

**The Terrorist Challenge to US National Security**  
**by**  
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**to the**  
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**I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Club's symposium on "Responsibility in the Age of Globalization." I have been asked to speak on the important but less than cheery subject of terrorism, including how that phenomenon impacts—and is impacted by—globalization.**

**I would offer that terrorism has had a significant, negative impact on the overall course of globalization — at least in the short term. The perpetrators of attacks such as those of September 11 deeply oppose the values and implications of a globalized world.**

**At the same time, the methods terrorists employ—access to communications, training, technical information, rapid financial transactions, and transportation with little government control—are reminders that the instruments of globalization can be used for good or evil.**

**The 9/11 attacks and related exposures of terrorist logistic activities deepened the global economic recession and caused a lack of confidence in many areas of private sector and government activity. This includes such issues as the security of information systems and the costs of insurance, travel, and secure real estate. Companies around the world now hold seminars to discuss the implications of the so-called “terrorism tax” for their business processes and bottom lines.**

**The trend toward the privatization of communications, transportation, and certain heavy industries occurring in many parts of the world may be slowed, or in some cases reversed.**

**This happens as governments come to recognize the strategic value and potential risk that such enterprises represent to national stability and well-being and assign military and police forces to protect them.**

**The most basic values of globalization—greater political and economic openness—also are likely to be challenged. This erosion occurs as governments reassert greater control over identification of nationals and non-nationals, of migration, and even over access to public spaces. States will be reluctant to permit greater freedoms—including to domestic minorities—when law and order concerns dominate the national and international agenda.**

**In democratic societies, especially in Europe and America, a lively debate is now underway on how to balance the need for security — usually government directed — with the existing constitutional, political, and cultural environment.**

**In non-democratic countries, the concern about terrorism is likely to delay or retard the development of civil society and greater political openness.**

**For the next few minutes, I would like to talk about some of the fundamental trends in terrorism that have brought us to the current situation, and how I foresee the future threat.**

**Several of these trends have been magnified in the past decade by the forces of globalization — forces that are certain to persist.**

**I will not talk specifically about the 9/11 attacks, with which everyone is tragically familiar. I would emphasize, however, that although those attacks caused far more casualties than any previous terrorist incident, they did not mark a fundamental redirection of international terrorism. Rather, the attacks reflected important trends that began several years ago.**

*First, terrorism has become more transnational.* Terrorist groups like Usama Bin Ladin's al-Qa'ida increasingly are composed of individuals of different nationalities. These groups have a presence or conduct operations in a number of countries.

Ease of migration, especially owing to the liberalization of immigration laws and policies in many countries, is aiding the growth of international terrorist networks. More than 140 million people now live outside their countries of birth, and migrants comprise more than 15 percent of the population in over 50 countries. Terrorists typically blend into, and recruit among, co-ethnic immigrant communities.

The information revolution is also enabling terrorists to become more transnational. They use the Internet and their own websites to spread their message, recruit new members,

**communicate quickly and reliably, and plan operations. Al-Qa'ida was proficient enough to conduct major and sophisticated operations worldwide—using modern communications to direct terrorist attacks thousands of miles away.**

**The growing transnational nature of terrorism is leading some groups to evolve from clearly defined hierarchical organizations into looser, flexible networks. This organization makes them harder to identify and eradicate than individual, discrete groups.**

*A second trend is that the role of state sponsors has declined substantially. Countries have become less willing to support terrorists in a highly integrated world, fearing they may be isolated and prevented from participating fully in the global economy. Libya is a notable example.*

**The US willingness to use armed force as demonstrated in Afghanistan will obviously be a big disincentive to state sponsors. But a few states—notably Iran, Iraq, and Syria—will remain of concern because of their longstanding relationships with terrorist groups or the nature of their goals, particularly their commitment to acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.**

**Weakness and instability in some other countries will enable terrorist groups to use their territories in various ways, including training, without the cooperation of the host government. Sudan, for example, has reduced its direct involvement in terrorism but continues to be a safehaven.**

**The overall reduction in state sponsorship of terrorism has occurred in tandem with the expansion of other forms of support. Many terrorist groups now rely chiefly on private sources of financial help. These include their own criminal and**

**legitimate business activities, individual donors, and nongovernmental organizations.**

**Lebanese Hizballah is the leading example of a group using criminal activity to raise funds. A significant portion of its estimated \$200 million annual budget for political, social, military, and terrorist-related activities comes from smuggling, commercial fraud, passport fraud, narcotics trafficking, counterfeiting, alien smuggling, and money laundering.**

**The emergence of another terrorist leader with the personal wealth of a Bin Ladin would seem highly unlikely. Just as al-Qaida has drawn on other private donors in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, however, other terrorist groups will also continue to benefit from the largesse of wealthy individuals. Many such donors will be sympathetic toward the declared aims of a group even if they are not aware of all of its terrorist activities.**



**In the coming years, many terrorist groups, particularly the radical Islamist variety, will attempt to increase their exploitation of witting or unwitting non-governmental organizations. These organizations can provide cover employment, false documentation, training, facilitation of travel, and in some cases weapons. For many terrorists, these forms of assistance are more valuable than funding.**

*A third trend I would cite is that the proportion of terrorist groups that identify themselves with religions—particularly Islam—has increased over the last two decades. Although such groups generally distort the beliefs of the religions on whose behalf they claim to act, their themes resonate widely and convincingly. They now constitute a majority of key international terrorist groups.*

**Islamic extremists will continue to pose the greatest threat to US interests. Political, economic, educational and socio-cultural conditions are deteriorating in many Muslim countries. Moreover, persistent conflicts in which Muslim states are involved—including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—will continue to fuel violent and often anti-American extremism.**

**Radical Islamic activists have gained combat or other operational experience in recent years in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, and Chechnya. They possess the weapons, skills in the use of violence, and personal contacts to continue their terrorist activities internationally even if stability is brought to those regions and countries.**

**New groups not currently existing or identified are also likely to emerge and pose a threat to US interests. Bear in**

**mind that al-Qa'ida was not commonly identified as a group until the late 1990s.**

***Fourth, terrorism has become more lethal.* The total number of casualties and the average number of people killed in terrorist incidents have been increasing. In contrast to terrorist groups prominent in past years—whose objectives typically were to achieve specific political goals—many of the terrorist groups that have become active in recent years are motivated by a vehement hatred of the West. They are more likely to try to kill large numbers of people indiscriminately and are less likely to use force in more restrained and calibrated ways.**

**The spectacular nature and very high casualty toll of the plane crashes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon may accelerate the trend toward deadlier attacks. Future**

**terrorists may believe that they must make a bigger physical impact to achieve the desired psychological effect.**

**We must be particularly concerned that groups like these will seek and obtain weapons of mass destruction, including biological weapons such as anthrax. In fact, terrorist groups worldwide have ready access to information on biological, chemical, and even nuclear weapons via the Internet.**

**Documents recovered from al-Qa'ida facilities in Afghanistan show that Bin Ladin had a more sophisticated biological weapons research program than was previously thought, and was working to acquire some of the most dangerous chemical agents and toxins. As early as 1998, he had publicly declared that acquiring unconventional weapons was “a religious duty.”**

*A fifth and final trend I will mention is that the US homeland and US targets overseas have become prime targets.*

**Most of the underlying animosity that fuels anti-US terrorism is based on the ever more conspicuous status of the US as the sole superpower, primary supporter of Israel, and leader of the West. Islamists will exhibit this animosity most clearly, but leftists and anti-globalists will share it.**

**Some perceive globalization as primarily an American process designed to ensure US dominance of the developing world and Muslim world. Western cultural and economic influences, and the US military presence in some Islamic states, will continue to cause particular resentment. Influential teaching in Muslim states, including from clergy in Saudi Arabia and many madrassas or religious schools in Pakistan, has encouraged a militant and intolerant attitude toward the West.**

**Over the next few years, most attacks by international terrorist groups against US persons and property probably will occur overseas, because locations outside the US present fewer operational challenges. At the same time, the US homeland will remain a high-priority target, as terrorists recognize that successful attacks within the US have deep psychological impact on Americans.**

**Even if additional restrictions on access by foreigners to the US are implemented, terrorists will count on the large volume of foreign travel to and within the US and on false documentation to reach their targets. Approximately a half-billion travelers enter the US each year; two-thirds of them are aliens. Terrorists who operate in this country without being part of a permanent cell structure will pose a particular threat, because they have fewer connections for law enforcement authorities to track.**

**The most appealing targets in the US and overseas will be prominent and symbolic—especially official facilities such as embassies, government buildings, and military bases, but also some well-known commercial sites and our national infrastructure.**

**Let me conclude by underscoring that, although these trends are daunting, actions on an appropriate scale are now being taken to counter the threat. Since September 11, the US Government and private sector have mobilized resources in an unprecedented way to support the campaign against terrorism.**

**Our new national focus on homeland and overseas security will not end the problem and will not provide any guarantees, but it will help. Looking ahead, the overall magnitude and shape of international terrorism will depend in large part on the counterterrorist policies and enduring security practices of governments and businesses.**

**Fortunately, the US Government—together with strong private institutions in our own society—is also considering various economic, social and educational initiatives that could be undertaken in and with Muslim countries to address, over time, the underlying causes of terrorism.**

**We are receiving valuable assistance from cooperative foreign governments in these efforts. Often they are in the best position to identify and act against terrorist groups. Actions of our partners will be at least as important in deterring anti-US terrorism as the counterterrorist measures taken by the US itself.**

**Already, many attacks have been thwarted, many terrorists detained, and many groups disabled. The challenge is to build on our progress, thus minimizing the number and effectiveness of future attacks on US and allied interests. This,**



**in turn, will contain the damage done by terrorism to the overall, positive aspects of globalization.**

**Thank you very much.**