

Lifting the Veil: *The Future of the Old War*

Reshad
Karimov

Abstract

Among many questions one can have while studying suicide terrorism, there are two questions that stand almost unexamined. First, why has suicide terrorism been welcomed in the last few decades as such a potent weapon? Second, why is it that some terrorist groups use suicide terrorism, while others have not? The recent spate of female suicide bombers in different venues, different countries, and different terrorist organizations warrants careful study of this type of action. It will make more sense to think about suicide bombing as an example of a military innovation. This paper reviews the history of female suicide bombers, focuses on bomber characteristics and motivation, analyzes recent attacks, and predicts trends within a strategic assessment of the future of suicide bombing. The evidence suggests the importance of organizational factors in driving the adoption or non-adoption of suicide terrorism, as well as the greater danger of the next generation of suicide bombers. The author's main claim is based on the evidence of the ease with which marginalized youths are able to translate their frustrations into acts of terrorism, often on the basis of professed solidarity with terrorists halfway around the world whom they have never met.

* Reshad Karimov is a research fellow at the Center for Strategic Studies in Baku, Azerbaijan

Every person who has lived through the beginning of the century will have a philosophical sense of the changes in the world. Naturally, the causes behind the enormous changes are too numerous to mention, but people will bring up repeatedly only one: terrorism. In world capitals, leaders fortified their security and curtailed public appearances. Ordinary citizens felt unsafe walking the streets of major cities, while the terrorists themselves were like phantoms – everywhere and nowhere at the same time, seemingly able to strike at will. Terrorism became the preoccupation of police and politicians, bankers and business leaders. The shelves of Western bookshops are filled with definitions and versions on the subject, pages that call to mind images of explosives, “middle eastern” people, women in veils, and young children armed and ready to fight. The news packages on TV also have become all too familiar in their horror – emergency workers and ambulances, screaming, blood-spattered wounded and splattered body parts on the ground covered with blankets. It might be Iraq, Israel, Sri Lanka, Russia or just about any state struck by a suicide bomb attack. Soon, most likely, the organization responsible would release a video of the bomber’s last words, there’d very likely be a retaliatory attack by the targeted

state, and the theatre would follow a familiar script...

Terrorism is not new, and even though it has been used since the beginning of recorded history it can be relatively hard to define. Terrorism has been described variously as both a tactic and strategy, a crime and a holy duty, a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable outrage. One of the contributors to our advancement of knowledge on the subject, David Rapoport, by studying the history of terrorism since the 1880s identified four distinct waves fueled by common ideological commitment originating from anarchism, anti-colonialism, socialism, and religious fundamentalism, respectively, with the first three waves lasting roughly 40 years each.¹ Rapoport defines these waves with three characteristics: a cycle of activities characterized by expansion and contraction phases, covering multiple nations, and “driven by a common predominant energy that shapes the participating groups’ characteristics and mutual relationships.”

But I will argue another dimension of the waves: the tactic. A war which changed the world ultimately changed warfare itself. September 11 illustrated a post-Cold War dynamic:

¹ David Rapoport, “The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism,” in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James Ludes, eds., *Attacking Terrorism*, pp. 46-73.

power, as the prerogative of states, is anachronistic, and governments find themselves increasingly vulnerable to indistinct transnational threats such as terrorism. The horrible reality is that states will not be immune to catastrophic violence perpetrated by terrorist groups motivated by distorted ideologies.

Violence without constraint, multiple devastating attacks, falling buildings, casualties in the hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, these became the goals of the new cohort of terrorists. It is against this backdrop that al Qaeda appeared on the scene, injecting bombing into ordinary political struggle, controlling the location, timing, and method of delivery. Today, the use of women and explosive belts suggests a shift in tactics, since Muslim females appear to be increasingly employed to carry out today's weapon of choice in the Middle East – suicide attacks. Low cost, low technology, and low risk weapon – suicide bombers are readily available, require little training, leave no trace behind, and strike fear into the general population. A simple truth outlined by Martha Crenshaw is that terrorism is chosen many times because it is the most efficient.²

2 Martha Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Choice" in *Origins of terrorism: psychologies, ideologies, theologies, states of mind*, Walter Reich (ed.), Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998

The success of suicide bombers depends upon an element of surprise, as well as accessibility to targeted areas or populations. Both of these required elements have been enjoyed by female suicide bombers.

Historical perspective

Although female suicide terrorism is not new - the first known suicide attack by a woman was carried out in Lebanon on April 9, 1985 when Sana'a Mehadli, a 16 years old member of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), detonated a car bomb, which killed two Israeli soldiers and injured two more - the boom in female suicide bombings across Iraq has led to a flood of media efforts to identify a specifically gender based motivation in the face of this trend. For instance, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and 16 others were killed while campaigning for re-election by a bomb concealed in a basket of flowers, carried by a female *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)* suicide-bomber. One-third of the members of the Sri Lankan organization were women who, in addition to duty on the battlefield, in the kitchen, and in medical camps, had suicide bomb missions. In a way, the Chechen "*black widows*" remind us of the Tamil women suicide bombers in Sri Lanka, who are also products

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of a horrific civil conflict. In the Palestinian territories, the groups *Hamas* and *Palestinian Islamic Jihad* witnessed a surge in female bombers during the *intifadas*. During the current intifada the numbers of public displays of willingness and volunteering by Palestinian women to perpetrate terrorist attacks have grown. This is, ironically, a source of female empowerment due to the legitimization given to women’s participation in the struggle against Israel by Palestinian religious leaders and terrorist organizations, as well as the fact that the women feel this is the first time they are able to participate in military resistance and not only civilian activity.

Explaining female suicide terrorism requires viewing it as a military innovation – the deployment of women bombers is the product of a tactical demand because women are stereo-

typed as nonviolent and they might elicit less attention and thus execute a stealthier attack. Paradoxically, the strategic appeal of female attacks stems from the rules about women’s behavior in the societies where these attacks take place. Given their second-class citizenship in many of these countries, women generate less suspicion. Women also can increase the number of combatants in groups with depleted “man” power, whether through joining the ranks themselves or fulfilling a role as inexpensive cannon fodder. In the Chechen conflict so many had gone to fight and been killed that in some cases the women were almost the only ones left in certain villages. In the case studies of Sri Lanka and Chechnya, women have risen to the forefront of their organizations by engaging in suicide terrorism. Terrorists want to, and need to, communicate their message to the outside world and an audience – terrorism has been defined as “a synthesis of war and theater.” And when the first Palestinian female bombing occurred, the news was given great prominence, far more than any male suicide bomber would have received. The media, so essential to terrorist groups, are sucked in by the drama of self-sacrifice for a cause, with the centrality of women having a force-multiplying effect on the viewer’s consciousness. It is a reac-

tion that knows no state or religious boundaries. This disproportionate publicity, in turn, may arouse worldwide sympathies for suicide bombers and can also serve as a terrorist recruitment tool.

Approximately 17 groups have started using the tactical innovation of suicide bombing;³ women have been operatives in more than half of them in the Middle East, in Sri Lanka, in Chechnya, and in Colombia. Organizations, like the *Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK)* in Turkey, routinely use suicide bombers and have utilized the notion of martyrdom and self-sacrifice as a means of last resort against their conventionally more powerful “enemies.” These groups believe that suicide bombs are successful in bringing notice to their troubles and contend that suicide bombers are the only effective weapons they have, in contrast to their enemies’ much larger wealth, weapons, soldiers, and political means. Abu Shanab, a Hamas leader, stated that “all that is required is a bomb, a detonator, and a moment of courage.”⁴ Violent political movements may embrace it for ideological purposes, but they use it mainly for a very simple reason: it works.

3 Mia Bloom, “Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend,” *Daedalus* Winter 2007, Vol. 136, No. 1: 94–102.

4 Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003) p.40.

Motivation

Question – why? Why would one die voluntarily in order to kill many innocent people? A suicide bomber, someone willing to die for a cause, is puzzling. Martha Crenshaw argues that,

*The motives for suicide terrorism do not appear to differ significantly from the general motives for terrorism, which include revenge, retaliation, and provocation of government over-reaction. These objectives may be tactical goals in the end of disrupting peace processes or acquiring political recognition and status. Although terrorism is often described in terms of pure emotionalism or “fanaticism,” its instrumental or strategic dimensions should not be overlooked.*⁵

Suicide bombers may end their lives in the same way, but it would be foolish to draw any conclusions about their motivations from a single story. Motives vary: revenge for a personal loss, the desire to redeem the family name, to escape a life of sheltered monotony and achieve fame, and to level the patriarchal societies in which they live.

5 Martha Crenshaw, “Suicide Terrorism in Comparative Perspective,” *International Policy Institute of Counter-Terrorism (ICT)*, *Countering Suicide Terrorism: An International Conference*, p. 21, retrieved on December 2, 2009 from <http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/51563-Countering%20Suicide%20Terrorism.pdf>

Recently, there is a tendency to assume a natural connection between faith and the willingness to kill and be killed. Focusing on recent events Juergensmeyer in his book *Terror in the Mind of God* explores the use of violence by marginal groups within five major religious traditions: Christianity (reconstruction theology and the *Christian Identity* movement, abortion clinic attacks, the Oklahoma City bombing, and Northern Ireland); Judaism (Baruch Goldstein, the assassination of I. Rabin, and Kahane); Islam (the World Trade Center bombing and Hamas suicide missions); Sikhism (the assassinations of Indira Gandhi and Beant Singh); and Buddhism (*Aum Shinrikyo* and the Tokyo subway gas attack). Juergensmeyer interviewed participants and advocates of violence (notably Mike Bray, Yoel Lerner, Mahmud Abouhalima, Simranjit Singh Mann, and an anonymous ex-member of *Aum Shinrikyo*).⁶ Unfortunately, Juergensmeyer is less interested in individual psychology than in “cultures of violence,” broadly construed. The author argues that only religion provides the moral justification to commit violence in the name of a *cosmic war* between good and evil and only religion polarizes a situation into such extreme absolutes that compromise and concession are no longer easy or sometimes even

6 Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*,

possible. But I would argue that religious fanaticism creates *conditions* that are favorable for terrorism, yet there also must be other conditions that in combination provoke some people to see terrorism as an effective way of creating change in their world. In my own studies of cases of religious violence, I have found that religious speech and ideas play an important role though not necessarily the initial one. In fact, historically, many terrorist groups – such as the *Red Brigades* in Italy, the *Red Army Faction* in Germany, and the *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru – were radical-socialists with no religious connection whatsoever. And like the *Tamil Tigers*, the *PKK* in Turkey never promised its people a first-class ticket to heaven. Further, Islamist groups in early stages commonly discouraged and only unwillingly did accept female suicide attackers. At the start of the second intifada in 2000, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the founder of Hamas, claimed, “A woman martyr is problematic for Muslim society. A man who recruits a woman is breaking Islamic law.”⁷ Hamas actually rejected Darin Abu Eishah, the second Palestinian female attacker, who carried out her 2002 bombing on behalf of the secular al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade of Palestinian

7 Lindsey O'Rourke, “Behind the Woman Behind the Bomb.” *The New York Times*, August 2, 2008, retrieved on November 4, 2009 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/02/opinion/02orourke.html>.

militias aligned with Fatah.⁸

A simpler explanation revolves around the word “protest.” The explanation for one’s behavior is found not in how they think, but rather in how they feel. Terrorist organizations are well aware of the variety of individual motives and recruitment tactics aimed specifically at women often involving numerous, even contradictory, arguments: feminist appeal for equal participation, using a suicide attack as a way to redeem a woman’s honor for violations of the gender roles of her community, revenge, nationalism and religion — almost any personal motive that does not contradict the main strategic objective of uprising. In Iraq, particular-

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ly, women today are either using violence to protest the loss of their society, loss of their family members, or the loss of their country to an occupation they don’t believe in.

⁸ Ibid

In “jihadist” propaganda, the invasion and violation of Muslim lands is intimately tied to the violation of Muslim women, either directly or through the corrupting role of Western values and attitudes. When the 9/11 attacks were perpetrated, the U.S. was not in fact the occupier of a Muslim country, whatever bin Laden might have claimed. Yet through the U.S. response – the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, and subsequently Iraq – suddenly it was. Recall that the first two female bombers in March 2003, who detonated themselves days after U.S. forces entered Baghdad, declared on television that their primary motive was to protect Iraq from a foreign invader.⁹ In most of the aforementioned cases, these women had a large amount of “personal baggage” and suicide bombing could be a way of “cleansing” themselves and erasing their past. The individual terrorist’s willingness to face not just high risk but certain death requires a psycho-cultural explanation.¹⁰ An example of this is the first female suicide bomber in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, Wafa Idiris, a 27-year-old ambulance worker,

⁹ Farhana Ali, “Dressed to Kill: Why the Number of Female Suicide Bombers is rising in Iraq,” *Newsweek*, July 30, 2008, retrieved on November 4, 2009 from <http://www.newsweek.com/id/149531>.

¹⁰ Martha Crenshaw, “Suicide Terrorism in Comparative Perspective,” *International Policy Institute of Counter-Terrorism (ICT)*, *Countering Suicide Terrorism: An International Conference*, p. 21, retrieved on December 2, 2009 from <http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/51563-Countering%20Suicide%20Terrorism.pdf>

who killed an Israeli civilian and wounded 140 in January 2002. In death she became a celebrity. She was married off at a very young age and could not have children. In that society a woman, a wife, who can't have children, is considered worthless. The husband divorced Wafa and married someone else and had children with her. Wafa also worked with a humanitarian organization on the West Bank where she saw a lot of carnage from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. You might say that she was a very depressed person. But after the bombing, Wafa Idris instantly became a hero...

In the good old days, it seemed like such an easy task to identify and give a face to who were your friends and foes at times of war, even at the risk of racial and cultural stereotyping. Even the early years of suicide terrorism were a simpler time. Today, in fact, women of all ages and sects are playing an increasing role in several aspects of supporting terrorist behavior. Women have acted as facilitators, in both planning and perpetrating terrorist attacks. Areas of involvement include opening bank accounts under a maiden name to evade suspicion by counter-terrorism financing experts, raising money for terror groups through charity functions, and transporting supplies and information past

airport security officers focused on Arab men. In the Moscow theater hostage crisis on October 23, 2002, also known as the Nord-Ost Siege, the whole world saw the young women in black outfits, although it was not the first account of such tactic. The first Chechen "Black Widow" was Luiza Gazuyeva, who killed a Russian general in November 2001 because she believed he was responsible for killing her husband.

Among the Nord-Ost hostage takers were 19 women – marking the largest participation of female Chechen militants in any operation since the start of Russia's second war against separatists in the North Caucasus republic.¹¹ A terrorist act committed by young female mountain villagers was clearly a deliberate public relations move by the Chechen resistance. Asya Gilshurkaeva, a Nord-Ost suicide bomber, lost two husbands during two wars, and her 13-year-old brother was taken away in the middle of the night by soldiers and is still "missing." Aishat and Hadishat Ganiev, who were also at Nord-Ost, came from a family of ten children, in which two boys had died fighting the Russians, one daughter had gone missing and another son was jailed as a rebel. Once, soldiers arrested them

¹¹ Irina Lagunina, "Russia: Nord-Ost Anniversary Recalls Ascent of Female Suicide Bomber," RFE/RL October 27, 2006, retrieved on November 4, 2009 from <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1072365.html>.

at night and then released them four days later. According to the Russian newspaper “Izvestia,”¹² what was done to them isn’t known; the women do not talk about it, but when they disappeared the next time, they were seen again only when their bodies were found in the Dubrovka Street Theater siege which ended with the death of 129 hostages and all 41 rebels. Over the past 16 years, Russian soldiers have left a trail of destruction in Chechnya that is psychological as well as physical. Countless women have been widowed or lost sons, brothers or fathers. Those who have been raped may find it impossible to marry and live a normal life.

On March 29, 2010, carefully orchestrated attacks perpetrated by two Chechen “black widows,” that focused on two of Moscow’s most iconic subway stations just as they were filled with maximum crowds, and killed more than 50 people and injured another 100 on Moscow’s crowded metro, seemed to be a sign of the return of a nightmare that the Kremlin thought it had ended years ago. One of the suicide bombers was 17-year-old Dzhanet Abdurakhmanova, a widow of Dagestani militant leader Umalat Magomedov killed by federal troops the year before, and

12 Vadim Rechkalov, “Female- Dolphins,” [Вадим РЕЧКАЛОВ, “Девушки-дельфины,”] retrieved on November 4, 2009 from <http://www.izvestia.ru/articles/article36818/>

the second bomber was identified as Markha Ustarkhanova, a 20-year-old widow of a another militant leader, also killed by federal troops in a raids in 2009.¹³

“Unless martyrdom was valued by society or at least by an identifiably separate social group, individuals would not seek it,” I wrote in my field journal by the end of the 90’s, when I had been writing and documenting in Chechnya about how an entire generation has grown up in the war, how these young people have not known any other way of life. I also did understand that when healthy, beautiful, and intelligent young men and women set out to kill and be killed, something is wrong with the world that has not heard their anguished cries for justice. These young people deserve to live along with all those whom they have caused to die. Those young people, most of whose eyes shone with intelligence, had been spending hours discussing how to arrange a public bombing, how to kill themselves and take with them as many civilians as possible. At that time they saw certain conditions with no way out, some of which made violence against civilians seem like a reasonable and even necessary op-

13 “Black Widow Responsible For Moscow Subway Bombing Identified As Dzhanet Abdurakhmanova From Dagestan,” TimesNewsLine.com, April 3, 2010, retrieved on April 20, 2010 from <http://www.timesnewsline.com/news/Black-Widow-Responsible-For-Moscow-Subway-Bombing-Identified-As-Dzhanet-Abdurakhmanova-From-Dagestan-1270293104/>

tion. They saw their lives on Earth as too difficult to handle, and when they reached that stage, in their minds, taking out the enemy was an opportunity to become a hero. Even calls for jihad were overshadowed by desire to execute some kind of raging revenge. For me, unless one has been a mother, wife or daughter this is all but impossible to understand, but those ingrained instincts of protection and agonizing sorrow have to be released. They changed the notion of conventional warfare and wiped out the entire logic of power, since no credible threat can be made against someone who has no desire to survive. And given the globalization of terror from non-state actors, it's my belief that the art of suicide bombings, which will include female suicide bombers, the "innovation" in suicide bombing as the ultimate asymmetric weapon, will become more and more popular. Suicide bombing is mainly a demand-driven, not a supply-limited, phenomenon. There's a simple reason that since the 1980s the world has witnessed the ascent of suicide bombings: it's fair to say that the suicide bomber is the insurgency's most devastating weapon and the most efficient form of violence at close range with the power to metamorphose our thinking.

Preemption

Perhaps the increased role of women in supporting terrorism is a passing phenomenon. But when counterterrorism experts estimate their opponents' capabilities and techniques, it is proper for them to think about what is happening in the women's "locker room." Counterterrorism intelligence has two primary challenges: determining the capabilities an opponent can muster and fathoming the intentions to employ those capabilities – the "who, what, when, where, how, and how much?" But understanding the motivational factors behind why actors get involved in violent acts – the "why?" factor – may give us an idea of what challenges a society is facing, and in turn the factors that engender conditions in which terrorist organizations are able to recruit and win support. If "leaderless resistance" is the wave of the future, it may be less lethal but harder to fight; there are fewer clues to collect and less chatter to hear, even as information about means and methods is so much more widely dispersed. It is more like spontaneous combustion than someone from the outside lighting a match.

By understanding the psychological processes leading to terrorism, F.M. Moghaddam conceptualizes the ter-

rorist act as the final step on a narrowing staircase¹⁴. Although the vast majority of people, even when feeling deprived and unfairly treated, remain on the ground floor some individuals climb up and are eventually recruited into terrorist organizations. These individuals believe they have no effective voice in society, are encouraged by leaders to displace aggression onto out-groups, and become socialized to see terrorist organizations as legitimate and out-group members as evil. The current policy of focusing on individuals already at the top of the staircase brings only short-term gains. The best long-term policy against terrorism is prevention, which is made possible by understanding the motivational factors behind why actors get involved in violent acts. This may give us an idea of what challenges a society is facing, and in turn the factors that engender conditions in which terrorist organizations are able to recruit and win support. No other form of violence has a higher proportion of females than suicide bombers. The greater knowledge of women suicide bombers can further our understanding of terrorism in general while also furthering understandings of “women in conflict” – they are the mothers, wives, daughters, and the sisters that

“The greater knowledge of women suicide bombers can further our understanding of terrorism in general while also furthering understandings of “women in conflict” – they are the mothers, wives, daughters, and the sisters that carry the burden of the war on their backs.”

carry the burden of the war on their backs. Equally as important, as it requires much more than bearded Special Forces operators, we should strive to give Muslim women across the globe other outlets for employment, as an opportunity to contribute to countering terrorism in their societies. We need to make women believe, that the contribution they make in life is worth far more than any contribution they make in death. Moreover, since female attacks are considered especially shocking, rebel groups deliberately use them as bombs under the guise of addressing human problems. Thus prevention will require a great improvement in the social conditions that produce, beget, or trigger terrorist acts. Most surveys indicate that the support for violence decreases when there are viable alternatives and better prospects

14 Moghaddam, F. M. “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration.” *American Psychologist* 60.2 (2005): 161–169, retrieved on November 24, 2009 from <http://www.cipert.org/resources/PsychTerrorismChapter5.pdf>

for peace.¹⁵ Can we offer something better? Something to defuse the explosive anger of jihadist widows bent on vengeance, or young women craving freedom from foreign occupation for themselves and their people? In the comfort of Washington, the answer would seem an obvious yes – politicians talk a lot about education, jobs, and equal rights. But in the dusty alleys of Baghdad, the arid hills of Waziristan, the rubble of Grozny, the walled-off villages of the West Bank the solutions may not always be so clear. We need to realize that we play to the same audience as *Bin Laden & Co.*: those Muslims trying to choose between the preached dreams of the Caliphate and of finding their own place in the terrible economy. Anything that persuades them that the world is open to them works in our favor. Anything that closes the door on them works for Bin Laden with the help of a new generation, almost entirely a grass-roots enlistment operation that is bottom up rather than top down in the sense that individuals in “jihadi” networks bring in other family members, friends, co-worshippers or co-workers.

Case in point? The new lyceum for girls that opened in February of 2008 in Pakistan – a country of 190 million citizens where violence is no longer

15 Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.) ch. 3

limited to the lawless tribal lands along the border with Afghanistan. As the focus of the U.S.’s war on terror has moved from Afghanistan to Iraq and back, there is a widely dawning realization that its central front is actually Pakistan, where militants have thrown up a serious challenge to the authority of the Federal Government in every Province in the country – Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh – as well as in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Gilgit-Baltistan and ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir.’ Devoid of a strong political leadership and the necessary will to confront terrorism, Islamabad has failed to respond adequately and recover some measure of control, as some 7,435 people died in terrorism-related brutality in 2010, according to the organization South Asia Terrorism Portal.¹⁶ Pakistan is the one Muslim nation that has nuclear weapons, where people who want them – like the Taliban and al-Qaeda – are still more popular there than the U.S. and its allies.¹⁷

Azerbaijan’s Heydar Aliyev Foundation had decided to build that school in Muzaffarabad at the initiative of

16 “Annual Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan, 2003-2009,” retrieved on November 4, 2009 from <http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>

17 Polls was conducted August, 2007 and January, 2008 by Terror Free Tomorrow: The Center for Public Opinion, D3 Systems and the Pakistan Institute for Public Opinion, retrieved on November 4, 2009 from <http://www.terrorfreetomorrow.org/upimages/tft/TFT%20Pakistan%20Poll%20Report.pdf>

Mehriban Aliyeva, the First Lady of Azerbaijan. This step can be seen as a drop in the ocean and may not eliminate violence immediately, but it might help to deliver benefits to the population while the terrorists and radicals cannot and influence government survival, as populations always hold government accountable for failing to provide simple social conditions and security. And certainly it can make terrorist tactics revolting if the population that the terrorists claim to represent, think they can get more through peaceful means than through violence. In the long run, because of the nature of terrorism, military action alone is not likely to be enough to win a war against terrorism itself. The war can and will last as long as the terrorists don't run out of potential bombers and new tactics, and above all else, the motivation to fight for their cause.

Conclusion

According to Sageman,¹⁸ this newest wave of terrorism is a leaderless hodgepodge of thousands of what he calls "terrorist wannabes." To some extent it still has an agenda; but unlike the first waves, whose members were well educated and intensely religious, the majority of the new

"jihadists" are a weird species of the Internet culture. Outraged by video images of Americans killing Muslims in Iraq, they gather in password-protected chat rooms and dare each other to take action. Like young people across time and religious boundaries, they are bored and looking for thrills. What makes these examples of the next generation of terrorists so frightening is the ease with which marginalized youths are able to translate their frustrations into acts of terrorism, often on the basis of professed solidarity with terrorists halfway around the world whom they have never met. They seek to belong to a movement larger than themselves, and their violent actions and plans are hatched locally, with advice from others on the Web. Their mode of communication also suggests that they will increasingly evade detection. Without links to known terrorists, this new generation is more difficult to discover through traditional intelligence gathering. Of course, their lack of training and experience could limit their effectiveness along with new possibilities of infiltrating the system. But that's cold comfort for their victims.

"It's more about hero worship than about religion," I wrote in my field journal after observing this phenomenon. Many of these representatives

18 Sageman, Marc, 2008, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

of the new wave don't speak Arabic or read the Koran. Very few (13 percent of Sageman's samples) have attended radical madrassas. Nearly all join the movement because they know or are related to someone who's already in it. In my field journal I would call such phenomenon "Darwinian structural evolution of the process of radicalization in a hostile habitat."

My point is that in the long run, because of the nature of terrorism, military action alone is not likely to be enough to win a war against terrorism itself - a war, that can and will last as long as the terrorists don't run out of potential bombers and new tactics, and above all else, the motivation to fight for their cause.

What can be done to counter, or at least to defuse, the danger of terrorism in the future? Some movements are open to political solutions - especially those demanding greater political autonomy, such as the Kurds in Turkey and the Chechens in Russia. But the more radical groups like al Qaeda are not interested in compromises; they demand total victory.

Again, in the long term, such white-hot fanaticism may burn out and even disappear, making way for new kinds of hate. But in the meantime, we are

faced with one of the most dangerous passages in human history. Some say, "Terrorist campaigns seem endless, but they always end!" "Civilization will prevail, it always has!"

But there can be no final victory in the war on terrorism, which, in one form or another, will continue as long as there are conflicts on Earth. A more threatening change will take place. Terrorism will become bloodier. More terrorist incidents will result in fatalities rather than purely symbolic violence, more incidents will result in multiple fatalities, and in more incidents it will become clear that the terrorists will be determined to kill as many people as possible. In part, the escalation will reflect the continuing need to command attention, which, in a crowded terrorist field, requires more spectacular violence. The terrorist acts will be tested by the "*New York Times front page test*" - it will reflect the brutalization of the terrorists themselves. The self-imposed constraints that had discouraged terrorists from wanton bloodshed will wear down. But the escalation will reflect the replacement of terrorists who had political agendas with terrorists who will be inspired by either religious or ethnic ideology to fight global identity jeopardizing their wish to preserve their own vision of themselves and were therefore beyond considerations of

morality and earthly politics.¹⁹

Nonetheless, those of us who have been studying terrorists for a long time are likely to be skeptical for one simple reason: all groups relying on terrorism face the same dilemma. Terrorism is essentially negative power. Terrorists can kill, destroy, disrupt, frighten, prolong conflict, deny peace, provoke repression, and create misery. But these acts make an open-ended cycle. Terrorists do these things to acquire positive power – to publicize their existence, galvanize support, attract recruits, gain concessions, and impose their views. To gain strength, terrorists must either escalate their violence or mobilize more people and become a mass movement, a difficult transition for them. Generally ill-suited for the tedious task of mobilization, yet frustrated at the lack of visible response, the default decision is to escalate the violence. Terror only breeds more terror, and recent history demonstrates the never-ending cycle of evil that such attacks incite. If not a bigger group, then bigger bombs. If not bigger bombs, then bigger sacrifice. Sadly, the world has already grown accustomed to seeing children becoming soldiers. But it may not be their last

role in this ugly scene in the age of the Internet.

19 Anna Simons, "Making Enemies: An Anthropology of Islamist Terror" Part I in *The American Interest*, Summer 2006, Part II in *Autumn* 2006, pp. 6-18, 35-45