TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA:

A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

Presented by:

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A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the

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in Communication Studies of the University of

Nairobi's School of Journalism

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So let us pursue our studies rather than make the idleness of others the pretext of our own. There are always those who listen and those who read. It is for us to labour towards what is being heard or printed – pliny.

Declaration

I declare that this Project entitled *Terrorism and the Media: A Symbiotic Relationship* is my original work and has not been submitted, either wholly or partially, to any other university or Examining Body for the award of any Degree or Diploma.

Reuben Nyangaga Mackenzie

Signature: _____

Date: 28ᵗʰ SEPTEMBER 2006.

This is to certify that this Project work was undertaken independently by Reuben Nyangaga Mackenzie, under my supervision.

Name of supervisor: Mr. Patrick Maluki

Signature: _____

Date: ___29 / 9 / 06___

Dedication

This project is humbly dedicated to the following VIPs in my life:

(i)   Aidah, Andrew and Albert, my loving children and judges.

(ii)   Rachel Aidah, an all-time excellent mom

(iii)   Charles D., a friend who is there.

Preface

I concur with F. A.[a] Manna when he says, quoting Sir Winston Churchill, that writing a book – a project included – is an adventure. To begin with, it is a toy and an amusement; then it becomes a mistress, and then it becomes a master, and then a tyrant. The last phase is that just as you are about to be reconciled to your servitude, you kill the monster, and fling him about to the public.

So it is that I am now in all modesty flinging this project about to the public. Is terrorism the project is all about an outlandish abstract concept to our society? By no means. Counting from the Norfolk incident of the late 70s or early 80s, terrorism has been concretized on our soil no fewer than three (3) times! These are definitely one too many. The most sanguinary remains the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in the heart of our capital city, even though it struck us as recently as November, 2002. Being so at close quarters with terrorism, what steps has Kenya taken in proactivity so as to preclude a recurrence? While we commendably are reactively united in condemnation of terrorist acts, when it comes to dealing with future terrorism, sadly *our unity mysteriously flounders!* Witness the stillbirth of the Anti-Terrorism Bill. When the Bill was first published, it ran the gauntlet of criticisms led by Human rights organizations, leading to its being shelved. Even now, there is no dim possibility of it being revived, yet terrorists, like time and tide, await no man or woman. A look at the objections and their rebuttals.

On Human Rights concerns, the approach *seems to place the Human Rights of terrorists above those of their victims.* This places us in a strait-jacket. Human Rights are by no means absolute. If a

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[a] Mann, F. A., *The Legal Aspects of Money*, 5th ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press (1992).

section of society behaves as do terrorists – in such a way as to hold entire humankind to ransom, surely, even in a democracy, why should right thinking, law-abiding citizens approach the resolution of this within the mindframe of Human Rights? Remember, in a democracy, the majority prevail.

There is no religion qua religion which espouses violence as one of its policies. So if there are terrorists who masquerade as religious, and yet fly in the face of their religious values, their co-religionists must disown them.

Terrorism is a universal problem, and there really is no substance to the argument that the Bill is an American imposition on Kenya. Must we reinvent the wheel in this globalised world? Hardly. What we should be doing is what the British bequeathed to us a long time ago. When introducing their law to Kenya during colonial days, they wisely placed a caveat on the application of the transplanted law: *It was to apply to the extent the people and circumstances of Kenya allow.* So even when borrowing from any other society including the U.S., this wisdom is still valid and so we must still heed it.

The normative function of law is too important to be overwhelmed by these weak-kneed objections. Since the challenges Kenya is facing in this regard are similar, if not the same as those facing the rest of the world, I decided to deal with the subject of terrorism in a general way.

So as to emphasise its universality. The reader will see further evidence of this in the eclecticism of my sources. Among others, I have referred to communication itself, history, social psychology, political science and sociology. This is also to encourage policymakers to be

broad-minded in their approaches. A brief preview of the 5 chapters comprising this project follows.

Chapter One sets the scene by stating the statement of the problem, discusses the Theoretical Framework, highlights the Definition of Major Terms and expresses the hypotheses to be tested throughout the project. The objectives and scope of the study are also included.

In Chapter Two, a review of literature is carried out to bring out the extent throughout on our subject of the Terrorism Media Axis. Perspectives of Terrorism Media Reporting are discussed, as are the problems of Media Reporting of terrorist acts, among other issues.

To understand a phenomenon scientifically, it is necessary to trace it to its origins, and so as to know how it spreads so as to control it, a knowledge of diffusion is an absolute essential. Has the phenomenon under the study a future? These issues are canvassed in Chapter Three.

Since we are dealing with the Terrorism-Media-Axis, it is important to bring out how these two phenomenon interact for the issues to emerge into the open. Accordingly, Chapter Four is preoccupied with this task.

Turbulent times, so Charles W. Kegley[b] assures us, stimulates re-examination of orthodoxy theory and invigorate the search for reconstituted principles to guide thinking. So it is that in keeping with this, Chapter Five which constitutes our conclusions and recommendations, is modeled on this advice. With this exhortation in the foreground, the reader would readily grasp why the conclusion is what is and the recommendations are what they are.

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[b] Kegley, charles W., Jr. "The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths & The New International Realities," *The International Studies Quarterly*. (1993) 37.

In the sense that it is preoccupying a large chunk of global attention, terrorism seems to be in the ascendancy. But it is a house of cards. For to paraphrase the venerable Nelson Mandela – in *No Easy Walk to Freedom* – there is no easy walk to freedom anywhere, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountain tops of our desires. So even if terrorism gains some victories, they are shortlived. Kegley quotes the U.S. First World War President Woodrow Wilson and we must concur that:

> I would rather be defeated in a cause that will ultimately triumph, than win a cause that will ultimately be defeated.

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Acknowledgements

Many a tree a forest makes, demonstrating that collaboration is a higher value than individualism. So it is now time to acknowledge.

It is a task I am approaching with both pleasure and trepidation: While the former is self-explanatory, the latter is not. This is because I may inadvertently omit to acknowledge a genuine hand extended towards me. So before I proceed, I hastily erect an "Altar to an unknown God" just as the ancient Greeks did in no doubt similar circumstances as mine.

First and foremost, I would like to express my warm gratitude to my supervisor, Mr. Patrick Maluki. He well understands the rigors of a Master's Programme that have the potential of even making some fall by the wayside. He therefore, takes care you do not, and so takes a keen interest in what you are doing and delivery timeframes. He also played a key role in the choice of the title of this project. In addition, he has imparted to me some key tips in editing. For all these excellent academic and professional qualities he embodies, I thank him most sincerely.

Next up are the scholars on whom I have relied in the exposition of my views. These I have acknowledged in the reference section of this project.

The famous Philosopher Aristotle defined friends as one soul in two bodies. My experience so far with my variety of friends gives ample backing for this, and so it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge their various salutary influences they exercise on me. However, space

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constraints place a limit on the number I may mention here. Not in any order of preference, there are those friends of mine who just believe in me and my abilities: this category is exemplified well by Livingstone Murage and Lucy Njoroge, Company Secretary and Finance Manager of NIC Bank Ltd., respectively. Also included in this are Nyambura Musyimi, Managing Partner of Musyimi & Company Advocates, Michael Makau and Major J. Wanyeki (Rtd). Then there is my childhood friend, William Ambaka with whom I have excellent companionship and also friendly rivalry, especially intellectually. He is in the process of defending his Ph.D proposal... there are those with whom I enjoy professional association, and whose counsel and opinion I greatly appreciate: J. Mohammed, David Majanja & Dr. Githu Muigai, all of Mohammed & Muigai Advocates; Charles Mutuku, Bernard Wamichi, Evelyn Mungai (Mrs), Edna Kihara and Linda Muriuki. George Mutua not forgetting Njoki Muiga and Wairimu Kireri. I do not know why some of my other friends defy categorization, but here they are: Ann Njeri, Winnie Wangare, John Baptista, and Gabriel Ochieng. William Shakespeare once said that there are friends you tie in a hoop around your heart – James Mbatia (Chief), Nelson Bichanga and Marian Akelo they are.

At the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, I am proud to have been part of the M. A. (Communication Studies) 3rd intake. This intake was very brilliant collectively and being a part of it raised my game, as it were. It was composed of very many memorable individuals who include our class representative, the "jukebox" Ohayo, the "mischievous", Eva Kiiru, the comedian Justus Olielo, the inimitable Noelina, the tigress Rosie, among so many. Our lecturers were all outstanding, and I am honoured to have been instructed by them in communication. They all worked hard to ensure that we turn out as true communication experts! Our main contact Moses deserves special praise for his indefatigable efforts in this

regard. Similarly, Anne of the Computer Section, who tirelessly worked on this project, Rachel our Librarian and the Librarians at the main Library, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial.

I would be remiss in honouring my obligations if I ended these acknowledgements without mentioning the help I have received from certain important institutions. Topping this list is NIC Bank Limited; from the time it employed me as a callow youth in 1988 to the time I left in June, 2005, I had learned a lot about life in general and how best to run corporate affairs, and more importantly, *how not to*. I joined NIC as a mere A-Level finisher, but I had garnered two degrees in Law and Communication and CPS Final Certificate by the time of leaving. The Bank also facilitated my meeting a lot of people who are still my friends, including Joseph Mutisya, Thomas 'Baba' Koech, Stanely Maina, Joseph Ndungu, Josephine Nduku, Carol Karanja…..

The U. S. Department of State, through the U. S. Embassy, Nairobi did a commendable job of procuring on my behalf some significant research material and I can say the Project was immensely enriched as a result. It also made me realize that even giants have gentle sides to them! The one hard-working individual who introduced me to both these institutions is Mr. George Kamau, the Reference Centre Director and my very good friend and classmate. Thank you very much, State Department and George!

Last, but by no means least, all glory to God Almighty who, Seneca assures us, "does not make a spoilt pet of a good man; he tests him hardens him, and fits him for his own service."

Reuben Nyangaga Mackenzie
P. O. Box 44969-00100
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September, 2006.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

1. **ABC**   American Broadcasting Corporation

2. **CNN**   Cable News Network

3. **CTC**   Counterterrorism Committee

4. **CTED**   Counterterrorism Committee Executive Directorate

5. **FBI**   Federal Bureau of Investigations

6. **ETA**   Basque Separatists Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna

7 **MIR**   Left Revolutionary Movement (Peru)

8. **IRA**   Irish Republican Army

9. **OPEC**   organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

9. **PFLP**   Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

10. **PLO**   Palestinian Liberation Organisation

11. **TWA**   Transworld Airline

12. **UN**   United Nations

13. **UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Social & Cultural Organisation

14. **US**   United States of America

15. **9/11**   11th September, 2001, the day when four aircrafts were hijacked by Islamic

terrorists in the US – two of which destroyed the World Trade Center in New

York, one which partially destroyed the Pentagon, and a fourth which crashed

landed in a field in Pennsylvania.

Abstract

This exploratory study seeks to investigate via the agency of the concept of symbiosis how mutually beneficial the relationship between terrorism (however defined) and the media (as broadly defined) is. The study concludes that while the symbiosis concept may largely explain the mutuality of the terrorism media relationship, it simultaneously determines that in the changed environment of new media technologies, terrorism and terrorist groups are now increasingly owning and operating their very own media – which closely mirror the ordinary media and interface with them. This injects complexity in the terrorism-media relationship as symbiotic. The media may be a victim of terrorism.

Accordingly, policymakers (to whom this project is addressed) have to do a delicate balancing act in coming up with a practical, workable and acceptable policy concerning the media coverage of terrorist acts and the terrorists' access to the media without unduly compromising liberal ideas in a democratic setting.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The attacks mounted by the Al-Qaeda organization on September 11, 2001, were of unprecedented scale, heretofore seen only in wartime, killing over three thousand people in a few hours' time. Most victims were civilians, and most were Americans, yet the dead included people from 87 countries.

In the past, even terrorism has evinced an implicit set of expectations – using violence to intimidate or gain publicity by targeting civilians so as to undermine the confidence placed in organized authority, but generally falling short of this irrational magnitude of destruction. Only nihilism might seem to explain a scale of wreckage that serves no pragmatic demands or political ambition. So, too, the real target might seem to be liberalism since Al-Qaeda's enterprise exploits freedom's core values: free association, privacy and multi-ethnic social fabric, and a stalwart sense that government should leave us alone.[1]

Ruth Wedgewood clearly brings home the radical nature of modern terrorism – which however, still relies on publicity to achieve its macabre objectives. This radical nature is well-captured by Joan Fitzpatrick[2] when she observes that "one of the striking aspects of the September attacks is their vivid demonstration that non-state actors are now capable of shaping international events and relations more powerfully than many states."

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[1] Wedgewood, Ruth, "Al-qaeda, Terrorism & Military Commissions", *American Journal of International Law*, Vol 96 No. 2, April, 2002.

[2] FitzPatrick, Joan, "Jurisdiction of Military Commissions & the Ambiguous War on Terrorism." *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 96 No.2, April. 2002.

Terrorists' seeking of publicity suggests that the media play a central role in the terrorists' strategy in their bid to attain their warped goals. This is evidenced by the editors of *Perspectives on Terrorism*[1] when they assert that headlines and televised terrorist happenings have raised social anxieties to a high level of worldwide concern. Terrorism reflects the technology of the society in which it is active and is reflected by the media whose interest it arouses to a degree often disproportionate to the actual injury inflicted. So terrorism and media mutually advance the attainment of their respective objectives (for the one bloody and for the other commercial).

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The eminent editors of *War and the Media*[4] set the ball rolling for us when they state that by calling for a war on terrorism, the United States (US) has initiated an open-ended and global conflict – one that can be directed at any adversary, anywhere in the world. How this war is framed and represented in the media thus becomes a crucial area of inquiry for both academics and professionals.

There can be, argues Joseph J. Lambert,[5] few modern problems which are so elusive of effective regulation and which so challenge the efficacy of international law as that of international terrorism. As this phenomenon has proliferated since the 1960s, so it has received the increasing attention of governments, scholars, politicians, commentators and the general

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[1] Freedman, Lawrence Zelic & Yonah Alexander (eds), *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Wilmington, Scholarly Resources, Inc. (1983).

[4] Thussu, Daya Kishan & Des Freedman (eds), *War & The Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, New Delhi, VISTAAR Publications (2003).

[5] Lambert, Joseph J., *Terrorism & Hostages in International Law – A Commentary on the Hostages Convention 1979*, Cambridge, Grotius Publications Ltd. (1990).

public. It has, moreover, been addressed at length by the world community in various fora particularly the United Nations (UN). However, serious differences in opinion over almost every aspect of terrorism – most fundamentally over the meaning of the term itself – have resulted in the failure of the international community to adopt a comprehensive and universally acceptable approach to combating the problem. This disagreement extends to the media. Well has Kelvin G. Barnhurst[6] captured this by stating that authorities in the field of terrorism and the media tend to gather in two camps:

(i)   Those who believe that news coverage spreads terrorism like a disease. They often call for government regulation of one resort or another, although they warn that media guidelines may push terrorists to greater violence. These escalating demands for attention encourage greater restraint, they argue, in a spiral of media attention, control and even more terrorism.

(ii)   The opposite camp considers the media to be the victims of terrorists. They concede that free and competitive news organizations may emphasise the violence at first, but they consider the process naturally self-limiting.

As terrorism becomes routine coverage wanes, so restraint is not only unnecessary, but may damage the credibility of the media and of the state. Moreover, controlling the media is ineffective because terrorists can strike other points in the infrastructure such as transportation, the power grid, or water supply with results that communicate directly to the intended audience without media intervention.

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6 Barnhurst, Kelvin G. "Contemporary Terrorism in Peru: Sendero Luminoso & The Media", *Journal of Communication*, Autumn 1991.

The disagreement also carries over to the definition of terrorism, which suffers from perennial relativism. As Daniel S. Papp[7] relevantly points out:

> As a general rule, if an observer agrees with the objectives of someone who employs violence, the observer considers the person a "freedom fighter", if the observer disagrees with the objectives, that same individual is a terrorist.

So it becomes critical to investigate the relationship between terrorism and the media, with a view to gaining an insight into how communication can be harnessed effectively in the fight against the terrorism scourge. We would do this through the aid of the scientific concept of symbiosis to whose definition we now turn.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this exploratory study is to investigate the perennially controversial relationship between Terrorism and the Media with a view to providing policymakers with knowledge of how communication can be harnessed in the fight against the ever-threatening scourge of terrorism. This would aid the policymakers to come up with a practical, workable and acceptable policy – one that does not compromise important democratic ideals.

Specific Objectives are to establish:

(i)   Why terrorism seems to thrive largely in fairly democratic societies as opposed to authoritarian, closed societies.

(ii)   The impact on society of the media diffusion of terrorism, terrorist ideology and terrorist acts.

(iii)   Whether it is beneficial to society for every happening to be reported in the media.

1.4   Justification of the Study

In addition to meeting academic purposes, this study further aims at contributing a little towards the search for a solution to the pressing and menacing scourge of terrorism. By presenting, analyzing and evaluating the arguments advanced for and against the relationship between terrorism and the media, we hope to provide policymakers with a useful tool for deployment in formulating the policy concerning media coverage of terrorism and terrorist acts, and terrorists' access to the media consistent with human rights concerns and democratic ideals. This is so because the media are often seen as factor in the creation and solution of conflict.

We would further aid policymakers put matters in proper perspective as the information provided herein would lead to the policymakers' analysis of their motivations to fight terrorism. For as John Burton[8] pertinently asks: Is interest in solving the problem of terrorism inspired by a desire to control terrorists or by a desire to alter the conditions that stimulated terrorism?

Attesting to the importance of media effects, Michael D. Slatter[9] observes that "media effects research, as well as personal experience, suggests that an individual's beliefs about the larger social world are shaped largely through mediated experience, via television, film, newspapers, magazines, novels and textbooks." This explains why especially terrorists are ever eager for media access and media reporting of their terrorist acts.

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[8]Burton, John, *Deviance, Terrorism & War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social & Political Problems*, Oxford, Robertson & Company Limited.
[9] Slatter, Michael D., "Processing Social Information in Messages," *Communication Research*, June, 1990.

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1.5 Theoretical Framework

Our Theoretical Framework is anchored in the Agenda-Setting Theory. In this subsection, however, we would be analyzing the theory as a backdrop against which we would discuss Agenda-Setting Techniques in Chapter Four (infra) before using it and its techniques to relate it to terrorism in our final chapter. The issue is whether the Agenda-Setting function of the media makes them victims of terrorism. Here we go.

Everett Rogers and James W. Dearing[1] open their critical evaluation and appreciation of the Agenda-Setting Research by quoting the ex-US President Abraham Lincoln as saying concerning public sentiment (or opinion):

> Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes and pronounces decisions.

Appreciation for the power of public opinion and the influence wielded by the press has continued since Lincoln's comment. Such concerns address the process by which American [just like any other] democracy functions. As Lincoln's comment shows, in the mid-1800s the earlier notion of classical democracy, whereby a government responds directly to the wishes of its public, with the mass media serving as a go-between, was being questioned.

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[1] Rogers, Everett M. & James W. Dearing "Agenda-Setting Research: Where Has It Been, where Is It Going?" in James A. Anderson (ed), *Communication Yearbook/11*, Sage Publications.

Later, political analysts like Key and Lippman provided a new view of democratic process: Elected political elites decide upon policies for the public, and the public can make itself heard through political parties, which serve to link policymakers with their constituents.

Many scholars (as well as terrorists) now see omnipotent mass media systems as the mechanisms linking the public with political policymakers.

The media have usurped the linking function of political parties in the US, creating what can now be thought of as a "media democracy". One method for understanding modern democracy is to concentrate upon mass media, public and policy *agendas*, defined as issues or events that are viewed at a point in time as ranked in a hierarchy of importance. Agenda research, concerned with investigating and explaining societal influence, has two main research traditions that have often been referred to as:

(i)   *Agenda-Setting*, a process through which the mass media communicate the relative importance of various issues and events to the public (an approach mainly pursued by mass communication researchers), and

(ii)   *Agenda-Building*, a process through which the policy agendas of political elites are influenced by a variety of factors, including media agendas and public agendas. Whilst the agenda-setting tradition is concerned with how the media agenda influences the public agendas, the agenda building studies deal with how the public agenda, and other factors and occasionally the media agenda, influence the policy agenda.

The issue of the homogenisation of the news into a set of topics addressed by all members of the news media was raised early by the Hutchins Report (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947). This set of topics was recognized as the media agenda and the implications of that influence for society were initially explored by Lazarsfeld and Merton who conceived of the media issue agenda as a result of the influence that powerful groups, notably organized business, exerted as a subtle' form of social control. "Big business finances the production and distribution of mass media. And, all intend aside, he who pays the piper generally calls the tune."

Similarly, Qualter (1985) argued that a commercially sponsored mass media system is operated by those in the ruling class of society; therefore, the media cannot be expected to question the socio-economic structure of that society seriously. Ball-Rokeach suggested analyzing the structural dependency organizing the relationship between the political system and the media, which she describes as "co-operation based on mutuality of central dependencies."

The mass media softly, but firmly present the perspective of the ruling class to their audiences. The result is not a conscious objective of the media. Qualter stated:

> The media are far from being the sinister manipulators of the popular mind suggested by some conspiracy theories. Their major functions seem to be to support the system, and to protect the members of society from excessively disturbing, distracting, or dysfunctional information.

These media functions are perpetuated through recruitment and socialization of media elites, editors and journalists. In this way, the traditions, practices, and values of media professionals shape the news agenda.

The Public Agenda

Understanding how public opinion is influenced by the content of the mass media has been an important concern of communication scholars tracing back to the writings of Robert E. Park, founder of the 1915 – 1935 Chicago School of Sociology. Park, who has been termed "the first theorist of mass communication" (Frazier & Gaziano, 1979), expanded upon William James's notion of how people form an "acquaintance" with information by studying the role of newspapers in forming public opinion. Another seminal thinker on this relationship, and one more commonly credited, was Walter Lippman, who wrote in response to Wallas's (1914) claim concerning the public's increasing dependence on the mass media. Early empirical research results, however, cast doubt on the mass media's power to bring about audience effects. Lazarsfeld and Stanton, in a series of studies on the effectiveness of radio campaigns, concluded that any effects of the mass media were considerably mediated by interpersonal relationships and by personal experience. Social scientists interpreted Lazarsfeld's results as proof that the mass media had only weak effects.

Scholarly research on the agenda-setting process of the mass media stems most directly from the writings of Bernard Cohen, who observed that the press:

> May not be successful much of the time in telling people *what to think*, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers *what to think about*…. The world will look

different to different people, depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors, and publishers of papers they read (emphasis added).

The Policy Agenda

Of direct importance to assumptions about democratic societies is the relationship of public opinion to policy elites' decisions and actions. Agenda-Setting researchers who conceptualise policy information as a dependent variable want to know whether the agenda items that are salient to individuals in the public also become salient to policymakers. Occasionally, policy agenda-setting researchers investigate the extent to which the media agenda influences the policy agenda. As Dovons observed, "A problem must be dramatic and exciting to maintain public interest because news is 'consumed' by much of the American public [and by publics everywhere else] largely as a form of entertainment".

In a sense, one of the strongest pieces of evidence of the media's agenda-setting influence may consist of the fact that issues and events that are completely ignored by the mass media do not register on the public agenda. As McCombs noted "This basic primitive notion of agenda-setting is a truism. If the media tell us nothing about a topic or an event, then in most cases it simply will not exist on our personal agenda or in our life space."

1.6   Hypotheses

(i)   The spread of terrorism is directly related to the level of media coverage and media access to which the terrorists are exposed.

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(ii)   The relationship between terrorism and the media is a function of the system of government under which the media operate.

(iii)   New media technologies have a greater impact than media reporting on the global spread of modern-day terrorism.

(iv)   The media's interest in terrorism is limited to reporting of news happenings in society.

1.7   Research Methodology

According to Claire Selltiz *et al*,[11] a research design is the management of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. It follows then that research designs will differ depending on the purpose of the research. An exploratory study has for its purpose the gaining of familiarity with a phenomenon or the achieving of new insights into it, often in order to formulate a more precise research problem or to develop hypotheses. The major emphasis is on discovery of ideas and insights.

Since the present study is an exploratory one the methods used in such a study would be applicable. These methods (as per Claire Selltiz) include a review of the related social science and other pertinent literature; a survey of people who have had practical experience with the problem to be studied and an analysis of "insight-stimulating" examples. Although most

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[11] Selltiz, Claire, Lawrence S. Wrightsman, & Stuart W. Cook et al, *Research Methods in Social Relations*, 3rd ed. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc. (1976).

exploratory studies utilize one or more of these approaches, in our case, however, we would restrict ourselves primarily to a review of the related social science and other pertinent literature. Accordingly, we would rely on secondary sources in the exposition of our study.

1.8   Scope of the Study

Given the pauncity of time, we shall be relying on secondary sources for our exposition of this study. This means that there will be virtually no primary sources and so no field work.

The other limitation is that important though it is in relation to terrorism, we would not discuss at length definition in general, but would touch on it only in passing. Even at the present time, there is yet no universally acceptable definition of terrorism. A critical study of definition is urgently needed to determine to what extent definition in general and nature is impeding the formulation of a widely accepted definition of terrorism.

The problem of the controversial relationship between terrorism and the media is largely unique to democracies. For terrorism, on the authority of Alan M. Dershowitz, [12] is a tactic directed most effectively against open democracies. It is far less effective against closed tyrannies. One reason for this difference is that terrorism, to the extent that it is "propaganda by the deed," relies heavily on widespread publicity, and such publicity is readily available in countries that permit freedom of the press. Closed societies – such as China... North Korea, and former Soviet Union – impose controls on what can be printed in the state – run newspapers and shown on state-run television. There is only limited retail publicity in a closed

society, so terrorism is far less effective there than in societies where widespread, wholesale publicity can be counted on.

But why is widespread, wholesale publicity assured in democracies? This is another way of asking what role communication plays in democracies.

Finally, we concur with Dershowitz's focus on only a part of the overall phenomenon of terrorism, but which is the part that poses the greatest danger to the world.

His focus (as ours) is on groups, not intervals. More specifically, it is on groups that receive some sponsorship – though it may be only indirect – from nation states. Moreover, these state-sponsored terrorist groups are inspired by religious, nationalistic or political zealotry and are prepared to use any means including suicide and mass murder to achieve their macabre goals. Their targets include, but need not be limited to, civilians. The objective of this "organized terrorism" (his word) is to attract attention to the terrorist cause, to terrorise their enemies into submission, or to defeat an "evil" state that has more powerful conventional weapons. So our exploratory study would focus on the workings of terrorist groups and their relationship with the media within democratic societies.

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[12] Dershowitz, Alan M., *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threats, Responding to the Challenge.* New Haven & London, Yale University Press (2002).

1.9   Definition of Major Terms

(i)   Symbiosis:

According to *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*[8], symbiosis is a term used to describe the relationship between two species in which each benefits from the association. The microorganisms present in the digestive tract of ruminants (for example cows) are symbionts, helping digest the cellulose in the food of ruminants and receiving nutrients in return. Such internal symbionts are called endosymbionts. A symbiont that lives on the surface of a host is an ectosymbiont. Examples include fleas and biting lice, which feed on the sloughed feathers of birds and the dried skin flakes of many animals.

John-David Yule,[9] after defining symbiosis in similar vein adds that it is that relationship that subsists between two organisms of different species – in which mutual benefit is derived by both participants. The main types of symbiotic relationship are commensalism and mutualism.

The former implies eating at the same table, for example sea anemone that lives on the shell occupied by the Hermit crab: the anemone hides the crab, but feeds on food scattered by the crab. Mutualism is the more intimate, there being close physiological dependence between participants. An example is seen in bacteria that live in the gut of herbivorous mammals. Here, the bacteria aid digestion of plant material.

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[8] *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia Vol. IX. 15th ed. Chicago*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. (1975).
[9] Yule, John-David (ed), *The Concise Encyclopedia of Science & Technology*, New York, Crescent Books (1985).

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(ii)   Democracy:

Whereas Samuel P. Huntingtons[15] concept of democracy goes back to the Greek philosophers, modern usage dates from the revolutionary eighteenth century upheavals in Western society. Mid-twentieth century saw the emergence of three approaches in the debates over the meaning of democracy: sources of authority for government, purposes served by government, and procedures for constituting government. Since serious problems of ambiguity and imprecision arise when democracy is defined in terms of either authority or purposes, we concur with Huntington when he adopts a procedural definition and proceeds to rely on Joseph Schumpter (1942) who defined the democratic method as the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. So defined, democracy involves two dimensions – contestation and participation – that Robert Dahl saw as critical to his realistic democracy or polyarchy. It also implies the existence of those civil and political freedoms to speak, publish, assemble, and organize that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of electoral campaigns.

(iii)   Media:

Kaarle Nordenstreng and Lauri Hanninkainen[16] define mass media in general terms, "covering all media of mass communication, printed and electronic [including the internet], as well as all types of information transmitted (news, documentaries, fiction, entertainment, etc.)."

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[15]Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave: Democratisation in The Late Twentieth Century*. Norman & London, University of Oklahoma Press (1991).
[16] Nordenstreng, Kaarle & Lauri Hannikainen, *The Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO*, New Jersey 07648, Ablex Publishing Corporation Norwood.

This is a befitting definition of media because although terrorism would rather have access to television at all times, the modern strand of terrorism nevertheless is not averse to using all the other media to attract publicity to "its cause".

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The greatest danger, observes Alan M. Dershowitz,[12] facing the world today comes from religiously inspired groups - often state sponsored – that are seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction for use against civilian targets. These loosely-knit groups are especially difficult to combat because they often employ suicidal terrorists who are not subject to the usual deterrent threats of death or other severe punishment. They also lack "a return address" (in original) a known location where they can be attacked without civilian casualties. The grave dangers posed by this kind of "poor man's warfare" (his words) are different from any previously faced and we are unprepared to confront them because we refuse to recognize and eliminate the reason why terrorism persists. Terrorism is often rationalized as a valid response to the "root causes" mainly repression and desperation. But the vast majority of repressed and desperate people do not resort to the willful targeting of civilians. The real root cause of terrorism is that it is successful – terrorists have consistently benefited from their acts. Terrorism will persist so long as it continues to work for those who use it, as long as the international community rewards it, as it has been doing the last 35 years.

At the most basic level, terrorism is a social conflict with enormous destabilizing impact globally. By social conflict, to borrow from Hubert M Blalock's[17] diction, we shall mean the intentional mutual exchange of negative sanctions or punitive behaviours, by two or more

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[12] Ibid.
[17] Blalock, Hubert M., *Power & Conflict: Toward A General Theory*, Newsbury Park, Sage Publications, Inc (1989).

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parties, which may be individuals, corporate actors or more loosely-knit quasi groups. This definition seems to come reasonably close to general usage without incorporating causes or consequences into the definition itself. Even so, it contains four features that in some instance may be problematic: the notions of negative sanctions, intent, mutuality and parties. By negative sanctions we shall mean the same thing as punitive behaviours, which we shall define as those courses of action by party X that decrease the probabilities of party Y's obtaining those goals to which they attach positive values or utilities, or that increase the probabilities of Y obtaining negatively value goals.

Blalock quotes Coser as defining social conflict as "a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals".

Explaining why conflicts take a very long time to resolve, Blalock contends that conflicts very often turn out to be "bad" (in original) in the sense that they involve far more injury and misery than originally anticipated. Actors rarely correctly predict either the duration or intensity of conflicts, generally erring in the direction of underestimating both. Conflicts generally turn out to be much more difficult to terminate than to begin, given the dynamics of escalation coupled with changes in individuals' motivation to gain revenge for what they perceive as "wrongs" (his word) inflicted by their opponents. Often, neither party can afford to appear willing to concede ground or to be the first to suggest a compromise resolution. So conflicts often grind on, long after either party has anything to gain from them. And, of course, many innocent victims suffer unnecessarily. This is why many of us tend to abhor

conflicts and hope for a world in which no conflicts ever occur or at least one in which they can be brought to a much speedier and far less costly resolution.

Blalock claims that social conflicts are ubiquitous, come in many forms, and involve vastly different kinds of parties, ranging from individual persons to large macro units such as nation states. Some are dramatic and well-publicised [like terrorism], whereas others are much more subtle and hidden from public view.

Quite in order are Daniel S. Papp's[7] observations that terrorism has been [and still is] a particularly vexing global problem. Although no single source of terrorism exists, US and other Western officials have frequently pointed to N. Korea,....Iran, Pro-Iranian fundamentalists throughout the Middle East, and a number of South American drug cartels as centres of the problem.

However, he observes further that identifying terrorists and coping with terrorism are two different things. Given the necessity to acquire and collate large amounts of timely information about terrorist intentions and movements, and to co-ordinate responses against planned terrorist attacks or terrorists themselves, an international response to the terrorist problem is clearly required. Single nations by themselves rarely have the wherewithal to respond effectively to terrorist activity. Even this simple observation gives rise to several questions. When is it legitimate for a state to use its military power to defend its interests? What is terrorism and is it only a weapon that the weak use against the strong?

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[7] Ibid.

Are terrorists sometimes more powerful than states, or does it only seems that way? To what extent should governments act to protect their citizens living or traveling abroad?

2.1   Literature on Perspectives on Terrorism Reporting

Phillip Schlesinger, Graham Murdock and Phillip Elliot published a book in 1983, *Televising "Terrorism": Political Violence in Popular Culture*[18] against two orthodoxies, one of which is relevant to our purpose here.

The book took issue with those who were in favour of censoring television's coverage of political violence as, in their opinion, the arguments they use are both intellectually untenable and politically unsound. The underlying assumption is that political violence needs rational analysis and wide political debate. Although, taken in isolation, political argument does not provide any solutions the authors believed it to be a necessary pre-condition for democratic decision making. An un-informed public is incapable of properly influencing the development of policies for dealing with political violence. As television undoubtedly has a crucial role in affecting terms of the debate, the authors thought that it should have more space for serious investigative coverage rather than be subjected to even further restrictions. It is no wonder then the authors have placed the word terrorism in quotes throughout their book.

Terrorism, the authors continue, has been one of the major pre-occupations of recent years [and still is even to a larger degree than previously]. Newspapers, television, and radio have

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[18] Schlesinger, Graham Murdock & Philip Elliot, *Televising "Terrorism": Political Violence in Popular Culture*.

made reporting political violence a staple theme, and, apart from news reports, documentaries and book-length investigations, the activities of terrorists and those who fight them, have been the subject of films, television fictions and novels. Terror and counter-terror have, to some, come to represent the epic struggle between good and evil, light and darkness, democracy and totalitarianism, civilisation and anarchy. Most public knowledge of terrorism is founded upon the images, definitions and explanations provided by the media.

"Terrorism" and "terrorist" are terms which look straight forward, but actually they are shot through with contradictions. When is an action "terroristic", and when are its perpetrators "terrorists"? Once we pose these questions, it becomes obvious that the response depends upon our values. The term "terrorist" as opposed to "guerrilla", "freedom fighter" or "members of the resistance", implies that a given action is illegitimate and merits a condemnation as criminal behaviour. Conversely, using a term such as "guerrilla" invites us to accept that a particular killing or bombing incident should be seen as a legitimate part of a "liberalisation struggle".

The conflict over such rival conceptions is important. Those who control the apparatus of state have an interest in delegitimising their enemies, just as their opponents have a stake in promoting the acceptability of their armed struggle. Contests over definitions are not just word games. Real political outcomes are at stake. If the public, or sufficient sections of it can be persuaded that the state's perspective on a given "war against terrorism" is questionable, this might imply a weakening of support. On the other hand, if the public can be persuaded that the state is right, this helps mobilise support for transferring resources from welfare to security. Language matters and how the media use language matters. The definition of

"terrorism", indeed the entire way in which the concept is represented through images, explanations, and evidence is central to the exercise of ideological power and influence in our society [and worldwide].

With the introduction out of the way, it is time we turned our attention to the discussion of perspectives on terrorism reporting. Philip Schlesinger et al[18] usefully categorise these perspectives into four: official, alternate, populist and oppositional. We shall now deal with each in turn:

(i)   Official

The official perspective is the set of views, arguments, explanations and policy suggestions advanced by those who speak for the state. The key users of these official definitions of terrorism are government ministers, conservative politicians and top security personnel. Given their high status as news sources, their opinions are assured a prominent place in the media coverage.

Although the official perspective commands the centre of contemporary debate, it is by no means monolithic, nor even a particularly coherent, set of ideas. There are considerable discrepancies in the accounts offered to the general public and the confidential briefings prepared for selected government and state personnel. There are also important differences of emphasis between the views tailored for popular consumption and those circulating among experts and elite groups. Moreover, even images and interpretations with the widest currency

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[18] Ibid.

conflict with one another. For example, the official perspective removes terrorism from the political arena by stressing its essential criminality. There are conflicts too over the way the state should combat terrorism. On the one hand, the official perspective stresses the need to maintain the rule of law in responding to terrorism. On the other, it is argued that an exceptional threat to the state requires an exceptional response which may entail suspending due process and the right to trial.

From an official point of view, one of the greatest threats represented by terrorism is the way it undermines the credibility of the government and its perceived ability to maintain the secure functioning of the social order. Mrs. Thatcher (the then British Prime Minister) gave voice to this anxiety in May 1981, when she said:

> The world is daily assaulted by those who seek to impose their views upon us through violence and fear. Terrorism is an attack upon the whole community.... If (the terrorist) can destroy our trust in well-ordered society, if he can spread consternation and provoke retaliation then he is on the way to achieving his ends.

Official spokesmen judge that maximum publicity is essential to the success of this strategy. In the words of the then Home Secretary, Mr William Whitelaw:

> Terrorists and terrorist organisations seek and depend upon publicity. A principal object of their acts of violence is to draw attention to themselves and gain notoriety...they bomb and murder their way into the headlines.

To achieve their aims, terrorists are seen as deliberately organising their actions to fit the key news values of drama, violence, and unexpectedness. As Brian Jenkins, the Rand Corporation's expert on international terrorism puts it, "Terrorists choreograph their violence. Terrorism is

theatre." The news media, for their part, are seen as unable to resist the chance for a "good story", so obligingly provide extensive coverage of terrorist bombings, hijacks, kidnaps, and assassinations. After a time, however, the standard terrorist performances become over familiar and lose their newsworthiness, and like the newsmen they are seen to be, terrorists have to find new acts to keep the media interested. The result is a vicious spiral of escalating violence. This view is well encapsulated by Professor Walter Laqueur[19] of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington:

> Terrorists have been quicker in accepting the other chief lesson: that the media are of paramount importance in their campaigns; that the terrorist act by itself is next to nothing, whereas publicity is all. But the media, constantly in need of diversity and new angles, make fickle friends. Terrorists will always have to innovate. They are, in some respects, the super entertainers of our time. The real danger facing the terrorists is that of being ignored, receiving insufficient publicity, losing the image of the desperate freedom fighter and, of course, having to face determined enemies who are unwilling to negotiate regardless of the cost.

The media's coverage of terrorism, Phillip Schlesinger et al[18] resume, is therefore seen as playing into the hands of the enemies of state, and of encouraging them to go even further.

This provokes a call for tight controls over the media if they cannot control themselves. If "terrorist propaganda" is criminal, then so are the media which uncritically relay it. In this vein, Philip Schlesinger et al quote Professor Jose Desantes Guanter, a Spanish expert on information law, as observing:

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Laquer, Walter, *The Age of Terrorism*, Boston/Toronto, Little, Brown & Company (1987).

> Terrorism today is an "information crime"; it cannot operate without the modern social communications media.... Terrorist violence is merely the springboard for real terrorism which is communicated terrorism.

Implicit in this is the assumption that if political violence went unreported, it would go away. It is not surprising therefore that official spokesmen view the media as especially culpable for interviewing those who have taken up arms against the state. This is seen as legitimising our enemies. Also central to the question of legitimacy [of] the official view, the value of language as an instrument of persuasion is of paramount importance. The obvious corollary is that it should be controlled in ways that favour the definitions issuing from the state. Those who misuse language are either conscious sympathisers with the terrorists cause or dupes.

(ii) The Alternative Perspective

Philip Schlesinger et al believe that alternative perspective is the set of views, arguments, explanations and policy suggestions advocated by those who, while dissenting from the official view of terrorism, accept that violence is not legitimate within the liberal-democracies, though they recognise that it may be so in other political systems. The alternative view is advanced by civil libertarians, critical academics and journalists, and some politicians. Like official spokesmen and intellectuals, advocates of the alternative perspectives are concerned with the battle for public opinion, not least with trying to ensure that their own views receive a credible airing in the media.

The alternative perspective has developed in the context of the upsurge of political violence (a term often preferred to terrorism) and the growth of the repressive side of the state. While the alternative views do not offer a fundamental challenge to the official claims made for a

legitimate use of the means of violence, they do question the implications of excessive repression for the rule of law and democratic rights. Furthermore, the alternative perspective also questions the official strategy of repressing and exorcising terrorism, advocating instead strategies of political change and social engineering designed to defuse the violence and tackle its causes.

The alternative perspective is argued from a position which is both defensive and subordinate. It is defensive because those who argue officially accuse those who do not of being "soft on terrorism". It is subordinate because orthodoxy is well entrenched.

(iii) Populist Perspective

The claim is frequently made officially that a "war against terrorism" is being fought nationally and internationally. But at the same time official views also stress the defense of the rule of law and assert the political and moral advantages of democratic rule. The war against terrorism, therefore, cannot be total. No democratic state can openly advocate torture, assassination or arbitrary imprisonment on poor evidence nor can such practices even be admitted to exist as other than aberrations from a law-abiding norm by "bad apples" amongst security forces.

But this means that the official perspective is open to a charge of inconsistency. If there is a warlike walk, what about warlike action? Why not kill the terrorists, whether by military operations, or by imposing the death penalty after they have been captured and convicted? Proponents of this view take the metaphor of war seriously. The authors have labeled the framework in which it is developed the populist perspective.

But whereas those who pursue these themes from within the official perspective continue to claim (however rhetorically), that the rule of law must be upheld, "reactionary" populists are prepared to drop this caveat and call for a full-blooded "war against terrorism" aimed at restoring order by whatever means may be necessary. Moreover, it is argued, if the state refuses to take such action, people are entitled to fight back themselves, by force if necessary. At this point the populist perspective on terrorism shades into the more general advocacy of popular vigilantism as a way of combating violent street crime.

(iv) The Oppositional Perspective

The oppositional perspective, according to Schesinger et al, justifies the use of violence in the pursuit of political ends. It is put forward by those who perform acts of politically-motivated violence, or by those who either speak for them or share their objectives.

Those arguing the official perspective are concerned to ensure that oppositional views, inasmuch as they provide a rationale for violent acts, receive as little publicity or credibility as possible. In that way the actions which generally result in death and injury and damage to property may be allowed to "speak for themselves". The less they are placed in context by oppositional spokesmen and women, or by communiqués, the more they are subject to explanation in official terms, as criminals, barbarous and irrational.

Two main kinds of justification surface in the communications of those employing anti-state political violence:

(a)   Politically and economically, the state is a repressive instrument which so constraints those within it that any other form of political action is either impossible or ineffective. The aim, therefore, must be the complete overthrow of the state and the political and economic system which it maintains.

(b)   Political violence is necessary in struggles for national or sectional liberation in circumstances where the state may be said to have adopted a colonial role towards another people or towards a section of its own population. The subjugation of other peoples may take the form of economic imperialism rather than direct colonial administration and so be carried out through client states and dependent governments.

2.1   Literature on Problems of Media Reporting of Terrorism

Mr Cherif Bassiouni[20] opens his authoritative analysis and discussion of the problems in media coverage of non state-sponsored terror-violence incidents by quoting J. Bowyer Bell as saying:

It has become far more alluring for the frantic few to appear on the world stage of television than remain obscure guerrillas of the bush.

Bassiouni sketches a background to his article by stating that the media are the indispensable communications link of industrial society, as vital to the modern world as energy.

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[20] Bassiouni, M. cherif, "Problems in Media Coverage of Nonstate-Sponsored Terror-Violence Incidents," in Lawrence Zelic Freedman & Yonah Alexander (eds), *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Wilmington, Delaware, Scholarly Resources, Inc. (1983).

Through their various forms, media serve economic and sociological interests in the collection and dissemination of information. As electronic technology becomes more refined, this diffusion of information is accomplished more rapidly and more extensively than ever before. In addition, society's easier access to and increased reliance on media renders their psychological impact more pervasive and persuasive than in the past.

These facts have not escaped the attention of those who employ strategies of violence in order to obtain media coverage that most effectively achieves their socio-political objectives. Indeed, the correlation between the escalation of global terror-violence in the past 20 years and the innovations in the media technology that facilitate rapid transmission of information to large audiences is more than mere coincidence. In essence, this correlation illustrates the symbiotic relationship between "terrorism" and the media. The "terrorists" (his words) rely on the media to further their terror-inspiring goals, and the media utilize the terrorists' acts as necessary or rewarding news items. To strengthen his case, Bassiouni quotes Dr. Frederick Hacker, a California Psychiatrist with experience as a terrorist negotiator:

> If the mass media did not exist, terrorists would have to invent them. In turn, the mass media hanker after terroristic acts because they fit into their programming needs; namely, sudden acts of great excitement that are susceptible, presumably of quick solutions. So there is mutual dependency.

Regardless of whether acts of terror-violence are committed by individuals against a state or are state-sponsored acts, the perpetrator's strategy invariably involves the use and instrumentalisation of the media. It may be more advantageous at times for terrorism from above (state-sponsored) to reduce media exposure of repressive violence, while terrorism from below (non-state sponsored) usually seeks maximum exposure. In the case of serious state-

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sponsored violations of human rights such as the use of torture and arbitrary arrests and detentions the state may well use all of its powers to prevent the dissemination of such news. This may not be true, however, where a different state goal is involved. For example, the Iranian seizure of the U.S Embassy and 63 hostages in Tehran in October, 1979 was intended to focus maximum world attention on both the incident itself and on underlying motivations which the Iranians advanced as justifications for their actions. In this respect, the Iranian crisis was similar to acts of terror-violence whose goal is more often than not to propagandise claims or to achieve maximum publicity for a variety of purposes.

Ideologically motivated terror-violence from below is the weapon of the weak, employed by those who are too few or too powerless to achieve their objectives through the conventional political process. Media technology has made terror-violence an attractive strategy for effecting social or political transformations for two reasons:

(a)   It has enhanced the power image of those who are opposed to the socio-political systems of an increasingly complex and vulnerable society.

(b)   Technology has made the media an indispensable device by which an individual or a small group of individuals can magnify their power and influence over society within a short period of time and with relatively little effort.

That the media have come to serve willingly and unwillingly the purposes of those who engage in terror-violence was captured by the National Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism [in the U.S.]:

> Acts of terrorism have gained immediacy and diffusion through television, which conveys the terrorist message to millions worldwide. The modern terrorist has been

quick to exploit the medium in a way that shows government as a poor rival. Formerly, in countries where free speech and communication were jealously guarded rights, it would have been unthinkable for violent subversives to have seized control of the organs of mass communications. Today it is the commonplace consequence of terrorist action. In many ways, the modern terrorist is the very creation of the mass media. He has been magnified, enlarged beyond his own powers by others.

This problem may better be understood by recognising that the media's public function condemns them to being the medium of the terrorist's message, a message conveyed explicitly and implicitly by virtue of terrorist incidents. Furthermore, the type and extent of this coverage often increase the shock effect of terror-violence in general as well as particular incidents of terror-violence. However balanced the media coverage may be, some problems of pervasive influence remain: these are compounded when coverage is unbalanced or suffers from other improprieties.

Bassiouni then proceeds to a brief discussion of the functions of the media before specifically dealing in detail with the problems presented by the media coverage of terror-violence incidents. The mass media perform five basic functions:

(a)   Informational, by providing increasing numbers of people with a flow of news concerning events occurring within a given society and the world;

(b)   Judgmental, by providing the public with standards of judgment conveyed explicitly or implicitly by selection and treatment of subjects and material to aid in interpreting the information given;

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(c)   Educational, by transmitting the social and universal heritage from one generation to the next, and by defining and clarifying social goals and social values;

(d)   Interactional, by providing an open forum for the free exchange of ideas and opinions, by furnishing a basis from which individual and collective judgements can be formed;

(e)   Recreational, by providing amusement, relieving tension, and providing learning situations.

While the relationship between terror-violence and the media has received increasing examination, specific solutions to the problems created by the media coverage of terror-violence have been limited. To develop such solutions, one must first understand the problems presented by media coverage of terror-violence incidents. Only then can one develop specific proposals to effectively control and eventually prevent terror-violence in a manner that comports with constitutional principles and the rule of law.

(i)   Publicity Objective of Terror-Violence

Terrorism is a "strategy of unlawful violence calculated to inspire terror in the general public or a significant segment thereof, in order to achieve a power outcome or to propagandise a particular claim or grievance", quoting himself (Bassiouni). A psychological element is implicit in this definition: though the physical harm caused by ideologically motivated terror-violence is relatively limited, such acts produce, and are calculated to produce, an extensive psychological impact.

Because ordinary sporadic acts of violence would be of limited utility in achieving their objectives, perpetrators of ideologically motivated terror-violence must enhance the attention gathering and impact of their actions by making their activities appear extra-ordinary and sensational. This can be achieved most effectively by increasing the public's knowledge and attention on the terror-violence acts. Since the mass media have the capacity to disseminate information concerning occurrences of terror-violence, they have the capability to create the social impact desired by the perpetrators. Thus, the perpetrators depend upon the mass media to disseminate their sociopolitical message and the terror-inspiring nature of their act. The terror-inspiring quality of a terror-violent act is not necessarily inherent in the act itself; rather this quality is derivative of the act's impact which is largely determined by the media coverage the act receives.

Ideologically motivated perpetrators of terror-violence usually operate at three levels, each of which has its own goal:

   (a)   Primary stage, in which the tactical objective is an attack against a suitable target;

   (b)   Secondary stage, in which the strategic objective is the dissemination by the media of the ideological claim or the terror-inspiring effect of the act;

   (c)   Final stage, in which the ultimate objective is the achievement of the desired power outcome.

The tactical, strategic and ultimate objectives are interrelated in the perpetrator's reliance on the media to attain his ends. First, the strategic objective of the terrorist influences his choice of tactical targets and the methods of attack. The acts undertaken by the ideologically motivated perpetrator are likely to be directed against highly visible targets and conducted in

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the most dramatic manner, so as to draw media attention to the event and maximise its media-related impact. The perpetrator anticipates and relies on media coverage in the planning and execution of his terror-inspiring acts while media, in covering such act, unwillingly further his objective of producing a social impact that would not otherwise occur. Second, in addition to seeking maximum exposure, the media-conscious perpetrator attempts to manipulate the instruments of mass communication so that the ultimate objective of his particular grievance or ideology is portrayed as desirable or inevitable. Although the methods of manipulation vary from incident to incident, they are invariably chosen to demonstrate the vulnerability and impotence of the government, attract broader public sympathy by the choice of a carefully selected target that may be publicly rationalised, cause a polarisation and radicalisation among the public or segment thereof, goad the government into repressive action likely to discredit it, and present the violent acts as heroic. To drive his point home, Bassiouni quotes from the Brazilian terrorist Carlos Marighella's *Minimanual of Urban Guerrilla:*

> The war of nerves or psychological war is an aggressive technique, based on the communication and news transmitted orally in order to demoralise the government. In psychological warfare, the government is always at a disadvantage since it imposes censorship on the mass media and winds up in a defensive position by not allowing anything against it to filter through. At this point it becomes desperate, is involved in greater contradictions and loses time and energy in exhausting effort at control which is subject to being broken at any moment.

It is apparent from these statements that the media are as much a victim of terror-violence as society and its institutions. Perhaps the best example of this occurred during the Iranian seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. During this crisis, the perpetrators chose the media to

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achieve their strategic goal and manipulated media coverage to publicise the legitimacy of their revolution and their grievances against the U.S.

(ii) The Cinematogenic Link between Terror-Violence and the Media

Terrorist organisations rely heavily on the stereotypes created by the media. The inter-relationship between media coverage and terror-violence groups is so strong that these groups purposefully conform to media stereotypes in composing their internal organisational structure, their chain command, and even the attitudes of their members. In addition, terror-violence group's choice of targets and their execution of certain acts frequently correspond to media-created perceptions of how these spectacular events should occur.

The cinematogenic nature of contemporary terrorist behaviour attests to the symbiotic relationship between the media and terrorism. The media's portrayal of individuals and events is based on value judgment as well as on certain expectations and patterns of behaviour. These factors have not been sufficiently appraised in terms of their impact on perpetrators and would be perpetrators of terror-violence. It is noteworthy, therefore, to point out certain outcomes of this cinematogenic effect: 1) the perpetrators' patterns of behaviour seek to fulfil media expectations by conforming to certain patterns stereotyped by factual or fictional portrayals; 2) response to stereotyped portrayals provides a framework and rapport between the perpetrators, media personnel who cover the event, and those who decide what type of coverage which terror-violence acts should receive; 3) conformity to stereotype provides a sound basis for predictability of behaviour and responses on the part of the perpetrators, the media and the general public.

In addition, fictional media stereotypes provide models of behaviour that the public associates with certain values. By conforming to these stereotypes and, sometimes, by easily distorting them, the perpetrators of terror-violence are able to assume roles which attract public sympathy. In any event, conformity to stereotypical cinematogenic roles tends to make their behaviour more tolerable to the public.

(iii) The Media-Enhanced Impact of Terror-Violence

Four categories of problems associated with media coverage of terror-violence incidents are identifiable readily in the context of democratic societies which guarantee freedom of the press:

(a) The reporting of acts of terror-violence may encourage others to engage in such conduct.

(b) Excesses or deficiencies in media coverage may enhance the climate of intimidation which the terrorist seeks to generate; this would not only further unnecessarily the perpetrator's objectives, but it would also engender pressures for counterproductive governmental repression and cause undesirable social consequences.

(c) Media coverage may immunise or dull the general public's sense of opprobrium. Each of these factors has also a potential counter effect.

(d) Media reporting may endanger hostages' lives and interfere with effective law enforcement response; these problems generally arise during contemporaneous on-the-scene coverage of ongoing incidents.

On the other hand, it should be noted that media coverage and media portrayal also can operate as a safety valve or a release factor. For example, media coverage can be a means of securing hostages' release; media coverage can also co-opt the need for terror-violence by disseminating claims that otherwise would have become exteriorized through violent action. We shall now proceed to analyse categories of problems each in turn:

(a)   The Psychologically Projected Prediction

This effect of terror-violence occurs in the following manner. First, events of terror-violence conjure up images associated with certain symbols or labels. When these symbols or labels are used later to describe another event, this triggers the recall of the prior event, even though the new one may not be of the same magnitude, seriousness or impact. Thus, the repeated usage of a given key word regarding an event which the key word represents, but also a projected prediction about the new event's outcomes. As a result, the ready recall and projected impact which this process creates tend to increase the psychological effects of terror-violence. For example, because the media have highlighted acts of terror-violence by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), the recall effect is such that any act of terror-violence associated with PLO, even when it was committed by any of the other groups of terrorists at any time.

(b)   The Contagion Hypothesis

According to the contagion hypothesis, media attention given to terror-violence encourages further incidents of terror-violence. Although this hypothesis would not appear entirely

susceptible to empirical verification, at least with respect to ideologically motivated individuals, concern over this contagion effect has been repeatedly expressed, and the theory retains a certain intuitive reasonableness. The public success of a particular terrorist group, for instance, may encourage that group to repeat its attacks in order to keep the public's attention on its goals or ideology. In addition, publicity generated by one terrorist group, such as accorded the Italian Red Brigade, by virtue of its kidnapping of Aldo Moro, may goad less successful groups to commit increased or more daring acts of terror-violence.

The contagion hypothesis also may operate with respect to perpetrators motivated by non-ideological reasons. Since the mass media have the ability to "confer status upon an individual or an event merely by presenting them" the spotlight of media attention may be an irresistible lure to violence for certain individuals. The common criminal who is motivated by personal gain may imitate successful techniques which he has learned from the media coverage of earlier terrorist incidents; for example, after a report of a skyjacking in which the perpetrator successfully escaped by parachute, subsequent skyjackers routinely included a parachute in their list of demands.

Although researchers continue to focus their attention on contagion hypothesis, no conclusive data have been compiled. Nevertheless, this research supports the reasonable and qualified proposition that the contagion effect of terror-violence leads to imitation by other groups, especially when previous terrorist acts have been successful.

In contrast to its negative, contagion effects media coverage of terror-violence instead may have a cathartic effect on potential perpetrators of terror-violence. In this instance, media

coverage of an event or social grievance actually may dampen an individual's motivation to engage in terror-violence in order to attract attention to his social claim. This counter-effect of deterrence is produced by portraying the failure of terrorist acts due to the effectiveness of law enforcement. Thus, the effect of contagion created by media coverage of terror-violence may well be counteracted by the effect of deterrence such coverage creates. Although no quantitative analysis could establish an empirical foundation that could adequately predict the degree to which an individual's behaviour is influenced by competing or countervailing motivations, one can reasonably conclude that media coverage does have contagious consequences.

(c) The Climate of Intimidation

Perhaps the most pervasive problem associated with the media reporting of terror-violence is the climate of intimidation it engenders, a general fear of victimisation that despoils the quality of life and may destabilise social institutions. While intimidation is usually one of the strategic objectives of terror-violence, isolated incidents could scarcely produce such a ubiquitous psychological impact. Rather, it is the repetitive dissemination of terror-inspiring acts and the manner of dissemination that produce impact.

In their social role, the media act in part as mediator between man and his environment. As society increases in complexity, and events affecting one's welfare occur increasingly outside one's immediate experience, the objective world retreats ever further out of reach, out of sight, and out of mind. Man's reliance on the mass media increases correspondingly as he attempts to construct for himself a picture of his surroundings. By providing messages from the outside

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world, the media influence the way people view the world and, consequently, their behaviour in response to it. A classic illustration of this type of media influence is the public's panicked reaction to the *Invasion from Mars* in the 1938 radio broadcast of George Wells' "War of the Worlds". As Professor Harold Mendelssohn has written "the mere fact that the so-called invasion was presented in the form of a radio broadcast gave it an authenticity per se (in original) which was sufficient for many listeners to accept uncritically and to base behavioural action upon". Similarly, a degree of public anxiety is a necessary by-product of media reporting of news events during times of stress. Such media-created anxiety is functional rather than dysfunctional, however, only when it readies individuals to cope with realistic dangers in realistic ways. It is where mass media offer false standards of judgment by which readers, listeners and viewers may misinterpret the news that the dangers lie. Whether through ignorance, guile, vested interest or irresponsibility where some sectors of the mass media create dysfunctional anxiety, we have a serious problem on our hands.

In the context of media coverage of terror-violence, the dysfunctional anxiety enhances the perceived power of the terrorist in his own eyes, in those of his peer group, analogous groups, other individuals susceptible of emulation, and the public. This perception of enhanced power, when combined with society's high level of vulnerability (created by the vulnerability of targets and the weakness or ineffectiveness of law enforcement), causes intimidation in the social psyche. This impact increases as recurrence of incidents produces the Psychological Projection Prediction Syndrome discussed above. At a certain point in this process, however, a level of tolerance may well set in producing an immunisation effect. Following tolerance, social reaction may be the exact opposite of immunisation, as society develops an antipathy toward terror-violence and resolves to combat such conduct. Society also may overreact in its hostility

to terror-violence; however, this would clearly be counter-productive to the effective control and eventual eradication of the problem.

(d)   The Immunisation Effect

The Immunisation Effect imports that media reporting may endanger hostages' lives and interfere with effective law enforcement response, especially during contemporaneous on-the-scene coverage of ongoing incidents.

The following are the three ways by which the Immunization Effect manifests itself:

(I)   The first derives from continuous media coverage of violence in general and terror violence in particular; its effect is to heighten the public's level of tolerance and acceptance of violence and terror-violence as a fact of life. In addition, when such coverage is glorified or associated with certain rewards, such as status, social prominence, sex appeal, financial success, or political importance, the rejection of violence is eroded, and gradual tolerance for it creeps persuasively into the social psychology. Thus, as moral opposition is reduced, immunisation to the phenomenon increases. The increased acceptance of violence as a tolerable social act increases its contagion effect.

(II)   Portrayal of terrorists as "crazies" or as individuals and organisations beyond the means of social control. Thus, the avowed aberrant nature of the perpetrators and their modus operandi is perceived as so far outside the accepted frame of reference that it explains the occurrence of such acts and society's inability to prevent it or

control it. The result again is immunisation, as society explains away the phenomenon by considering it alien.

(III)   This derives from the abstract and impersonal portrayal of the act of terror-violence and its harmful effect. An example of this is the coverage of the Iranian seizure of the American hostages in 1979-1980, when 63, later 50, persons held were almost never described as individuals. No longer was it a matter of a person with a face, a name, a family, a life, but the concept of "hostage" that acquired the connotation of a pawn on the chess board of world politics. The public's outraged reaction was directed more at the political significance of the act than its harmful effects on the individuals involved. In time, the public's perception of the problem focused almost exclusively on the political dimensions of the incident, while becoming immune to its human dimensions.

As society becomes more immune to violence, two consequences become likely:

- The level of violence necessary to elicit a terror-inspiring effect increases in order to overcome the dulled perceptions of the public;

- More persons may resort to violence in general, and terror-violence in particular, as a result of the lessening of the social opprobrium attached to it, or the increasingly social acceptance or tolerance of such conduct and its perpetrators. In any event, it increases the contagion and intimidation effects discussed above.

Public immunisation is not a foregone conclusion of media coverage of terror-violence. In fact, the exact opposite is quite likely in that the media's portrayal may increase public opposition to such behaviour. Thus, the terrorists want enough balanced media coverage to

produce immunisation, and not outraged media coverage that could trigger opposing social reaction.

The Combined effects of Contagion, Intimidation and Immunisation in Media Coverage Impact

The terrorist's powers usually are represented by the media and perceived by the public disproportionately to his actual capacity to harm, to the extent the media abuse or allow the terrorists to abuse their social mediating role. Thus the climate of intimidation is enhanced while, at the same time, it stimulates emulation through contagion. Although the media are becoming more accurate, responsible, and self-critical in their often sensationalist past, several exigencies and limitations inherent to the media, their purpose, and type of organisation are bound to create the effects of contagion, intimidation, and immunisation. Daily, the media prepare the public for its race as a victim of terrorist attacks; the media's portrayal of fictionalised violence provides the backdrop for the public's reaction to the terror-violence. Commercial and competitive factors influence the type and extent of coverage a terror-violence incident will receive and colour the public's perception of the terrorist's message.

Despite the important stake society has in the performance of media functions, the media are also private businesses in pursuit of profits. Although size and profitability have had some positive effects upon the quantities and quality of new reporting and upon the media's independence, commercial factors also lead to abuses. Since profits are obtained from selling time or space to advertisers at rates determined by circulation or audience size, the media are engaged in the business of selling attention. Terrorist events often are dramatic, and it is

beyond doubt that such events are newsworthy. However, when news reporting becomes a commercial product whose relative media emphasis is determined by its attention-getting potential, excessive coverage may be afforded to violent, dramatic events in disproportion to their actual significance. The consequence of serving up acts of terror-violence as mass entertainment is to augment the terrorist's audience and, consequently, the impact of his message.

Terrorists are aware that competition between news organisations, their fear of being scooped by the opposition, and their quest for ever larger audiences and prestige foster reliance on sometimes questionable reporting techniques. Reporters do not merely report the news; they are often subjective participants in it. They are in essence, the actors, the script writers, and the idea people behind each story. Terrorists take advantage of this situation in their attempts to manipulate the media. While direct media contact and interview with a terrorist make a more exciting story, such reporting techniques often afford the perpetrator an unedited platform and excessive publicity. Hand-held microwave minicameras enable terrorist broadcast live into the viewer's home where television's visual impact, immediacy, and realism foster the climate of intimidation. Subjective portrayals of the terrorist personalities as glamorous or heroic figures, an image terrorists seek to inculcate, elevate them to positions of prominence disproportionate to their actual power. When commercial and competitive factors displace judgment in the coverage of terrorist incidents, the media may lose control over the situation and themselves become a hostage.

The special relationship of television to terrorism was the subject of a British Conference under the auspices of the Institute for Study of Conflict. In its special report, the conference noted the unique role of television:

> Television in the mass media has acquired over the last 20 odd years an infinitely more powerful and penetrating means of communication than anything hitherto known to us. If a person reads a newspaper or a book, only the sense of sight is being employed and his reactions are entirely self-induced. Radio employs the sense of hearing, and reactions to what is said are already to a very large extent affected by the manner of presentation. With television not only are the senses of sight and hearing fully occupied, but every emotion is closely caught and involved in what is happening on the live screen in the opposite corner of 15 million living rooms. This is a captive audience not necessarily in possession of the independent criteria by which to form judgments.

Terrorists have a particular affinity for gaining access to television. To give the reason for this, Bassiouni quotes from P. Wilkinson: "for they appreciate its potency, its immediacy, and its vast potential audience". However, it is generally not possible for television to provide the viewer with a wholly unbiased picture. Since terrorist groups operate clandestinely, their atrocities often are not presented. They can determine when, and even to some degree how, they are covered and manipulate the image transmitted. Because there is virtually no limitation upon the television reporting of abuses, real or alleged, in pluralist and representative societies, television inevitably seems one-sided, and its bias inevitably on the side of the revolutionaries and against established authority.

It must be noted in appraising the three effects of contagion, intimidation, and immunisation and their interaction that each one of these effects also has a potential counter-effect. The counter-effect of contagion is deterrence, manifested in media portrayal of effective and proper law enforcement action which may intimidate both the perpetrators of terror-violence and the would-be perpetrators of terror-violence. The immunisation effect may even create an extreme anti-terrorist public reaction. Suffice it to recall that totalitarian regimes, which engage in violent repression, effectively deter opposition.

The distinction between the social effects of the terror violence and those effects generated by the intervening factor of media coverage and dissemination can hardly be assessed because of the number of variables involved. In this area, as in others covered by this study, more research is needed although common sense and ordinary human experience amply warrant the concern created by the perceived effects of contagion, intimidation, and immunisation, Bassiouni concludes.

2.2   Literature on the Media and Communication Process

Whereas the preceding section briefly discussed basic functions of the media, this section is meant to build on that presenting the functions of the media in relation to knowledge and social control. The rationale is that solution to some of the problems bedeviling humankind lies in the control of the free flow of information within society. This section would then briefly examine the functions of the communication process before concluding with a discussion of approaches to international communication since terrorism is an international phenomenon.

According to G.A. Donohue et al[21], the importance of knowledge as a basis for social power has been noted by a number of scholars, but appreciated is the fact that <u>control</u> [in original] of knowledge is central to development and maintenance of power. The knowledge industry of which mass media are part, currently [in the 1973 U.S.] accounts for more than a quarter of the gross national product and attests to the social importance of the demand for knowledge production and distribution.

In the present day society, large scale organisations in both public and private sectors are structured carefully to control both the assimilation and dissemination of information. The rapidly growing data-processing agencies represent overt recognition of the role of information and its control in modern social organisation. Professional specialists in modern corporate structures are integrated into a configuration of organised intelligence which is often beyond the comprehension or concern of any one of them as individuals.

It is still important to study the micro processes of mass communication, but given the growing importance of information control in society, it appears equally important to take a macro-view of mass media as inter-dependent parts of a total social system in which they share facets of controlling, and being controlled by, other sub-systems.

The authors define the concept of "social systems" as a series of inter-related subsystems with primary functions including the generation, dissemination and assimilation of information to

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[21] Donohue, George A., Philip J. Tichenor, & Clarice N. Olien, " Gatekeeping: Mass Media Systems & Information Control," in F. Gerald Kline & Philip J. Tichenor (eds), *Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research*, Sage Publications (1972).

effect further control as a means to an end or as an end in itself. Mass media represent subsystems which cut across other subsystems and transmit information among and between them.

One should not assume that social control is the only function served by mass communication, but rather that all communication processes have a control function within them, either latent or manifest.

Before tackling diffusion of an ideology, what is the role of communication process in society? On the authority of Harold D. Lasswell[22], the communication process in society performs three functions:

(a)   Surveillance of the environment, disclosing threats and opportunities affecting the value position of the community and of the component parts within it.

(b)   Correlation of the components of society in making a response to the environment.

(c)   Transmission of the social inheritance from one generation to the next.

But Modern news media are not, according to Andrew Arno[23] just passive channels. Dramatic advances in communications technology are resulting in wider and faster dissemination of news, with a related growth in the potential of world and national public opinion as a political force. The media, in fact acting through the ephemeral, intermittent, but explosively powerful coming together of news sources, print or broadcast organizations, and both mass and specialized audiences, are partially autonomous parties to relationships in which conflict

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[22] Laswell, Harold D., "The Structure & Functions of Communication in Society," in Wilbur Schramm & Roberts Donaldson (eds), *The Process & Effects pf Mass Communication*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
[23] Arno, Andrew, "Communication, Conflict, & Storylines: The News Media As Actors in a Cultural Conflict," in Andrew Arno & Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *The News Media in National & International Conflict*, London, Westview Press.

situations exist. The news media are unusual, volatile entities, different in some ways from individuals or organized, stable groups.

To the extent that they do not merely transmit, but also frame and interpret messages, however, they must operate within contexts of shared cultural meaning just as other social actors do. Turning the realities of conflicts into stories, which then become part of the reality, media organizations necessarily observe social and cultural conventions, and cultural patterns are essential determinants of the roles that the news media take during conflicts.

Systematic, purposive involvement in conflict situations is the most immediately salient feature of the anatomy and behaviour of the news media in relation to other contemporary social entities. They insert themselves or are drawn into virtually every kind of social conflict because, in a basic sense, conflict is news.

Andrew Arno goes so far as to assert that news is defined by its conflict focus and that there is nothing deplorable about the fact. It is sometimes argued that the predominance of conflict stories in news gives a distorted picture of the world, but people do not read or watch news to gain a picture of the world that is "undistorted," where what is good and positive is portrayed in realistic proportion to what is evil and dangerous. Counterbalancing information about nonconflictual topics is available in other formats, and to the extent that a newspaper is filled with recipes, gardening hints, or serialized fiction, for example, it is not functioning as a news medium. Newspapers and television properly provide material to educate and entertain, but people also want accurate information about conflicts and problems. When it is not supplied by the conventional, they are apt to seek it from alternative channels.

The human disposition to find alarming reports more stimulating than stories about what is right with the world probably accounts in part for the persistence of the species. The farmer who pays more attention to the observation of a single Mediterranean fruit fly in his vicinity than to reports that describe the thousands of healthy plants in his fields is more likely than one otherwise inclined to reap a good harvest. This is not to claim that any (in original) amount of conflict is good in itself, but a problem, implying some sort of conflict, that is known about is better than a problem that is neglected. This is not often the case, but often it is. Left to themselves, many problems grow worse, and what gives conflict its bad name is its potential, if not controlled or managed, to escalate and become destructive.

In a structural sense, social conflict may at times be useful, as when it increases solidarity and co-operation within a group that is in conflict with some outside force. Elevated levels of conflict can also be a temporary part of constructive social change.

Even so, conflict can be dangerous and destructive if it gets out of control and escalates to the point of destroying necessary or desirable relationships. Conflict management is the social process of allowing conflict to run in society without becoming destructive to basic structural relationships. Communication has always been a central part of the management process, especially when parties to a conflict have attempted to generate consensus for their own positions through persuasion. In modern, large-scale societies as in international relations, the mass media have become an essential part of the process, and their content is an indicator of the importance of their roles.

A basic question is how communication about conflict is related to the actual conflicts that exist in and among societies. It is often argued that communication about certain kinds of issues can actually create or intensify conflict. At the interpersonal level, rumour and gossip are condemned on such grounds, and in many nations political leaders and government officials have periodically denounced the press and electronic media for their alleged roles in creating conflict. On the other hand, one can maintain, as have many journalists and media philosophers, that by supplying information about conflict issues to a wide audience, the press and television constitute an essential part of a "court of public opinion" and thereby help to contain social conflict by assisting in the solution of underlying community problems.

Both arguments agree that media content does not merely reflect the level of conflict in the society, but has a functional relationship to it: it either intensifies or diminishes it.

In any case, media, like all social actors, are never completely autonomous, but are meshed into interdependent relationships with other groups and sectors of society. If they were totally autonomous, they would lose access to information as well as rapport with audiences, but if they become totally identified with a party to a conflict they would cease to function, in that conflict situation, as news media. The media tread the line between these structural extremes.

2.4   Diffusion of An Ideology

In this final subsection of this chapter, we would first define the concept of diffusion in general and the diffusion of ideology in particular before discussing the role of the media in the process of the diffusion of a news event like terrorism. So what is diffusion?

Everett M. Rogers,[24] a guru on diffusion of innovations, defines diffusion as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. It is a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas (including an ideology). *Communication* is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This definition implies that communication is a process of convergence (or divergence) as two or more individuals exchange information in order to move toward each other (or apart) in the meanings that they give to certain events.

Diffusion is a kind of social change, defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system. When new ideas are invented, diffused, and are

Adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social change occurs. Of course such change can happen in other ways, through a natural event like drought or an earthquake, or by means of a government regulation.

One of the important contributions of the news event diffusion studies has been to establish the conditions under which mass media versus interpersonal communication channels are relatively important.

News Events of extremely high news value, like the assassination of President Kennedy or the shooting of Pope John Paul II in 1981 not surprisingly spread with great speed because while

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[24] Rogers, Everett M., *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. New York, The Free Press.

the media (especially radio and television) carry the news to a number of people, the news then fans out by word-of-mouth channels, even among strangers. Less spectacular, everyday news events of the kind that typically appear on the front page of a daily newspaper spread mainly via mass media channels. Events of relatively low news value, such as last night's decision by the City Council to build a new sewer line, while reported in the local media, mainly spread by interpersonal channels among the few people who are interested.

According to Strodthoff et al,[25] a guiding framework for the study of diffusion of ideology posits that mass media organizations evolve through three basic adaptive phases – disambiguation, ligitimation, and routinisation – in their processing of information relevant to a maturing social cause. Gleaned from general systems theory, the involved processes correspond metaphorically to sequential phases in the growth of a system (gestation, maturation, and equilibrium). Each deals with processes that seem to be characteristic of certain temporal phases in the unfolding of a larger process – the diffusion of ideology. Thus these concepts should be seen in terms of both process and of phases:

i) Disambiguation

Is a process whereby the basic doctrinal tenets of an emerging social cause themselves become defined and distinguished from each other and are first manifest in the content of mass communication channels. Disambiguation should be predominant during the earliest phase of the diffusion progression and continue until the approximate point of cresting in media attention to the philosophical themes of the social movement.

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[25] Strodthoff, Glen G., Robert P. Hawkins & A. Clay Schoenfeld, "Media Roles in A Social Movement: A model of Ideology Diffusion," *Journal of Communication*, spring, 1985.

i) Legitimation

Is a process by which those who regulate the content for a given channel or media organization (gatekeepers) recognize various concerns pertinent to a social cause as valid topics for coverage by their particular channels.

iii) Routinisation

Is a process whereby content relative to the movement is incorporated into the channel's operations on a fixed basis, such as through space, time, or personnel allocation. The approximate point of beginning is evidenced in formats and/or from published statements indicating that such an administrative decision has been made.

Karl Erik Rosengren[26] observes that in innovation research one usually makes a distinction between diffusion and adoption. The corresponding concepts in the study of news diffusion are diffusion and learning. Diffusion is a group process, learning, an individual process.

Diffusion of a news event may be affected by event variables (times of occurrence, degree of importance, etc.) and by group or system variables (media structure, social structure, etc). The individual's learning of the news may be affected by event variables, group or system variables, such as age, sex, education, interest and knowledge.

The importance of an event might be defined as the number of persons whose lives the event affects in a decisive manner. The news value of the report of the event might be defined as the number of persons that feel involved in the report of the event (and, indirectly, in the event

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[26] Rosengren, Karl Erik, "News Diffusion: An Overview," *Journalism Quarterly*, 50 (1), 1973.

itself), i.e. importance refers to events, news value primary to report of events, or, rather to reports as perceived and used by the audience.

An important part of journalists' work consists in:

(1) Ratings of the importance of news events

(2) Ratings of the news value that may be obtained by reports about the same events, and

(3) The weighing together of the two ratings.

The estimated news value of an event will be defined as moment (2) ratings of the news value that may be obtained by reports about the same events, and (3) the weighing together of the two ratings.

The estimated news value of an event will be defined as moment (2) above: Journalists' ratings of the news value which may be obtained by the reports of a given event. What has been called estimated news value and news value respectively are often treated as the same thing, and labeled news value. But conceptually they are widely different, and consequently they should be kept apart.

Yasuhiro INOUE and Yoshiro KAWAKAMI[27] give us a brief history and insight into news diffusion. They observe that news diffusion studies generally found that interpersonal communication plays a role in diffusion news events. Even though fast and far reaching new

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[27] INOUE, Yasuhiro & Yoshiro KAWAKAMI, "Factors Influencing Tabloid News Diffusion: Comparison with Hard News," *Keio Communication Review*, No. 26, 2004.

media revolutionalised our information environment, word of mouth still remains a means of primary news source for important events.

The authors trace the history of systematic research about news diffusion back to more than half a century. One of the pioneering studies was Miller's study of the news story about the US President Roosevelt's death (1945). The research findings suggest that the word of mouth communication increases the spread of the news very quickly, though the initial source of information was a mass medium, radio. In the 1960s, more scholars gave attention to news diffusion, and the number of the studies increased. Greater attention could be attributed to the US's President John F. Kennedy's assassination. This tragedy eventually provided a window of opportunity for news diffusion scholars to examine the various aspects of the spread of the news. Hill and Bonjean found that the majority of the people (57%) learned the news by interpersonal communication even though electronic media had become ubiquitous at the time. The study confirmed that the significance of the news event activated the interpersonal channel as the initial news source.

Bantz, Petronio, and Rarick examined the influence of demographic and political affiliation on post communication behaviours by using the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan. As in the case of crisis news, the majority of the respondents (68%) reported interpersonal communication as the first news source. Emotional responses on communication behaviour after learning of the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger were analysed by Riffe and Stovall. This study found that those who were very upset were more likely and faster to diffuse the news interpersonally. News attributes such as the degree of surprise may increase or decrease the likelihood that people inform others of the news.

For example, it is said that the more surprising a news story is, the more likely people are to pass it along.

Commenting authoritatively on the relationship between mass media and interpersonal communication, Stephen H. Chaffee[28] observes that the use of the mass media is commonly thought of as a discrete individual behaviour, one that can be isolated from the rest of a person's daily living. A moment's self-reflection should be sufficient to convince the reader that this conception is too narrow. We frequently refer to our daily newspapers, to the ubiquitous television set, and to magazines, books, and films for information and insights that we can employ *in our interactions with others* (in original). We do not ordinarily think of these as two separate types of communication. Rather, we are continually – often simultaneously – involved in both mass and interpersonal communication, as we build and cross-validate our interpretations of ourselves and the people and events that surround us.

Mass media context determines, perhaps to a much greater extent than we realize, what things we shall argue or agree about with others. In turn – and even less obviously – this interpersonal context plays a major role in shaping the content of the mass media.

Quite a different example of the interplay between mass and face-to-face communication is provided by Coleman's analysis of the ways in which communities deal with divisive controversial issues. Coleman concluded that the mass media, which are quite useful in crises such as floods or other disasters when people mainly need to know *what to do* (in original), are

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[28] Chaffee, Stephen H., "The Interpersonal Context of Mass Communication," in F. Gerald Kline & Philip J. Tichenor (eds) *Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research*, Vol. 1 Sage Publications (1972).

much less helpful in community disputes when people need to know *what to think*. As a crisis over an issue such as fluoridation or school bonds grows, personal invective and rumour are generated. The media generally decline to transmit such content, but interpersonal channels thrive on it. As the informal flow of slander and falsehood builds, it tends to create a "market" for itself. At the peak of a controversy, the mass media are frequently inadequate to meet the popular demand for "information" relevant to the conflict.

We conclude this subsection by examining how terrorists ensure access to media attention and thus diffuse their ideology, macabre though it may be. Our said examination would be based on the perceptive analysis by Ralp E. Dowling[29] who opens his article by quoting Hacker as having identified three distinct types of terrorists: Criminals, who are motivated by the possibility of monetary gain; crazies, who seek personal glory, to overcome massive insecurity, or to wreak revenge on a world that scares them to death; and crusaders. Crusaders practice terrorism for political ends, defined by the [US] Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism as "violent criminal behaviour designed primarily to generate fear in the community... for political purposes." Echoing this definition, Jenkins ruefully concluded that "the use of terrorist tactics will persist as a mode of political expression, of gaining international attention, and of achieving limited political goals."

Terrorists, news people, and media experts "share the assumption that those whose names make the headlines have power, that getting one's name on the front page is a major political achievement," as Walter Lacqueur puts it.

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[29] Dowling, Ralph E., "Terrorism & the Media: A Rhetorical Genre," *Journal of Communication*, winter, 1986.

The author also quotes Gerbner and Gross as opining that "representation in the world of television gives an idea, a cause, a group, its sense of public identity, importance, and relevance. No movement can get going without some visibility." Modern terrorists seek access to the media by committing acts that closely fit news agencies definition(s) of news: being timely, and unique, involving adventure or entertainment value, and somehow affecting the lives of those being informed.

Terrorists engage in recurrent rhetorical forms that force the media to provide the access without which terrorism could not fulfil its objectives. The genre, which Bell has called the "terrorist spectacular," has three optimum requirements:

i)   A terrorist-spectacular first should be staged in an ideologically satisfactory locale with more than adequate technological facilities. Munich was ideal – No justice for Palestine, no peace for the world, not even at the Olympics, and several thousand journalists and cameramen on the spot...

ii)   The terrorist drama must offer the reality or prospect of violence. Unlike conventional serials, the violence is real and the outcome is uncertain.

iii)   Movement – the change of scenery that allows the cameras to follow the actors from one site to the next – coupled with the passage of time. The Croatian hijacking in 1976 managed to include New York, Chicago, Montreal, London, and Paris, with Rekjavik in Iceland thrown in. The Croatian spectacular ran for thirty hours...

The terrorist whose acts include these elements transcends mere access to the media. Such a terrorist is no longer subject to editorial judgements; rather, the news agencies become his or her pawns. Journalistic responses are inevitable because the newsworthiness criteria are

inflexible and unquestioned. When the critics charge journalists with inciting terrorism, journalists will "continue to insist that, as always, they simply covered the news," as J. B. Bell puts it. The news, however, is created and staged by terrorists seeking media access.

The President of the US, arguably the most powerful person on earth, has had slightly less success than terrorists in obtaining media access. The clearest explanation for this amazing success is provided by J. B. Bell:

> Given a script with an uncertain ending, live actors...and a skilled director who choreographs the unfolding incident for maximum impact, television is helpless.

These violent deeds send distinct messages to the two audiences of terrorism: the dedicated followers of the movement (insiders) and the mass audience (outsiders). This is how terrorism diffusion proceeds.

By conducting a successful terrorist spectacular, the terrorist can persuade the loyal minions that, to quote J. B. Bell again, "even if their aspirations are no closer to reality, they can at least act on events." The importance of this message to improving terrorists' morale must not be underestimated. Denied the ability to transform their utopian dreams into social realities, terrorist groups are motivated by "a free floating activism that can with equal ease turn right or left. Terrorism... is not a philosophical school – it is always the action that counts" (W. Lacqueur). Such ideological ambivalence casts further doubt on the suggestion that ideological conversion is a major purpose of terrorism.

Another goal of terrorism is to demonstrate to terrorists that they are worthy and, in the process, to claim a sort of moral victory. In their study of confrontation rhetoric, Scott and

Smith discuss how, "by the act of overcoming his enemy, he who supplants demonstrates his own worthiness, effacing the mark, whatever it may be – immaturity, weakness, subhumanity – that his enemy has set upon his brow." Any concession by the stronger authorities becomes a terrorist victory – including the airing of ideologies, grievances, or demands.

Lacking the final victory they seek, terrorists also can claim at least a limited victory when they succeed in gaining any concession(s) in exchange for releasing hostages or agreeing not to detonate explosives: When authorities are forced to release "political" prisoners, feed the poor, guarantee immunity from prosecution, provide transportation to safe havens for political exiles, or allow the publication/broadcast of ideological statements or lists of demands. Terrorists can persuade themselves that their heroism, determination, and rightness of cause ensure them of eventual victory over the enemy who lacks the "stomach for the fight". According to Scott and Smith, radicals may "work out the rite of the kill symbolically. Harassing, embarrassing, disarming the enemy may suffice, especially if he is finally led to admit his impotence in the face of superior will of the revolutionary."

The first step in the terrorist strategy is to make outsiders aware of their existence. To ensure our awareness, terrorists must gain and hold our attention. The level of awareness is a function of the terrorists' adherence to the genre. To illustrate this, the author quotes from Jenkins who identified this hierarchy of quality in evaluating some of the recurring types of terrorism:

> Hostage incidents seem to have greater impact than murder, barricade situations more than kidnapping. Hostage situations may last for days, possibly weeks. Human life hangs in the balance. The whole world watches and waits. By contrast, deaths, even many deaths, are news for only a few days. They lack suspense and are soon forgotten.

Jenkins then goes on to argue that the Croatian hijacking of an airliner in 1976, which fulfilled all of the characteristics of the genre, is better remembered today than the sudden death of 73 caused by a bomb placed aboard a Cuban airliner just three weeks later. The PLO and Israeli Commandoes at Entebbe (later the subject of a television docudrama), Black September killers and Israeli athletes in Munich, South Moluccans and Dutch school children, and Hanafi Muslims in B'nai B'rith headquarters in Washington, have become universal memories through successful enactment of the terrorist genre.

Adherence to the terrorist genre also explains why government officials and private citizens have often erroneously commented on increases in terrorism during years that actually witnessed absolute decreases in both the number of incidents and the damage inflicted. Lacqueur attributes the discrepancy between reality and perception to the dramatic character of the smaller number of incidents. All of this indicates that the genre is a description of reality as well as a prescription for success.

Other variables influence terrorists' success in gaining awareness. Since many world events compete for the finite time and space available on news channels, as Jenkins puts it, "timing is important. Terrorist violence is easily submerged by higher levels of conflict; individual acts of violence lose their meaning in a war." Terrorists must take also care not to split our attention with simultaneous incidents, lest the impact of their deeds be diminished. Lacqueur provides several examples of terrorists who succeeded in gaining attention:

> Only a few years ago, newspaper readers in the Western world were led to believe that the German Border – Meinhoff group, the Japanese United Red Army, the Symbionese Liberation Army, and the British "Angry Brigade" were substantial movements that ought to be taken seriously. Their "communiqués" were published in

the mass media; there were earnest Sociological studies on the background of their members and their motivations; their "ideology" was analysed in tedious detail. But these were groups of between five and fifty members and their only victories were in the area of publicity.

Contemporary terrorism has not achieved the long-term goals of its practitioners. The creation of a climate of fear is the only terrorist strategy that might directly contribute to such goals. Dobson and Payne described this strategy:

> The philosophers of terror have assumed that their principal aims, the creation of a climate of repression in liberal societies, would become easier. They hoped by this repression to achieve what they call the alienation of the masses which then prepare the way for revolution. But in Europe and the United States the theory has not worked out.... The police state, a step on the road to revolution, has failed to emerge.

The creation of mass fear as an inducement to repression responses places the liberal regime at a disadvantage. Liberal regimes enjoy popular support because they allow a great deal of freedom. The citizens of such a state presumably will be unsatisfied with the authorities if freedoms are sacrificed in an attempt to clamp down on terrorism. In his instructions to terrorists, Carlos Marighella made this strategy clear:

> The war of nerves or psychological warfare is an aggressive technique.... The government is always at a disadvantage since it imposes censorship on the mass media and winds up in a defensive position.... At this point it becomes desperate, is involved in greater contradictions and loss of prestige.

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The provocation of repressive responses by the authorities can serve other purposes as well. Terrorists may provoke violent responses from authorities to counter the negative reactions aroused by their own violence.

The terrorist beliefs that fear can be produced has some foundation. But, perhaps because their ideology demands it, terrorists seem unable to accept the fact that the responses of a liberal government may actually reflect the desires of the people. Since greater fear produces greater willingness to rely on authority, the public will not likely be alienated by reasonable responses from officials. As Gerbner and Gross suggest,

> Ritualised display of any violence (such as crime and disaster news, as well as mass-produced drama) may cultivate exaggerated assumptions about the extent of threat and danger in the world and lead to demands for protection. What is the next result? A heightened sense of risk and insecurity.

In the next chapter, we would discuss the concept of terrorism, followed by media before concluding our study.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 History, Diffusion and Future of Terrorism

In this chapter we shall examine this controversial concept of terrorism in the light of its background, its definition, history, and conclude by a critical look at its future in relation to the media.

Andrew Sinchair[30] asserts that nearly all of those who have taken over nation states have terrorist acts to their discredit. They are judged by the scale of these crimes. For every country in its wars is guilty of some terror tactics. The degree of blame lies in the count of the dead. How many were killed? How were they killed? How long did they take to die?

The philosophers of terrorism, from Machiavelli to Robespierre, from Lenin to Hitler, advocated its limited use, until the state was taken over. All terrorist groups were forgiven once they had become the government; in the pursuit of power, success leaves few enemies. The horror of modern times, however, has been the scale of the use of state terror, which has managed to massacre in the last century more than a hundred million people. Since it would take many volumes, no account of terror may be inclusive and the present account is no exception.

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[30] Sinclair, Andrew, *An Anatomy of Terror: A History of Terrorism*, London, Pan MacMillan Ltd., (2004).

In examining this concept of terrorism, we shall adopt as our guiding framework that laid down by the editors of *The Planning of Change*[31]:

> One way in which people gain perspective on current events which are moving around them, indeed events which are moving in and through them since their choices and actions contribute to shaping the events, is to think of those events historically. How did the events come to be? What human needs, aspirations, and conflicts lent motivation to the events? What changes in life conditions gave them impetus and focus? And what ideas and ideals provided direction and justification for them?

Another way, the editors continue, to get perspective on a field of study is to map the different varieties of thought and practice which have developed internally to the field. We noted in chapter one that the absence of a definition of terrorism is greatly hampering the international community's efforts at curbing the spread of terrorism.

3.1 Defining Terrorism

According to Alan M. Dershowitz[12], there are certain components that tend to appear in most attempts to define this elusive term, but none is without the difficulties:-

i) The first focuses on the nature of the targeted victims. The deliberate killing of innocent civilians is a central element in most definitions of terrorism, but if this were the only criterion, then the bombing of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Dresden by the armed forces of the U.S and Great Britain would have to be considered terrorism.

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[31] Bennis, Warren G., Kenneth D. Benne, Robert Chin & Kenneth E. Corey (eds), The Planning of Change, 3rd ed., Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc.
[12] Ibid.

ii)   Another element that often figures into the definition of terrorism is the nature of those who commit the violence. According to many definitions of terrorism, only groups that are not part of the official apparatus of the state can commit terrorism. A distinguishing characteristic of what many people regard as terrorism and the characteristic that makes it so difficult to punish is its shadowy nature. Most acts of terrorism are difficult to pin on nation states. Instead, they are committed by unofficial groups that have no standing army and no "return address" where preventive or retaliatory actions can be focused. The terrorist kills and then blends back into the civilian population or is himself killed. Increasingly, the terrorist may be a woman, a teenager, or even a child. All efforts to retaliate or prevent future terrorism are labeled "collective punishment" and are often condemned. The word "terrorism" itself has its historical origins not in the actions of shadowy groups, but in acts of terror inflicted by the state on its own citizens: the reign of terror" conducted by the revolutionary government of France was the Paradigm. Terror was also an integral part of the Stalinist, Nazi, Peronist, and other totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

iii)   Yet a third aspect of many definitions of terrorism includes the mechanism of which those who engage in violence seek to influence the actions and attributes of their intended audiences. Terrorists seek to attract attention to their cause by employing, or threatening, dramatic acts of violence that capture the attention of the media and terrorize large populations. One scholar characterized terrorism as "Propaganda by the deed" to which Dershowitz would add, by violent and deadly deeds, often against the most vulnerable and innocent of victims, and often only as an initial step in a multi-faceted program of violence. If "war is a mere continuation of policy by other means", as Clausewitz once observed, then terrorism is war by other means. Criminal

organizations, such as Mafia or the Columbian drug cartels, also employ terror as a technique but their object is more financial than military, religious or nationalistic. They are different in kind from global terrorists we fear most because their use of violence is narrowly designed to terrorise competitors and police. Dershowitz quotes from Philip B. Heyman:

> Terrorism is best understood as an effort to speak to audiences with a greatly amplified voice. Duration is as important as volume for conveying a message and creating the public concerns that can move the government. Holding hostages keeps the story in the lead of television news and on the front pages of newspapers throughout the country for a far more sustained period of time than any terrorist action except a far more difficult extended campaign of bombings. The holding of American hostages in Lebanon following the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in 1985 captured headlines for weeks. Even our largest corporation [in the U.S] could not have afforded to buy similar access to the American people. Speaking of this hijacking, the State Department Legal Advisor Abraham So far said, "The hijackers sought publicity and they got it, the world was treated to a media extravaganza that gave irresponsibility and tastelessness a new meaning". Tom Brokaw, NBC News anchor, and his ABC counterpart Peter Jennings, agreed that the press had served the terrorists' purposes too well.

Into the fray enters Jospeh J Lambert[5] who unequivocably notes that the term "terrorism" is unsatisfactory. It is emotive, highly loaded politically and lacking a universally, or even, generally, accepted definition. He quotes Walter Lacquer as saying that the term has been used as a synonym for "rebellion, street battles, civil strike, insurrection, rural guerrilla war, coup

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[5] Ibid.

detat" and a dozen other things. The result is that is has "become almost meaningless, covering almost any, and not necessarily political, act of violence". Even amongst scholars in the field great many definitions have been promulgated. In a 1983 study Alex Schmid compiled 109 definitions of terrorism. Although there seem to be general agreement that terrorism involves the threats or use of violence, that it seeks to create a climate of fear and that it often relies on publicity, differences in definitions range from the semantic to the conceptual. J. Bowyer Bell has charged that the academic response to terrorism has been inadequate, leading to a situation where there is no agreement on the bounds of terrorism, its basic causes or the best way to analyze it. As noted, the word terrorism is politically loaded. Some commentators have suggested that the labeling of a particular act as terrorist tells less about that act than it does about the labeler's political perspective, that it is more a formulation of a sense of social judgment than a description of a set of phenomena.

Is it any wonder, then that scholars like Paul Van Ostaijen[32] assert that "... language is neutral, that it is men who charge it with emotion"?

Although terrorism is classified as war, the classification is by no means conclusive. In one of his papers, "War and Politics", Robert Ezra Park[33] quotes from an unspecified source to apparently justify the inevitability of war: "Peace has been the dream of wise men, but war has been the history of nations". He then goes on to admit frankly his doubts as whether to regard war as a natural phenomenon, like an earthquake or a pestilence or to classify it as a social phenomenon like a political contest or an elementary form of judicial procedure, like an

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[32] Ostaijen, Paul Van, *Patriotism, Inc & Other Tales*, edited and translated by E. M. Beekman, The University of Massachusetts Press (1971).
[33] Hughes, Everett Cherrington, Charles S. Johnson, Jitsuishi Masouka, Robert Redfield & Louis Wirth (eds), *The Collected Papers of Robert Ezra Park*, Vol. 3, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press.

ancient trial by battle. In short, he continues, we do not know whether war is to be conceived as a social institution or as biological and social process. Trial by combat seems to have been a peculiar custom of certain German tribes and was imported by them into Western Europe in the course of Germanic invasions. It was according to [the historian Edward] Gibbon, first made a legal institution in Burgundy by an edict of King Gundobald in AD 501 and was later "propagated and established in all the monarchies of Europe from Sicily to the Baltic'. The Church and the Clergy were for various reasons opposed to the institution, and it is recorded that the King, in defending his edict against the objections and complaint of one of his bishops, disposed of the matter finally with this appeal to commonsense and the consensus of mankind. "Is it not true", he said, "that the event of national wars and private combats is directed by the judgment of God; and that his providence awards the victory to the Juster cause?"

Finally before moving to the definition of terrorism, we would do well to take to heart the wisdom of John Burton: [8]

> We operate in many straightjackets: cultural, linguistic, ideological and perhaps most restrictive of all, the constraints of institutionalised disciplines in both academic and policymaking fields. A problem sometimes comes to be defined according to decisions made as to who shall deal with it and such decisions are often made administrative ones. Who shall deal with a problem is usually determined by the conventional definition of it, thus militating against new thinking. This separate treatment of particular categories of problems deprives researchers and administrators of opportunity to use experience and evidence obtained in other areas.

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[8] Ibid.

The editors of *The Planning of Change*[11] quote Richard Weaver as remarking in his article "Ultimate Terms in Contemporary Rhetoric" as having once remarked that the ultimate term in contemporary rhetoric, the "god term", was "progress" or "change". Were he writing at the present time we feel certain that his "god term" would be "terrorism" given the menace terrorism is posing to global peace, prosperity and security. For a good reason, as Dershowitz[12] puts it:

> How we deal with international terrorism is quickly becoming the defining issue of our age. The terrorists have gotten our attention and we have gotten theirs. We are in a mortal struggle, one that will be fought primarily not on conventional battle fields but rather in dark alleys, shadowy streets, crowded airports, high-rise buildings and secret weapons laboratories. It will also be fought in court rooms, legislative chambers, and executive mansions. Finally, it will be fought in the hearts and minds of people throughout the world.

The same author goes on to educate us on the importance of articulating an unambiguous definition of terrorism when the word is used in legislation or other formal context in which serious consequences may flow from designating persons or acts as "terrorist". In creating any such definition it is important to recognize several different components, each of which operates along a continuum and overlaps others. They may include:

a) The nature of the group engaging in, or supporting the violence - is it a government, an army, a movement (with or without government backing), a religious group, a small group (gang, drug cartel), or even an individual...

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

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b) The nature of the targets and victims -- are they military, diplomatic, police, occupiers, citizens of an enemy nation, co-religionists, children randomly selected? Are the targets relatively small (bus, a restaurant) or large (building or an entire city)?

c) The means selected - are those who carry out the violence trying to survive or are they suicide bombers?

d) The goals to be achieved by violence - is the goal specific and limited (the freeing of prisoners), broad (the establishment of a state or the recognition of a movement or unspecified and unlimited (the end of western domination over Islam)? Is the goal religious, political or some combination?

e) The mechanism for achieving the goals - are the victims expected to respond by giving into specific demands, by overreacting and denying civil liberties, by taking military action, by becoming terrorized and frightened, by destabilising the economy or by a combination of the above?

It may also be important to acknowledge that not all terrorism is a matter of degree. Certain genres of terrorism are so far along the continuum as to warrant universal condemnation. These include deliberate targeting of innocent noncombatants based on their religion, race, or civilians who happen to be in a given place at a given time. These genres of terrorism can be distinguished from the targeting of military personnel, collateral killing of noncombatants during a legitimate military operation, and other uses of violence that may belong to the end on a continuum of terrorism, but closer to the end that may not warrant universal condemnation. The most difficult genre of violence to distinguish is the deliberate military targeting of entirely civilian population centres, such as the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki, as well as the fire bombing of Dresden. These military actions were undertaken in an effort to end aggressive wars and in response to the targeting of civilians by the enemy but the intent and result - deliberate targeting of many innocent noncombatants - is essentially the same.

There are many definitions of terrorism (as we noted in the preceding subsection, a 1983 study researched 109 definitions) but for our purpose, we shall illustratively sample only three and then focus our attention on the most recent U.N. attempt at definition. Lawrence Zelic Freedman[34] defines terrorism in terms of distinguishing it from violence. He avers that terrorism is defined as the use of violence when its most important result is not the physical and mental damage of the direct victims, but the psychological effect produced on someone else. Terrorism also involves, in addition to the act, the emotion and the motivation of the terrorist. Violence may result in death, injury or destruction of property or deprivation of liberty. It becomes terror when the significant aim is not to attain these ends, but, through these to terrorise people other than those directly assaulted.

The author continues that this distinction between terror and violence is not absolute. There may be violence linked with terror, in which the intention is to harm the direct victim, but the assault is linked to an act of terror which either preceded or followed it. There is also violence linked to terror in cases such as the freeing of a terrorist. He concludes by observing that:

[34] Freedman, Lawrence Zelic, "Terrorism: Problems of Polistaraxic," in Lawrence Zelic Freedman & Yonah Alexander (eds), *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Wilmington, Delaware. Scholarly Resources, Inc. (1983).

Whether a hijacking - skyjacking for example - is an act of terror depends upon whether the intent of the hijackers is to escape from one country to another or to create an ancillary effect by, for example, the holding of certain persons as hostages in order to secure the release either of the hijackers or of other terrorists.

Anthony C.E. Quainton[35], while not specifically defining terrorism, nevertheless gives a useful commentary on the definition of terrorism. He commences his study by observing that although we are all aware of terrorism as a phenomenon in the contemporary world, we are less precise about what events deserve that highly pejorative label "terrorist". There is no universally accepted definition of terrorism, although a number of formulations are widely used. Two in particular seem to the author to illustrate the essential elements of terrorism and provide some pointers for decision makers. The first defines terrorism as a "symbolic act designed to influence political behaviour by extra normal means entailing the use or threat of violence". The second asserts that terrorism is the "threat or use of violence for political purposes when such action is intended to influence the attitude and behaviour of the target group other than its immediate victims and its ramifications transcend national boundaries". Both take as their starting point the fact that terrorism is violent political activity. There is no terrorism without violence and coercion. There is no terrorism in the absence of political motivation. In fact, as Lenin might have observed, terrorism is the continuation of politics by violent means.

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[35] Quainton, Anthony C. E., "Terrorism: Policy, Action, & Reaction," in Lawrence Zelic Freedman & Yonah Alexander (eds), *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Wilmington, Delaware, Scholarly Resources, Inc. (1983).

However, not all violent political acts are intrinsically terrorist, as one can see from the many national liberation struggles of the postwar world. To have acts of international terrorism, additional elements are needed. The two definitions provide those elements - the concept of extra-normality and the transcending of national boundaries. Terrorism is abnormal because it almost always chooses as targets and weapons innocent noncombatant diplomats in an embassy, passengers on an airplane or train, students on a bus, or businessmen kidnapped for ransom. These targets are nonmilitary frequently with no direct connection to the cause being promoted. The victims are used cynically as the tools whereby public attention can be focused on a political cause and wider international audience can be influenced. Terrorism can be considered abnormal when certain kinds of act are involved: hijacking, hostage taking, kidnapping, letter bombing. Under international law, all these are regarded as illegitimate, inhumane, and unjustifiable acts of violence.

To wind up our three definitions from scholarly sources is the definition of terrorism as ably presented in the *International Encyclopedia of Communication*[36] (hereinafter the encyclopedia). After defining terrorism as an attempt to bring about change through violence usually in form of bombings, assassination and kidnappings, directed at intimidating a population or government into granting demands, the encyclopedia goes on to distinguish between terrorism and various types of political violence. The definition also considers varieties of terrorism for complete elucidation. The violence, the encyclopedia continues, is usually perpetrated in an indiscriminate fashion, with the victims themselves having little or no connection to the political issues, all of which enhances the fear on which terrorism thrives. As form of political

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[36] Barnouw, Erik et al (eds), *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, Vol. 4, Published jointly with the Annenberg School of Communications & Oxford University Press (1989).

violence, terrorism is unique in its reliance on the propaganda value of the act of violence itself. It can be said then that terrorists commit acts of violence as a means of communication. Through violence terrorists seek to create a climate of fear and simultaneously to direct international attention to their cause. Acts of terrorism are generally of limited or strategic value and are best analysed as political dramas organized for the purpose of getting publicity. The fact that terrorists seem to design their violence to attract media attention has made the role of the media one of the major controversies in the general study of terrorism.

Terrorism as a phenomenon is frequently confused with state terrorism. The latter generally refers to the use of violence by a government against its own people to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation so that the government rule and authority will not be challenged. Although there are similarities between terrorism and state terrorism, the intellectual, philosophical, and conceptual approaches to these two phenomena render them distinct subjects. This becomes readily apparent when the topic is approached from the perspective of communication. States that use terrorism to coerce political acquiescence attempt to conceal such acts from the media. Not only is the act itself more important than the publicity generated about it, but the occurrence of the act is in fact something that the state wants to conceal from the scrutiny of world opinion. In contrast, terrorism conducted by nonstate actors is generally designed explicitly for its attention-getting effects.

State terrorism is not synonymous with state sponsored terrorism which refers to sponsorship of a terrorist group or action by a nation – state. The sponsorship is frequently difficult to prove and is almost always denied by the state involved. Even the seemingly obvious issues of what sponsorship means is itself controversial. Some states openly provide arms, training and

logistical support to groups that other states call terrorists. When the support is overt, the sponsoring state will deny that the support is anything other than legitimate military assistance to a group engaged in a war of national liberation. Most state sponsorship of terrorism is covert, and the media can rarely cut through the layers that separate the sponsor from client.

As a form of political violence, terrorism is best understood by comparing it to other forms of political violence. The form of political violence any group chooses is a function of the amount of popular support and military power it possesses. A group with substantial popular support and with military power roughly equivalent to the group it wishes to dislodge will engage in civil war.

A group with somewhat less power will engage in irregular or guerrilla warfare. A group with still less power will engage in sporadic riots and mass demonstrations. The form of political violence found at the bottom of this power hierarchy is terrorism.

Terrorism is the political violence of the weak, of those who lack either the military strength or the popular support to engage in more intense forms of political violence. Terrorism is as much a manipulation of symbols as it is a form of political violence. Terrorists seek to compensate for their political weakness by creating the illusion of power through dramatic episodes that are designed to draw disproportionate amount of attention on the part of the popular media. Thus terrorism is to a large extent a mixture of political propaganda and political theatre. Terrorists want a lot of people watching, listening and questioning.

We have already noted from Jospeh J Lambert that serious differences in opinion almost over every aspect of terrorism – most fundamentally over the meaning of the term itself - have hindered the efforts of the international community in adopting a comprehensive and universally acceptable approach to combating the problem. The said international community must therefore have applauded the U.N. Secretary General for constituting a High Level Panel[37] to look into ways the U.N could be made more effective in discharging its global responsibilities in the arena especially of maintaining international peace and security. The panel was advisory and submitted its report to the Secretary General and in forwarding on 2nd December, 2004 a copy to U.N. member countries, the Secretary General in his note on the report said in relation to terrorism:

> The report finds that the U.N. has not made the best use of its assets in the fight against terrorism. As the panel rightly advocates, the U.N. must be able to articulate an effective and principled <u>counter-terrorism strategy</u> [in original] that is respectful of the rule of law and the universal observance of human rights. One of the obstacles hitherto, I believe, has been the inability of the membership to agree on a definition of terrorism. The report offers a definition and I am confident that this will help in building the consensus we need to move forward quickly.

Terrorism, according to the report, attacks the values that lie at the heart of the Charter of the U.N: respect for human rights; the rule of law; rules of war that protect civilians, tolerance among peoples and nations; and peaceful resolution of conflict. Terrorism flourishes in environments of despair, humiliation, poverty, political oppression, extremism and human

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[37] *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility: Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges & Change* A/59/56S.

rights abuses; it also flourishes in contexts of regional conflict and foreign occupations; and it profits from weak state capacity to maintain law and order. Two new dynamics give the terrorist threat greater urgency:

i)   Al-Qaeda is the first instance of an armed non-state network with global reach and sophisticated capacity. Attacks against more than ten member states on four continents in the past five years had demonstrated that Al-Qaeda and associated entities pose a universal threat to the membership of the U.N and U.N itself. In public statements, Al-Qaeda has singled out the U.N. as a major obstacle to its goals and defined it as one of its enemies.

ii)   The threat that terrorists will seek to cause mass causalities creates unprecedented dangers.

Against the backdrop of this incisive background, the panel then goes on to suggest what elements should constitute a negotiated definition of terrorism. Before doing this the panel notes that the U.N. ability to develop a comprehensive strategy has been constrained by the inability of member states to agree on an Anti-Terrorism Convention, including a definition of terrorism. This prevents the U.N. from exerting its moral authority and from sending an unequivocal message that terrorism is never an acceptable tactic, even for the most defensible of causes.

Lack of agreement on a clear and well known definition undermines the normative and moral stance against terrorism and has stained the U.N. image. Achieving a comprehensive convention on terrorism, including a clear definition, is a political imperative.

The search for an agreed definition usually stumbles on two issues:

i) The arguments that any definition should include state use of armed forces against civilians. The panel believes that the legal and normative framework against state violation is far stronger than in the case of non-state actors and the panel does not find this objection to be compelling.

ii) Peoples under foreign occupation have a right to resistance and definition of terrorism should not override this right. The right to resistance is contested by some. But it is not the central point: the central point is that there is nothing in the fact of occupation that justifies the targeting and killing of civilians.

That definition of terrorism should include the following elements:

a) Recognition in the preamble that state use of force against civilians is regulated by the Geneva convention and other instruments, and if of sufficient scale, constitutes a war crime by the person concerned or a crime against humanity;

b) Restatement that acts under the twelve preceding anti-terrorism conventions are terrorism, and a declaration that they are a crime under international law; and restatement that terrorism in time of armed conflict is prohibited by the Geneva conventions protocols;

c) Reference to the definitions contained in the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and Security Council resolution (1566 (2004);

d) Description of terrorism as "any actions, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution 1566(2004), that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or noncombatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature and context, is

to intimidate a population or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any [legitimate] act.

For purposes of this study, since all the four meanings complement each other, the meaning ascribed to terrorism shall be all the four meanings as discussed. How then, did terrorism come to be? A brief look at the history of terrorism now follows.

3.12 History of Terrorism

Relying for their authority on the 1911 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* 216. Thomas M. Franck et al[38] that initially, terrorism covered governmental action. The word "terrorism" first came into use during the "Reign of Terror" in France during the Revolution; it was applied to the intimidating practices of the government in power from 1789 to 1794. Elucidating further on this, Walter lacqueur[19] adds that the terms "terrorism" and "terrorist" are of relatively recent date: the meaning of terrorism was given in the 1798 supplement to the *Dictionnaire* of the Academic Francaise as *"Systeme, regime de la terreur"*(translated as system, regime of terror). According to a French dictionary published in 1796, the Jacobins had on occasion used the term when speaking and writing about themselves in a positive sense; after the 9th Thermidor, "terrorist" became a term of abuse with criminal implication. It did not take long for the term to reach Britain; Burke, in a famous passage written in 1795, wrote about "thousands of those hell hounds called terrorists" who were let loose on the people. Terrorism at the time referred to the period in the French Revolution broadly speaking between March, 1973 and July, 1974

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[38] Franck, Thomas M. & Bert B. Lockwood, Jr. "Preliminary Thoughts Towards An International Convention on Terrorism," *American Journal of International Law* Vol. 1, 68.
[19] Ibid.

and it was more or less a synonym for "reign of terror". Subsequently, it acquired a wider meaning in the dictionaries as a system of terror. A terrorist was anyone who attempted to further his views by a system of coercive intimidation. But why are we interested in the history of terrorism? John Martin Vincent[39] answers this for us by quoting the (in)famous Machiavelli as saying:

> The wise men say with reason that to foresee the future it is necessary to consult the past, because the events of this world have in all times well defined relations with those of times which have preceded. Produced by men who are and always have been animated by the same passions they ought necessarily to have the same result.

In similar vein, David Paul Nord and Harold L Nelson[40] observe that we need true statements about the past, not for the sake of establishing general laws that will embrace in grand explanation great reaches of the past and predict the future, but for the growth and development of the individual human being. They adduce a number of reasons based on various scholarly sources. For instance they quote David S. Landes and Charles Tilly as asserting that the possibility always exists that history can provide perspective and wisdom to those who attend to it, and this may be the greatest of its contributions. They quote R.J. Shater as elaborating this point:

> There is much to be said for the view that the greatest function of historical study is an addition to experience, tending to an appreciation of the existence in the past of the race of many confrontations with problems similar to our own. We see how recurrent are such

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[39] Vincent, John Martin, *Historical Research: An Outline of Theory and Practice*, New York, Lenox Hill Pub. & Dist. Co; Reprinted, 1974.

[40] Nord, David Paul & Harold L. Nelson, "The Logic of Historical Research," in Guido H. Stempel III & Bruce W. Westley (eds), *Research Methods in Mass Communication*, © 1981 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.; Eglewood Cliffs, N. J. 07632.

problems as the necessity but the danger of resistance to tyranny, argument over the values and perils of freedom of expression, greed in the development of property, abuse of labour, the rivalry of culture groups, the competition of individuals for eminence and power, the lurking danger of demoguery in free societies. This broadening of experience promotes sophistication and judgment in the contemplation of Public decisions and tends both to reduction of parochialism or insularity, and to steadiness in consideration of grand decisions by elimination of the supposition that all current problems are uniquely terrible in the history of man.

So the knowledge of the history of terrorism would put the concept into proper perspective. As Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch[41] observe, if the concept of war on (or by) terrorism is one now shared by all its Protagonists, then we may plausibly ask why and how the phenomenon it describes has come about, and - above all - also seek its origins. The authors claim that terrorism has co-existed with intelligence services throughout their modern phase, serving not only as a principal *raison detre* but also as a covert methodology. The concept was well established long before the current preoccupation with radical Islam as its supposedly foundational driving force. To back this claim up, the authors say that the British special Branch owes its inception to the Irish bomb outrages of the 1870s, for example, while the Russian secret service – the Okhrano - targeted anarchists and nihilist bombers of the same era. Inevitably, the authors conclude, given so pejorative a term, the definition of the terrorist enemy is strongly contested. Each government has its preferred candidates but the catch-all become more elastic in the scramble to board what is, for some, a very timely politico-military bandwagon.

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[41] Todd, Paul & Jonathan Bloch, *Global Intelligence: The World's Secret Services Today*, London, Zed Books Ltd. (2003)

Fittingly, then, Yonah Alexander[42] affirms that terrorism, as expedient tactical and strategic tool of politics in the struggle for power within and among nations is not new in the history of man's inhumanity to man. From time immemorial opposition groups, functioning under varying degrees of stress, have intentionally utilized instruments of psychological and physical force - including intimidation, coercion, repression and ultimately destruction of lives and property - for the purpose of attaining real or imaginary ideological or political goals, i.e. as agitational and disruptive civil violence, terrorism has been employed by sub-national groups either seeking to effect limited changes within the existing political structure, or desiring to abolish completely the established system principally, but not exclusively, as part of a parochial or transnational revolutionary strategy.

In a different book, Yonah Alexander[43] throws more light on the history of terrorism which he says is as old as history itself. A classic example is the martyrdom mission of the Hashashin (assassin), an offspring of the Isamailis, targeting the Crusaders and Sunni adversaries in Persia, Syria, and elsewhere in the Middle East from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. Between the sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries, several European states employed Pirates, or Privateers, to terrorise the seas for the purpose of advancing foreign policy objectives. By the time of the "Reign of Terror" (1793-94), during the French Revolution terrorism from 'above" and "below" was well established. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a variety of European groups resorted to regicide and other terrorist activities such as bombing. The murder of the Austrian Archduke in Sarajevo, which triggered World War 1, is a dramatic illustration of the impact of terrorism on world history.

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[42] Alexander, Yonah, "Terrorism, the Media & the Police," in Robert H. Kupperman & Daniel M. Trent (eds), *Terrorism: Threat, Reality, Response*, Hoover Institution Publication 204 (1979).

[43] Alexander, Yonah (ed), *International Terrorism: Political & Legal Documents*, Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

The period between the World Wars of the twentieth century also experienced terrorist violence in different regions of the world such as Asia and the Middle East where nationalist groups fought for their liberation from colonial rule. But it was not until the Post-World War II period that terrorism became institutional, brutal and global. Several factors have contributed to the escalation of terrorism, including pronounced ethnic and national fragmentation; intensification of religious fundamentalism; and rapid development in modern technology, communication facilities, and inexpensive and convenient travel.

It is these political circumstances and technological realities that guided both sub-national groups and state actors to employ terrorism as a cost-effective, extralegal tool in the struggle for power domestically and internationally. For instance, a review of the terrorism chronology in early 1992 reveals a wide range of targets. Thus a parcel bomb exploded at a mayor's office in Colombia; a bus bomb targeted a police station in Peru; in South Africa seven people were killed in black township violence and multinational school was bombed; an American businessman was kidnapped in the Philippines; in Bangladesh a bomb exploded aboard a crowded motor launch killing 14 people and injuring 15; Protestant gunmen shot a Catholic to death in Northern Ireland; an Irish Republican Army (IRA) bomb caused damage to London's Soho district; a bomb exploded at the Helsinki tax offices, a gunman assassinated one of Yasser Arafat's intelligence chiefs in Lebanon; a Jewish settler was shot to death in the Gaza strip; and a car bomb destroyed the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, killing 29 and wounding 250 people.

To this James D Kiras[44] adds that terrorism is a weapon of the weak conducted by a minority of individuals who promote an extremist ideology. In order to effect change, terrorist groups must either make their message more appealing to generate widespread support for their cause and/or weaken their adversaries to the point of exhaustion or collapse. The global community, in response, must utilize the resources at their disposal collaboratively to diminish support for terrorism and demonstrate the illegitimacy of terrorist messages and causes.

Unlike other historical precedents, so says Yonah Alexander,[42] nonstate terrorists, sanctified by their precipators in the name of Higher Principles, have introduced in contemporary life a new breed of violence in terms of technology, victimization, threat and response. The brutalisation and globalisation of modern violence makes it amply clear that we have entered into a unique "Age of Terrorism" with all its formidable problems and frightening ramifications. To be sure, it is generally recognised that extra-legal terrorism poses many threats to contemporary society and is likely to have serious impact on the quality of life and on orderly civilized existence. Perhaps the most significant dangers are those relating to the safety, welfare and rights of ordinary people, the stability of the state system, the health and pace of economic development and the expansion, or even the survival, of democracy.

No account of the history of terrorism, however brief, is complete without a note on the role of religion in the rise of modern terrorism. As Andrew Sinclar[30] observes, religion is the trigger of the fanatic. The bullets are fired by the rising fundamentalist movements in the U.S.

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[44] Kiras, James D., "Terrorism & Globalisation," in John Baylis & Steve Smith (eds), *The Globalisation of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 3rd ed; New York, Oxford University Press, Inc (2005).
[42] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

and Israel and Islam. Elements in all of them seem to return to medieval extremes of belief. Crimes across the globe are still being committed in the name of God, through the perversion of the various holy texts about the divine. The publicity attached to such horrors calls attention to a just cause or a losing cause or an excluded minority. Terrorism is, in the novelist Don Delillo's words, "the language of being noticed." To drive home the point of religion's increased and increasing involvement in modern terrorism, Andrew Sinclair evidences that in the early 1980s, the American State Department included hardly a religious group among its list of international terrorist organisations. By 1998, however, more than half of the thirty most dangerous groups in the world were connected to religious sects. These self-designated holy warriors were attacking what they believed was the state terror practiced by governments, particularly in the U.S. and Israel.

3.15 The Future of Terrorism

In this subsection, we critically examine the future of terrorism in relation to the media and whether new strains of terrorism are emerging given the new media environment of new information communication technologies. We shall investigate briefly such issues as the possibility of nuclear terrorism and given the changed technological media environment, are terrorist organisations owners and operators of their own media?

But, in spite of various national and international efforts to deal with the dangers of terrorism, Yonah Alexander[43] tells us, the level of non-state violence remains high. The reasons for these conditions are diverse, but include the roles of mass media. Clearly, modern technology has

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[43]Ibid.

provided terror groups with critical communications instruments: the media – which willingly or unwillingly serve their specific or general propaganda and psychological warfare needs. More specifically, the strategy of terrorism followed by sub-national groups does not prescribe instant victories over established regimes or states. On the contrary, the struggle for intended ends is seen as complicated and protracted. Terror groups, by their very nature, are too small and too weak to achieve an upper hand in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation on the battlefield. Since sheer violence can accomplish little or nothing in terms of ultimate goals, an extension of the duration and impact of the violent deed is therefore mandatory in the terrorist strategy. Hence the terrorists' reliance on the media for publicity. It is because of this realisation, so continues Yonah Alexander, that terrorist operations have been symbolic rather than physically-oriented. In relying on immediate and extensive coverage of television, radio and the press for the maximum amount of propagandising and publicity, terrorists can rapidly and effectively reach watching, listening and reading audience at home and abroad and thereby hope to attain essentially one or two of the following communications purposes:

i)   To enhance the effectiveness of their violence by creating an emotional state of extreme fear in target groups, and thereby, ultimately alter their behaviour or disposition or bring about a general or particular change in the structure of government or society.

ii)   To draw forcibly and instantaneously the attention of the "Whole world" to themselves in the expectation that these audiences will be prepared to act or, in some cases, to refrain from acting in a manner that will promote the change they presumably represent. Terrorism, like advertising, increases the effectiveness of its messages by focusing on spectacular incidents and by keeping particular issues active through repetition.

What factors have contributed to the rise of transnational terrorism? According to James D. Kiras, [44] although incidents of terrorism existed prior to 1968, three factors led to the birth of transnational terrorism: the expansion of air travel; the wider availability of televised news coverage; and broad common political and ideological interests. These changes allowed terrorism to grow from a local and regional phenomenon into an international threat. Air travel gave terrorists unprecedented mobility. Prior to the implementation of passport controls, terrorists could travel relatively freely between countries and regions. For example, terrorists of the Japanese Red Army could train in one country and conduct operations half a world away, as they did in the Lod Airport suicide attack in Israel in 1972. Air travel was also appealing to terrorists for another reason: Airport Security measures were almost non-existent when terrorists began hijacking airlines. These "Skyjackings", suited terrorist purposes well. Hijacked aircraft offered a degree of protection and security for the terrorists involved and states initially acquiesced to terrorist demands, which encouraged further incidents. The high success rate of hijacking as a technique spurred other terrorist groups, as well as criminals and political refugees, to follow suit. As a result, incidents of hijacking skyrocketed from 5 in 1966 to 94 in 1969.

Shared political ideologies stimulated co-operation and limited exchanges between groups as diverse as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque Separatists Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA). Besides sharing techniques and technical experience, groups demanded the release of imprisoned "fellow Revolutionaries" in different countries, giving the impression of a co-coordinated terrorist network.

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[44] Ibid.

Televised news coverage also played a role in expanding the audience who could witness the "theatre of terrorism" in their own homes. Individuals who had never heard of the "plight of Palestinians" became notionally aware of the issues after incidents such as the tripple – hijacking and blowing up of airliners by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in September 1970 or the coverage of the hostage taking conducted by Black September during the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Although media coverage was termed "the oxygen that sustains terrorism", terrorist groups discovered that reporters and audiences lost interest in repeat performances of the same incidents. In order to sustain viewer interest and compete for coverage, terrorist groups undertook increasingly spectacular attacks, such as the seizure of the Organisations of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) delegates by Carlos the Jackal in Austria in 1975. We would be taking up the issue of terrorist ownership and operation of media in the next chapter, but to conclude this subsection and hence the chapter, we attempt an answer to the question of whether or not nuclear terrorism is possible. The answer is a difficult one to give as the evidence is not conclusive. To the evidence, then.

According to Andrew Sinchair[30], during the Chechen struggle against the Russian Government, the rebels threatened in 1996 to devastate Moscow by radioactivity. The police there were directed to a hidden source of Caesium – 137, a fissile material, although no further activities took place. Not until the discovery of nuclear manuals in the camps and caves of the Al-Qaeda terrorists did the threat of atomic explosions in Major Western Cities from bombs

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[30]Ibid.

packed into suitcases send a fresh frisson of fear around the West [and by extension, the rest of the world].

But James D. Kiras[44] reports that terrorist experts speculated that terrorist leaders understood that a horrific mass causality attack would alienate support for the group and delegitimise their cause. According to the experts, this helps to explain, in part, why few terrorist groups attempted to acquire or use weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, to conduct the most shocking attack imaginable.

However, given the emergence of "new" terrorism and its connection with religion, it would be fool hardy to rule out the possibility of the occurrence of nuclear terrorism. James D. Kiras says that in the decade prior to September 9/11, a number of scholars and experts perceived that fundamental changes were taking place in the character of terrorism. The use of violence for political purposes, to change state ideology or the representation of ethnic minority groups had failed in its purpose and a new trend was emerging. "Post-modern terrorism", also known as "New" terrorism, was conducted for different reasons altogether. Motivated by promise of rewards in the afterlife, some terrorists are driven by religious reasons to kill as many of the non-believers and unfaithful as possible.

Finally, is it any wonder that The Nuclear Terrorism Convention was opened up for signature in September, 2005? As Andrew Sinclair[30] observes, fear will drive men to any extreme, as

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[44] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

George Bernard Shaw noted – as faith will, too. All Sacred texts are misused, particularly by bellicose states or rebel terrorists, to justify the horrors which they perpetrate on civilian societies. Andrew Sinclair avers that from his study of terrorism, ten principles of terror have emerged:

i)   Terror is warfare by extreme means.

ii)   Terror is the lifeblood of tyranny.

iii)   Terror is the weapon of the outlaw against the oppressor.

iv)   Terror is murder on the cheap.

v)   Terror is the lash on the back of refugees.

vi)   Terror is victory by stealth for the few.

vii)   Terror is defeat by cowardice for the crowd.

viii)   If we are terrorized, we may become terrible to those who make us fear.

ix)   Terror is measured by the scale of victims, not merit of its cause.

x)   Tolerance of terror is no virtue.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Media and Terrorism Relations

In chapter two, we examined the functions of the media and the communication process. We also dealt with the problems of media reporting of terrorism. In this chapter, however, we shall be examining various aspects of the relationship between terrorism and the media by interrogating issues such as: Is international terrorism newsworthy? What is the impact of the new media environment on the terrorism-media axis?, the impact of media events on society? These and other issues will also be examined: New media communications technology and media power; agenda-setting techniques and their impact. Are the media victims of terrorism? Must every occurrence or happening be reported, i.e. does human salvation lie in open communication or is there a role for ignorance in human affairs? To set the ball rolling, we must find the reason for media behaviour in a democracy, i.e. the media's ideological driving force for placing this behaviour in a proper perspective.

John C. Merril[45] gives an answer. He avers that the world today is a giant arena in which large and small press systems are actively engaged in a strange kind of game. How do the participants – press systems and units thereof – know what it is they are trying to do? In the main, they all have rather specific sets of directions, but these directions vary considerably.

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[45] Merril, John C., "The Global Perspective: Global Press Philosophies," in John C. Merril (ed), *Global Journalism: A Survey of the World's Mass Media*, New York, Longman (1983).

However, it may be said that all these participants have guiding concepts which are tied rather tightly to the traditional types of governments they represent. These concepts or philosophies – in many cases unwritten – serve to give some type of reason for the participants being in the arena.

Probably as many press philosophies or theories exist in the world today as there are media managers; certainly an observer can see many and often quite significant, variations in basic media types from country to country and in many cases sections of one country. However, when he looks down on the giant arena, he will notice that out of the wide and intricate press design a few ideological patterns take shape and stand out. These ideological patterns formed among the world's press systems are classified as:

a) The authoritarian

b) The communistic

c) The Libertarian

d) The Social Responsibility.

The first two of these theories, or concepts, are really quite similar, and it is difficult to differentiate many of the basic characteristics; for example, both are primarily totalitarian in their insistence on control and careful regimentation of the press. The press systems of Hitler's Germany in the 1930s and 1940s and of Franco's Spain in the 1950s are good examples of the authoritarian theory in practice; in a totalitarian sense, they differ little from today's prime example of a communistic press system – that of the [former] Soviet Union.

The other two theories – the libertarian and the social responsibility – overlap also in many respects. In fact most nations which accept libertarian theory today consider responsibility of the press to the public as part of this theory. Of course, the idea of social responsibility brings up many philosophical questions which cannot be examined here; but since in any country the organization of society – its social and political structure – determines to a large extent what responsibilities the press (and the citizen) owes to this society, one must conclude that every country's press quite naturally considers itself as being socially responsible. Since we are concerned with the relationship of terrorism and the media within democratic societies, this is the theory that explains the media's behaviour in this context. So a brief explanation is in order.

The concept of the libertarian press can be traced back to the seventeenth century, where it took roots in England and on the new continent of America. The philosophy of that time viewed man as a rational being having inherent natural rights and thus gave rise to the Libertarian Press Theory. Man, according to this new rationalistic philosophy, had the right to pursue truth, and would-be interferers with this right should be restrained. Exponents of this Libertarian Press Movement during the eighteenth century – characterized by John Milton and John Locke – insisted that governments keep hands off printed material. Individual liberties were emphasized by these philosophers, liberties that have manifested themselves in the American Declaration of Independence and constitutional guarantees of free speech, free press, and free religious pursuits.

Under the Libertarian Theory, the press functions to uncover and present the truth, and it cannot function in this way if it is controlled by some authority outside itself. The free press in

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theory will produce reportorial truth because it is regulated by all members of a free society who express their wishes in a free market where they can support or refuse to support certain newspapers or magazines.

Rather than this being a freedom especially of the press, it is really a right of the people to be informed and to choose their informants; in theory, this freedom belongs to the people rather than to the editors, publishers, and news managers. However, since the press must serve as the informational link between government and people, the freedom automatically extends itself to the press. If this informational link is broken by governmental censorship or secrecy – or by other means such as doctored news released by a government press agent – the concept of freedom of information is largely invalidated.

Today the libertarian press measures its social utility by how well the public is kept abreast of governmental activities. Theoretically at least, the libertarian press is a Fourth Estate, supplementing the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches of government. Thus, according to the theory, is one of the main ways the libertarian press accepts social responsibility.

A mid-twentieth century concept, the social responsibility theory of the press had its roots in the libertarian press system. It goes beyond the libertarian theory, however, in that it places a great many moral restrictions on the press. Instead of emphasizing freedom for the press, it stresses responsibilities. The theory has been drawn largely from a report published in 1947 by a private group (the Commission on Freedom of the Press) which studied the American press and came up with a critique.

According to this commission (often called the Hutchins Commission after its Chairman Robert M. Hutchins), the mass media, because of their persuasive impact in all areas, have gone beyond such libertarian concepts as the search for truth, and the press's right of access to information.

The new theory, as expressed by the Commission, maintains that the importance of the press in modern society makes it absolutely necessary that an obligation of social responsibility be imposed on the communications media.

The Hutchins Commission saw press freedom as limited by a social responsibility to report facts accurately and in a meaningful context. Such thinking, of course, leads to the advocacy of a regulatory system to watch the actions of the press and to keep it functioning properly; the Commission on Freedom of the Press did not overlook this, and in its report suggested that some type of government regulation might be needed to ensure that the press accepted its responsibility. It was even suggested that the government might go into the communications business to properly inform the citizens if private media did not wake up to their obligations to the public. The social responsibility theory implies recognition by the media that they must perform a public service to warrant their existence.

Having sketched briefly the ideological foundation of media behaviour in a democracy to act as a backdrop, let us move on to the examination of the issues.

4.1   Is International Terrorism Newsworthy?

According to Gabriel Weimann and Hans-Bernd Brosius, [46] modern technology has provided small terrorist groups with a powerful instrument – the mass media – that willingly or unwillingly serves their needs.

Several terrorist organizations realized the potential of media-oriented terror in terms of effectively reaching huge audiences. The authors quote Schmid and de Graaf to drive this point home: "Acts of terrorism...perceived as a means of persuasion, when the victim is the skin on a drum beaten to achieve a calculated impact on a wider audience".

The emergence of media-oriented terrorism has led several scholars to reconceptualise the phenomenon of terrorism in the framework of symbolic communication theory. Thus, for example, Karber suggested a new model of analysis:

> As a symbolic act, terrorism can be analysed much like other media of communication, consisting of four basic components: transmitter (the terrorist), intended recipient (target) message (bombing, ambush), and feedback (reaction of target audience). The terrorists' message of violence necessitates a victim, whether personal or institutional, but the target or intended recipient of the communication may not be the victim.

Several studies have revealed the impressive success of terrorists in gaining media coverage. The explanation for this success is provided by Bell: "These new transnational gunmen are, in fact, television producers constructing a package so spectacular, so violent, so compelling that

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[46]Weimann, Gabriel & Hans-Bernd Brosius, "The Newsworthiness of International Terrorism," *Communication Research*, June 1991.

the networks, acting as executives, supplying the cameramen and the audience, cannot refuse the offer."

A theoretical framework for the analysis of the newsworthiness of modern terrorism can be found in the relationship of the newsworthiness of deviance to the social rules of the mass media. According to this concept, one of the mechanisms through which the mass media exert their influence on social norms and social change is assessing the newsworthiness of people and events. Alexander argues that the news media fulfill a normative function in society by providing ways for society to organize and understand events. Discovering instances in which norms have been broken (i.e. deviance) is the only way that the media can fulfill that normative function. Indeed, many studies of the flow of international news and media selection of events revealed the emphasis on bad news.

Finally, the authors' study of the newsworthiness of international terrorism should also be interpreted within the conceptual framework of the theatre of terror. The fact that certain attributes are more powerful in determining media coverage is known not only to communication scholars and journalists, but also to those who write and perform the terrorist scripts. A survey of terrorist literature reveals that these actors have become more and more media wise, and that more and more terrorist acts are preplanned to satisfy the media's considerations in terms of scarcity, reference to elite nations or elite people, personification, proximity, relevance, and events of negative nature, per Dobson and Paine. The significance of the present study, according to the authors, lies with the social role of deviance in the media when related to the newsworthiness of terrorism. The authors support this by quoting Shoemaker et al's conclusion:

By their very existence, deviant people and groups bring the opportunity for change. If that change seems threatening to the status quo, then its agents may act to control the direction and extent of the change. Because what is unknown cannot be controlled, the emphasis on deviance within indicators of newsworthiness is functional for the status quo.

So, international terrorism is actually newsworthy to the extent that terrorist acts closely mirror the factors determining the newsworthiness of an event and also to the extent of bringing deviance to the attention of the status quo proponents to enable them control the extent and direction of change. For what is unknown cannot be controlled. To illustrate just how terrorist acts mirror the news standards, let us listen to John M. Higgins[47] when commenting on the most (in)famous and most daring terrorist act to date: the September, 11, 2001 World Trade Center demolition. According to him, no producer could have staged the horror for television more dramatically. By crashing the first hijacked jetliner into the World Trade Center Tower 1 at rush hour, the terrorists caught the attention of television stations' morning traffic helicopters ringing Manhattan Island. Those choppers were well positioned to deliver live pictures a few minutes later as the second passenger jet plowed into Tower 2.

Most bombings, plane crashes or disasters have television rushing to the scene after the fact. The attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was made for television. "Terrorism has become an act of mass communication," the author quotes Joan Deppa. The second plane, she said was "meant to crash in front of us. The first plane that came in ... was to get the attention of the media." Even non-news cable networks switched to news. Disney-owned

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[47] Higgins, John M., "Made-for-TV Terrorism," http://pro quest, umi.com/pqdweb? Index.

ESPN dropped sports on Tuesday and picked up American Broadcasting Corporation's feed. Other non-news television stations, like shopping and product information networks, suspended programming with notes on screen explaining their deference to the disaster and recommending viewers tune to news outlets.

However, before moving on to the examination of the impact of the new media environment on the Terrorism-Media Axis, a brief note on news would not be out of order. According to Jean Seaton,[48] news is one of the great political and artistic forms animating contemporary collective and private lives – and it deals with how we understand our condition. Violent news can be awesome and its bitter sights addictive. Yet at times we read and watch events comparable to the fall of Troy or the sack of Constantinople with casual indifference or prefer other sillier, lighter things.

News is often treated as little more than a mirror of reality or as something which is compromised by the habits which assist in its construction. There is far less concern with the way in which news has changed. Yet all news is not the same and we need to consider how one terrible and politically crucial kind of news is handled and consumed: news of hideous events that are important. This distinction already involves a media dimension – for political weight is attributed to events, partly at least, by the media. As Tim Allen has suggested, a modern definition of war might well be that of a conflict named as such by the media. Yet although the news is often relentlessly pre-occupied with the bizarre and unimportant, and journalists frenziedly sate themselves and their journals on events which are of no significance,

[48] Seaton, Jean, "Understanding, Not Empathy", In Daya Kishan Thussu & Des Freedman (eds), *War & The Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, New Delhi, VISTAAR Publications (2003).

nevertheless they do sometimes deal with terrifying and critical issues. Although these happenings and how they are displayed have a complicated relationship with history, as well as fiction and fantasy, the key to their unique authority is that they really did occur.

News brings us, as spectators, into the direct apprehension of the tragic disruption of everyday lives. The sight of the contrast between quotidian normality broken by violence is always poignant. Yet we routinely watch events of overwhelming magnitude and importance to other people while we remain safe. It is into this world of casual and comfortable spectatorship that the news seeks to infiltrate and command attention. The witnessing of distress on a previously unimagined scale, often making of us unwittingly the spectators of violent death, may have many special effects. The journalism that presents us with the suffering of others is already a more complete act of witnessing, as it both observes and articulates the condition of distant victims. Thus many of the processes of news-making are really concerned to secure the trust of the audience in its accounts – and this is important because of how unreliable we all know witnesses can be, motivated by their own interests or simply confused about what they have seen. The issue is partly how much of our passive witnessing of the news translates into an understanding that is useful – either for those that suffer misfortune, or indeed for ourselves.

News is how we know ourselves and the world. It can be ruthless in pursuit of a story. When a news "feeding frenzy" (authors) is running it can seem to bystanders, or those subject to its attentions, more like a mob. To be on the inside of a news-hunt is appalling.

News has become more savage over the last 20 years. Newsrooms and journalists construct stories that may be completely misleading – may in fact be lies – out of fragments of verifiable

fact. News is also a commodity, subject to market pressures, and always changing. The fact that there is a public interest in news being well made — that the realism of political estimates depends, at least in part, on its comprehensiveness and accuracy — is only one, increasingly weak element in the manufacture of news.

As risky conflict is exciting and the news has to gain attention, genuine causes go unexplored in comparison to the thrilling familiar horrors of well-recognised genres of violence, disaster and catastrophe.

If the news pleases us too much it may fail to alert us properly and this is not a moral problem, but a hard practical, self-interested one of survival.

4.3   The Impact of New Media on the Terrorism-Media Axis

Before delving into this sub-topic, it would be prudent to answer the question: into what milieu is modern terrorism situated? The answer would serve as a backdrop against which to examine this issue. For our answer we would rely on Frank Webster.[49] War is newsworthy and, as such, of compelling interest to the media. War is dramatic, attention-grabbing, and played for enormously high stakes and, as such, is a top priority for news makers. This does not mean that war is in itself sufficient to gain media attention — there are clearly other factors involved such as the scale and intensity of the conflict, its location, where the participants come from, as

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[49] Webster, Frank, "Information Warfare In An Age of Globalisation," in Daya Kishan Thussu & Des Freedman (eds), *War & The Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, New Delhi, VISTAAR Publications (2003).

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Well as its strategic implications. However, the inherent newsworthiness of war remains and increases the likelihood of it receiving prominent and sustained attention.

Fundamentalism is an expression of certainty in an uncertain world – it is an insistence that some things are not subject to change or challenge, that there are some absolutes of morality, behaviours and belief. In these circumstances we may experience the emergence of what Giddens terms "enemies without states," where fundamentalists combine to resist the "Great Satan" of globalised and secular capitalism in the name of an absolutist creed which disregards national borders. This is the milieu in which Al-Qaeda and the Osama bin Laden networks are situated, as well as terrorism in general.

According to Bruce A. Williams,[50] after two decades of declining news audiences, increased newspaper readership and skyrocketing ratings for network and cable news in the wake of 11 September, 2001 was a relief to many. Professional journalists especially saw it as reassuring evidence that, when it really mattered, Americans still turned to them. While the nightly news broadcasts drew increased audiences, the big winners, with the most dramatic and long term increase were the cable news networks. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the pew Research Center found, 9 out of 10 Americans were getting their news primarily from television – but 45% turned to cable, 30% to the broadcast networks. As significantly, ratings increased dramatically among the young, who had been abandoning 'serious' news for decades. In the wake of 9/11, 45% of 18 – 34 year olds watched Cable News Network (CNN), as opposed to 16% in August. The figures went from 20 to 30% on MSNBC and from 12

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[50] Williams, Bruce A., "The New Media Environment, Internet Chatrooms, & Public Discourse After 9/11, in Daya Kishan Thussu & Des Freedman (eds), *WAR & THE MEDIA: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, New Delhi, VISTAAR Publications (2003).

to 28.9% at Fox News. The increased audience was not limited to television. Newspaper circulation increased, as did the circulation of newsweeklies like *Time* and *Newsweek* (up by almost 80% in the weeks after the attacks) and of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Is it any wonder, then, that Daya Kishan Thussu[51] asserts that "audience interest in news is highest at the time of conflict"? He explains this phenomenon by saying that news is largely about conflict, and conflict is always news, especially its rolling variety, as the global expansion of the Atlanta based CNN demonstrates.

However, Bruce A. Williams[50] has a different explanation which looks at the same phenomenon in the context of the new media environment. He avers that a closer look at the patterns of media consumption during this crisis suggests that journalists are "whistling past the graveyard" if they conclude that Americans rely on them as they have in the past. According to ABC news poll, almost half of all Americans now get news over the internet and over a third of them increased their reliance on online sources after September 11. Moreover, when seeking out information online, people were not limiting their search to traditional sources. For example, the website of Matt Drudge, the notorious political gossip, was the 20th most popular destination on the Internet for the week following the terrorist attacks, the first time it had ever rated that highly. This made it more popular than the online *New York Times*, *Washington Post* or *USA Today*.

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[51]Thussu, Daya Kishan, "Live TV & Bloodless Deaths: War, Infotainment & 24/7News," in Daya Kishan Thussu & Des Freedman, *WAR & THE MEDIA: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, New Delhi, VISTAAR Publications (2003)
[50]Ibid.

Chatrooms and their host sites took advantage of the ease with which diverse sources of information were easily accessible over the Internet. The degree to which this availability of diverse sources of information challenges the hegemony of mainstream journalism is captured by Carrin James of *The New York Times*:

> American reporters and anchors are clearly uncomfortable with this influx of foreign information, whether it [i]s friendly or not. On MSNBC, Brian Williams was almost apologetic about showing the bin Laden tape so often, saying with a tone of resignation that we do have a free press and, anyway, the tape would have gotten out somehow. (In the pre-cable, pre-Internet era, it probably would not have).

In the 16 minutes following the first strike on the World Trade Center, so says Philip M. Taylor, [52] New York's news media organizations scrambled their helicopters and were on hand to broadcast images of the attack on the second tower live to a global television audience. It was, many people said, like "watching a movie." The so-called war against international terrorism thus began with a spectacular psychological operation by an asymmetric enemy against militarily the most powerful nation on earth.

The relationship between terrorism and publicity has always been a symbiotic one, but the power of *real-time* television images would appear to have eradicated the Thatcherite solution of attempting to "starve" terrorism of the "oxygen of publicity" by denying them a voice through the traditional free mass media. This had not prevented the Administration of President

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[52] Taylor, Philip M., "We Know Where You Are: Psychological Operations Media During Enduring Freedom", in Daya Kishan Thussu & Des Freedman (eds), *War & The Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, New Delhi, VISTAAR Publications (2003).

George W. Bush from trying to do this, for example by requesting the American-based television networks not to air Osama bin Laden's video recordings for fear that they may contain coded messages to terrorist "sleepers" in the US.

James D. Kiras[44] examines for us the impact of Internet on the spread of terrorism. He says that the continued expansion of the number of Internet Service Providers, especially in states with relaxed or ambivalent content policies or legal authorities as well as more capable and cheaper computers, software, peripherals, and wireless technologies, has "empowered" individuals and groups with the ability to post tracts on and send messages throughout the World Wide Web. Once limited to mimeographed manifestos, some terrorists and their supporters are now capable of building websites to post any information they choose. For example, a website sympathetic to the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement posted the group's communiques and videos, which were accessed by international news agencies during the seizure of the Japanese Embassy in Lima in 1997. Webmasters, who can be either groups or individuals, selectively control the content posted on their websites. The website of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam posts items that cast the group as a responsible, internationally acceptable organization (meeting delegates from the World Bank) committed to conflict resolution. As well as handling content control, and depending on the resources available and the intended audience, webmasters can tailor messages electronically in ways more appealing to specific segments of the population.

For the purposes of spreading messages to the widest possible audience, for those without Internet or text messaging capabilities, and where speed of communication is not a

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[44] Ibid.

requirement or a possibility for security reasons, terrorists need not rely exclusively on virtual methods. With a computer with modest capabilities, readily available software packages, and equipment such as printers and CD/DVD burners, members of terrorist groups and their sympathizers can create propaganda leaflets, distance learning materials, and multimedia presentations at very low cost in large quantities. Difficult to intercept or trace, the files for such materials can be mailed to other cells or groups to be modified to suit their specific message or mission with little chance of interception or prevention. More importantly, whereas offset printing machines and photocopiers are difficult to move, a laptop computer and printer can be packed in a suitcase, increasing the mobility of the terrorist cell generating the material and making them more difficult to locate. Terrorist groups in Chechnya and the Middle East have also made increasing use of video cameras to record the preparation for and results of attacks, including successful roadside bombings and bringing down helicopters. Video footage is useful in inspiring potential recruits, as well as improving future attacks, and can be distributed to recruiters within the organization. The competition between global news outlets ensures that the images of successful and/or dramatic attacks reach the widest audience possible.

In view of this, it is not difficult to concur with James D. Kiras when he suggests that in order to deal with global terrorism, the international communities must address one of its most problematic aspects: the appeal of messages that inspire terrorists to commit horrific acts of violence.

The impact of the new media environment on the terrorism-media axis is well epitomized by the operations of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda. So inside the secret world of Osama bin

Laden, to borrow Peter L. Bergen's[53] striking turn of phrase, we go. Terrorists study media to determine the best forum to broadcast their views. Terrorists have media advisers. Bergen, who personally met and interviewd Osama bin Laden, tells why Bin Laden and his advisers granted him the interview. Bergen, who was then working for CNN, says that Osama bin Laden and his advisers had concluded that CNN was the best forum to broadcast his first television interview to the English-speaking world. When Bergen had requested for the interview through a Bin Laden London connection Khaled, Bergen was summoned by Khaled to see him, saying he had received *a call from bin Laden's media adviser* (My italics). Modern terrorists have media advisers working for them! Is it no wonder the interview was professionally conducted, as evidenced from the following description:

> Peter Arnett and I had worked up a long list of questions, many more than could be answered in the hour allotted to us. *We had been asked to submit them in advance, and bin Laden's people had excised any questions about his personal life, his family or his finances* (Italics added). We were not going to find out…what kind of tree bin Laden thought he was. But he was going to answer our questions about his political views and why he advocated violence against the Americans.

According to Bergen, bin Laden represents a shift in the way terrorists operated, a shift made possible by the changing rules of the New World Order. While bin Laden transferred his millions from Saudi Arabia to Sudan to Afghanistan, his followers enthusiastically embraced the artifacts of globalization. They communicated by American satellite phones and kept their plans on Japanese-made computers. Bin Laden's *Fatwas,* or religious rulings, were faxed to other countries, particularly England, where Arabic-language newspapers reprinted them and

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[53] Bergen, Peter L. *Holy War, Inc: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden,* London, Phoenix (2002).

transmitted them throughout the Middle East. Thus was bin Laden able to create a truly global network. Listen to bin Laden intoning on the issue of relativism of terrorism: "The US today has set a double standard, calling whoever goes against its injustice a terrorist. Wherever we look, we find the US as a leader of terrorism and crime in the world." To illustrate how central media is to the terrorists' strategy of advancing their macabre goals, when Bergen asked bin Laden about his future plans, the reply: "*You will see them and hear about them in the media, God willing*" (my italics).

In an increasingly globalised culture, bin Laden's ideas are influencing beliefs and actions of millions from Yemen to Kenya to England. In part, this is simply a matter of timing: in the twenty-first century communication is ever easier and bin Laden's message can spread with a speed and reach unimaginable two decades ago: Bin Laden's interviews with CNN, *Time* and *Newsweek* circulated internationally. Arab media outlets such as Qatar's Al-Jazeera television and London's *Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspaper* relay news about bin Laden all over the Middle East. That coverage is in turn picked up by Western television networks and wire services.

The Internet has had as great an impact on Holy War, Inc. as it has on many other concerns. The recruitment videotape made by Al-Qaeda in 2001 was converted to DVD (digital video disk) format, which makes it easy to copy by computer, and was made available to several chartrooms. There are also websites devoted to bin Laden and jihadist sites, such as the London-based *azzam.com*, which deliver a wide range of products and services. *Azzam.com* details the lives of holy warriors martyred in conflicts around the world, seeks videotapes of those wars, carries interviews with jihadist leaders, and sells books by the leading ideologues of Jihad. A measure of the site's global reach can be seen in the reaction to the death of a Saudi

named Khallad al-Madani, who was killed in Chechnya in Felorucy, 2000 while fighting under the command of bin Laden protégé. In the course of one day, messages of support for al-Madani's family poured in from South Africa, the US, Lebanon, Malaysia, Canada, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Sri Lanka, and India. While a rapidly globalizing world, propelled by new technologies, allows his message to be taken up with a click of a mouse by holy warriors from Azerbaijan to Yemen.

On the Internet, Chechen groups maintain websites in more than a dozen languages, from Albanian to Swedish. The 2001 Al-Qaeda recruitment video tape, accessible on the web in real player format, lauds Khattab's (Chechen leader) exploits.

The power of Abdullah Azzam's message was so strong that even via the medium of video tape observant Muslims felt the pull of his call to holy war. Mohamed Odeh, a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian descent who would play a role in the 1998 bombing of the American embassy in Kenya, was a student of engineering in the Philippines in the late eighties, when he watched a video by Azzam extolling the Afghan Jihad. Oden soon traveled to Afghanistan, where he was trained in the use of a wide variety of weapons, including AK-47s, machine guns, and antitank and anti-aircraft missiles, and of explosives such as C3, C4, and TNT. He also subsequently swore an oath of allegiance to bin Laden. Between 1990 and early 1993, some members of the group also undertook the massive task of writing the *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*. This multivolume series, thousands of pages long, details everything the Afghan Arabs learned in the Jihad against the Soviets. Each volume is dedicated to participants in that holy war, although the only ones mentioned by name are the late Abdullah Azzam and bin Laden, "who did not cease to wage jihad and incite jihad to this present day." The *Encyclopedia* contains

eight hundred pages on weaponry, including how to mount terrorist and paramilitary attacks. A CD-Rom version of it went on sale in the bazaars of Pakistan in the mid-1990s.

For Pakistani magazines, a cover story on bin Laden was surefire way to sell copies. One such piece, in the September 14, 1998 edition of the weekly *Wujood*, had a lurid and patently absurd account of 150 Palestinian Commandos, trained in Israel and the US, standing by to snatch or kill the Saudi exile.

Al-Qaeda's global scope is further underlined by calls made from bin Laden's satellite phone, a notebook computer-sized device purchased from a New York – based company in 1996 for US $7,500. Over the next two years, hundreds of calls were placed from that phone to London, Sudan, Iran, Yemen, and dozens to Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Kenya.

Also based in Britain was Al-Qaeda's member Anas al-Liby who is described as a computer expert. When the police searched his modest house, they found a 180 – page manual called *Military Studies in the Jihad against the Tyrants*. The manual covered such topics as how to conduct terrorist operations, how to counterfeit currency, and how to organize safe houses.

At the very moment that tens, perhaps hundreds, of millions of people around the world were glued to the grainy green night scope picture of the bombing raids in Afghanistan, the world's most wanted man popped up in the middle of the coverage to revel in al-Qaeda's success. "America is struck by God Almighty in one of its vital organs so that its greatest buildings are destroyed, grace and gratitude to God. America has been filled with horror from North to South and from West to East," he intoned. It was a supremely confident performance and a

perfect illustration of Holy War, Inc. in operation – utilizing the satellite uplinks of the world's television networks to beam a global message of holy war. Few political messages in history have been broadcast so widely. Six days later bin Laden's spokesman, a heretofore obscure Kuwaiti teacher named Suleiman Abu Ghaith, warned on another videotape seen around the world that Muslims in the US and Great Britain should not take plane flights or live in high buildings. Then in mid-October the Arabic-language television network Al-Jazeera conducted an exclusive interview with bin Laden but declined to air it, saying the interview was not "newsworthy". For reasons that Al-Jazeera has never convincingly elucidated, the network sat on the interview. CNN obtained a copy of the interview and aired it in February 2002 without the consent of Al-Jazeera.

4.4   Impact of Media Events on Society

According to the media scholar Majid Tehranian,[54] Daniel Boorstin, in a brilliant polemic, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, has identified a new malady of modern civilization: mediacracy. Boorstin argues, powerfully and disturbingly, that the new, complex apparatus of image-making in America [and by now, throughout the world] is systematically creating not only serious distortions about life, but also a distinct cultural preference for lively illusions over dull facts, colourful celebrities over honest citizens, actors over presidents, commercialized tourism over long spiritual journeys, and glittering images over chattering ideals.

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[54] Tehranian, Majid, "Events, Pseudo-Events, Media Events: Image Politics & The Future of International Diplomacy," in Andrew Arno & Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *The News Media in National & International Conflict*, Boulderlo & London, Westview Press.

In a thoughtful essay, however, Elihu Katz has proposed a counter-argument. In an article entitled "In Defence of Media Events," Katz focuses on the positive and integrative role that certain historic events, dramatized by the media, play in the lives of viewers and nations.

Thanks to extraordinary achievements in telecommunications, however, it is now technically possible for one person to speak directly and simultaneously to untold millions of people all over the world, and it is also becoming increasingly possible for millions of individuals to reach millions of others personally and instantaneously.

Tehranian Majid suggests the threats as well as the promises that the new telecommunication facilities offer for the conduct of international relations (which includes combating the spread of the scourge of terrorism). The threats are very real: the menace of unreality. What Daniel J. Boorstin has said of America is now perhaps true for an increasingly "Americanised" world:

> We risk being the first people in history to have been able to make their illusions so vivid, so persuasive, so "realistic," that they can live in them. We are the most illusioned people on earth. Yet we dare not become disillusioned, because our illusions are the very house in which we live; they are our views, our heroes, our adventure, our forms of art, our very existence.

This explains why terrorists are the most illusioned sort in the world, if their desperate and dramatic act to attract attention to their perceived ills is anything to go by.

4.5   New Media Communications Technology and Media Power

In a thought-provoking article of the same title as this subsection, Herbert S. Dordick[55] observes that any examination of the roles of news media in national and international conflict must take into account the new communications technology that has revolutionized the news industry in the past few decades.

Improved worldwide communications technology has, it would appear, increased rather than decreased tensions around the globe. For more than two decades, nations north and south, rich and poor, advanced and less developed have searched for a new international economic system that will create some form of order that could lead to equitable development. To this search has now been added a search for new information order – a search for a means to encourage, not stifle, the flow of information and to decrease the gap between those who have already been labeled information poor and those who are information rich. This search has led to intense conflict as nations seek to communicate on a common network and find that they cannot agree on how to use that network, let alone what to communicate.

The idea that improvements in communications make communication more difficult, as James Carey put it, may indeed be true. In considering the effects of technology on society, however, we must be careful to account for the social choices that play a part in those effects. Many writers have argued that high technology in itself has both basic and pervasive effects on the culture of the people who create and use it. In a subtle way, technology actually carried with it

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[55] Dordick, Herbert S., "New Communications Technology & Media Power," in Andrew Arno & Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *The News Media in National & International Conflict*, Boulderlo & London, Westview Press.

certain general cultural values, but we must not lose sight of the more obvious and important fact that technology is a tool that may be used any number of ways according to decisions made by its users.

Increased communication does not necessarily lead to understanding and the reduction of tensions as Lewis Coser points out elsewhere in this study. But how can there be understanding without communication? More access to better and more varied means of communication through the new technology could (in original) lead to more communication and understanding. If it does not, we cannot blame the technology; we might look to the uses we make of it.

What we must always consider is the impact of culture on technology, as well as the reverse. The use of communications technology in conflict situations is pertinent because it is clear that communication can exacerbate conflict as well as help to resolve it. Recent scientific and engineering developments in the communications field have magnified the potential for fostering good or ill that communication has always possessed.

How one uses a technology depends to a considerable degree on one's attitude towards that technology. Fear and apprehension cannot result in the creative use of any technology, and this is especially true of the information technology. As we have already noted in this chapter, terrorists are definitely not frightened of the new communications technology and so make use of it in the most creative, but evil way. This subsection naturally enmeshes with the following one dealing with agenda-setting techniques to portray media power.

4.06 Agenda-Setting Techniques

Media have always been regarded as powerful tools for shaping people's perception of reality in their environment. Agenda-Setting Theory is one of the theories explaining media power in society. In this subsection, we shall examine Agenda-Setting techniques to show how this power, if any, is exercised. These techniques include:

a) Headlining

b) Visual impact

c) Editorial endorsement

But before we embark on an examination of these techniques in turn, a word to set the ball rolling would not be out of place to put the said techniques in proper perspective. John P. Robinson[56] opens his article by quoting Joseph Klapper as saying:

> Regardless of the condition in question – be it the vote intentions of audience members, their tendency toward or away from delinquent behaviour, or their general orientation toward life and its problems – the media are more likely to reinforce than to change.

There are exceptions to this and they mainly concern the type of information under consideration. That is, it appears that some types of information in the media can be conveyed (all in original) to the broader mass audience – i.e. beyond simply those portions of the audience who are already predisposed to absorb the information. Nevertheless, Robinson's

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[56] Robinson, John P., "Mass Communication & Information Diffusion," in F. Gerald Kline & Philip J. Tichenor (eds), *Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research*, Vo. 1 Sage Publications (1972)

discussion touches on other communication variables as well, particularly the type of medium (learning via print as opposed to broadcast media) under consideration.

There is, first of all, the type of information that media observers, following from Lazarsfeld and Merton, have labeled "status conferral". That is, persons, issues, or objects to which the media pay attention have increased status conferred on them merely by being exposed to media attention. Weiss reviews several examples of this phenomenon, the most well accepted perhaps being the increased importance or salience in the public issues discussed by candidates during political campaigns (for example [Dwight] Eisenhower's raising of the Korean War as a campaign issue in 1952, the issue of bombing the islands of Quemay and Matsu in the Kennedy-Nixon debates). A similar connection is not unlikely for people in the news, which perhaps explains why politicians are so anxious for media coverage. Advertising, particularly brand name advertising, seems predicated on the notion that the public will attach higher status to products that have been brought to their attention by the media.

Elliot Aronson[57] makes very interesting comments on the media in the sense that even when communicators are not making a direct attempt to sell us something, they can succeed in influencing the way we look at the world and the way we respond to important events in our lives. He urges us to look at something supposedly objective – like news. He asks: Are the newscasters trying (in original) to sell us anything? Probably not, he answers. But those who produce television news shows can exert a subtle influence on our opinions by determining which events are given exposure. And what factors determine which news items are selected For television newscasts? It has been said by no less an expert than the Director of the British

[57] Aronson, Elliot, *The Social Animal*, 6th ed., New York, W. H. Freeman & Company.

Broadcasting Corporation that television news is a form of entertainment (in original). A study of why people watch the news agrees, concluding that most viewers want to be amused and diverted, and being informed is only a secondary motive for watching. Accordingly, when those in charge of news programs make decisions about which news events to cover and which fraction of the miles of daily videotape to present to the public, they make their decisions, at least in part, on the basis of entertainment value of their material. Film footage of a flooded metropolis has much more entertainment value than footage devoted to a dam built to prevent such a flooding: it is simply not very exciting to see a dam holding back a flood. And yet, the dam may be more important news. Just as such action events as football games are more entertaining on television than such quiet events as chess matches, so it is more likely that riots, bombings, earthquakes, massacres, and other violent acts will get more airtime than stories about helping each other or people working to prevent violence. Thus, news telecasts tend to focus on the violent behaviour of individuals – terrorists, protesters, strikers, or police – because action makes for more exciting viewing than does a portrayal of people behaving in a peaceful, orderly manner.

Such coverage does not present a balanced picture of what is happening in the nation, not because the people who run the news media are evil and trying to manipulate, but simply because they are trying to entertain us. And, in trying to entertain us, they may unwittingly influence us to believe people behave far more violently now than before. This may cause us to be unhappy and even depressed about the temper of the times or the state of the nation and it may actually cause (in original) people to behave violently.

In fact, sometimes the role of the media in reporting an event becomes more newsworthy than the event itself. As Robinson noted earlier, this form of influence is probably unintentional; the news media are not trying (in original) to foster violence or create the illusion that most people are cruel. But the pervasiveness of electronic media cannot be overstated. For example, during the Beirut hostage crisis in 1985, in which some forty innocent US passengers on a Trans World Airline jet were held captive by Shiite terrorists, television cameras offered viewers back home around-the-clock coverage of all aspects of the crisis – important and trivial alike. There were press conferences held by the hostages, intimate shots of anguished families, demands, counter demands, pistol waving, outrageous statements, luncheon menus, and so on... The television camera crews did everything but follow the hostages into the restrooms!

At one point, it was suggested that the electronic media might be prolonging the ordeal by giving so much free publicity to the Shiite cause. So what did the television networks do? They televised a series of panel discussions by learned pundits about the role of the media in such a situation. The message became the media itself (sic!).

Against this backdrop, let us now examine in turn each of the three agenda-setting techniques:

a) Effect of Headlining

According to Percy H. Tannebaum,[58] in answer to the question of what the role of the headlines is in everyday newspaper reading behaviour, certainly the headline is now an important, integral feature of the American [as everywhere else globally] newspaper page.

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[58] Tannenbaum, Percy H., "The Effect of Headlines on the Interpretation of News Stories," *Journalism Quarterly* (Incomplete reference in the library).

Practically every news item is introduced by a headline, while most newspapers have employees whose main – if not sole – function is to write headlines.

The headline has been variously referred to as a "thumb nail sketch of the news," a "super-lead" or "commercial sample" – a brief and attractive manner of presenting the reader with a sample of the paper's offerings. Thus, it is a sort of index by which the reader may guide his selection of stories. Not only can the headline serve as an index by attracting attention to a particular item, but may also serve as an index in terms of influencing the interpretation of a story. The headline writer may intentionally attempt to create a particular effect, or, perhaps more often, the influence can operate independently of his will.

That such an effect should exist is not totally unexpected. Most Journalism textbooks warn against the introduction of partiality into headlines. All stress, like Howard B. Taylor and Jacob Scher , that the headline "must leave no false impressions. It should not say less than the story, and it must not say more." These warnings grow out of two factors in the process of communication by newspaper:

I)   The headline of today, by its very nature of extreme condensation and brevity, is often unable to present the desired "bird's-eye view" of the story beneath it. Space limitations make it virtually impossible for the headline to tell the whole story. In most cases, then, the headline writer is forced to select a single aspect of the story to "play up" in the headline. Obviously, bias can enter here, virtually through an open door.

II)   An even more important aspect of how the headline can introduce bias stems from the way people read newspapers. The reader is essentially, as Earl English has put it, "a shopper of headlines." What makes this practice so important is that often the content

of the headline, and perhaps the first few paragraphs of the story, is all the reader does glean from a particular news item.

The problem was concisely underlined as early as 1925 by Dr. Glenn Frank (then President of the University of Winsconsin):

> When you stop to think how few people read beyond the headlines and how much public opinion is made by headlines, you begin to realize the enormous influence exerted by the journalist... who writes headlines.

Similarly, some twenty year later, Winship and Aliport wrote:

> Through the headline, they (editors) create the picture of the world scene that their public carries in mind.... In three important aspects, indeed, headline writers are free agents: They select the communiqué from which they draw their head; they choose that aspect of the communiqué they wish to feature; and they also fashion the final wording with all its subtle connotations. A glance at the newsstand will show that editors do not always select the same communiqué, nor choose the same wording. The varied fashions have different psychological effects.

The headline writer who recognizes the potentialities of the headline, and who is aware of the reading habits of the public, is certainly in a position to exert significant influence upon opinions of his audience.

In a way, the headline provides a lens through which the reminder of the story or article is perceived. Is this why terrorists murder and bomb themselves into headlines?

b) Visual Impact

M. Timothy O'Keefe and Bernard C. Kissel[59] discuss this issue thoughtfully. They aver that in their study of the diffusion of a statement on birth control by Pope Paul, J. B. Adams, James J. Mullen and Harold M. Wilson have attempted to categorise news events in terms of their impact on the emotions of the audience:

i) One group of events would be of little personal relevance and essentially unemotional;

ii) Another would be either relevant or emotional, but not both;

iii) The third type would be relevant as well as emotional.

Audience reaction to different types could be verbalized as "so what?" for the first; "How about that?" for the second; and "oh, my God!" for the third or cataclysmic event group.

Such an attempt at categorization is useful in that for the first time it allows one to gauge with some idea the rate and extent of diffusion of a particular event according to its emotional impact.

Terrorists have this knowledge and use it by ensuring that their terrorist acts evoke the strongest possible emotional response in the audience (for instance, the September, 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon).

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[59] O'Keefe, M. Timothy & Bernard C. Kissel, "Visual Impact: An Added Dimension in the Study of News Diffusion," *Journalism Quarterly*, Summer, 1971.

c) Editorial Endorsements

In a study of the same title as this subsection, Maxwell McCombs[60] avers that an examination of mass media use during political campaigns reveals little evidence of direct evidence on behaviour in the voting booth. Not only is greater influence attributed to interpersonal communication, but the use of mass communication appears to be highly selective. McCombs quotes Lang and Lang as suggesting that any accurate measurement of media influence must have a time perspective extending beyond a single campaign. The influence of the media is seen to lie in their long-range ability to shape frames of reference, to create the pseudo-environment to which political behaviour is a response.

But the media, especially newspapers, do make direct, overt attempts at influencing the bahaviour of the audience. This clearly is the purpose of editorial endorsements of candidates during political campaigns. At the national level these attempts at persuasion show little success. From 1932 to 1952 the proportions of newspapers endorsing Presidential candidates increased from half to two-thirds of the dailies (in the US especially) taking stands, and to date this trend shows no signs of abating, if the last US Presidential elections (2004) is anything to go by.

Do media evaluations have an impact on group power? George A. Donohue, et al[61] answer this question for us. According to them, information in newspapers and television reports may draw attention to an issue, provide alternative views of a social problem, raise questions about

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[60] McCombs, Maxwell, "Editorial Endorsements: A Study of Influence," *Journalism Quarterly*, 44 (1967).
[61] Donohue, George A., Philip J. Tichenor & Clarice N. Olien, "Media Evaluation & Group Power," *Journalism Quarterly*, 60 (Winter, 1973)?

about the positions of adversarial groups, give visibility to new leadership groups, or contribute to an increased membership base of a group.

4.07   Are the Media Victims of Terrorism?

Some scholars argue in the affirmative on the grounds that (among others) that controlling the media is ineffective because terrorists can strike other points in the infrastructure (such as transportation, the power grid or the water supply) with the results that communicate directly to the intended audience without media intervention (per Kelvin G. Barnhurst).

Other scholars like Andrew Arno[62] argue that in any case in conflict the position of the news media as the third party who profits and grows powerful is important in explaining the dynamics of relations between the press and society.

What do we mean by media being victims of terrorism? That the media are subject to unreasonable attacks and gratuitous violence just like the rest of the institutions of society. This means that the media cover terrorist activities to their peril, or their profit? Let us have a look at the evidence.

According to Kelvin G. Barnhurst[6], although Sendeyo Luminoso (a terrorist organization in modern Peru) began its armed struggle with propaganda, the organization eschewed contact

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[62] Arno, Andrew, "The News Media as 3rd Parties in National & International Conflicts: Duobus Litigantibus Tertius Gaudet" (Centres of Interest are, in communication terms, also centres of persuasion and message generation), in Andrew Arno & Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *The News Media in National & International Conflict*, Boulderlo & London, Westview Press.
[6] Ibid.

with the media, preferring to communicate by means of sabotage and violent acts. Senderistas disapproved of the "bourgeois methods" employed in 1965, when the MIR (Left Revolutionary Movement) Communists acted like "ballerinas", in calling press conferences to announce the struggle. Instead they preferred violent action to attract attention.

Sendero Luminoso used interpersonal communication, punctuated by violence, to attract followers. Touching on the role of the media in such conflict situations, Kelvin G. Barnhurst avers that the government tightly restricted press information. The military refused to provide details from the emergency zone or to co-operate with the press, with what result? Freed from journalistic verification, the security forces attributed several of their own massacres to Sendero Luminoso.

In an effort to limit the appeal of Sendero Luminoso, "the government of Alan Garcia,… reportedly urged the media to limit their coverage of terrorism." The publisher of the largest and most respected daily, *El Comercio*, proposed that the media apply voluntary guidelines to play down the news by reducing its visual impact. In the author's own words,

> *La Republica* is the only major newspaper in Peru that refused to honour voluntary press restrictions, and its critics accused it of sensationalism. But the newspaper's coverage of guerrillas and of the excesses of the counter insurgency has not shielded it from attack. The publisher of *La Republica* says that he and his staff continue to be threatened by Sendero.

Does this mean the media are victims of terrorism? To answer this question, it would be instructive to juxtapose the experiences of Sendero in relation to the media with those of sister organizations such as Tupac Amaru and Al-Qaeda. As we have already seen in this chapter

while examining the new media environment, Tupac Amaru, for instance, during the terrorist seizure of the Japanese Embassy, posted its communiqué on its website which was accessed by journalists. Al-Qaeda's Osama bin Laden has media advisers in his employ and is adept at exploiting the Internet to the maximum with the intention of capturing the attention of the ordinary mainstream media. This clearly shows that terrorists bend over themselves to have the media on their side. The media are actually the terrorists' best friend, to be sure, and this includes Sendero Luminoso. This is so because though Sendero verges on indifference in its relationship with the media, it is nevertheless an assumed indifference. Otherwise why would it be courting media attention through perpetration of violent terrorist acts?

So Andrew Arno is closer to the truth in this regard. The media profit and grow powerful in the conflict situations as those engendered by terrorism. So the media are by no means victims of terrorism. We now move to conclude this chapter by an examination of the arguments for and against open communication advocated for in a democracy as embedded in the Libertarian Theory of the Press.

4.08 Salvation through Communication?

This question is authoritatively discussed by Lewis Coser[63] by posing and answering two questions dealing with open communication (i.e. more communication) and less communication, but due to space constraints we shall only be dealing with the latter.

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[63] Coser, Lewis A., "Salvation Through Communication?" in Andrew Arno & Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *The News Media in National & International Conflict*, Bourderlo & London, Westview Press.

Is Less Communication better?

Hypothesis: By reducing ignorance among contenders, it is possible to facilitate agreement between them and to enhance their respective interests.

Arguments to the contrary are based largely on the pioneering papers by Wilbert Moore and Melvin Tumin and Louis Schneider. Both works conclude that ignorance, far from being always dysfunctional, may indeed subserve definite functions in social relationships. If that is indeed the case, the reduction of ignorance, far from being a blessing, may under specifiable conditions be a curse. Lewis A. Coser then quotes James Pule as making this point with considerable force:

> Ignorance of or lack of attention to potentially contentious issues may in fact confer stability and ensure peace. Thoroughgoing discussion, in which such things as habits of acquiescence, custom and power relation are ignored, may have the opposite effect. Perhaps the only certain result, if all social relations were indeed subjected to "rational discussions" by their participants, would be the outbreak of conflict and controversy in the place of apathy and acquiescence.

Ignorance, in other words, may minimize conflict, while full knowledge might enhance it.

An unexamined premise among salvation-through-communication theorists is the belief that if partners would only know each other better they would find it easier to discover grounds of agreement. There is no rational or empirical foundation for such a generalized belief. In fact, there are many instances in which, if we really knew what motivated other persons, we would become much more antagonistic toward them. As the old saying has it, people do not

necessarily improve upon acquaintance. Thus, a veil of ignorance may often operate as a means to maintain relations between people where full disclosure would lead to a rapture in relations. In these cases, knowing all comes perilously close to undermining the bases for conviction.

Sociologists interpreting communication processes always need to be aware of 4 interrelated questions when assessing communication impacts:

i) Under what circumstances can communication serve useful functions, and under what circumstances is it likely to be counterproductive?

ii) What are the structural circumstances that limit the impact and effect of communication?

iii) What purpose do such limitations serve?

iv) Who is benefited and who suffers harm?

When such questions are addressed, the sociology of communication becomes a significant area of research and communication will no longer be regarded as a panacea.

To this, Louis Scheider[64] adds his piece by averring that the sheer variety of concerns with ignorance on the part of sociological theorists is added to by Pitirim A. Sorokin who observes that "if empirical truth is ... given an unlimited liberty for its development, it may prove exceedingly injurious to many illusions which are necessary for the existence of values in a group."

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[64] Schneider, Louis, "The Role of The Category of Ignorance – in Sociological Theory: An Explanatory Statement," *American Sociological Review*, 27, 1962.

So what are the functions of ignorance in a society? Wilbert E. Moore and Melvin M. Tumin[65] examine the issue of the functions of ignorance in society. They do this by first commenting on ignorance in general before analysing the functions of ignorance, by no means exhaustively. But they take great care in defining ignorance, distinguishing it from error and the act of ignoring what is known. They tell us that ignorance is to be taken, in the context of their article, to be simply referring to "not knowing", i.e. the absence of empirically valid knowledge.

"Perfect knowledge" is considered as the totality of all knowledge ideally available to man in general, and not simply that which is believed available within any context of social action. Ignorance may refer to past, present, or future conditions or events, as long as valid knowledge is conceivably valid. For the purposes of their paper, the authors state that ignorance is to be kept distinct from "error," whether of fact or of logic, and from the act of *ignoring* (their italics) what is known.

The central theorem of their article holds that, quite apart from the role of ultimate values and attitudes relative to them, perfect knowledge is itself impossible, and an inherently impossible basis of social action and social relations. Put conversely, ignorance is both inescapable and an intrinsic element in social organization generally, although there are marked differences in the specific forms, degrees, and functions of ignorance in known social organizations. However, before delving into the brief examination of the social functions of ignorance in society, it would be quite instructive to note what the authors generally say in relation to ignorance.

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[65] Moore, Wilbert E. & Melvin M. Tumin, "Some Social Functions of Ignorance," *American Sociological Review*, 14 No. 6 (December, 1949).

Ignorance is commonly viewed today as the natural enemy of stability and orderly progress in social life. It is equally commonly believed, as a corollary, that any increase in knowledge automatically brings with it an increase in benefits to mankind. As a result, education, as the formal technique of imparting this knowledge to the uninformed, has become elevated in many lay and professional circles to the status of a panacea for all of man's ills. This enthusiasm for education, and for the "rational" approach which is considered its hand maiden, is found throughout the social sciences. That sociologists share this enthusiasm is indicated by the readiness with which, as applied scientists, they advocate such things as enhanced knowledge on the part of prospective marriage partners; improved lines of communication in industry; increased awareness of community and national affairs; greater knowledge about the "real" meaning of such terms as race and nationality; increased sensitivity to personal differences and nuances of interpersonal relations; and therapeutic treatment of neuroses through giving the patient a knowledge of sources of his anxieties. (It should not be overlooked here that there is an essential ambivalence concerning the role of knowledge. For, despite the institutionally sanctioned emphasis on education and on "facing the facts," there is considerable "folk" acceptance of the contrary idea that "where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise", or in a more popular formulation "what I don't know can't hurt me.")

The rationalistic bias, which finds its way into many sociological writings of the last half century, may, however, be contrasted with several developments in social science that have served to diminish the importance ascribed to rational, scientific knowledge. Two of these may be singled out for special mention:

i)   The first has been the careful study and analysis of the functions of magic, ritual, and superstition in social organization. This culminates, perhaps, in the findings of

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Bronislaw Malinowski concerning the role of magic as a means for providing a subjective and socially sanctioned security with regard to anxiety-producing features of the physical and social environment. This development calls to a widespread type of social action that functions as a "satisfactory" alternative to complete knowledge and perfect control. And, since resort to magic is so generally distributed throughout human society, there is at least some doubt that it is likely to be eliminated by any predictable expansion of knowledge and technique.

ii) The second development has been the distribution between irrational and nonrational orientations, and the recognition of the high importance in society of ultimate values and attitudes toward them. This development emphasizes the fact that empirical knowledge and ignorance do not in combination exhaust the socially significant orientations of the individual to his environment. It thus helps to distinguish clearly between ignorance, on the one hand, and ultimate, including super empirical, values, on the other.

Neither of these developments, however, has included an explicit examination of the role of ignorance as such. Both have served to narrow and redefine its relation to other types of orientation. But in both, there is some implication that genuine ignorance, as distinct from knowledge on the one hand and non-rational beliefs and values on the other, is only a disturbing element in social action and relations, and is accordingly subject to successive constrictions in importance.

The authors state that the central purpose of their paper is to examine explicitly some of the contexts in which ignorance, rather than complete knowledge, performs specifiable functions

in social structure and action. They list the functions as five broad ones: As preservative of privileged position; as reinforcement of traditional values; as a preservative of fair competition; as a preservative of stereotypes; and as an incentive appropriate to the system.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this concluding chapter, therefore, we would briefly sketch a background by way of introduction; then we would set out and answer a number of relevant questions to aid us in evaluating the evidence to far presented; based on the answers to these questions, we would conclude and by way of the implication of our conclusion, we would state our recommendations or suggestions towards a solution to the Terrorism-Media Axis. So here we go.

Journalists carry out the important function of furnishing material for discussion. In a presidential address to the Ninth-Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association on 28th December, 1912, Albert Bushnell Hart[66] bore testimony to this by stating:

> Alongside the reformer, is the journalist who helps to make government by his steam-pump ability to suck up information and to discharge it in a broad diurnal stream. General information is not the best commanding general for army or for nation, but he furnishes material for discussion.

This is the agenda-setting role of the media then as it is now. Testifying to this, Dan Edogbo Okolo[67] observes that there should be no doubt today that the mass media are the widest and

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[66] Hart, Albert Bushnell, "A Government of Men," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. VII No. 1, February, 1913.

[67] Okolo, Dan Edogbo, "Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in Political Reporting, "in Charles Okigbo (ed), *Reporting Politics & Public Affairs*, Nairobi, English Press @ 1994 The African Council for Communication Education.

fastest means of communication. They are the main organs of mass enlightenment and entertainment and also moulders of mass opinion and attitudes. Although many of the opinions and attitudes of any society are directly derived from the material experiences of its people, mass media reports give credence or confirm such experiences. The mass media, therefore he concludes, report the society to itself, and based on the reports, the society critically looks at itself and fashions out new ways of life while consolidating the old accepted ways. In the realm of communication, what is Agenda-setting?

According to Dan Edogbo Okolo, where journalists have been strong enough to resist direct or indirect control by the government, they have often ended up in prison. Based on this, he concluded that these government attempts to control journalists show clearly that the former recognize the power of the latter, in at least setting the agenda for public discussion, and ultimately, public opinion.

On 28th November, 1978, the UNESCO General Conference in Paris adopted the Declaration on Fundamental Principles Concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International understanding, to the promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War, according to Kaarle Nordenstreng[19].

Article IV of the said Declaration states that mass media should promote greater knowledge on the part of the peoples of the world of the evils attendant upon war, violence, apartheid, and other forms of national, racial or religious hatred. Conversely, the dissemination of reports

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[19] Nordestreng, Kaarle & Lauri Hannikainen, *The Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO*, New Jersey 07648, Ablex Publishing Corporation Norwood.

conducive to these evils is condemned. We know that apartheid is no more, but were this Article to be revised, we are confident that Terrorism would no doubt be grouped together with the other ills condemned by the Declaration. This then means that the media should not disseminate reports conducive to Terrorism. Even without revising, the Article is broad enough to include Terrorism by using the phrase "other forms". So the global community through UNESCO places on the media the responsibility not to spread terrorism, but is this what the media are in fact doing?

In Chapter Two, we discussed the diffusion of ideology without defining what an ideology is and its relationship with the media. The importance, in our view of an ideology to any movement or individual is such that the absence of one is the equivalent of having a car without an engine, i.e. ideology is the engine of all enterprise. Without an ideology, terrorists will not be inspired to commission of terrorist acts, and without the media, the terrorist ideology would not be diffused. So what is an ideology, its importance and relationship with the media?

In the most general and benign sense, so James Lull[68] informs us, ideology is organized thought — complements of values, orientations, and predispositions forming ideational perspectives expressed through technologically mediated and interpersonal communication. Ideologies may or may not be grounded in historically or empirically verifiable fact. They may be tightly or loosely organized. Some ideologies are complex and well-integrated; others fragmented. To this definition may be added that by Andrew Heywood[69] who posits that any

[68] Lull, James, *Media, Communication; Culture: A Global Approach*, Cambridge, Polity Press (1995).
[69] Heywood, Andrew, *Political Ideas & Concepts: An Introduction*, New York, St. Martin's Press (1994).

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analysis of political ideas and concepts must acknowledge the importance of ideology. Political ideologies are a kind of "world view", made up of a collection of doctrines, theories and principles which claim to interpret the present and offer a view of a desired future. These more or less systematic sets of ideas provide the basis for some kind of organized social action: they may defend the existing order, advocate its reform and improvement, or propose its revolutionary overthrow and replacement.

James Lull assures us that some ideological sets (while discussing the relationship between ideology and mass media) are elevated and amplified by the mass media, given great legitimacy by them, and distributed persuasively often glamorously, to large audiences. In the process, selected constellations of ideas assume ever increasing importance, reinforcing their original meanings and extending their social impact. Television has the unparalleled ability to expose, dramatise and popularize cultural bits and fragments then become ideological currency in social exchange. Television may be the most obvious conveyor of dominant ideology, but all mass media, including less recognized forms such as postage stamps, store windows, automobile bumper stickers, tee-shirts, even museums and restaurant menus carry messages that serve the interests of some groups and not others.

Electronic media, James Lull observes, play an especially influential role in contemporary rule-governed interaction. Media help shape and maintain rules and the ideological predispositions underlying them because their unique and powerful technical capabilities and appealing content are the most effective means of information diffusion ever invented. By articulating ideological syntheses that promote certain perspectives and exclude others, and by relating

ideological inflections to sources of authority, the mass media help constitute and regulate social reality by structuring some of their audiences most common and important experiences.

So with the media so deeply involved in the diffusion of ideology and thereby providing a vehicle for the diffusion of terrorist ideology, the media coverage of terrorism and terrorist acts spread terrorism like the plague.

Media Competition in covering Terrorism

Bruce A. Williams dramatizes the competition as captured in this partial quotation... "Brian Williams was almost apologetic about showing the bin Laden tape so often, saying with a tone of resignation that we do have a free press and, any way, the *tape would have gotten out somehow*" [Italics added].

So apparently there is no scope for inter-media co-operation in the suppression of the spread of terrorism and terrorist acts. In fact, there are certain media houses which have brazenly staked their growth on their hand-in-glove relationship with notorious terrorists. Witness Noureddine Miladi's[70] mapping of the Al-Jazeera phenomenon which links the arrival of the Al-Jazeera Television on the global stage with cooperation with the infamous Osama bin Laden. Miladi states that the availability of on-line communication has further widened Al-Jazeera's audience base. Its official website (www.aljazeera.net) has made considerable progress since its launch on 1 January 2001. During the year 2001, the activity of the site attracted 38

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[70] Miladi, Noureddine, "Mapping the Al-Jazeera Phenomenon," in Daya Kishan Thussu & Des Freedman (eds), *War & The Media. Reporting Conflict 24/7*, New Delhi, VISTAAR Publications (2003).

million hits, and more than 265 million pages viewed in January 2003, the site had over 80,000 members who can participate in television programmes through the net and receive the daily newsletter through their e-mail service. After 11 September 2001, aljazeera.net became even more popular and the number of visits to the site substantially increased. During the month of October 2001, the number of web pages viewed soared from 600,000 per day before the 11 September to more than one million pages per day. By the beginning of January 2002, Al-Jazeera prided itself on having 70 page viewers per month (Ben Thamir, 2002).

Al-Jazeera came to the notice of Western politicians, journalists and academics when, in 1998, it broadcast an interview with bin Laden in which he called upon Muslims to target American interests, but especially after the events of 11 September 2001, by regularly airing bin Laden's version of the "war on terrorism".

So the moral here is clear: if one media house refuses to air a terrorist's message to an audience, there is another media house too willing to oblige! To speak with one voice against terrorism for the media is a mere mirage.

Must every Happening in Society be reported?

Michael J. Arlen[71] reports an incident which is germane to our concern here. For more than a year, James Reston of the *New York Times* knew that the US was flying-high-altitude Spy planes (U-2s) over the now defunct Soviet Union. His paper did not report the fact. Then, in 1960, a

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[71] Sandman, Peter M., David M. Rubin & David B. Sanchman (eds), *Media Casebook: An Introductory Reader in American Mass Communications*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, Inc. (1972).

U-2 was shot down and its pilot captured. The then President Eisenhower denied everything. Did the *Times* contradict the President? Although *Times* knew the denials were lies, nevertheless printed them without comment. Only after the President finally admitted the truth did the *Times* finally publish the truth. What was the rationale for this behaviour? Reston, basing his belief on the tenor of the times, justifies his paper's behaviour in the following terms:

> In this time of half-war and half-peace, that old principle of publish-and-be-damned, while very romantic, bold and hairy, *can often damage the national interest* [my italics].

This passage brings out two issues of relevance here: that reporting should be contextual and specifies at least one ground national interest – when reporting must not take place. In Chapter Four, we noted an essential ambivalence concerning the role of knowledge. For despite the institutionally sanctioned emphasis on education and on "facing the facts," there is considerable "folk" acceptance of the contrary idea that "where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise."

So in the context of terrorism, having noted the overwhelming negative impact on society of the media reports, it is in order for the media to make an exception and not at all report on terrorism and terrorist acts. For it is pertinently clear that not every happening in society must be reported. Ignorance, indeed has a valid function and an honored place in the conduct of human affairs.

Does the Public Obtain All Its Information From the Media?

In other words, what is the relationship (if any) between the formal mass media and interpersonal communication in the diffusion of news events including terrorism and terrorist

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acts? In Chapter Two, Yasuhiro Inoue et al commented that even though fast and far reaching new media revolutionized our information environment, word of mouth *(i.e. interpersonal communication) still remains a means of primary news sources for important events*[my italics]. The authors report research findings suggesting that the word of mouth communication increases the spread of the news very quickly, though the initial source of information was a mass medium, radio. The said authors also report other research findings to the effect that the majority of the people (57%) learned of the news of the US's President John F. Kennedy's assassination by interpersonal communication even though by then electronic media had become ubiquitous. But it is just any kind of news event that gets diffused in this manner?

Yasuhiro Inoue et al answer this for us. They rely on research findings to the effect that those who are very upset are more likely and faster to diffuse the news interpersonally. News attributes such as the degree of surprise may increase or decrease the likelihood that people inform others of the news. For instance, it is said that the more surprising a news story is, the more likely people are to pass it along.

Before relating the foregoing answers to our hypotheses so as to pave way for our conclusion one way or the other, it is important to keep in mind that our theoretical framework is the Agenda-Setting Theory. Although we discussed it in Chapter one in general, highlighted some of its techniques in Chapter Four and briefly sketched its importance at the beginning of the present Chapter, we really never got round to defining it. It is time to remedy this apparent oversight so as to relate it effectively to the spread of terrorism and terrorist acts. The *Encyclopaedia*[36] defines *Agenda-Setting* as a term used for the hypothesis that editors and broadcaster – the mass media in general – play an important role in shaping social reality as

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they go about their daily task of selecting and displaying news. Editorial judgments, including those relating to placement and length of news items, reflect the relative journalistic salience ascribed to topics by media personnel. Audiences absorb these saliences from the news media, incorporating similar priorities into their personal agendas. Even though these saliences are largely a by-product of Journalistic Practices, here may lie the most important effect of mass communication: its ability to order and organize our world.

Agenda-setting is not limited to the correspondence between salience of topics for the media and the audience, but it also subsumes such concepts as status conferral, stereotyping, and image making. All deal with the salience of objects or their attitudes. In each instance we are dealing with a generic question of agenda-setting and research: How does press coverage influence our perception of objects and their attributes?

5.1   Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, we have established the following as indisputable facts:

- The media coverage of terrorism and terrorist acts does spread terrorism like the plague. This is attained generally via the agency of live coverage.

- The spread of terrorism has a largely negative impact on societies.

- The media are not united in their condemnation of terrorism.

- New media technology has altered the Terrorism-media Axis dynamics by injecting complexities.

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[36] Ibid.

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- Media are not solely responsible for the spread of terrorism as there exists opportunistic forces eager to deploy terrorism to their attainment of the selfish motives.

- Every occurrence in society must not be reported, as for instance when national security is at stake.

- The public does not obtain all its information from the media.

In view of these facts, what conclusion presents itself to us? Critically and objectively analysed, the evidence overwhelmingly points us to the conclusion that there indeed exists a symbiotic relationship between Terrorism and the Media within a democratic setting, and gluing the two together is the Agenda-setting Theoretical Framework. One can argue that this conclusion is too sweeping and flies in the face of the evidence. But consider: Does the overwhelming negative impact of the spread of terrorism prevent the media from coverage of terrorism and terrorist acts? Hardly. Overwhelmingly, the media in fact allocate prime time coverage to these evil deeds. Media have not even seen it fit to unite in the condemnation of the commission of terrorist acts. There are some media which primarily operate hand-in-glove with terrorists. Even if one were to argue that if the mainstream media do not cover terrorists, the terrorists own and operate their very own media, why do mainstream media access terrorist websites for news? Granted, the media are not solely responsible for the spread of terrorism, but have the media come out in condemnation of those opportunistic forces having a vested interest in the spread of terrorism? Not at all, because those forces are economic and so exert a very strong influence on media content which gives acres of space to terrorism and terrorist deeds. Despite the fact that reporting everything that happens in and to a society can endanger even the lives of media audiences, the media nevertheless persist in assigning pride of space to coverage of

terrorism and terrorist acts! Finally, although the public does not obtain all its information from the media, what is the initial source of news for those who spread interpersonally the news of surprising events? So all considered, the media stand guilty as accused.

What then, are the implications of this conclusion? In other words, since we now know how terrorism spreads, how do we go about managing its continued spread? We shall examine these and other issues in our suggested solutions/recommendations section which would be our final stop.

5.3   Suggested Solutions/Recommendations

Although there are many solutions that may be advanced and canvassed herein, we would only be concentrating on those we consider burning obstacles to the achievement of effective management of the Terrorism-Media Axis:

(i)   Definition

(ii)   Human Rights

(iii)   Democracy

(iv)   Media Regulation

(v)   Libertarian Theory

We shall now proceed to deal with each in turn.

(i) Definition

In 1987, Walter Lacqueur[19] gloomily and ominously predicted concerning attainment of a terrorism definition:

> It can be predicted with confidence that the disputes about a comprehensive, detailed definition of terrorism will continue for a long time, that they will not result in a consensus, and that they will make no notable contribution towards the understanding of terrorism.

One year shy of twenty, what are the prospects of disproving this prophecy? You recall that in Chapter Three, we discussed the UN Secretary-General's appointment of a High Level Panel which, inter alia, suggested a definition of terrorism as one of its recommendations. Did the membership adopt the suggested definition? The Secretary-General had hoped for a definition of terrorism that rules out attacks on civilians, but what did the membership hand him? Relying on the *Associated Press*, the *Daily Nation* (Nairobi) dated 15th September, 2005 has this to say: The UN General Assembly adopted a draft document for world leaders to adopt at the three day summit. Some crucial elements of the document, as relevant, sought a comprehensive convention in terrorism, but did not call for a definition of terrorism that rules out attacks on civilians. Instead, it condemned "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whoever, wherever, and for whatever purpose." This means the disputes about the definition of terrorism are still raging and are likely to continue for millennia to come!

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[19] Ibid.

Quite fittingly then, we would do well to heed Jack D. Douglas[72] advice concerning the world of meanings (definitions):

> As sociologists, we have to continually be on our toes to suspend that commonsense assumption that the meanings of common words and actions are obvious. Our motto must be "The world of meanings is problematic until proven otherwise."

Since definitions are used in all discourses regarding all the subjects under the sun, this advice cuts across the board. But why be interested in the definition of terrorism? Grant Wardlaw[73]:

> Without a basic definition, it is not possible to say whether the phenomenon we call terrorism *is a threat at all*, whether it is a phenomenon of a different nature to its predecessors, and whether there can be a theory of terrorism [my italics].

It is clear, in our view, that the continuing absence of a comprehensive definition of terrorism is a function of the permanent struggle for supremacy between state terrorism (terrorism from above) and individual terrorism, terrorism from below. For while nations are eager to condemn the latter, when it comes to the former, the enthusiasm flounders. Till this issue of double standards is resolved, the absence of a comperehensive definition will always be an albatross on our necks for even centuries to come! Meanwhile, what steps should we take towards satisfactory resolution of this unnecessary and debilitating struggle? Grant Wardlaw[73] prescribes one enlightening way forward. A major stumbling block to the serious study of terrorism is that, at base, terrorism is a moral problem. He explains that this is one of the major reasons for the difficulty over the definition of terrorism. Attempts at definition often are predicated on the assumption that some classes of political violence are justifiable whereas others are not.

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[72] Douglas, Jack D., *The Sociology of Deviance*. Boston/London/Sydney/Toronto, Allyn & Bacon, Inc. (1984).
[73] Wardlaw, Grant, *Political Terrorism: Theory Tactics & Countermeasures*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, University Press, (1990, Report).

Many would label the latter as terrorism whilst being loathe to condemn the former with a term that is usually used as an epithet. He then prescribes what should constitute a universally accepted definition of terrorism. For such a definition, it must transcend behavioral description to include individual motivation, social milieu, and political purpose. The same behaviour will or will not be viewed as terrorism by any particular observer according to differences in these factors. But, he concludes, the proper study of terrorism should seek to explain a phenomenon, not justify it. And it must be realized by all that explanation does not entail justification. In this respect, Graham Dustan Martin[74] quotes two leading scholars who appear to be contradicting each other:

- Description is the first stage in constructing explanations – Jarrold Katz

- We must do away with explanations, and descriptions alone must take their place – Ludwig Witgenstein.

When you describe a subject, you are in effect explaining it. So both these quotations furnish sound advice. H. C. Greisman[75] no doubt taking into account the foregoing goes so far as to suggest the abolition of the word "Terrorism" from the English language if evenhandedness is impossible to deploy in the usage of the said term. He claims that in a behavioural sense, official and individual terrorism achieve similar results, although governments usually have greater resources on hand. It is above all a reified conception of governments, nation-states, and the legitimacy of official terrorism that permits the social meaning process to function as it does i.e. individual terrorism is condemned as morally repugnant, while official terror is accepted as severe but necessary. With this bifurcation in mind,

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[74] Martin, Graham Dunsten, *Language, Truth & Poetry: Notes Towards a Philosophy of Literature*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press (1975).
[75] Greisman, H. C.. "Social Meanings of Terrorism: Reification, Violence, and Social Control," in Jack D. Douglas, *The Sociology of Deviance*, Boston, London, Sydney, Toronto, Allyn & Bacon, Inc. (1984)

The sociologist has a choice – banish the term terrorism altogether since it amounts to little more than moralized name-calling, or save the concept since it does in fact make an important distinction between types of violence, and apply the term even-handedly to both governments and individuals.

(ii)   Human rights Concerns

What, within a democratic setting, are Human Rights, how do they impede the fight against the management of the scourge of terrorism and what is the best way forward?

Peter Neyroud et al[76] define human rights by relying on Kamenka and Erh-Soon-Tay who in turn rely on Wellman as defining human rights as "a cluster of ethical liberties, claims, powers and immunities that together constitute a system of ethical autonomy possessed by an individual as a human being vis-à-vis the state." Wellman broke down the cluster into four component parts:

(a) Ethical liberty: freedom to perform some action provided there is no duty not to do it. An example would be the freedom not to attend a church.

(b) Ethical claim: creates a corresponding duty, such as the duty to protect life or not to cause injury.

(c) An ethical power: the freedom to waive one's rights, such as to consent to a search of one's property.

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[76] Neyroud, Peter & Alan Beckley, *Policing, Ethics & Human Rights*, Portland, William Publishing (2001).

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(d) An ethical immunity: against having rights removed, such as by an arbitrary action of the state. This immunity emphasises the personal autonomy and choice that rights provide.

The authors state that Wellman's approach is useful as it illustrates that "human rights" are not simple "one way" rights. They create not just rights, but also corresponding duties on the state, the individuals, and communities.

Another definition of Human Rights is that propounded by Andrew Heywood[69] according to whom Human rights are rights to which people are entitled by virtue of being human. They are therefore, "universal" rights in the sense that they belong to all human beings rather than to members of any particular nation, race, religion, gender, social class, or whatever. Human Rights are also "fundamental" rights in that they are inalienable; they can not be traded away or revoked. Many have suggested that human rights are "absolute" rights in that they must be upheld at all times and in all circumstances.

However, Heywood considers this view to be difficult to sustain since in practice rights are often balanced against one another. For example, does the assertion of a right to life rule out capital punishment and all forms of warfare, whatever the provocation? The right to life cannot be absolute if a right to self-defense is also acknowledged. K. R. Popper[77] proposed a similar solution in rather picturesque language:

[69] Ibid.
[77] Popper, K. R., *The Open Society & Its Enemies*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Vol. 1.

And the whole objection that it is hard to know where freedom ends and crime begins is answered, in principle, by the famous story of the hooligan who protested that, being a free citizen, he could move his fist in any direction he liked whereupon the judge wisely replied: 'Freedom of the movement of your fists is limited by the position of your neighbours nose.' Heywood's and Popper's observations are very important for our present case: the media must at all times realize that there are no absolute human rights. In theory, yes, but in practice they are often balanced against each other. Witness what Grant Wardlaw[73] has to say in the context of the media, quoting from H.H.A Cooper:

> If the freedom to publish rests, as indeed it must, upon a general interest expressed in terms of "need to know," is this not sensibly limited by that other public interest of denying to those who would damage the common weal the use of this potent, near irresistible force of the media? There is a real competition of interests here which must be resolved on a philosophical plane before the practical issues are tackled. The terrorist is an urgent suitor; if he cannot get what he wants by seductive means, he will not hesitate to attempt rape. The real problem seems to be uncertainty on the part of the media whether to play coy handmaiden or the harlot.

In our view, the tension between the media and society is derived from the media's belief that the right to publish is absolute and society's (through the state) belief in the security of life and property. So the policy of the state is to safeguard the interests of all the major segments of society, for instance through provision of national security. The state has an interest in promoting uniformity. But terrorists have an interest in the opposite direction. How the states go about achieving uniformity is what brings to the fore the issue of human rights violation.

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[73] Ibid.

Paul Gilbert[78] brings out this very well. He observes that where a group is an obstacle to state policy the violation of their rights need not constitute a response to *dissent* upon their part, and indeed that the aim of violation may be not to secure their compliance but to erase their *distinctiveness* [both in original]. There is an affixity however, between dissent and distinctiveness: both can upset a kind of uniformity which is thought essential to the political community. The difference is that distinctiveness upsets a uniformity of objectively discoverable properties; dissent upsets a uniformity of wills. It is with the aim of securing a uniformity of wills that human rights are often violated by governments. But this objective is not to be achieved by treating dissenting wills as an obstacle to be removed. The point of eliminating particular dissentients must then be to prevent others from springing up. In this case violating the rights of dissentients will be an instrument of government, in the proper sense of the phrase.

We have noted that human rights in practice are often balanced against each other. So in the context of the Terrorism-media Axis, the issues are clear. Granted, terrorists have human rights, but so do the people they threaten and even kill and maim in the name of their eccentric ideologies. So these have to be balanced off. Terrorists must not come off as the ones with superior human rights to those of the law-abiding audience.

On the part of the media, we concede at once that they have a right to report, but if this right endangers lives by compromising state security, must the said right be left untrammeled? By no means under the sun! On to our next concern.

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[78] Gilbert, Paul, Terrorism, *Security & Nationality: An Introductory Study in Applied Political Philosophy*, London/New York, Routledge (1994).

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(iii) Democracy

We defined democracy in our Chapter one, but here we shall be concerned with how it impedes the fight against the spread of the terrorism scourge, and then suggest the way forward.

In the democratic context, the foremost principle, per Grant Wardlaw[73], must be the objective of the maintenance of the democratic processes of government and the rule of law (which basically argues against unfettered discretionary government power). To drive this point home, Wardlaw quotes P. Wilkinson with approval:

> It cannot be sufficiently stressed that this aim overrides in importance even the objective of eliminating terrorism and political violence as such. Any bloody tyrant can 'solve' the problem of political violence if he is prepared to sacrifice all considerations of humanity, and to trample down all constitutional and judicial rights.

Wardlaw then observes that it is as much a betrayal of our beliefs and responsibilities to do not enough as to do too much. He exhorts that we must uphold constitutional authority and law and order, and we must do so with firmness and determination.

For while the law can be a refuge for the law-breakers and a hindrance to the law enforcement official, the law, Wardlaw concludes, is the basis of our system of government and must be upheld. This means that democracy is held as a constant in the fight against the spread of

[73] Ibid.

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terrorism. But, in this context, is this desirable? Is democracy such a perfect system of government, superior to all others in all circumstances? What are the prerequisites for any government and how does democracy measure up to them? These questions will guide us in the formulation of our recommendations in this regard.

It must first be remarked that democracy is just one of the systems of government globally. Lawrence C. Mayer et al[79] instance types of government as including democracies, socialism, autocracies and dictatorships. The authors then classify political systems by decision-making format broadly into two categories:

(a) Democratic systems (legitimate opposition is offered in regular, competitive elections).

(b) Authoritarian systems (Either elections are not present, the opposition is suppressed by the use or threat of force by the government, or the government otherwise makes the elections not competitive with the use of, inter alia, fraud and intimidation).

With this in mind, since terrorism is a universal human problem, how have the two political systems dealt with the problem? Alan Dershowitz[12] gives a succinct summary of the contrasts in the approach to this question adopted by the two systems. He commences by observing that if the terrorists' criteria for success is massive publicity, for example, it would be difficult for a democracy to control the amount of publicity a terrorist act generates. But publicity is generally not an end in itself. It is a means towards furthering the terrorists' cause.

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[79] Mayer, Lawrence C., John H. Burnet, & Suzanne Ogden, *Comparative Politics: Nations & Theories in a Changing World*, New Jersey 07458, Prentice-Hall, Inc. (2nd ed., 1996).
[12] Ibid.

Parenthetically, the author says that garnering publicity is generally in a multi-phased process of achieving substantive goals. Terrorism is a tactic directed most effectively against open democracies. It is far less effective against closed tyrannies, to the extent it is "propaganda by the deed", relies on widespread publicity, and such publicity is readily available in countries that permit freedom of the press. Closed societies impose controls on what can be printed in state-run newspapers and shown on state-run television. To be sure, there is often leakage, even in the most closed of societies. Fax machines, the Internet, satellite communication, publications and word of mouth make it virtually impossible to impose total control on the flow of information today. But even with the expectation of some limited retail publicity in a closed society, terrorism is far less effective than in societies where widespread, wholesale publicity can be counted on.

Moreover, the effectiveness of terrorism relies, at least to some degree, on a bottom-up grassroots phenomenon, whereby the public is terrorized into demanding change from the leadership. Tyrannical regimes, which operate in a top-down manner, are somewhat less susceptible to this tactic.

Finally, tyrannical regimes have few, if any, constraints on the responses they can make to terrorism. Unlike democracies, which are subject to civil libertarian, humanitarian and constitutional limitations, tyrannical regimes can employ the most brutal countermeasures against terrorists, their supporters, their families, their co-religionists, and anyone else.

It should therefore, come as no surprise that terrorism is directed more often against democracies than against tyrannies. At the very least, Dershowitz continues, we are more aware

of terrorism directed against societies with a free press than against societies that censor the news, especially the bad news.

Totalitarian regimes generally seek to control the flow of information both within the society and between it and the outside. Terrorists, therefore, cannot count on their message being received by its intended audience (unless that audience is the leadership or some small segment of the society directly affected by the terrorism). The regime can choose to publicise terrorist acts if publicity serves its purposes. It can exaggerate the damage done, or even contrive a terrorist act as an excuse for a massive "reprisal", the way the Nazis with the Reichstag fire of 1933. It can also report (and, if it chooses, exaggerate) the reprisal to achieve maximum deterrent impact.

Given Alan Dershowitz's explanation why terrorism thrives more in democracies than in tyrannies, what is our way forward? Before we answer this question, it would be prudent to briefly state what prerequisites are for an efficient and effective government. According to Lawrence C. Mayer et al[79], these are:

a) Resolution of the question of what kind of regime preceded the generation of divisive and substantive issues.

b) A widespread sense of community based upon the coincidence of the boundaries of the nation and the state. Ethnic and other population diversities detract from effective government only to the extent that they detract from this sense of community.

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[79] Ibid.

c) Legitimacy of the political system and especially of the constitutional format. Legitimacy is related to the acceptance of the processes by which leaders are chosen and of regularized processes for succession of leadership.

d) A substantial degree of pragmatism in the political culture – a willingness to modify principles to accommodate an ever changing world.

Let us then consider the question of whether democracy is all that perfect as to account for its being a given in virtually all political situations globally. Andrew Heywood[69] observes that there is a strange and perhaps unhealthy silence on the issue of democracy. So broad is respect for democracy that it has come to be taken for granted; its virtues are seldom questioned and vices rarely exposed. The author then proceeds to examine both the virtues and vices of democracy. Since the virtues are well known, we would only concern ourselves here with the vices:

a) The most fundamental argument against democracy is that ordinary members of the public are simply not competent to rule wisely in their own interests. Democracy is no more than a foolish delusion because political power is always exercised by a privileged minority, an elite.

b) A further argument against democracy sees it as the enemy of individual liberty. This fear arises out of the fact that "the people" is not a single entity but rather a collection of individuals and groups, possessed of differing opinions and opposing interests. The "democratic solution" to conflict is recourse to numbers and the application of majority rule – the rule of the majority, or greatest number, should prevail over the minority. Individual liberty and minority rights can thus be crushed in the name of the people.

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[69] Ibid.

c) In other cases, a fear of democracy has sprung not so much from the danger of majority rule as from the nature of the majority in most, if not all, societies. Echoing ancient reservations about popular rule, such theories suggest that democracy places power in the hands of those least qualified to govern: the uneducated masses, those likely to be ruled by passion and instinct rather than wisdom.

We are now in a position to state our way forward. Alan Dershowitz has shown us that terrorists thrive in a democracy because they are assured of widespread, wholesale publicity. In closed societies, however, the terrorists are starved of this and are not even assured of retail publicity. So in seeking a solution to the spread of the terrorism scourge, it is it not prudent to be eclectic in our approaches? That is, should we not borrow a leaf from the closed societies and engraft on to our open society? Granted, democracy is a superb system of government, but it has its weaknesses that render it virtually helpless when it comes to resolving some very life-threatening problems that plague humanity, including terrorism. Lest eyebrows are raised, we hasten to point out in our defense that this approach is already being comfortably deployed in the management field through the Contingency Theory School. What is this school? One management expert dramatically introduces this school thus:

> Imagine that you are seated in a crowded concert hall. Smoke is beginning to drift from under the stage, growing denser by the second. A flame flickers then disappears. Should you call a meeting to decide whether to evacuate the hall? [80]

In an autocratic situation or political system, it is clear what is to be done: decree immediate evacuation from the concert hall. However, in a democratic set-up, a meeting

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[80] Drummond, Helga, *Introduction to Organisational Behaviour*, New York, Oxford University Press, Inc., (2000).

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has to be called and then the majority will prevail. It is now clear what the absurdity is of holding one system of government a constant at all times, under all circumstances? The way out of this is to resort to Contingency Theory which evolved out of the systems attempt to translate or operationalise systems theory by assessing the many operant factors in any situation and establishing definite patterns and relationships between those factors that might serve as guides in other similar situations. Some believe that the development of the contingency approach with its situational emphasis and integration of environment into management theory and practice will encourage a manager to use the various schools of management in his or her work. In other words, greater consideration for the environment and situational aspects of a given problem will suggest greater use of different schools of management in solving that problem. *The result will be an eclectic format which uses the most useful contributions of the various schools*, thus providing an inclusive modern and practical approach to management study and practice[81] [my italics].

Laurie J Mullions[82] rounds off our consideration of the Contingency Theory by stressing its practicalities. He observes that irrespective of the identification of subsystems within an organisation, and drawing of boundaries between them, the nature and scale of the series of activities involved in converting inputs to outputs will differ from one organisation to another in terms of interrelationships between technology, structure, methods of operation, and the nature of environmental influences.

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[81] Terry, George R.& Stephen G. Frankline, *Principles of Management*, Krishan Nagar, Delhi-110051 (India), A.I.T.B.S. Pubishers & Distributors (1997).
[82] Mullins, Laurie J., *Management & Organizational Behaviour*, London, Pitman Publishing Limited (1985).

The contingency approach, he continues, takes the view that there is no one best, universal form of organisation. There are large numbers of variables or situational factors that influence organizational performance. Contingency models can be seen as an "if – then" form of relationship. *If* certain situational factors exist, *then* certain organizational and managerial variables are most appropriate. Contingency models highlight differences between organizations. Managers can utilize these models to compare the structure in the functioning of their own organisation.

Since governments are organisations the contingency approach applies to them with equal force. It would no doubt answer Plato's criticism in *The Republic* as quoted by Lawrence C. Mayer et al[79] to the effect that:

> Democracy . . . is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, *and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike* [italics added].

(iv)   Media Regulation

Is the control of the media the way forward in the fight against the spread of the terrorism scourge? What effect would control or regulation of media have in this regard? Let us then examine the rationale for this through the Alan Dershowitz's[12] eyes.

Control of the media is a powerful weapon against terrorism – a weapon that has been used effectively by Hitler, Stalin, Mao and other dictators such as Kim II Sung and Kim Jong II in

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[79] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

North Korea, Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, among others. Although it is somewhat more difficult today than it used to be to control the flow of information, it is still far easier for a closed society than for an open one to reduce the effectiveness of the publicity goal of terrorism. Acts of terrorism especially conditional acts, such as hostage-taking are natural news stories, because they create real-time drama involving individuals whose identities are known, whose faces are shown, and whose relatives can be interviewed. These are not anonymous faceless victims. Even when the terrorists engage in non-conditional acts of terrorism, such as blowing up buildings, the target is "everyman" and "everywoman," so that the identification with the general public is powerful.

A regime that exercises total control over the media can also disseminate false and damaging information against the terrorists, calculated to turn the population – including those who support their cause – against them. It can leak reports suggesting that the terrorists are really provocateurs who are actually working for enemies of the cause. Arab regimes, for example, often accuse local indigenous terrorists' of working for Mossad, the Israeli Intelligence Service, as a way of discrediting them.

The important point, Dershowitz concludes, is that open societies with freedom of the press make it easier for terrorists to get their message out and far more difficult for the government to take secret actions against terrorists.

Grant Wardlaw[73] argues that the response of many governmental and law enforcement officials to these charges is to suggest various forms of restrictions that should be placed on media

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[73] Ibid.

reporting of terrorist incidents. These suggestions run from self-imposed industry guidelines to governmental regulation amounting to strict censorship. The spectre of censorship casts long and dark shadows in democratic states and it is therefore, necessary to examine both the evidence, for the charges which could lead to censorship being imposed and any alternative measures short of censorship which could meet any well-founded objections to current media presentation of terrorist events.

Wardlaw then submits that the media will have to exercise some self-regulation of reporting of terrorism to in fact avoid the sort of explicit regulation which the critics of self-regulation fear. It may reasonably be argued that the media are in large part responsible for the hysteria which surrounds terrorism and that it is the consequences of this hysteria which are more dangerous than the actual specific objections to media activities in covering terrorism. If the media exploit terrorism – as we have already established it does – for competitive reasons they play into the hands of both the terrorists and of those who wish to use terrorism as an issue to bury other problems and as an excuse to control the news. What must be faced, in A. H. Miller's words, is that the problem is neither one of "easy answers nor complex solutions, but rather complex choices. The exercise of any one of these choices will leave some constituency dissatisfied." The choices involve a number of competing interests which include the following:

a) The need for a free press to provide information to the public.

b) The need to ensure the safety of the victims of terrorism.

c) The need not to unnecessarily prolong or make difficult the tasks facing police in a terrorist situation.

d) The need to maintain the human rights of freedom of speech, criticism and publication.

e) The need to avoid encouraging future imitation of terrorist acts.

f) The need to respect the privacy of hostages and their families.

Since these interests will rarely coincide, the media must make decisions about whether their actions will be guided primarily by the interests of the hostages, the police, the larger community or by the financial and organizational interests of their own companies. It is simply dishonest of the media to deny that such choices are made and influence their dissemination of news. It is therefore, important that gatherings such as police/media seminars and interaction with the community should take place to help the media reach their decisions about how they are going to respond to critical situations. The media must be able to respond to such questions as (from a 1977 anonymous source):

> By what standards – other than fear of losing out to the competition and the inherent excitement of live pictures of, say, a man in imminent danger of having his head blown off – do such events qualify as significant in terms of the values supposedly cherished by serious journalists?

a) The fundamental question, asks Wardlaw, is: "Is the public's right to know superior to all other rights: the hostages' right to life, the hostages' right to privacy, the terrorist' right to a fair trial, society's right to protect itself?" "If right to know" means "right to know *everything*" (in original), the answer is clearly no. How then should we approach the question of regulation?

In addition to (and overlapping with) voluntary guidelines there are four other policy decisions that may help both preserve the media's independence and overcome some objections to their treatment of terrorism. These area, as Wardlaw sees them:

a) To consider matters relating to the timing of news. Temporarily withholding of news may be legitimate in some instances such as kidnapping; but one may caution that with the advent of the new information communication technologies, success in this is by no means guaranteed.

b) Making deliberate attempts to balance coverage (an extremely difficult goal to attain) may help to counteract some of the negative effects of terrorism.

c) To acknowledge that news tailoring is a fact of everyday news production and focus on reporting that might be expected to lessen tensions and aid the negotiating process.

d) To accept that the media have an important role to play in public education and at times other than during terrorist incidents to feature items regarding the ethics of using violence for political ends, the legitimate needs of law-enforcements in a democratic society, the non-romantic side of terrorism and the existence of avenues of dissent. Part of this role must also encompass a vigorous determination to investigate and report on the injustices and inequalities in society which, if left to fester, may be the cause of acts of terrorism.

In conclusion, Grant Wardlaw quotes J. Bowyer Bell as having summed it up so well:

If open, democratic societies in the West cannot protect the liberty of us all from a handful of gunmen, accommodate dissent, and repress the politics of atrocity under the law – if we cannot tolerate the exaggerated horror, flashed on the evening news, or the random bomb, without recourse to the tyrant's manual – then we do not deserve to be free.

Although this is said in the context of the West, it is applicable to open, democratic societies globally.

(v)   Brief Critique of Libertarian Theory

Because we are considering the Terrorism – Media Axis in the context of a democratic setting, it is important we briefly critique the supporting theory of the press in a democracy. In Chapter Four, we observed that Libertarian Theory is the ideology explaining media behaviour in a democracy. However, we shall here be restricting ourselves to the brief examination of the shortcomings (if any) of this theory because in the search for a solution to the spread of the terrorism scourge, no cows are sacred.

In an unpublished Term Paper[83] on this theory, I quoted with approval a number of scholars in this field. John Milton (one of the theory's leading exponents) is quoted in the Term Paper as revealing the kernel of the theory:

> Let all with something to say be free to express themselves. The true and sound will survive. The untrue and unsound will be vanquished. Government should keep out of the battle and not weigh the odds in favour one side or the other.

This is Libertarian Theory in its pristine form, but unfortunately human manipulation of the media renders this theory untenable in modern society.

However, in a democratic setting, this is the ideal the media aim to achieve and by which it operates. To put matters in perspective, we would point out the un-tenability of this ideal in the modern world by highlighting its shortcomings. First and foremost, there is no country, even the most democratic, which is an embodiment of Libertarian media system.

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[83] Mackenzie, Reuben Nyangaga, "Libertarian Theory of the Press," M. A. (Communication Studies) Unpublished Term Paper (2004). On file with the author.

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For authority on this, the Term Paper quotes scholar T. S. Skierdal as asserting that, "it is hard to find intact examples of libertarian media systems in today's world," adding that although "the US will in many aspects come close... this country's media system has . . . tendencies of authoritarianism as well." This is because, as the leading communication scholars William L. Rivers and Wilbur Schramm observe, there are cases and occasions where authoritarianism expressed the popular will and, in all societies, there are occasions where media freedom may conflict with some interests of the state or society in general, for instance under conditions of terrorist insurgency or threat of war. Further, in practice the application of the press freedom has been far from straightforward.

In fact, there are some scholars like Pool who bravely assert that; "No nation will indefinitely tolerate a freedom of the press that serves to divide a country and open the floodgates of criticism against the freely chosen government that leads it."

Siebert et al, notes the Term Paper, observed that the most persistent problem facing democratic societies is determining proper limitations to freedom of expression in the mass media. All libertarian philosophers agree that freedom of expression is not absolute, but limited. What restrictions, then, can be imposed within the framework of democracy without violating the liberal doctrines? Unfortunately, no general principles have been developed to assist in solving this problem. The only guide is the historical acceptance of specific limitations without the assistance of a unifying concept.

In conclusion, the Term Paper accorded with Siebert et al's assessment of the Libertarian Theory. They observe that although the Libertarian theory has been and continues to be

questioned, libertarianism has demonstrated its theoretical and practical advantages. It has struck off the manacles from the mind of man, and it has opened up new vistas for humanity. Its greatest defect has been its failure to provide rigorous standards for the day-to-day operations of the mass media – in short, a stable formula to distinguish between liberty and abuse of liberty. It is vague, inconclusive, and sometimes inconsistent. Its greatest assets, however, are its flexibility, its adaptability to change and above all its confidence in its ability to advance the interests and welfare of human beings by continuing to place its trust in individual self-direction.

This assessment is a fair one and puts in proper perspective the Libertarian Theory, which must be born in mind by all its practitioners so to maximize its strengths and minimize its shortcomings. This is especially important in the context of the Terrorism-Media Axis resolution. What then, is the unifying paradigm in the urgent search for a resolution of the Terrorism-Media Axis? There is no better way of prefacing the answer to this question than by quoting – as did the Term paper – the great American Statesman James Madson:

> A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

Since the Libertarian Theory stands for free competition of ideas in the market place of ideas in a responsible way, it is the one theory that would ensure that the people acquire knowledge so as to defeat ignorance and govern themselves in relation to terrorism and its spread globally. What this then means is that communication is the unifying paradigm in the search for a solution to the problems bedeviling the Terrorism-Media Axis. The implication is that

policymakers have to design effective Anti-Terrorism Information Campaigns to which would apply all the relevant principles used in waging any successful information campaign. There are both physical and psychological barriers to human reception and retention of information. The policymakers must pay especially particular attention to the psychological barriers. To drive this point home, and thus conclude our project, we quote from an unpublished Term Paper[14] dealing with information campaigns.

The advice of Herbert H. Hyman and Paul B. Scheatsley would be our fitting conclusion as it was for the Term Paper:

> But even if all these *physical* barriers to communication were known and removed, there would remain many *psychological* barriers to the free flow of ideas. The physical barriers to communication merely impede the *supply* of information. In order to increase public knowledge, not only is it necessary to *present* more information, but it is essential that the mass audience *be exposed to* and that it *absorbs* the information. And in order to insure such exposure and absorption, *the psychological characteristics of human beings must be taken into account* [italics in original].

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[14] Mackenzie, Reuben Nyangaga, "Why Information Campaigns Fail in Kenya," M. A. (Communication Studies), Unpublished Term Paper (2004). On file with author.

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