, *Radical Islamist English-Language*, 46.

⁹³⁴ Shane, ‘CTC Sentinel’.

the operation in response to target nations in the coalition fighting the IS'.⁹³⁵ For example, in the fourth edition of *Dabiq*, IS wrote:

at this point of the crusade against the IS, it is very important that attacks take place in every country that has entered into the alliance against the IS, especially the US, UK, France, Australia, and Germany ... Every Muslim should get out of his house, find a crusader, and kill him. It is important that the killing becomes attributed to patrons of the IS who have obeyed its leadership.⁹³⁶

Through Adnani's *Indeed* speech and the eventual embrace of more explicit instructional material for lone-actor jihadists, IS develops its version of an individual jihadist narrative. The effectiveness of this narrative in inspiring Western-based operatives was unsurprising when considered in the context of the momentum and success they achieved through 2014, including the declaration of the Caliphate, the attention-demanding beheading video campaign, the taking of Mosul and the escalation of countermeasures. Hegghammer and Nesser found that between January 2011 to June 2015, some 69 plots were undertaken in Western jurisdictions, with 30 of these having an IS connection of some description. They noted that a majority, 26 of a total 30 IS connected plots, were undertaken between July 2014 to June 2015.⁹³⁷ It is also noteworthy that those tactics are explicitly endorsed by 'Just Terror Tactics' and most prominently reiterated across the broad-spectrum propaganda campaign. Having senior imprimatur from *Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful* would become the most prominent. Stabbings and vehicle ramming became synonymous with IS just as suicide operations and martyrdom had become with earlier iterations of the jihadist movement such as AQ. While IS would not explicitly reference al-Suri's individual jihad strategy in its propaganda or strategic doctrine, it stood on the shoulders of Awlaki and Khan's work to embed the theory, theological and strategic permissibility and praxis of individual jihad.

IS would ultimately develop a specific, dedicated, external operations capability to facilitate attacks in the West and evolve the traditional 'inspired' model further. The Legion,⁹³⁸ as it

⁹³⁵ This is taken from a claim released in relation to the 2021 Würzburg stabbing by Abdirahman Jibril A., which killed three people: *IS' Amaq Says Axe Attack on German Train Carried Out by IS "Soldier,"* SITE Intelligence, 2016. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Statements/is-amaq-says-axe-attack-on-german-train-carried-out-by-is-soldier.html>. [password protected]

⁹³⁶ *Dabiq*, 04, al-Hayat Media Center, 2014, 44. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/documents/dabiq/894-site-is-hmc-dabiq4/file.html>. [password protected]

⁹³⁷ Thomas Hegghammer and Petter Nesser, 'Assessing the Islamic State's Commitment to Attacking the West', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015): 19.

⁹³⁸ Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hughes, 'Threat to the United States'; Adam Goldman and Eric Schmitt, 'One by One, ISIS Social Media Experts are Killed as Result of F.B.I. Program', *New York Times*, 24 November 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/24/world/middleeast/isis-recruiters-social-media.html>.

became known, was an ‘online recruitment collective within the IS made up of a dozen members.’⁹³⁹ British citizen, Junaid Hussein, was understood to have been the founding member, and it included a number of British citizens and an Australian citizen, Neil Prakash. These individuals and their outreach efforts to potential operatives in the West led to ‘a surge of counterterrorism activity across the United States in 2015’. The model they implemented built on the unidirectional propaganda outreach of the conventional individual jihad model and provided a degree of specific, targeted interaction for those looking to launch operations. As Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hughes referred to them, the ‘virtual plotters’⁹⁴⁰ were not exclusively working in English. Rachid Kassim, for example, is believed to have been involved in more than half of the disrupted plots in France in 2016.⁹⁴¹ Hamid noted that Hussain was involved in directing operations and ‘corresponded with, encouraged, and facilitated would-be attackers’.⁹⁴² The Legion was sufficiently effective at its efforts to facilitate individual jihadist operations in the West so that ‘one by one, American and allied forces have killed the most important of roughly a dozen members of the cell’.⁹⁴³

Propaganda of the Deed and Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

Since the modern coalescence of jihadism, in the dying days of the Afghan–Soviet war, communicative and narrative considerations have been demonstrably central to the overall endeavour and the movement’s conceptualisation of power projection. Through Azzam’s internationalist ideological orientation, his commitment to the publication of *al-Jihad*, which, ‘at its peak, was distributed in around fifty countries in as many as 50,000 copies’⁹⁴⁴ and the demonstrable power of news coverage across the Arab world and beyond, communicative and narrative dynamics were central to the early establishment of the icons and myths of jihadism. As early as 1987, communicative dynamics demonstrated their intentional cultivation and power. The now-famous Battle of Jaji ‘marked the birth of Osama bin Laden’s public reputation as a warrior among Arab jihadists...After Jaji he began a media campaign’.⁹⁴⁵

⁹³⁹ Nafees Hamid, ‘The British Hacker Who Became the Islamic State’s Chief Terror Cybercoach: A Profile of Junaid Hussain’, *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 4 (2018), <https://ctc.usma.edu/british-hacker-became-islamic-states-chief-terror-cybercoach-profile-junaid-hussain/>.

⁹⁴⁰ Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hughes, ‘Threat to the United States’.

⁹⁴¹ Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hughes, ‘Threat to the United States’.

⁹⁴² Hamid, ‘British Hacker’.

⁹⁴³ Goldman and Schmitt, ‘One by One’.

⁹⁴⁴ Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 230.

⁹⁴⁵ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 163.

Early Jihadist Propaganda: Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

In addition to coverage in *al-Jihad*, the late Jamal Khashoggi would publish an article in the Arab-language *Al Majallah* in May 1988. An English-language version was published in the *Arab News* on the same day. Under his alias, *Abu Abdullah*, bin Laden was generously quoted, noting, ‘three attacks were made during a period of three weeks, and each time we were able, by the grace of God, to inflict a crushing defeat on the Russians’.⁹⁴⁶ This is some of the earliest evidence of bin Laden’s direct consideration of communicative and narrative dynamics in his own and the then-nascent movement’s trajectory. Bin Laden had invited Khashoggi to Afghanistan and then travelled with him from Peshawar in Pakistan. While much was made of the ‘Battle of Jaji’, and equally of bin Laden’s role in it, there are conflicting accounts of the significance of the battle during the war more broadly.⁹⁴⁷ Hegghammer went as far as to suggest that the battle was a significant factor in the formalisation of AQ itself, noting, ‘not only did Jaji itself convince bin Ladin, Abu Ubayda, and other Ma’sada cadres that they were doing something right; it also created an incentive to preserve and harness the experience and team spirit generated during the battle’.⁹⁴⁸ This is despite the observations of Stenersen, who noted that by the time of the Battle of Jaji, the Soviets had already decided to leave Afghanistan.⁹⁴⁹ This would come to represent a crucial aspect of the communicative and narrative elements of the jihadist movement. Representations and the framing of events that spoke to their target audiences did not need to reflect the perspective or version of events recorded by Western or even Middle Eastern institutional journalists or officials. The jihadist movement would come to understand the central role of propaganda, of both the deed and the word, in ensuring that they could shape both its narrative and Western media narratives. This is most forcefully reflected in their assessment of their role in defeating the Soviets and, in turn, their assessment of their capacity to defeat the far enemy.

As bin Laden and AQ came to prioritise the far enemy, bin Laden began to intentionally cultivate and exploit Western news media. This was part of a concerted effort to ensure that

⁹⁴⁶ Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Know*, 58–59.

⁹⁴⁷ Hussein notes ‘For bin Laden, it was the moment the Arab volunteer jihadists proved their worth by fighting Soviet Spetsnaz, or special forces, at close quarters. In reality, it was the Afghan mujahedeen who did most of the fighting. As Sayed Rahman Wahidyar, a Hezb-e Islami commander who knew bin Laden, recalled in a recent Channel 4 documentary I worked on, “We [Afghans] won the battle of Jaji”’: Tam Hussein, ‘The Façade of the Afghan Jihad’, *New Lines Magazine*, 15 November 2021, <https://newlinesmag.com/argument/the-facade-of-the-afghan-jihad>.

⁹⁴⁸ Hegghammer, *The Caravan*, 351.

⁹⁴⁹ Stenersen, *Al-Qaida in Afghanistan*, 18.

its operations and ideology were represented, communicated and contextualised in a manner they felt able to influence, if not control. Mohammed Atef⁹⁵⁰ (known by his *nomme de guerre*, Abu Hafs al Masri), who would become one of bin Laden's deputies in AQ, also became 'bin Laden's media adviser and arranged interviews with Western reporters'. As noted above, Meleagrou-Hitchens wrote that in 1990, he 'laid out a basic framework for the movement's media strategy'.⁹⁵¹ By 1993, bin Laden participated in his first interview with a Western journalist, Robert Fisk of the British newspaper, *The Independent*.⁹⁵² The journalist, indeed bin Laden himself, sought to portray a relatively benevolent financier and, in the words of Fisk, a 'Saudi entrepreneur'. Bin Laden argued that his activities in Sudan were entirely benign and claimed, 'I am a construction engineer and an agriculturalist. If I had training camps here in Sudan, I couldn't possibly do this job'.

As the jihadist movement continued to evolve, and various individuals from within the current dispersed across the globe, in 1994, Abu Musab al-Suri would establish himself in London, initially as the editor of the *al-Ansar* newsletter. As al-Suri himself noted, during his time in London, 'I was able to write for many jihadist magazines ... I was able to attend many lectures, meetings, and so forth in London. Many of these lectures and meetings were published or recorded and sent to different parts of the world'.⁹⁵³

Most substantially, al-Suri would spend his time in London, which had become somewhat of a haven for exiled jihadists, thinking on and articulating forcefully for a more refined, sophisticated, and intentional media strategy for the jihadist movement. As Lia explicitly noted, 'What really preoccupied al-Suri was improving the quality and impact of the jihadi groups' use of the media'.⁹⁵⁴ Al-Suri would establish a media centre, which would ultimately come to function as a 'media facilitator for al-Qaida'.⁹⁵⁵ Al-Suri would facilitate and coordinate numerous press interviews for bin Laden, with outlets like Britain's *Channel 4*, *CNN* and others. Lia cites his interviews with Atwan, who undertook numerous interviews with bin Laden in Afghanistan, all coordinated by and participated in by al-Suri. Lia noted his

⁹⁵⁰ 'Atef strengthened his relationship with bin Laden by following in Prophet Mohamed's tradition. He married his daughter to one of bin Laden's many sons, and the two sat smiling and sipping tea during their videotaped wedding released by al-Qaida early this year. In the tape, bin Laden claimed responsibility for the first time for the suicide attack against the destroyer USS Cole, in Yemen, which killed 17 sailors': Khaled Dawoud, 'Mohammed Atef', *The Guardian*, 19 November 2001, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/nov/19/guardianobituaries.afghanistan>.

⁹⁵¹ Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement*, 136.

⁹⁵² Fisk, 'Anti-Soviet Warrior'.

⁹⁵³ Lacey, *Terrorist's Call to Global Jihad*, 87.

⁹⁵⁴ Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 151.

⁹⁵⁵ Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 161.

role was that of ‘*de facto* media adviser’.⁹⁵⁶ Al-Suri’s influence on the evolution and ultimately explicit operationalisation of jihadist media is difficult to overstate. He sought to facilitate and exploit existing media platforms and approaches during this earlier period. In his later strategic and organisational theory, he would come to advocate explicitly for a more direct role for media, especially online media, in inciting jihadist operations.

The jihadist use of the video and online distribution of video content has an equally long history. It is important to point out that while the 2000 *Destruction of the Destroyer the USS Cole* was the first AQ and *As-Sahab* video release, it was by no means the first jihadi video release. Stenersen traced cameras in the Afghan–Soviet theatre back as early as 1981, although she noted this was primarily to document ‘results on the battlefield’.⁹⁵⁷ According to a *mujahideen* testimony collected in *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare: In the Words of the Mujahideen Fighters*, ‘the video camera was an important accessory of this war. Mujahideen used video cameras to record their actions so that they could prove that they expended weapons, ammunition and supplies and achieved results’.⁹⁵⁸

What Stenersen referred to as ‘jihadi cinematography’, a term she noted was used by jihadis themselves,⁹⁵⁹ evolved in line with both capability developments and parallel with changing purposes. For instance, bin Laden invited a journalist to Afghanistan to prepare a documentary entitled *The Arab Supporters of Afghanistan* in 1988,⁹⁶⁰ mirroring his approach to inviting Khashoggi to report on the Battle of Jaji. By the 1990s, and as the conflicts in Bosnia and Chechnya would become destinations of choice for post-Afghanistan jihadist fighters, video content became a mechanism to popularise the conflicts and valorise the participants—as propaganda outputs in and of themselves. Williams documented how, in 1996, during the earliest days of the ‘jihadisation’ of the Chechnyan conflict, subsequently infamous ‘international jihadist par excellence’,⁹⁶¹ Ibn al-Khattab:

led a unit of his Arab fighters, and some Chechens who had joined him, in an Afghan-style mountain ambush on a Russian column ... The ambushers killed as

⁹⁵⁶ Atwan, cited in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 171, n. 92.

⁹⁵⁷ Anne Stenersen, ‘A History of Jihadi Cinematography’, in *Jihadi Culture: The Art and Social Practices of Militant Islamists*, ed. Thomas Hegghammer (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 109.

⁹⁵⁸ Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester W. Grau, *Afghan Guerrilla Warfare: In the Words of the Mujahideen Fighters* (London: Compendium, 2001), 90.

⁹⁵⁹ Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihadi Culture*, 244, n. 1.

⁹⁶⁰ Stenersen, ‘History of Jihadi Cinematography’, 110.

⁹⁶¹ Muhammad al-’Ubaydi, *Khattab: Jihadi Bios Project*, published 2015, 2, https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CTC_Khattab-Jihadi-Bio-February2015-3-1.pdf.

many as one hundred Russians ... what made this one unique was that the media-savvy Khattab filmed his men carrying out the attack. Graphic videos of the deadly ambush were soon being distributed throughout Chechnya and were eagerly bought up by Chechens, who came to see Khattab as an ally and a hero.⁹⁶²

Again, even in its most preliminary utilisation of video, the jihadist movement was effectively incorporating communicative considerations into their operational and strategic calculus. During this same conflict, the First Chechen War, the first jihadist beheading videos, were produced and distributed.⁹⁶³ The Second Chechen War was important in producing some of the first martyrdom videos,⁹⁶⁴ which were distributed, along with similar products, through the previously discussed azzam.com and the Chechen conflict–dedicated qoqaz.com.⁹⁶⁵ The narrative of martyrdom and sacrifice and the propagation of jihadist ideology and worldviews was a consistent element of the internationalisation of jihadism.

Al-Qaeda Propaganda: Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

The 1998 launch of the explicitly far enemy–oriented operations in Kenya and Tanzania, detailed above and the subsequent launch of *As-Sahab* in 2000, reflects the beginning of the centrality of the visual and of the moving image in jihadist propaganda and communication practices. The details highlighted above of bin Laden’s poetry reading at his son’s wedding and its incorporation into *As-Sahab*’s first video release reflect an awareness and orientation towards the power of narratives and of video. Inclusion of footage of the poetry reading was a specific effort to shape the perception of the audience consuming the video and can be understood both from a communicative perspective and from a more narrative-oriented perspective. As Kendall has noted, ‘the power of poetry to move Arab listeners and readers emotionally, to infiltrate the psyche and to create an aura of tradition, authenticity and legitimacy around the ideologies it enshrines make it a perfect weapon for militant jihadist causes.’⁹⁶⁶

⁹⁶² Brian Glyn Williams, *Inferno in Chechnya: The Russian-Chechen Wars, the Al Qaeda Myth, and the Boston Marathon Bombings* (Lebanon, NH: ForeEdge, 2015), 162.

⁹⁶³ Koch, ‘Jihadi Beheading Videos’, 27.

⁹⁶⁴ A distinction can be made between videos that *glorified* martyrs during, for instance, the Bosnian War, as available through early websites such as Azzam.com, and martyrdom videos as contemporarily understood, which are video recordings by suicide operatives, recording as a ‘last will and testament’.

⁹⁶⁵ Arjen Nauta, ‘Radical Islam, Globalisation and Social Media: Martyrdom Videos on the Internet’, in *Social Media and Religious Change*, ed. Marie Gillespie, David Eric John Herbert and Anita Greenhill (Berlin; Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2013), 127–28, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110270488.121>.

⁹⁶⁶ Elisabeth Kendall and Ewan Stein, eds., *Twenty-First Century Jihad: Law, Society and Military Action*, new paperback ed. (London; New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 247.

While the poem itself carried substantive communicative weight, it was filmed with the power of its visuality in mind. This further demonstrates the significance attached to visual, specifically video, propaganda and ensuring that the representations of bin Laden himself and, by extension, the jihadist movement were as predetermined by those responsible for the propaganda. The attention to ensuring that this image was suitably portrayed is reflected in the comments of Wright, who noted the extensive lengths bin Laden went to in ensuring the video recording would be as he desired:

Two television cameras recorded the event, but bin Laden wasn't satisfied with the result—knowing that the poem would be featured on the Arabic satellite channels and an al-Qaeda recruitment video—so he had the cameras set up again the following morning to record his recitation a second time ... His image management extended to asking one of the reporters, who had taken a digital snapshot, to take another picture because his neck was 'too full'. He had dyed his beard to cover the streaks of gray.⁹⁶⁷

Bin Laden went on to film numerous interviews⁹⁶⁸ with Western journalists, release countless video statements, both before and after the attacks of 2001, and, *As-Sahab* ultimately released, and continues to release, video and media content for AQ. Regardless of their medium, the quality of production or means of distribution, these propaganda products and AQ operations all sought to propagate the idea of individual martyrdom as a means of collective liberation of the Islamic world and to encourage participation in the globalised, revolutionary movement that was the far enemy-oriented, martyrdom-centric and individually pursuable jihadist project.

Regardless of the sophistication of its output, there is no doubt that consideration of communicative and narrative dynamics was at the forefront of much of the strategic calculus of the jihadist movement and its leadership. Before providing an analysis of IS' mastery of these processes, it is worthwhile to briefly highlight some of the key statements and documents that would either substantially shape the jihadist movement's approach to communications and narrative development or reflect the importance ascribed to these considerations. In the post-9/11 period, AQ, and the increasingly distributed movement that evolved during that period, would continue to prioritise communicative and narrative

⁹⁶⁷ Wright, *Looming Tower*, 333–34.

⁹⁶⁸ Prior to 2001, bin Laden would undertake interviews with the *Independent*, *Time*, *Al Quds Al Arabi*, *CNN* and a number of other South Asian news outlets. While he conducted two interviews in the months after 9/11, he would ultimately pivot to video statements and communiques as a result of security considerations. He continued to release video statements until shortly before his death in 2011.

considerations, as well as continuing to adapt to the newfound counterterrorism environment in which they were forced to operate. As early as 2002, bin Laden was explicitly highlighting the centrality of the media to their overall efforts. He noted, ‘it is obvious that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; in fact, its ratio may reach 90% of the total preparation for the battles’.⁹⁶⁹ Around this same period, AQ strategist, al-Qurashi, would also note, ‘the mujahidin have also put the Internet to work, using it effectively to deliver their voices and points of view to hundreds of thousands of Muslims’.⁹⁷⁰

By 2003, the movement was beginning to explicitly encourage and prioritise the online environment as a vehicle for promoting the jihadist movement and shaping perceptions of the movement by a variety of audiences. Among the list of means by which individuals could ‘serve and participate’ in jihadist activities, early documents such as *39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad*⁹⁷¹ contained references to ‘Electronic jihad’—referred to as ‘a blessed field which contains much benefit’. It instructed sympathisers and supporters, among other specific suggestions, to:

- incite *jihad* and mentioning its virtues, especially in our times
- awaken the idea of *jihad* in the minds of the masses
- put out research and knowledge-based articles related to *jihad*.⁹⁷²

This document reflected both the prioritisation of distributing jihadist material and the conscious shift towards the online environment. While azzam.com and other websites had been established earlier, *39 Ways* was reflective of a broader shift and the beginnings of a recognition that jihadist propagandists were of substantial importance to the broader movement.

By 2005, as the impacts of Zarqawi’s insurgency in Iraq and the series of beheading videos released throughout 2004 and 2005 reverberated across the international media landscape and similarly felt within the jihadist milieu, then-AQ deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, wrote to

⁹⁶⁹ Osama bin Laden, ‘Letter to Mullah Mohammed Omar from Osama bin Laden’, 2002, https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/71/718A2632589F742D5BAF987CEF2C4E36_AFGP-2002-600321-Trans.pdf.

⁹⁷⁰ David Aaron, *In Their Own Words: Voices of Jihad—Compilation and Commentary*, RAND Corporation, 2008, 270, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG602.html>.

⁹⁷¹ Mohammad bin Ahmad al-Salem, *39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad*, Central Intelligence Agency, published 2003, [https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/2D/2D06F676D114500575E4A970D5915C33_39_WAYS_\(LAST_PART\).pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/2D/2D06F676D114500575E4A970D5915C33_39_WAYS_(LAST_PART).pdf).

⁹⁷² bin Ahmad al-Salem, *39 Ways to Serve*.

Zarqawi. He reflected the optics considerations referred to in bin Laden's 2002 letter. Zawahiri wrote, 'we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media'.⁹⁷³ By 2006, *As-Sahab*, leveraging the increased accessibility of professional production technology and the scope to distribute larger video files to wider audiences, was making feature-length documentary films like *Knowledge is for Acting On: The Manhattan Raid*.⁹⁷⁴ The film entailed nearly 90 minutes' worth of structured propaganda targeting young Muslim viewers and glorifying the attacks on 9/11 and those responsible. In venerating and iconising bin Laden, 9/11 and the martyrdom inherent in the attacks, these types of products served to continue to reinforce the concepts of attacking the far enemy, martyrdom itself and the individual agency and liberation available to those who wanted to support or participate in the jihad.

The work of Anwar al-Awlaki was detailed substantially in the previous section. It will not be revisited at length here other than to note that as a transitional actor within the jihadist current, he was crucial to the generational shift that took place among those with direct links to the Afghan Arabs: the generation that was often Western-based, non-Arabic speaking and whose perception of jihad was predominantly informed by the 9/11 attacks and subsequent GWOT. His early embrace of social media platforms meant that the 'jihadist propaganda of Anwar al-Awlaki has helped shape a generation of American terrorists'.⁹⁷⁵ His reach, as identified previously, stretched well beyond the US. His legacy, seen in the establishment of entities such as The Legion and the careers of individuals such as Junaid Hussein, Rashid Kassim and Neil Prakash, continues to endure. Whiteside and Ingram noted, 'Awlaki's charismatic appeal is rooted in his message and image'.⁹⁷⁶ His martyrdom in 2011 only strengthened his propagandistic value to the jihadist movement, and numerous aspirational jihadists have sought to emulate his career.

IS: Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

Any analysis of the strategic consideration of communicative and narrative dynamics by the jihadist movement must consider IS' full-spectrum, multifaceted and highly effective

⁹⁷³ Ayman al-Zawahiri, 'Letter from Al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi', Federation of American Scientists, published 2005, https://irp.fas.org/news/2005/10/letter_in_english.pdf.

⁹⁷⁴ *Knowledge is for Acting On: The Manhattan Raid*, as-Sahab, 2006. Part 1: <https://archive.org/details/AsSahabTheManhattanRaid1> Part 2: https://archive.org/details/AsSahab-TheManhattanRaid2_201802.

⁹⁷⁵ Shane, 'Watershed Moment'.

⁹⁷⁶ Whiteside and Ingram, 'The Yemen Raid'.

propaganda campaign. In doing so, the following will provide an analysis of key actors within IS responsible for its propaganda campaign, primarily as strategists, and discuss some of the more explicit demonstrations of the IS' appreciation of communicative dynamics. In addition, this section will also analyse the 2016 document, distributed via Telegram, entitled *Media Operative, You are also a Mujahid*.⁹⁷⁷

The starting point for understanding the sophistication and intent behind IS' propaganda campaign is to recognise the seriousness with which not only the post-2014 IS treated media and propaganda, but to acknowledge that since shortly after the 2006 establishment of the IS of Iraq, there has been a formal governance structure related to this field of activity. As al-Tamimi noted, as of April 2007, IS of Iraq established ministries as a component of its governance structures, appropriate for an entity that sought to act and be perceived as a state. Among the various initial ministries created by IS of Iraq were a public relations ministry and a media ministry.⁹⁷⁸ The establishment of these ministries demonstrates the importance placed on external communications and the image and narrative portrayed regarding the organisation. Hankiss noted that even earlier, in April 2006, under the auspices of AQ in Iraq, the leadership, including Zarqawi:

established a center supervising all media activities, the Al Furqan Institute for Media Production ... and eventually even produced propaganda material—including execution and beheading videos—for the IS. Abu Muhammad al-Furqan became the first minister of information and a key media coordinator for the IS.⁹⁷⁹

Abu Muhammed al-Furqan

Of all the individuals to exert consistent and consequential influence over IS' propaganda machine, Abu Muhammed al-Furqan is of greatest importance. Al-Furqan was a member of IS's Shura Council and had been a long-term associate of Abu Muhammed al-Adnani,⁹⁸⁰ who is reported to have been responsible for the final approval of external operations.⁹⁸¹ He oversaw the establishment of *Dabiq* magazine and appointed his protégé, Ahmad Abousamra,

⁹⁷⁷ Ingram, Whiteside and Winter, *The ISIS Reader*, 215–25.

⁹⁷⁸ Aymenn al-Tamimi, 'The Evolution in Islamic State Administration', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015): 117–29.

⁹⁷⁹ Agnes Hankiss, 'Behind the Scenes of Al-Qa'ida's Media Strategy', *Journal of Strategic Security* 12, no. 2 (2019): 67.

⁹⁸⁰ BBC, 'IS Confirms Death of Propaganda Chief Abu Mohammed Al-Furqan', *BBC News*, 11 October 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37619225>.

⁹⁸¹ Kyle Orton, 'The Coalition Targets Islamic State Propagandists and External Terrorists', Kyle Orton's Blog, 29 July 2017, <https://kyleorton.co.uk/2017/07/29/the-coalition-targets-islamic-state-propagandists-and-external-terrorists/>.

as its editor-in-chief.⁹⁸² *Naba* newspaper eulogised his 2016 death⁹⁸³ and noted that he had been involved in the media apparatus of the IS since its earliest beginnings. It noted he was ‘one of the founders of Qaedat al-Jihad in Mesopotamia [AQ in Iraq] at the time, and one of the distinguished leaders of the IS of Iraq, as well as the one with whom Allah established the foundations of the IS in Sham’.⁹⁸⁴

Naba further noted that al-Furqan, after the arrest of the previous head of the media *diwan*, was appointed ‘media emir of the Organization’.⁹⁸⁵ In the eulogy of Abousamra published in the eighth edition of *Rumiyah*,⁹⁸⁶ it was noted further that al-Furqan established what they referred to as the foreign languages team.⁹⁸⁷ Further, he was responsible for determining the title of *Dabiq* magazine and the decision to publish it periodically. It is important to recognise that not only did al-Furqan have substantial control and influence over IS’ media and propaganda operations, but he was also exceptionally well regarded in ideological and doctrinal terms. In early 2016, he oversaw what was known as ‘the methodological committee’⁹⁸⁸ tasked with dealing with internal theological divisions within IS. He believed that one of the organisation’s challenges was ‘excessive theological moderation or restraint in *takfir*’.⁹⁸⁹ Al-Furqan’s appointment to this committee, focusing on central theological and doctrinal questions, with direct strategic and operational implications, reflected his seniority and standing within the organisation. His standing was born of both the duration of his involvement with the organisation, as well as his highly regarded knowledge and experience. His role as head of the media *diwan*, as noted above, reached back to the earlier iterations of IS, and his commitment to the cause was reinforced by a period of incarceration in Iraq during the years of the insurgency.

⁹⁸² *Rumiyah*, 8, al-Hayat Media Center, 2017, 40-45

http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_IS_Rumiyah8_English.pdf. [password protected]

⁹⁸³ ‘IS Serializes Biography of Deceased Founding Member, Former Head of Media Department (Part 1),’ *Naba*, 285, 2021. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Statements/is-serializes-biography-of-deceased-founding-member-former-head-of-media-department-part-1.html>.

⁹⁸⁴ ‘IS Serializes Biography of Deceased Founding Member, Former Head of Media Department (Part 1)’ <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Statements/is-serializes-biography-of-deceased-founding-member-former-head-of-media-department-part-1.html>.

⁹⁸⁵ ‘IS Serializes Biography of Deceased Founding Member, Former Head of Media Department (Part 1)’ <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Statements/is-serializes-biography-of-deceased-founding-member-former-head-of-media-department-part-1.html>.

⁹⁸⁶ *Rumiyah*, 8, 43. http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_IS_Rumiyah8_English.pdf.

⁹⁸⁷ Given the time frames and the specificity of this unit, it is reasonable to assess that this ‘foreign languages team’ is what the FBI was referring to as ‘The Legion’.

⁹⁸⁸ Cole Bunzel, ‘Ideological Infighting in the Islamic State’, *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 1 (2019): 14.

⁹⁸⁹ Bunzel, ‘Ideological Infighting’, 14.

The media apparatus of IS had endured specific, targeted operations, especially during what was known in Western counterinsurgency discourse as the ‘surge’. As Roggio noted, quoting a US Defense official, ‘since the surge began, we’ve uncovered eight separate AQ media offices and cells.’⁹⁹⁰ An indication of the scale and sophistication of the previous iteration of IS’ media operation, of which al-Furqan was intimately involved, is in the capability that these units possessed. As Whiteside noted, one raid in 2007 garnered ‘65 hard drives with 18 terabytes of data, 500 compact discs of material, and twelve computers. The facility had the capability to mass-produce 156 CDs in eight hours and had a fully functioning film studio with first class equipment.’⁹⁹¹

The media capabilities of IS are rooted in practices developed, refined and preserved during earlier iterations of the organisation and in earlier periods of heightened operational activity. Whiteside further noted that the decentralisation of the media operations in Iraq during the aforementioned period provided a level of resilience to their enterprise that would enable them to continue to generate output and inform future organisational structures established during the Caliphate period.

Abu Muhammed al-Adnani

Abu Muhammed al-Adnani rose to infamy, at least beyond jihadist circles, with the 2014 release of *Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful* and its role in motivating individual jihadist operations in the West. Much like al-Furqan, Adnani had a storied jihadist career, dating back at least as far as al-Furqan and the early days of the Iraqi insurgency. Soufan noted that as far back as 2002, Adnani was part of a cohort of some three dozen Syrians who pledged allegiance to Zarqawi’s nascent organisation.⁹⁹² While Adnani became known as the ‘loudest and most effective spokesperson’⁹⁹³ for IS, his substantive credentials as a strategist and senior figure within the organisation are of equal importance. This status is reflected in two key declarations he made, the first during the period when IS was breaking away from AQ, entitled *Ma kan hadha Manhajuna wa lan yakun* (This Is Not Our Methodology nor Will It Ever Be), which condemned AQ’s alleged relative tolerance of Shias, Hindus and Christians.

⁹⁹⁰ Bill Roggio, ‘US Targets al Qaeda’s al Furqan Media Wing in Iraq’, *Long War Journal* (blog), 28 October 2007, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/10/us_targets_al_qaedas.php.

⁹⁹¹ Craig Whiteside, ‘Lighting the Path: The Evolution of the Islamic State Media Enterprise (2003–2016)’ (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016), 12, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep29438>.

⁹⁹² Ali H. Soufan, *Anatomy of Terror: From the Death of bin Laden to the Rise of the Islamic State* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017), 127.

⁹⁹³ Soufan, *Anatomy of Terror*, 270.

This statement would spark a propaganda spat between Adnani and Zawahiri. The intra-jihadist conflict would culminate in the eventual splintering of IS from AQ, with Adnani declaring on 29 June that the organisation would now be referred to simply as IS. Further, ‘the caliphate had been established, and that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had been nominated as its caliph’.⁹⁹⁴ Adnani announced the Caliphate and the caliph. He made the absolutist declaration that ‘it is incumbent upon all Muslims to pledge allegiance to the khalīfah Ibrāhīm and support him (may Allah preserve him). The legality of all emirates, groups, states, and organizations, becomes null by the expansion of the khilāfah’s authority’.⁹⁹⁵

Further, Adnani repeatedly exhorted Western-based Muslims to launch individual jihadist attacks. He provided broad guidance regarding tactics and targets and oversaw IS’ external operations team, the *Amniyat al-Kharji*, which:

recruited and trained foreign fighters in Syria with the intention of sending them home to conduct terrorist attacks ... IS fighters conducted 132 external operations—76 successful attacks and 56 disrupted plots—between March 2014 and August 2016, while al-Adnani oversaw *Amniyat al-Kharji*. Fifty-two percent of these involved foreign fighters. Sixty percent were conducted in the West. The most devastating operation killed 129 individuals in Paris on November 13, 2015.⁹⁹⁶

His significance to Western jihadist operations is unsurpassed, and his communicative role in propagating the narratives of IS’ ideology and their strategic intent and broader justifications for operations in the West have had vast consequences. In both al-Furqan and Adnani, the ideas of al-Suri are present. While not as explicit as they were in the case of Awlaki, the clear influence of al-Suri’s commitment to media and online communication and individual jihad is present through al-Furqan’s ‘foreign language’ teams and his role in establishing *Dabiq*. It is also present in Adnani’s commitment to the value of refined and targeted propaganda and the explicit and repeated call for individual jihad in the West. Both individuals were complemented by another IS member, whose trajectory mirrored aspects of Awlaki’s and who sought to undertake and propagate terrorism in the West.

⁹⁹⁴ Ingram, Whiteside and Winter, *The ISIS Reader*, 161.

⁹⁹⁵ *This is the Promise of Allah*, al-Hayat Media Center, 2014.

http://sitemultimedia.org/video/SITE_ISIS_Adnani_Declaration_Caliphate.mp4

⁹⁹⁶ R. Kim Cragin and Ari Weil, ‘“Virtual Planners” in the Arsenal of Islamic State External Operations’, *Orbis* 62, no. 2 (January 2018): 294–312, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2018.02.007>.

Ahmed Abousamra

Ahmed Abousamra presents a further demonstration of the importance of communicative and narrative dynamics to IS' strategic calculus. He reflects a culmination of many jihadist processes and strategic actions over time. Abousamra was a Syrian American, whose jihadist career reflects the outcomes and consequences of the jihadist movements violent innovations, communicative and narrative considerations and their embrace of emergent information and communications technology. His trajectory can be understood as fundamentally shaped by the intertwined nature of these elements by the jihadist movement over time. This includes prioritising the far enemy, cultivating a globalised culture of martyrdom and promoting and practising individual jihad, all of which were communicated and contextualised within a broader jihadist narrative and distributed via contemporary information and communications technology. Abousamra, killed in 2017 and the last of three key propagandists, including al-Furqan and Adnani, was targeted by the US and its allies.

Abousamra's primary notoriety with Western audiences was through his editorship of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*,⁹⁹⁷ propaganda items that were the result of his work with his mentor, al-Furqan. His trajectory prior to his role in the media *diwan* explains his career as a product and consequence of much of the previously discussed elements of the jihadist movement in the post-2001 period. While Abousamara's career is indelibly shaped by opportunities that IS and the broader conflict in Syria and Iraq presented, his experiences and efforts before his departure for the conflict zone are equally as insightful as his actions in theatre.

The radicalisation trajectory of Abousamra began well before 2001. Klausen demonstrated that he began watching AQ videos as early as 1996,⁹⁹⁸ indicative of the impact of early jihadist video propaganda. Given the timeframe, these would likely have been the types of poor-quality videos of the conflicts in Chechnya and Bosnia hosted on sites such as azzam.com. Consuming jihadist propaganda, Abousamra was soon joined by an individual who would ultimately become his co-defendant, Tarek Mehanna, and others. Between 2001 and 2003, Abousamra made multiple attempts to join jihadist groups in theatre, via Pakistan and through Yemen. It is worthwhile to note that over these years, the various members of the small cell that had formed around Abousamra 'would remain in contact via blogs and forums

⁹⁹⁷ Ingram and Lewis, 'Founding Fathers of American Jihad', 4.

⁹⁹⁸ Jytte Klausen, 'A Behavioral Study of the Radicalization Trajectories of American "Homegrown" Al Qaeda-Inspired Terrorist Offenders', Office of Justice Programs, published 2016, 15.

over the years.’⁹⁹⁹ After Mehanna and Abousamra’s failure to join offshore jihadist groups, they ‘translate[d] jihadist literature into English and became active bloggers and web administrators for various jihadist sites.’¹⁰⁰⁰

The career trajectory of Abousamra and his fellow travellers would be a component of the implementation of the so-called electronic jihad, with members of the original small cadre in his hometown of Boston going on to have roles that ‘brought together a number of people who went on to work on the Inspire Magazine and related online publications associated with AQAP and Anwar al-Awlaki.’¹⁰⁰¹ Eventually, in 2004, Abousamra was able to make it to Iraq via Yemen and joined AQ in Iraq.¹⁰⁰² Abousamra would only remain in Iraq briefly before returning home and regrouping with Mehanna, who referred to himself and colleagues as ‘the media wing of AQI’ and were engaged in the ‘translation of several videos produced by the group from Arabic into English’.¹⁰⁰³ Mehanna would translate *39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad*, mentioned above.¹⁰⁰⁴ Abousamra would eventually return to the Middle East, travelling to Syria in late 2006 after being questioned by the FBI.¹⁰⁰⁵

According to his eulogy, Abousamra returned to the US in 2004 to ‘try and make America itself the frontlines for his jihad and the place for his martyrdom’.¹⁰⁰⁶ The eulogy detailed Abousamra’s efforts to undertake a suicide operation in Syria and how al-Furqan, having determined he had greater utility, ‘decided to bring him to the Media Diwan of the IS.’ His eulogy suggests that his initial efforts were working with the ‘foreign languages team’ to encourage them to travel to Syria as foreign fighters before ‘the idea came to produce a magazine directed towards English speakers’. As with al-Furqan and Adnani, Abousamra was also allotted responsibilities to propagate IS methodology and ideology and manage and produce more conventional propaganda. Meleagrou-Hitchens et al. referred to Abousamra and two other American foreign fighters as pioneers, a term they use:

to refer to the top-tier of U.S. jihadist travelers in Syria and Iraq. Pioneers arrived early, built connections in jihadist networks, and contacted supporters who were

⁹⁹⁹ Klausen, ‘Behavioral Study’, 15.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Klausen, ‘Behavioral Study’, 15.

¹⁰⁰¹ Klausen, ‘Behavioral Study’, 15.

¹⁰⁰² Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Seamus Hughes and Bennett Clifford, ‘The Travelers: American Jihadists in Syria and Iraq’, GW Program on Extremism, published 2018, 43, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/TravelersAmericanJihadistsinSyriaandIraq.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰³ Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hughes and Clifford, ‘The Travelers’, 32.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ingram and Lewis, ‘Founding Fathers of American Jihad’, 34.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ingram and Lewis, ‘Founding Fathers of American Jihad’, 35.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Rumiya, 8, 41. http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_IS_Rumiya8_English.pdf.

still in the U.S. to encourage them to provide support or join their organizations. These individuals often become nodes of jihadist recruitment in the U.S. and are linked to several other cases of material support and travel.¹⁰⁰⁷

These three individuals, al-Furqan, Adnani and Abousamra, reflect the personnel that founded, shaped and prosecuted key elements of IS' full-spectrum propaganda campaign aimed at Westerners, encouraging them initially to *hijrah* (migration) to the IS. Then, as the dynamics of the conflict and foreign fighter flows began to alter, to make *hijrah* or *jihad*. As Adnani advised in a 2016 speech entitled *And Those Who Were to Live Might Live after a Clear Evidence*, 'if the tyrants have closed in your faces the door of *hijrah* [migration], then open in their face the door of *jihad*'.¹⁰⁰⁸ In seeking to understand the depth and breadth of the *system* that IS was capable of amassing, it is worth quoting from the eulogy of Abousamra again, this time at length. The work of this triumvirate of propagandists and their teams had dramatic and ongoing consequences on Western counterterrorism, achieving substantial strategic effect. By fusing the communicative and narrative aspects of their work and integrating this with the broader innovative forms of violence that the jihadist movement broadly, but then IS specifically, practised, it achieved grossly disproportionate results. At its peak, IS' propaganda machine was unsurpassed in terms of its output's volume, diversity and sophistication. In its own words:

the Media Bureau's productions reached an amount and a quantity that impressed the enemy before the friend, by the grace of Allah the Almighty. Not a day passed without one or more visual production, in addition to hundreds of photos and news reports. Also, al-Bayan Radio broadcast exclusive material around the clock, and millions of leaflets and advocacy books were distributed, the blessings of which spread over the land of the Caliphate, by the grace of Allah the Almighty.

The volume of audiovisual and reading material in foreign languages and translations increased until nothing remained of the news of the IS and the various products of the Media Bureau until it reached vast horizons in different languages. Then, magazines in various languages appeared. In addition to *Dabiq* (in English) was *Dar al-Islam* (in French), *Constantinople* (in Turkish) and *Istok* (in Russian). Work began on projects to issue magazines in other languages before Sheikh Abu Muhammad later decided to unify all

¹⁰⁰⁷ Meleagrou-Hitchens, Hughes and Clifford, 'The Travelers', 23.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *And Those Who Were to Live Might Live after a Clear Evidence*, al-Furqan Media Foundation, 2016. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/is-spokesman-rallies-fighters-blasts-u-s-led-campaign-against-is.html>.

projects in one magazine, *Rumiyah*, issued simultaneously in English, French, Turkish, Russian, German, Turkistani, Bosnian, Indonesian and Pashto.¹⁰⁰⁹

The diversity of mediums mentioned in the above quote speaks to the IS' ability and willingness to exploit all the benefits and power that emergent information and communications technology made available to them. They did not merely exploit Twitter or social media alone in doing so. They used digital technology in all its forms, exploiting its accessibility, portability, cost-effectiveness and agility. It is this final element that the next section analyses.

Exploitation of Emerging Information and Communication Technologies

The evolution of the jihadist movement's propaganda efforts and its operational trajectory has paralleled what has been invariably referred to as the information revolution, the information technology revolution, the information age or the network society.¹⁰¹⁰ Castells, in his famous *Rise of the Network Society*, referred to this as:

A technological transformation ... namely the integration of various modes of communication into an interactive network. Or, in other words, the formation of a hypertext and a meta-language which, for the first time in history, integrate into the same system the written, oral, and audiovisual modalities of human communication.¹⁰¹¹

The 'system' articulated by Castells is reflected in the operational system described above: the extract from the eulogy of Abousamra and its reference to 'one or more visual production, in addition to hundreds of photos and news reports.' The integrated and reinforcing, embedded narratives and interconnectivity of much of this system further evidences its dependency on, and exploitation of, what Castells dubbed 'the network society'. At the peak of its media operations, IS was strategically deploying a fully integrated system that produced 'written, oral and audiovisual' material, in multiple languages, and was distributed across a wide array of contemporary platforms.' Castells' analysis of the digitally informed information revolution is central to the perspective taken here and in understanding and analysing how the jihadist movement, especially on how IS achieved the kinds of strategic

¹⁰⁰⁹ IS Serializes Biography of Deceased Founding Member, Former Head of Media Department (Part 2), *Naba*, i287, 2021. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Statements/is-serializes-biography-of-deceased-founding-member-former-head-of-media-department-part-2.html>.

¹⁰¹⁰ Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age—Economy, Society and Culture* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons 2009), 28, ProQuest Central.

¹⁰¹¹ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 356.

effects they did. As Atwan has observed, ‘without digital technology it is highly unlikely that IS would ever have come into existence, let alone been able to survive and expand’.¹⁰¹²

This section will analyse how the jihadist movement, particularly IS, has exploited contemporary, digital information and communications technology and how this has been a necessary component of its effectiveness in achieving strategic effect. Since the earliest days of the modern jihadist movement, propagandists specifically and leaders with propaganda sensibilities have sought to incorporate digital technology into the suite of offensive capabilities of the movement. In doing so, the jihadist movement has remained at the leading edge of terrorist use of digital technology and has continually innovated and mastered exploiting these technologies. The following will reflect on the trajectory of digital technology within the jihadist movement before providing an analysis of the specific examples where IS and other elements of the jihadist movement could exploit these technologies as key elements of their strategic operations. Initially, the focus will be on the information operations that IS undertook in support of their kinetic activities during the Siege of Marawi in 2017. Second, an analysis of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks of 2015 will be undertaken, noting that while IS has certainly been the most prominent, sophisticated and advanced in its exploitation of emergent information and communications technology, AQAP remains an entity capable of sophisticated and integrated information activities, if in a distinct manner. As Atwan has noted, ‘IS could never have achieved its territorial ambitions, nor could it have recruited such a large army in so short a time, without its mastery of the internet’.¹⁰¹³

Digital Technology

Given the voluminous and frequently hyperbolic literature regarding modern information and communication technology, especially regarding terrorism, it is necessary to provide appropriate parameters about what is meant by the terms being deployed herein. For the purposes of this analysis, a relatively broad conceptualisation of modern digital information and communication technology (herein, digital technology) will be utilised. The work of Hanson is especially instructive in seeking to capture what digital technology constitutes. She referred to:

¹⁰¹² Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate* (London: Saqi Books, 2015).

¹⁰¹³ Atwan, *Islamic State*, 15.

the abundance of information available and the variety of sources from which it can be obtained ... the number and variety of communication channels, and especially, the reduction in the time and cost for communicating over great distances. The combination of digitization (which converts all signals into 1s and 0s) with satellite technology allows messages, pictures, data, and any form of information to be transmitted almost instantaneously to any part of the world that can receive electronic signals.¹⁰¹⁴

In the broader context, beyond the hardware and technological capability itself, what must be considered is the cultural implications of the changes these technologies have driven and enabled. As Castells has noted previously, the emergence of this fundamental information revolution ‘is changing and will change forever our culture’.¹⁰¹⁵ While there is no specific focus on the cultural dynamics of the audiences that consume contemporary jihadist propaganda, it is necessary to acknowledge that, as with any information revolution, the changes that take place are as much about the technology itself as the impacts such technology has on culture. As digital technology has become an increasingly near-ubiquitous aspect of modern existence, the volume, manner and capacity to access and consume information have been equally revolutionised. In particular, it has been highlighted that the increased accessibility of terrorist and extremist content has substantially impacted the radicalisation process. As RAND found in 2013, the internet has increased opportunities for radicalisation, accelerated the radicalisation process and created opportunities for self-radicalisation and radicalisation without physical, real-world interaction.¹⁰¹⁶

Social Media

The secondary element of this section of the analysis is social media. Clarifying what constitutes social media is challenging, as it is a phenomenon that exists within a highly dynamic environment that thrives on accelerated levels of innovation and change. It is also relatively immature, at least relative to other modes of communication. Facebook, for instance, one of the most pervasive and influential social media platforms, was only established in 2003. Ahlqvist et al. have defined social media specifically (they distinguish between Web 2.0, which they use to refer to the exclusively technical aspects of social media) as ‘the interaction of people and also to creating, sharing, exchanging and

¹⁰¹⁴ Elizabeth C. Hanson, *The Information Revolution and World Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 1–2.

¹⁰¹⁵ Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*, 357.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ines von Behr et al., *Radicalisation in the Digital Era: The Use of the Internet in 15 Cases of Terrorism and Extremism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR453>.

commenting contents in virtual communities and networks'.¹⁰¹⁷ Much has been written on the relationship between terrorism and social media.¹⁰¹⁸ Thus, it is not the purpose of this analysis to relitigate these arguments, but rather to evidence how digital technology, and the 'creating, sharing, exchanging and commenting in virtual communities' it has enabled, have been exploited by terrorist entities.

Siege of Marawi: 23 May – 23 October 2017

The Siege of Marawi in 2017 provides a unique insight into the information activities of IS. The siege took place during a relatively advanced stage in the development of IS's overall trajectory and in relation to the trajectory of their information activities. Before specifically analysing the information activities of IS in this context and the integrated campaign they deployed regarding *Wilayah Al-Filipin* (Wilayah Philippines), it is necessary to note the context within which the events and the propaganda campaign took place. As early as September 2014, the *Katibah Nusantara Lid Daulah Islamiyah* (Malay Archipelago Unit for the IS in Iraq and Syria)¹⁰¹⁹ had been established to address language issues for the numerous Indonesian and Malaysian foreign fighters that had travelled to Syria and Iraq to join IS. By 2016 'ISIS committed considerable expenditure on *Bahasa Indonesia* and Malay language social-media propaganda'.¹⁰²⁰ In April 2016, IS declared the establishment of a new *wilayah* (province) in the southern Philippines, the site of long-running insurgency and terrorism challenges for the Manila government.

Beginning on 23 May 2017, IS operatives engaged substantially with Filipino forces, and within days, the Marawi city was being evacuated. Months later, in August, Joint Task Force Marawi had the IS forces confined to a relatively small geographic area, with only a limited number of men at arms. It was not until October 2017 that the Filipino Government declared

¹⁰¹⁷ Toni Ahlqvist et al., 'Social Media Roadmaps Exploring the Futures Triggered by Social Media', *VTT Research Notes* 2454 (January 2008): 13.

¹⁰¹⁸ West, '#jihad: Understanding Social Media as a Weapon'; Klausen, 'Tweeting the Jihad'; Elizabeth A. Bodine-Baron, *Examining ISIS Support and Opposition Networks on Twitter* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016); Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, Audrey Alexander and Nick Kaderbhai, 'The Impact of Digital Communications Technology on Radicalization and Recruitment', *International Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September 2017): 1233–49, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix103>; Weimann and Hoffman, *Terrorism in Cyberspace*; Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, 'Paradigmatic Shifts in Jihadism in Cyberspace: The Emerging Role of Unaffiliated Sympathizers in Islamic State's Social Media Strategy', *Journal of Terrorism Research* 7, no. 1 (February 2016): 36, <https://doi.org/10.15664/jtr.1183>.

¹⁰¹⁹ Jasmininder Singh, 'Katibah Nusantara: Islamic State's Malay Archipelago Combat Unit', n.d., 3.

¹⁰²⁰ Rommel C Banlaoi, ed., *The Marawi Siege and Its Aftermath: The Continuing Terrorist Threat* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), 5.

the siege over and the city free of IS elements.¹⁰²¹ This provides a rudimentary overview of the battle itself.¹⁰²² However, the primary focus of the following section is to highlight how IS deployed an integrated, thematically consistent information operation, deployed across a range of social media platforms and created using digital technologies. To highlight the use of digital technology and social media, it is noteworthy to preliminarily highlight that the opening scenes of the third edition of *Inside the Caliphate*¹⁰²³ are footage taken by a drone-mounted camera. The dramatic scene, backgrounded by the familiar audio of a *nasheed* and complemented by a computer-animated map and English audio, states, ‘to the furthest edges of the East, which the reign of the Ummah of Muhammad, Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him, would reach as promised, Marawi’.¹⁰²⁴ It then cuts to the drone footage of battle-damaged Marawi, with the Mosque dome and towers prominent in the scene. This is but one example of the sophisticated digital technology-enabled content IS produced and distributed during the siege.

The information activities undertaken were spread across the full spectrum of written, oral and audiovisual. The breadth of content included simple ground up content such as a message posted on Telegram challenging famous Filipino boxing champion, Manny Pacquiao, to fight in Marawi;¹⁰²⁵ the tenth edition of *Rumiyah*, which included ‘an interview with the IS official for East Asia, Abu Abdullah al-Muhajir; and a biography of a slain Malaysian fighter, Abu Sabah al-Muhajir’, which included photos of executed ‘belligerent Christians’ (as the magazine refers to them).¹⁰²⁶ By the time of the publication of the twelfth edition of *Rumiyah*, in August of 2017, Marawi was a footnote by comparison, and IS had sustained losses across Syria, Iraq and Marawi. References to Marawi were reduced to brief details of the military operations in Marawi, and a couple of sentences, such as ‘in another part of the world, the soldiers of the Khilafah have proven once again—this time in Marawi’.¹⁰²⁷ The more sophisticated output during the siege included Episodes Two and Three of *Inside the*

¹⁰²¹ ABC News, ‘Philippines Declares End of Marawi Siege as 40 Suspected Gunmen Found Dead’, 23 October 2017, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-10-23/philippines-troops-find-dozens-dead-as-warawi-siege-ends/9077096>.

¹⁰²² A detailed analysis of the conflict can be accessed at Ervin C. Divinagracia, ‘Urban Terrorism: The Siege of Marawi’ (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 2018), <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=833059>.

¹⁰²³ *Inside the Caliphate*, al-Hayat Media Center, 3, 2017. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Multimedia/is-focuses-on-marawi-in-3rd-episode-of-inside-the-caliphate.html>.

¹⁰²⁴ *Inside the Caliphate*, 3.

¹⁰²⁵ ‘Filipino IS Operative Challenges Boxer Manny Paquiao to Fight in Battlefield, Claims Spies in Military HQ,’ *SITE Intelligence*, 2017. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Chatter/filipino-is-operative-challenges-boxer-manny-paquiao-to-fight-in-battlefield-claims-spies-in-military-hq.html>.

¹⁰²⁶ *Rumiyah*, 10, 2017. http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_IS_Rumiyah10_English.pdf. [password protected]

¹⁰²⁷ *Rumiyah*, 12, 5, 2017. http://sitemultimedia.org/docs/SITE_IS_Rumiyah12.pdf. [password protected]

Caliphate. Episode Two represents a highly calibrated approach to propaganda production, with the main speaking role allocated to *Abu Adam al-Australi* (Mounir Raad),¹⁰²⁸ who, after speaking the first half of the five-minute video in Arabic, switches to English and explicitly encourages Australians to make *hijra* to Marawi before explaining that if this is not possible:

So kill them wherever you find them. If you're a tradesman, use your nail gun and nail the kaffir to the head and crucify his body to the woodworks. If you're truck driver, ram their crowds until their streets run with their filthy blood. Or pour petrol over their houses whilst they're asleep and engulf their houses with flames. That way the message will be burnt into their memories.¹⁰²⁹

This section is supported by computer graphics, with text from *Just Terror Tactics*, animated images of a nail gun firing bullets and a truck, a jerry can and a match lighting the fuel poured from it. The explicit reference to Australians, supported by the reference to 'tradesmen', and argumentation about Australian involvement in support of the Filipino authorities, evidences a highly targeted recruitment video, seeking per the broader narrative for IS supporters to make either *hijra* or *jihad*.

Throughout the siege itself, several IS news agencies explicitly encouraged social media users to promote '#EastAsia'. The Arabic messages stated, 'to bolster their enthusiasm and provide them support in terms of media, we urge you to participate in the campaign and bring them victory'.¹⁰³⁰ As the Filipino authorities began to gain the upper hand, the messaging began to shift, and increasingly the focus was on encouraging lone jihadist operations in Western locales in response to the events in Marawi.¹⁰³¹ Ensuring that all mediums were covered, IS also released an English-language *nasheed* entitled *Brothers in Marawi*.¹⁰³² It sang the praises of the IS fighters in the conflict. The overwhelming majority of this content was shared, at least preliminarily, on Telegram, via both official and unofficial channels.

¹⁰²⁸ Liz Burke, 'Aussie Tradies Called to Join IS', *News.com.au*, last modified 8 August 2017, <https://news.com.au/finance/work/at-work/275australian-islamic-state-recruiter-targets-truckers-and-tradies-in-new-propaganda-video/news-story/eed59086ac184f07a7a52d1c5af4aa81>.

¹⁰²⁹ *Inside the Caliphate*, AL-Hayat media Center, 2, 2017. http://sitemultimedia.org/video/SITE_IS_Inside_Caliphate_Ep2.mp4. [password protected]

¹⁰³⁰ 'IS Supporters Push Campaign Promoting Fighters in East Asia, Philippines Specifically', *SITE Intelligence*, 2017. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Chatter/is-supporters-push-campaign-promoting-fighters-in-east-asia-philippines-specifically.html>.

¹⁰³¹ 'Filipino IS Operative Calls Muslims in West to Avenge Bombing of Marawi', *SITE Intelligence*, 2017. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Chatter/filipino-is-operative-calls-muslims-in-west-to-avenge-bombing-of-marawi.html>.

¹⁰³² 'IS Releases English Audio Chant Promoting Fighters in Marawi', *SITE Intelligence*, 2017. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Multimedia/is-releases-english-audio-chant-promoting-fighters-in-marawi.html>.

The above demonstrates the sophistication of the individual products themselves and the capacity of IS to produce thematically integrated content that promptly reflects events on the ground and reinforces narratives promoted in other products. It also evidences the use of and dependency on digital technology, including video equipment and the computers and software necessary to undertake post-production work. The use of computer graphics and drone-mounted cameras further demonstrated the sophistication and a deep understanding of the strategic power of imagery and video, symbolism and the various narratives pushed throughout the campaign. Digital technology also enabled IS, as they had with their Syria- and Iraq-oriented messaging, to adjust their narrative as conditions on the ground changed. The pivot from calling for *hijra* to that of *hijra* or *jihad* before focusing primarily on individual jihadist operations beyond the conflict zone further reflects the benefits and the strategic exploitation of digital technologies.

Charlie Hebdo Shooting: 7 January 2015

In seeking to highlight the consequences of the pervasiveness of these technologies and their impacts on news, politics and society more broadly—what Castells referred to as ‘the emergence of a new form of communication related to the culture and technology of the network society’¹⁰³³—it is helpful to consider the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris briefly. The attack itself, which involved two operatives entering the offices of the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, killing twelve people, does not in and of itself provide any explicit insight into the impact of digital technology on society. However, contextualising the attack in a broader context is instructive.

This was not the first attempted terrorist attack anchored in perceived offences regarding cartoon depictions of Mohammed, and it is impossible to remove these instances from the broader context of the post-9/11 GWOT and associated news and public discourse on Islam, the Middle East and domestic immigration-related politics.

What the 2015 attack does demonstrate is how choreographed violence, embedded with communicative dynamics through symbolic target selection and shaped to both reinforce and perpetuate existing narratives, can manifest as a media event unto itself. Further, it demonstrates how it can become a live, globally mediated event in the context of digital

¹⁰³³ Manuel Castells, ‘Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society’, *International Journal of Communication* 1 (February 2007), 239, <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/46>.

technology, what Sumiala et al. would call a ‘hybrid media event’. By this, the authors referred to media events that can be understood as ‘translocal, transcultural and transnational phenomena articulated by a connectivity of different actors, platforms and communication processes’.¹⁰³⁴ In characterising the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as a hybrid media event, Sumiala additionally noted that, over seven days, the media event unfolded in real-time and was transmitted via ‘different actors, platforms and communication processes, begins with the attack against the Charlie Hebdo headquarters, climaxes in the public demonstrations in which world leaders march together in Paris and ends with the publication of the Charlie Hebdo ‘survival issue’, the first issue after the attacks’.¹⁰³⁵

The live, globalised mediation of these events was fundamentally underpinned by digital technology. From the footage of the attack itself; its global, instantaneous broadcast; the trending hashtags on Twitter associated with the event; the accessibility of the publication at the centre of the attacks and the protests and social responses, sympathetic and offended, across the West and beyond, were all mediated through and across contemporary digital technology platforms. The trending Twitter hashtag *#jesuischarlie* is one of the most representative manifestations of this process.

The same can be said for the alternative media ecosystem of the jihadist movement. Prior and in the aftermath, jihadist organisations and sympathisers had consistently commented on, rallied against, and called for violence in response to various depictions of Mohammed. Multiple plots had been disrupted concerning the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper and *Charlie Hebdo*. As recently as July 2015, AQ’s *As-Sahab* released a two-part documentary video entitled *An Unpardonable Crime*, the first part of which focused on France and the claim that it had repeatedly blasphemed against Islam and Mohammed.¹⁰³⁶ The video explicitly references and includes footage from the *Charlie Hebdo* attack. At the time of the attack, numerous jihadist organisations from across the movement celebrated the attack. It was a focus of numerous chat forums and other platforms where jihadists engage in discourse. The capacity of the attack itself to achieve the effects it did was contingent on the

¹⁰³⁴ Johanna Sumiala et al., *Hybrid Media Events: The Charlie Hebdo Attacks and the Global Circulation of Terrorist Violence*, 1st ed. (Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing, 2018), 13.

¹⁰³⁵ Johanna Sumiala, Minttu Tikka and Katja Valaskivi, ‘Charlie Hebdo, 2015: “Liveness” and Acceleration of Conflict in a Hybrid Media Even’, *Media, War & Conflict* 12, no. 2 (June 2019): 202–18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635219846033>.

¹⁰³⁶ ‘Al-Qaeda Releases 1st Part of Video Documentary on Jihadi Reprisals for Insults to Islam, Vilification of France,’ *SITE Intelligence*, 2021. <https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Multimedia/al-qaeda-releases-1st-part-of-video-documentary-on-jihadi-reprisals-for-insults-to-islam-vilification-of-france.html>.

violence deployed, the communicative nature of the target selection and embedding the attack within a broader narrative of reprisals for the depiction of Mohammed, as well as on digital technology in enabling the incident to become a globalised, mediated event as described above. The attackers were affiliated with AQAP. One of the brothers, Saïd Kouachi, had, as previously detailed, reportedly met with Anwar al-Awlaki during his time in Yemen.¹⁰³⁷

As a further demonstration of both the continuity that issues such as the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons can underpin and the accelerated nature of contemporary, digital technology–informed terrorism, it is worth briefly analysing the attempted attack on Curtis Calwell Centre in Garland, Texas, in 2015. This was an attack on an intentionally provocative Mohammed cartoon competition that included speeches from incendiary activists such as Pamela Gellar and controversial anti-Islam Dutch politician Geert Wilders. In the period before the attack, IS-sympathetic Twitter accounts had been citing the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo*, encouraging potential operatives to act:

Other users in Simpson’s social network had been tweeting about the Garland event for weeks in advance of the attack, and many provided links to its time and location. On April 23, for instance, one user tweeted, ‘Brothers & Sisters. the kuffar [unbelievers] are exercising their free speech “hate speech” by drawing Rasulallah [the Prophet]’, with a link to more information. On April 26, 2015, a little more than a week before the attack, an IS supporter responding to an unknown comment by Simpson tweeted, ‘You really have to do it’! On May 1, two days before the attack, a user tweeted, ‘Kuffar gone crazier, they are making draw Muhammad SAW event’!!!!!!¹⁰³⁸

Ten days prior, American *al-Shabaab* operative, Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan (a.k.a. Mujahid Miski), who had been in contact with Simpson for weeks prior, tweeted, ‘The brothers from the *Charlie Hebdo* attack did their part. It’s time for brothers in the #US to do their part’.¹⁰³⁹ Hours before the operation, Simpson tweeted an image of Anwar al-Awlaki with his Twitter avatar, pre-empted the #texasattack hashtag of the attack,¹⁰⁴⁰ and encouraged other Twitter users to follow one of Junaid Hussain’s Twitter accounts. The failed attack was

¹⁰³⁷ Scott Shane, ‘In New Era of Terrorism, Voice from Yemen Echoes’, *New York Times*, 10 January 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/world/middleeast/paris-attacks-anwar-al-awlaki.html>.

¹⁰³⁸ J. M. Berger, ‘Tailored Online Interventions: The Islamic State’s Recruitment Strategy’, *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 10 (2015), <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CTCSentinel-Vol8Iss1036.pdf>.

¹⁰³⁹ Counter Extremism Project, ‘Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan a.k.a. Mujahid Miski’, accessed 27 November 2021, <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/muhammed-abdullahi-hassan-aka-mujahid-miski>.

¹⁰⁴⁰ BBC, ‘Profile: Texas Gunmen Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi’, *BBC News*, 5 May 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-32582704>.

celebrated almost immediately on Twitter by Hussain¹⁰⁴¹ and other IS-aligned accounts. The collapsed timeframe between online encouragement, public commitment to action and launching an (albeit failed) operation speak to the accelerated environment that digital technology enables. It also informs how mediated events can exist and endure within mainstream traditional media discourse and the alternative media ecosystem of the jihadist movement, at times able to transcend organisational divisions.

The previously analysed emergence of *Inspire* magazine, its promotion of individual jihad and the strategic doctrine of al-Suri provide evidence of the beginnings of the strategic embrace of social media and digital technology. These technologies truly enabled the substantive shift to what Castells referred to when he identified the ‘formation of a hypertext and a meta-language’ and its capacity to ‘integrate into the same system the written, oral, and audiovisual modalities of human communication.’ This was what Awlaki sought to build. It was what IS ultimately succeeded in building, and it remains the enduring legacy of the jihadist movement. Their full-spectrum propaganda machine, which produced content in various languages across a multitude of mediums and in various formats, is an exploitation of the underpinning digital technologies and a product of them. These technologies, the accessibility, for instance, of affordable desktop editing software and portable videography capacity and the capacity to distribute the digital technology-enabled content to a global audience, were fundamental to the success of IS’ campaign. With its encouragement of individual jihadist attacks and its strategic communication towards their primary adversary, the Western-oriented campaign was crucial to its success and the perception of its success. Returning to the *Message to America* video of 2014, it is possible not only to recognise that digital technology was fundamental to the effectiveness of that propaganda item, but that as Krona and Pennington noted, ‘this particular video clearly illustrated a deliberate strategy of mediation by ISIS—a strategy that aimed to gain global attention through the theatrical beheading of a Westerner and to simultaneously convey the message of the organization as a global phenomenon itself.’¹⁰⁴²

¹⁰⁴¹ Spencer Ackerman, Ewen MacAskill and Alice Ross, ‘Junaid Hussain: British Hacker for ISIS Believed Killed in US Air Strike’, *The Guardian*, 27 August 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/27/junaid-hussain-british-hacker-for-isis-believed-killed-in-us-airstrike>.

¹⁰⁴² Michael Krona and Rosemary Pennington, *The Media World of ISIS* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 2019), 1.

Conclusion

It is difficult to overstate the centrality of digital technology and social media to the success of the IS as a culmination of the jihadist project. Their capacity to recruit their Western foreign fighter army and enable and inspire their Western-based army of individual jihadists was anchored equally in the series of integrated violent innovations, refined communicative and narrative dynamics and exploitation of emergent information and communications technology discussed above. In doing so, they integrated the three key elements of the framework in an exceptional manner, innovating violence in various ways, building on, extending and refining the narratives of jihadism that their predecessors developed; and exploiting, initially without counter measures, emergent digital technologies. The integration of these elements enabled IS to achieve significant strategic effects against a range of key adversaries, including but not limited to the US and its allies. Throughout the totality of the modern jihadist movement, that these actions were frequently informed by strategic thought and doctrine only reinforces the merits of the analytical approach articulated above. It is not by happenstance that IS came to dominate international security agendas from 2014 onwards. Moreover, as demonstrated by its resilience and adaptability, the jihadist movement will remain an international and national security consideration well into the future. Its capacity to shift platforms, adapt its approach and adjust its narrative means it is almost certain that the jihadist movement, in some guise or another, will remain an enduring presence, albeit changing its character to adapt to its environment and context well into the future.

Part III

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion and Implications

In his 2016 State of the Union address, then-President Obama made remarks that reflect some of the key ideas analysed above. This analysis has demonstrated not only the centrality of propaganda to terrorism but that a complex integrated approach to the use of innovative forms of violence, the intentional incorporation of communicative and narrative dynamics into that violence and the exploitation of information and communications technology can achieve strategic effects grossly disproportionate to the conventional capabilities of the terrorist organisation undertaking the operation(s). The achievement of this disproportionate response is the enduring nature of terrorism. It dates back to what is considered to be some of the earliest manifestations of contemporary terrorism. Obama's comments, made at a time when offensive kinetic and non-kinetic efforts to counter IS were well underway, noted the following:

But as we focus on destroying ISIL, over-the-top claims that this is World War III just play into their hands. Masses of fighters on the back of pickup trucks and twisted souls plotting in apartments or garages pose an enormous danger to civilians and must be stopped. But they do not threaten our national existence. That's the story ISIL wants to tell; that's the kind of propaganda they use to recruit.¹⁰⁴³

Obama's caution reflects the challenge and the intent of terrorism as a threat to national and international security. The former president identifies two key components of how terrorism achieves its strategic effects: 'over-the-top claims' and 'the story ISIL wants to tell.' These comments could have been made by focusing on almost any terrorist campaign throughout history, especially regarding the paradigmatic manifestations analysed throughout this thesis.

Throughout history, government responses to terrorism have frequently been characterised by disproportionality and exploiting the perception, either by the public or the political apparatus (or both), of the need for a 'state of exception'. In circumstances where terrorism becomes an enduring aspect of national or national security, these disproportionate measures and states of exception can normalise and, in turn, become embedded features of increasingly illiberal democratic arrangements. As Wilkinson argues in his classic *Terrorism Versus Democracy*, it

¹⁰⁴³ Barack Obama, '2016 State of the Union' (Speech, State of the Union, Washington, DC, 2016), <https://medium.com/@ObamaWhiteHouse/president-obama-s-2016-state-of-the-union-address-7c06300f9726#.flsvqkay9>.

is unnecessary for democracies to ‘to suspend the rule of law and adopt draconian measures in the name of ‘national security’ in order to suppress terrorism’.¹⁰⁴⁴ It remains a truism that terrorism remains entirely capable of causing grossly disproportionate responses in democratic and undemocratic states. The above analysis has proposed that the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter Three is an effective means of understanding how terrorism, as a phenomenon that transcends organisations, waves, or specific ideological manifestations, can provoke these kinds of responses. This is significant because although terrorism studies has matured substantially since its initial coalescence, the field has not produced an integrated conceptual framework with broad applicability across diverse manifestations of terrorism. This dissertation has sought to develop a preliminary effort in that direction.

Before summarising the analysis above, a brief example of the kinds of strategic miscalculations that terrorism can provoke is instructive. The US response to the events of 9/11 is replete with excesses, numerous of which have endured well beyond their initial implementation. Policies such as so-called enhanced interrogation techniques, warrantless wiretapping and a litany of other policies, practices and strategic and operational decisions under the auspices of the GWOT have, in many ways, not only undermined democratic value but strengthened or enhanced the position of the terrorist organisation/s being countered. The invasion of Iraq in 2003, which Kilcullen referred to as:

an almost indescribably massive strategic error, which bogged the United States and its allies down in a decades-plus long counterinsurgency fight that demanded immense sacrifices from our troops, cost us our strategic freedom of action and eroded the legitimacy of a cause that, at the outset, enjoyed huge global support,¹⁰⁴⁵

is one of the most pertinent examples of how terrorism can create conditions conducive to counterproductive, strategic decision-making. In the process, it elevates and strengthens those entities that, at least nominally, are the target of the actions taken.

The invasion of Iraq created the crucible from which IS would spawn, providing a context that witnessed the transformation of a Jordanian petty criminal into a global household name. It further provided the operational environment for the evolution of this marginal jihadist enterprise to ultimately transform into a globally consequential terrorist enterprise, capable of launching large-scale, sophisticated terrorist attacks such as the 2015 Paris attacks, inspiring a

¹⁰⁴⁴ Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism versus Democracy*, 2.

¹⁰⁴⁵ David Kilcullen, *Blood Year: The Unraveling of Western Counterterrorism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 281.

multitude of individual jihadist operations across the Western world and controlling territory across the strategically important regions of Syria and Iraq. Their actions in theatre attracted military responses from the US and its allies, Russia and Iran. The Syrian Civil War exacted an unquantified but horrific toll on the civilian populations of Syria and Iraq. Without 9/11, it is difficult to see the US invading Iraq in 2003. Without the invasion of Iraq in 2003, it is difficult to see the 2014 declaration of the Caliphate and the gruesome violence that were and are the consequence of those events. Understanding terrorism's capacity to create grossly disproportionate strategic effect is vital to ensuring that the countermeasures enacted are proportionate, necessary and not counterproductive.

The application of the conceptual framework throughout this dissertation demonstrated the enduring nature of the strategic logic of terrorism. It has revealed how the enduring nature of terrorism is enabled through the application of relatively consistent, if continually evolving, methods. While various manifestations of terrorism achieve varying degrees of success, the application of the framework to the three paradigmatic case studies has enabled a deeper understanding of the mechanisms by which terrorism can disproportionately achieve a strategic effect and endures as a tactic and a strategy, over time.

The research sought to identify why particular terrorism campaigns achieved substantial strategic effects and to demonstrate there existed a common concept or enduring strategic logic among those able to achieve these effects. The framework itself, articulated in detail in Chapter Three, proposes that for terrorism to achieve the kinds of strategic effects articulated above concerning Iraq, the three elements of the framework must be integrated within the strategic calculus of terrorist strategic and operational planning. It has unpacked and articulated a consistent demonstration of the strategic calculus that underpins terrorism and evidenced the enduring nature of the practice, as distinct to the changing character of the phenomenon. At its core, this analysis has evidenced that there exists a consistent strategic consideration, present throughout all three case studies. While the historical context necessarily results in changes in relation to the ideological motivation and salience, the forms of violence deployed, the information and communications technology used to propagandise the actions and ideas, the anarchists, the Palestinians and the jihadists all made or make similar assessments about their most effective ways and means to achieve their strategic end states.

The Framework

The framework consists of three key elements, which it is worth briefly reiterating here before demonstrating how the case studies support the essentiality of the framework elements. As articulated at the outset, the framework is premised on the proposition that there is a consistent strategic logic to terrorism, that strategic logic is reflective of the enduring nature of terrorism as a phenomenon and that the key elements of that strategic logic can be identified and are articulated through the framework. The framework seeks to address the central research question of this analysis, namely, *how does terrorism achieve strategic effect?* The conceptual framework, which draws from scholarly literature and primary source terrorist doctrine and strategic thought, was applied to the case studies to demonstrate that across three paradigmatic manifestations of terrorism, each of which achieved substantial strategic impact through their operations, the framework held consistent explanatory power. The following section will briefly demonstrate what each of the framework elements evidenced when applied to the case studies.

As detailed in Chapter Three, the framework proposed three necessary elements that could cause strategic effects when integrated effectively. These three elements are:

1. innovative forms of violence
2. communicative and narrative dynamics
3. exploitation of emergent information and communications technology.

Innovative Forms of Violence

The innovative forms of violence element of the framework included internal and external innovation, revolutionary and iterative innovations, and innovations related to broader issues of strategy and organisational structure and how these can facilitate the deployment of new tactics or new targeting decisions. The forms of innovation applied across the case studies were revolutionary innovation, strategic innovation, incremental innovation and structural innovation.

The application of the framework regarding innovative violence found that forms of revolutionary innovation, such as the use of dynamite, could have dramatic effects in both immediate operational senses and the communicative sense. Dynamite resonated with the various audiences of the period and enabled the anarchist perpetrators to play out the drama

of their operations and demand the attention of the burgeoning global news industry. Palestinian terrorist revolution in aircraft hijacking practices would have significant strategic impacts on the Palestinian cause, the international aviation industry and ultimately saw adversaries of the Palestinian cause experience strategic effect. It also acted as the catapult that launched the Palestinian cause onto the global stage. While Munich would culminate this project, the instances of plane hijacking that preceded Munich would be crucial to the profile and comprehensibility of the Palestinian cause. Additionally, the strategic innovation of embedding the Palestinian cause within the broader Third Worldist narrative enabled a litany of transnational opportunities, from funding and weapons provision to operational cooperation.

The jihadist movement presented a unique manifestation of violent innovation, shaped by the duration and consistent high tempo character of the counterterrorism campaign arrayed against it. This led to a series of innovations, before and beyond 9/11. The transformative strategic innovation of adopting the far enemy strategy would reverberate across the jihadist movement and underpin al Qaeda's targeting and operational considerations and the entire jihadist movement. The incremental innovation related to transforming conventional airplane hijacking for hostage-taking purposes into the use of airplanes for undertaking mass-casualty suicide operations truly cemented the jihadist movement within the broader international security discourse of the twenty-first century. The structural innovation that involved the embrace of al-Suri's strategic guidance regarding individual and small cell jihad was contingent on the previous iterations of innovation. It would enable the capacity of the jihadist movement to target Western powers, despite the sustained degradation of their external operational capability.

Across all three case studies, innovation concerning violence was essential to the capacity of terrorist organisations to achieve strategic effect. Regardless of its specific type, the innovative character of the violence was a crucial component of what enabled the violence to achieve newness and, as such, attract the attention of the various audiences it was communicating to. However, in and of itself, the violence was insufficient. It also needed to be calibrated so that the communicative aspects of the violence and the operations undertaken were woven into the operational design.

Communicative and Narrative Dynamics

Communicative and narrative dynamics referred, as per Chapter Three, to the ‘intentional embedding of ideology, through either explicit or symbolic components, into the conceptualisation and production of conventional propaganda or terrorist actions undertaken for propagandistic effect’. Narrative dynamics were explained as ‘constituting the conceptualisation and production of terrorist propaganda or terrorist actions undertaken for propagandistic effect, with the intention of establishing or reinforcing an ideologically informed narrative context.’ Again, it is unnecessary to restate the expansive articulation regarding this element. Noteworthy is that its manifestations consistently reflected the ideas and principles that the Executive Committee of NV articulated. Specifically, when it declared the purposes of its actions were ‘to break down the prestige of government, to furnish continuous proof of the possibility of pursuing a contest with the government, to raise in that way the revolutionary spirit in the people, and finally, to form a body suited and accustomed to warfare’.¹⁰⁴⁶

These principles and concepts were implicitly replicated by further manifestations of the anarchist movement and formed the core and underlying strategic conceptualisations of terrorism for the Palestinians and the jihadists. Both of these cases evidenced numerous manifestations of these considerations. They are usefully captured in the following direct quotes from key strategists and operational planners within the movements. As George Habash wrote on behalf of Black September in the *al-Sayad* newspaper, only days after the Munich Massacre:

The Olympiad arouses the people’s interest and attention more than anything else in the world. *The choice of the Olympics, from the purely propagandistic viewpoint, was 100% successful* [emphasis added]. It was like painting the name of Palestine on a mountain that can be seen from the four corners of the earth.¹⁰⁴⁷

Since its modern inception, the jihadist movement has clearly prioritised communicative and narrative considerations. From the earliest publication of *al-Jihad* magazine and bin Laden’s cultivation of press coverage for his activities in Afghanistan, consideration of the presentation and contextualisation of the jihadist movement has been central to its operation. By the time the structural innovations of al-Suri became a vital aspect of the jihadist

¹⁰⁴⁶ Cited in Iviansky, ‘Individual Terror’, 46.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Reeve, *One Day in September*, 293–94; Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 71–72.

movement's strategic considerations, al-Suri himself was explicitly encouraging a focus on this aspect of their activity. He noted in his *Global Islamic Resistance Call*, on what he referred to as 'secret propaganda or agitation unit[s]',¹⁰⁴⁸ 'the mission of these units is to spread the Call to Resistance and distribute its literature and research, and studies and various programs by secret means, especially the Internet. It should translate the researches and communications of the Resistance into ... world languages'.¹⁰⁴⁹

Each of the three case studies demonstrated a consistent understanding of the importance of ensuring their violence was choreographed towards an audience or audiences. These actions were also embedded within an often-self-cultivated narrative that allowed the violence to be comprehended. Across the case studies, there is evidence of terrorist organisations undertaking repeated operations over time, and in the process building the necessary audience familiarity and narrative comprehension so that when their operational capability reached its crescendo—the assassination of Alexander II, the Munich Massacre, 9/11—it was understood and comprehended sufficiently for the desired strategic effects to be achieved.

Exploitation of Emergent Information and Communication Technology

The final element of the framework was the exploitation of emergent forms of information and communication technology. This refers to the technologies themselves as well as how their diffusion has shaped and informed cultural and social practices. This element has been the one most subject to conjecture concerning its impacts on terrorism, with consistent arguments put forward during the periods under consideration that suggested that printing, satellite television or social media were to blame for terrorism's prevalence. All three cases were dependent on and exploited the emerging information and communications technology of their day. In addition, these technologies would underpin the cultural products and practices that would assist audiences in accessing and understanding the actions of the relevant terrorist organisations. From the writing of Dostoevsky and others in Russia to the work of Kanafani in the Palestinian case, the centrality of video and subsequently social media, to the jihadist movement's representation of itself, all three not only calibrated their violence for novelty and communicative purposes but also took advantage of the relevant technologies for disseminating their messaging, violent and nonviolent.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 250.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Al-Suri, cited in Ryan, *Decoding Al-Qaeda's Strategy*, 250.

The jihadist movement was able to move beyond the dependence on conventional institutionalised media. It would incorporate a capacity to communicate directly with a global, decentralised audience of sympathisers and potential recruits and operatives. The social media campaign of IS, its demonstrated ability to contribute to the recruitment of tens of thousands of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq and to operationalise substantial numbers of individual jihadist terrorists in Western countries, speaks to the power of this information and communications technology. While the practice was not fundamentally different from the Palestinians and anarchists, modern digital technology, including social media, accelerated the radicalisation process, increased opportunities for radicalisation and enabled radicalisation without substantive engagement with an organisation or its representatives.

Closing Remarks

This research sought to address a deficiency within the existing terrorism studies literature, which was an absence of an integrated strategic conceptualisation of the practice of terrorism across ideological, historical, and geographic contexts. It has articulated a framework that can be generalised beyond a single manifestation of terrorism, providing sufficient explanatory capability in response to the research question. Understanding *how terrorism achieves strategic effect* can help ensure that counterterrorism efforts designed to prevent terrorism are not strategically counterproductive. The past 20 years of consistent, global responses to terrorism should serve as a reminder of the adaptability of terrorist organisations, their capacity to strategically calculate effective ways and means of provoking their adversaries and the risks of playing into the hands of these strategies.

This dissertation draws from and builds on the substantial scholarship of authors such as Crenshaw, English, Hoffman, and Cronin, amongst others, to further progress the field's understanding of the strategic intent and strategic purposes of terrorism, irrespective of ideological persuasion. It does not argue that the framework developed here has universal explanatory power, nor that it provides an absolute explanation of the phenomena. It does seek to weave together a body of existing related but unintegrated concepts from within terrorism studies in an effort to provide a more holistic understanding of terrorism and its capacity to achieve strategic effect, and more specifically, *how it achieves that strategic effect*. It is necessary to note that as with any research, this dissertation was limited to three confirmatory case studies, and did not include application of the framework to a negative case study. While this was in part informed by limitations of space, it does provide a further

research opportunity. Understanding instances where terrorist attacks or campaigns failed to achieve strategic effect is likely to be equally as insightful as the cases analysed here.

The framework developed and applied throughout this dissertation is proposed as a start point for a further research agenda that builds on, expands, challenges, and refines the framework. As terrorism studies continues to mature and widens its aperture beyond the post-9/11 lens it will be important to reflect and recognise the strides that the field has made in the two decades of research since the events of 9/11. This research can provide an opportunity for further refinement of the understanding of the nature of innovation in a terrorism context, and the interplay between innovation itself and the constraints and opportunities that terrorist organisation are affected by. Additionally, the development of a stronger appreciation for the frequently strategically intentional non-kinetic consequences of terrorist attacks and campaigns provides a rich avenue for further research. As this dissertation has sought to demonstrate, at least in part, terrorism is frequently more focused on the second and third order effects of action rather than on the immediate kinetic action. Further research in understanding how terrorism effects its targets at a societal level will strengthen understanding of how best to insulate society from these effects. There is also potential to progress a research agenda focused on how the use of communications technology by terrorists and other malign actors. As communications technology continues its rapid development and dissemination, understanding how terrorists exploit such technologies can assist in preventing and countering that exploitation.

Public discourse and policy responses to new manifestations of terrorism have a tendency to be reactive, hyperbolic, and to essentialise the violent aspects of terrorism. While this is understandable, it is important to recognise that this is also part of the strategic intention of terrorism. As such, an especially in the context of a liberal democracy, it is vital that counter terrorism measures remain proportionate, necessary, and a reflection of the values of the societies they are designed to defend. Abandoning these values in response to a well framed, innovative form of violence that effectively exploits information and communications technology is serving the strategic intent of the perpetrators rather than countering them.

In its modern form, terrorism has been a consistent and enduring threat to national and international security since its emergence in Russia in the mid-1800s. While it has manifested in a diversity of ideological forms, in various geographic locations and used a wide array of tactical and operational means to try and achieve its ends, this research has sought to identify

that it has consistently relied on an enduring nature and conceptually consistent strategic calculus. As early as 1879, the Executive Committee of NV was articulating a strategic objective that could just as easily have been drawn from the writings of Palestinian or jihadist strategists. They wrote:

terroristic activity ... aims to undermine the prestige of the government's power, to demonstrate steadily the possibility of struggle against the government, to arouse in this manner the revolutionary spirit of the people and their confidence in the success of the cause, and finally to give shape and direction to the forces fit and trained to carry on the fight.¹⁰⁵⁰

Terrorism has always tried, and will continue to try, to achieve these types of objectives. It will continue to make the same calculations regarding how to achieve strategic effect. Understanding and appreciating the strategic calculus of terrorism as a phenomenon can help to better inform comprehensive, strategic counterterrorism practices. The above analysis aims to provide some insight into the strategic considerations of terrorist organisations and assist in informing the development of these practices.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Volya, *Program of the Executive Committee*, 13.

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