

### **Superterrorism. Policy Responses**

Lawrence Freedman (ed.)

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How to crack down on the root causes of trans-national terrorism, ensure its direct prevention and fight the terrorists at the same time? Almost everything is debatable: The very meaning of the category 'terrorism', the causes, what or who should be targeted by governments, and much more. The relevant literature is big and growing. The slim volume under review is a timely and truly competent contribution to the debate. It covers such fundamental topics like the nature of modern terrorism, its roots, coming war on terrorism, finance warfare and legal instruments of anti-terrorist actions, EU/Nato and USA, and the Russian policies.

One merit of the book is to stimulate debate by posing relevant questions and offering insightful comments, while being economical with the definite statements on matters under investigation. The important distinction between the phenomenon (terror, terrorism, superterrorism, etc.) and actors (perpetrators) is examined. Also, the notions of 'war' and 'war on terrorism' are not applied without reservation (Lawrence Freeman, *The Coming War on Terrorism*, pp. 44-45). Another doubt is just mentioned in passing, when a contributor (Professor of Law) states, that the 11 September attacks were carried out 'probably' by al-Qaeda (Helen Fenwick, *Responding to 11 September: Detention without Trial under Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001*, p. 86). Contributions by Freedman, William Wallace, Ann Deighton and Charles Grant offer extensive analyses of the EU/NATO countries — US relationship, and of some intra-EU problems, 'superterrorism' being seen as a catalyst of the process, while Wallace's discussion of the hegemony is furthermore a very rare voice of a prominent Liberal on such a Gramscian topic and will draw attention of 'world system' scholars.

It is easier to describe 'superterrorism' (it was revealed on 11 September) than define terrorism. One wonders what definition of terrorism will satisfy the bankers waiting for legal basis for the actions some governments require from them. Martin S. Navias, a finance lawyer, is careful enough to write about just 'terrorism', and he qualifies it as 'international' and 'global' for such is the typical characteristic of the terrorist funding. His '*Finance Warfare as a response to International Terrorism*' is a very clear presentation of what was the immediate response (declaring financial war and freezing assets), what are the systemic vulnerabilities in the financial system that made terrorist financing and ultimately terrorist operations possible, what significance the anti-laundering roots in the finance war against global terrorism have, what types of terrorist financing exist, what needs to be done to enhance global anti-terrorist cooperation and what domestic regulations specifically should be upgraded. He leaves the readers with a valuable insight that '*[d]espite all these massive national and international efforts, there continue to be reports that terrorist fund generation capabilities remain in place (...) Nor is there as yet any suggestion that national intelligence authorities have a full grasp of either the scale or the scope of terrorist financing networks and practices. (...) The conceptual problems are obviously more serious and are linked to*

*the definitional issues that inevitably arise whenever there are attempts to identify and categorise what constitutes terrorism.'* (pp. 76-77).

John Gearson writes on the necessity to separate terrorism from the violence of *'organized states, which have taken upon themselves the monopolistic right of legitimate use of organized violence'*. This reminds us of a known definition of terrorism as an act of breaking of the monopoly in question to attain a political aim. He devotes his attention to state terrorism, focusing his attention on one aspect of terrorism: fear. *"This is the essence of terrorism: the breaking of an enemy's will through the exploitation of fear."* (p. 8). What he calls the state terrorism is, however, just a form of exerting of the above-mentioned monopoly by a non-democratic state. The state terrorism seems to me to be something different, for example, it reveals itself in actions of the death-squads and the like forces organized, led and manned by public functionaries and private individuals, with access to state information, transportation, weapon, etc., aiming at implementing government's policies with unlawful means, with tacit acceptance of the government. Another example: The state terrorism manifested itself in actions of the state expropriating committees that confiscated property in excess of the decrees adopted by the very state, the official committees being aware of tacit acceptance by their revolutionary superiors. The state terrorism is also breaking of the monopoly in question, albeit by a non-legitimate, non-democratic government in a state where the rule of law is bent to serve political purpose. Let us hope that *'careful consideration of which civil liberties need to be sacrificed and which do not'* (p. 23) will distinguish our struggle against terrorists from the methods developed under state terrorism.

Gearson investigates the extent to which terrorism is evolving from a tactic into a strategy. The question arises: What strategic aim was communicated to us by the planes hitting Pentagon and the WTC towers? Such replies are practically absent in the public debate. They should, however, dictate the policy responses. One way to deduce the terrorists' strategy is to investigate the roots of their actions.

To identify the key sources of the actual phase of trans-national terrorism I would point to the cumulative effect of (i) uneven development in the world, (ii) a peculiar conjunction of religious and state regimes and the ensuing conflict among Muslims, and (iii) the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East (amplified by contradictions existing between Arab countries). In the book, the most exhaustive treatment of the causes of terrorism is offered in 'The Roots of terrorism: Probing the Myths' by Karin von Hippel: *Common sense would dictate that there is a direct correlation between poverty and terrorism; yet the evidence gathered thus far does not lend credence to this proposition, and if anything, supports the opposite (...)* *If poverty really were the root of terrorism, more terrorists would come from the poorest part of the world, sub-Saharan Africa; and this, so far, is not the case.* (p. 26). When years ago a debate was going on whether it was the poverty or the Soviet subversion that was the principal cause for Latin American armed struggle, the role of middle class radicals was never doubted and the wildly unjust distribution of national income figured prominently as a factor to be reckoned with. Much earlier, the socialist movement in Europe, both the revolutionary and reformist wings, had been drawing upon such phenomena like poverty and what we now call distributive justice, but the founders and the most outspoken activists in the movement were not the poor workers from the poorest countries. People who feel they may speak in the name of millions of those living in conditions that flout the sense of

human dignity are not uneducated and poor. Their radicalization is intensified by the growing media boom and the resulting exposure to the different kind of lifestyle of the rich countries. In the minds of people living in peripheral countries, wealth is associated with living under other, alien, moral and religious rules, and this breeds fanaticism among those overwhelmed by a religious supremacy over society. This is where religion appears, a topic insufficiently explored in the book. Poverty and injustice, religion, nationalism and institutional underdevelopment are intertwined. Admittedly, some aspects of it do not go unnoticed by the authors — Freedman and von Hippel draw attention to the ambiguous role of the weak states (e.g. Somalia). Von Hippel postulates a Western careful intervention to improve the state of education in those countries. She also writes about '*reducing humiliation*' as a long-term project to be achieved through '*spreading the benefits of globalization*' (p. 37).

A comprehensive presentation of a policy response proposition has been offered by the volume editor and the main contributor. By reading the authoritative essay by Lawrence Freedman we are probably getting acquainted with the British Government's source of expertise. He provides *inter alia* a valuable commentary to Blair's Chicago speech of 1999 (at the height of the war in Kosovo) and his '*five tests, relating to confidence in the analysis, exhaustion of diplomatic efforts, availability of military options, a readiness for the long haul and some connection with national interests*' (p. 43). It makes an interesting reading in the Iraqi context (the book was published before the intervention) in that Freedman seems to take the would-be intervention for granted (as does Grant).

Typically, since it is not an 'area study' publication, impact of works published in other languages than English is hardly detectable. There is, however, a contribution by Nadia A. Arbatova from Moscow who aptly presents the well-known views from Russia, writing about 'Russian-Western' relations after 11 September. Understandably, she does not dwell upon the most valuable field of the superterrorism-related cooperation, that is, intelligence (Afghanistan and beyond). Neither there is any trace of concern with the impact of systemic stability/instability (transformation) on efficiency of the anti-terrorist security arrangements in nuclear power stations and on the WMD sites operation in alert configuration or of concern with one **million kilogram of the Highly Enriched Uranium on the territory of the**<sup>o</sup> former Soviet Union (mainly in Russia).

The texts have been very carefully edited. However, it is worth noticing that Article Five had not been invoked on 12 September (p. 142). Furthermore, the index is not complete with all the names of the countries mentioned.

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<sup>o</sup> This part has been deleted in the printing process.