

THE INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC SECURITY

This study is primarily concerned with the analysis of political terrorism and with outlining ways in which effective responses may be designed. Some of these responses may also be applicable to related phenomena, such as organised crime and drugs and migrant trafficking, and — where this is the case — appropriate references will be made. However, these are topics that deserve separate studies in themselves. Similarly, the geographic arena for the discussion that follows is, in essence, the Mediterranean region and emphasis will be placed on terrorism originating from the Southern rim of the Mediterranean. This is not to say that terrorism is not a phenomenon in Europe, it is. However, the implications of the phenomenon on the European continent are not normally replicated in the Mediterranean region as a region, for it is usually confined within national boundaries. Nevertheless, reference, where appropriate, will also be made to European paradigms.

Executive summary

- Political terrorism, drugs smuggling and international crime are the major forms of international extensions of domestic security inside the Mediterranean basin, of which political terrorism is the most significant;
- Political terrorism is defined as coercive intimidation, or the use of violence for political ends and is an aspect of asymmetric threat;
- Such asymmetric threat involves moral ambiguity which gives political terrorism its peculiar force, for the perpetrator defines his actions as morally superior to those of the state and thus legitimate in ways that those of the state are not;
- In the Middle East and North Africa, such attitudes are also a reflection of perceptions of exclusion and the illegitimacy of the state;
- Responses to such asymmetric threat require a similar asymmetry and must crucially be based on accurate intelligence as well as on persuading the population-at-large of the inherent illegitimacy of the non state actor's demands and objectives;
- An integral element in such a strategy is that it must conform to generally accepted standards of legality and transparency where this is possible without endangering the strategy or the associated tactics themselves;
- Strategy here refers to "grand strategy" and care must be taken that the operationalising tactics are not discordant with the strategy itself, otherwise the opponent will be able to respond with far greater effect.

- Patterns of international co-operation have become far more important recently because of the changing international environment, although such developments do not obviate the need for effective national-based strategies.
- The choice of the tools used to respond to asymmetric threat depends on circumstance and careful balances must be struck between the role of police and military force.

The problem of definition

It is usually claimed that there are over 200 different definitions of what is conventionally described as "terrorism" — a phenomenon that, in its modern guise, goes back to the French revolution, although there are many historical precursors. Perhaps the most widely used definition is that proposed by Paul Wilkinson, which argues that political terrorism — terrorism designed to affect the structure and distribution of power within a particular state or society — is "coercive intimidation", in other words, the use of coercive violence for political ends. The Arab League, in its April 1998 convention on terrorism, signed in Cairo by Arab interior and justice ministers, has suggested a more detailed definition that, unlike the definition given above, includes a value-judgement that reduces its utility. This definition is:

Any act of violence or threatening violence regardless of its motives or purpose that takes place in the execution of a criminal undertaking....

The virtue of this definition, a feature which is also implicit in the earlier definition, is that acts constitute the component of the event which makes it terrorist. In other words, organisations as such are not "terrorist" unless they engage in acts that fall within the definitions. This does not, however, deal with the problem of organisations that claim an ideology justifying or encouraging terrorist acts. Yet, even here, in most circumstances, it is only when action is sought or undertaken that terrorism becomes an issue.

A more comprehensive definition, which also emphasises the role of action in defining the phenomenon of terrorism, is provided by the United States Department of State. This definition is used in the annual American assessments of global terrorism and has the advantage that it mentions the target of terrorist acts, although it, as a consequence, limits the definition unnecessarily. The definition reads:

The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.

The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.

The term "terrorist group" means any group practising, or having significant subgroups that practise, international terrorism.

In fact, this definition, although it implicitly includes state agents within its scope, also implicitly assumes that state authority is sacrosanct, for it prohibits violent acts where there is no formal state of hostilities. It would thus include acts carried out in furtherance of national liberation, even if such acts fall outside the first two definitions. It also denies the right of minorities to act against oppression by methods outside the state-sanctioned mode of political contestation, whether or not this would allow such groups satisfaction of their legitimate concerns. It is a reasonable question, in these circumstances, to ask whether the United States government would, therefore, condemn the *Iraqi National Accord*, *SCIRI*, the *Moujahhidin-e Khalq*, *Frelitin* or the *IRA* out-of-hand, or whether it would consider their objectives licit even if some of their acts would be terrorist. The issue here — as with low intensity conflict (see below) is one of "just cause" and "just means".

In any case, there are two aspects to the second definition that also reduce its utility. The first is similar to the objection to the third definition, in that it assumes that all such acts are essentially criminal. This is, of course, true in that they will contravene an established legal code. However, as will be discussed below, part of the essence of the kind of terrorism we are concerned with here is that it deliberately contests the legitimacy of such a code — an aspect of the problem that is excluded by the definition! This becomes particularly important when we consider acts committed by national liberation movements or minority community movements where the very essence of the movement is that its sole objective is to contest the legitimacy of the legal dispensation in force in the territory over which it seeks control. If there is no popular consent to such a legal structure, then it is at least open to argument that any act committed by such a movement cannot be construed to be "criminal" let alone "terrorist".

It is also worth noting, incidentally, that the criminalisation of terrorism by the state is not necessarily an effective way of responding to it. Often this plays straight into the terrorists' hands for it immediately places the issue of legitimacy and moral authority in the forefront of the propaganda war. As will be discussed below, perceptions — by the state of the threat it faces — by its opposition of state and, most importantly of all by public opinion of both — are a key element in dealing with the phenomenon. It should also be borne in mind that there can be a psychopathology associated with terrorist acts that may seek to arrogate moral advantage, particularly if the terrorism itself is epiphenomenal in nature — constituting an end in itself rather than acting as a means to an end. This could be said to have been the case with the *GIA* in Algeria, the *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru or *Millenarian* terrorism in the United States.

All three definitions highlight the dangers involved in trying to define a phenomenon that is inherently morally ambiguous and of trying to impart a moral context to any definition. In essence, the most neutral of definitions probably serves our interests best but it may, in any case, obscure the underlying nature and purpose of terrorist acts. This is that such actions are part of a discourse designed to alter the behaviour of the

opponent and to do so by mechanisms other than direct confrontation. For this reason, terrorism forms part of a wider category of such actions that are today subsumed under the generic title of "asymmetric threat". This is reflected in the second problem with the Arab League definition of terrorism and in the original definition taken from Paul Wilkinson; namely, the inherent role of violence within terrorism.

Asymmetric threat

Indeed, the second problem with the Arab League definition is more wide-ranging than the first, for it has to do with the nature of the act. Violence may indeed accompany terrorism; indeed, it usually does. This may not, however, be the essence of the act itself, for the violence is only instrumental and not usually both the means and the objective of the act. Such forms of epiphenomenal terrorism, when they occur, are essentially irrational for they have no purpose beyond violence and are thus not part of a discourse designed to achieve political ends. Indeed, these ends require that violence is purely instrumental, for they are designed to give legitimacy to the claims of the organisation perpetrating the act and to the organisation itself as a political actor.

In reality, in attempting to establish such a discourse, the organisation concerned is also attempting to set its parameters on its own terms. It is, in effect, attempting to set the agenda for the discourse and to predetermine the content of the discourse — it is engaged in *control of information* in the wider public arena so as to pre-empt and limit its opponent's response. The purpose in doing this is to seek to change the political system it confronts by means and mechanisms which are not acceptable to the system itself — a system which, in turn, is not acceptable to its non-state actor opponents.

This can only be done if the organisation concerned can exploit weaknesses in its opponent's political system and structure and it is for this purpose that violence is usually an intrinsic element. However, from this point of view, the issue of "terrorism" becomes part of a wider issue confronting established political systems, that of *asymmetric threat*. Although this is conventionally seen as threat by the weak against the strong — also conventionally and frequently an attribute of the terrorist — in reality it is a statement about threats based on the ability of an organisation to exploit the weaknesses of its opponents to achieve its ends. This is an important distinction, for it means that the scope of the phenomenon is broadened to include actions by state as well as non-state actors if they are based on the exploitation of weakness in structure, system and ideology using methods which lie outside the generally accepted patterns of international discourse — the system of treaties, agreements and practices which form the corpus of international law.

Within the corpus of asymmetric threat it is, perhaps, necessary to distinguish acts conventionally described as "terrorist" from those which fall within the generic category of *low intensity conflict*, of which terrorism might otherwise form a part. In essence, low intensity conflict is a form of warfare in which the normal restrictions governing warfare

usually apply, whereas there are not normally such limitations with terrorist actions. Such conflict, such as guerrilla warfare, usually has discriminate and appropriate targets which are military or security-based in nature; the means it uses to achieve its objectives are restricted, particularly in the sense that they are not coercive in the way that terrorism is; and the means used to obtain the objectives themselves are bounded by generally recognised principles of warfare, such as those defined in the theory of just war.

Terrorist acts are usually unbounded in this sense — their targets are indiscriminate, often, indeed, usually, involving civilians and others with no direct involvement in conflict; the means used are unrestricted, thus increasing the incidental threat to persons not directly involved; and these means are justified by the objectives themselves, whatever the consequences. Those responsible directly confront the issue of legitimacy and legality by reversing the usual Weberian argument over the nature of the state as having the monopoly of legitimate violence. It justifies this position on the grounds of national sovereignty and its legitimisation through democratic control. Terrorist organisations, instead, arrogate this legitimate monopoly to themselves, on the grounds that the state does not enjoy popular consent or has outraged the moral principles that sanction its monopoly and is therefore not legitimate. They reject the argument of criminality by pointing out that, just as the state can, in times of war, authorise, even encourage and render licit actions which would otherwise be illegal (such as violence and killing), so the organisation, since it is itself legitimate, can and does do the same.

One of the major problems in dealing with this kind of threat is that the appropriate responses to asymmetric threat are usually poorly defined, both in the literature and in practice. There is usually a lack of understanding of the phenomenon itself and a lack of consistency in response. This results from the fact that there is also usually little appreciation of the threat environment, which is typically multifaceted and complex. Nor is there a realisation that asymmetric threat can only be effectively countered by a strategy based on the principles of asymmetry itself. This, in turn, requires that the threat environment be properly understood, both in terms of causation and manifestation. We therefore turn to a brief discussion of the threat environment in the Mediterranean region, before considering the mechanisms available to counter asymmetric threat.

Terrorism in the Mediterranean region

Asymmetric violence in the Mediterranean region is generally a consequence of perceptions of exclusion from the state and the benefits associated with it, or of a contestation over the political legitimacy of the state itself. Usually, it is the non-state actor which perceives itself to be excluded or which contests the legitimacy of the state. Usually, too, the perception of exclusion consists either of exclusion from economic benefit or from participation in the political decision-making process, whilst the issue of contestation of legitimacy either follows from this perception of exclusion or results from an ideological rejection of the ethical and moral basis of the state — in the context

of Hegel's definition of the state as the "actuality of the ethical idea". In practice, it can be very difficult to separate out such motivations and perceptions.

As mentioned above, the use of violence also reflects a moral ambiguity — in the case of non-state actors, at least, although this is not the case for state-supported acts. This arises because the non-state actor arrogates legitimacy for its actions in terms that are a mirror-image of those used by the state to justify its own monopoly of violence. The non-state actor therefore does not recognise the state's authority or right to label such acts as "terrorist" and, by extension, criminal. Indeed, such action by the state can be treated as further confirmation of its own lack of legitimacy. It may even act as an additional spur to action by the non-state actor. It may also be exploited to substantiate the claim that no other method of discourse with the state is possible because political participation does not exist. Terrorist action thus becomes the sole means by which such a discourse can be undertaken, with the added proviso that such a discourse is really about dominating the arena for discourse — the essence of the function of asymmetric threat in conditioning the opponent's capacity and mode of response.

It is also worth noting that, insofar as terrorist violence is an adjunct to such a discourse, terrorism itself is also engaged in forcing a dialogue, either with the state or with public opinion if its object is to replace the state itself. It is for this reason that the conditioning of the political arena is an integral part of asymmetric threat, even if the ultimate objective of replacing the state cannot be achieved. In fact, as Politi remarks, in commenting on Iran and the Gulf, " Terrorist acts do not by themselves delegitimise the ruling classes, they are only a violent symptom of growing internal problems." They do, however, contribute to such a delegitimation if their effect on public opinion is not countered. In such a case, any consequent dialogue will be based on an agenda set by the group responsible, not by its opponent.

Rhetoric and discourse

It is for this reason that the rhetoric in the discourse used by such non-state actors is so important. In, for example, mobilising a political Islamic discourse, a non-state actor is directly attacking the legitimacy of its opponent — the state — on the basis of a perception of the latter's moral defects, expressed in ideological terms that are publicly accessible. In the past, similar hierarchies have applied to Arab nationalist and socialist rhetoric, although here the hierarchy of delinquency has been political, rather than moral. The Islamist rhetoric, however, has a great advantage over certain of its predecessors, such as socialism — an advantage that was also possessed to some degree by Arab nationalist discourses — in that it can lay claim to the values of the dominant culture in the South Mediterranean region.

It must, however, be realised that much of the force of the rhetoric arises from the genuine convictions of those expressing it. It is dangerous to assume that non-state asymmetric threat is based on ideological cynicism, even if the rhetoric is also clearly

operational and mobilisational in nature. It is the cultural authenticity of its vocabulary and of those exploiting the vocabulary that gives it the peculiar force to condition the state's response and to mobilise widespread public support. However, its real power also comes from the fact that that political exclusion is a reality throughout much of the South Mediterranean region, as are deficiencies in the state system there. There has, therefore, been a public predisposition to accept the non-state actor's attempt to condition the arena for discourse at face value — to the disadvantage of the state.

Participants

Evidence for these statements comes from an analysis of those who typically engage in terrorism. When the phenomenon first became a matter of general official concern in the Middle East and North Africa — in the 1980s — sociologists began to consider the makeup of those who became engaged in the phenomenon. Interestingly enough, the main support base for radical and violent movements tended to be drawn from those social strata which had been the most profoundly affected by the process of modernisation. These transitional groups had often come from relatively disadvantaged, traditional backgrounds but had been able to obtain access to education — in many cases including higher education and vocational education. A surprisingly high proportion of those involved had had scientific training or education and many had also been junior-level officers in the armed forces. Often such persons have subsequently had difficulty in finding employment or have been forced to take employment perceived as requiring education levels below those that they possess.

The characteristic that they shared was their belief in their exclusion from the institutions and processes of the state; they could not affect its operations through established and recognised systems of participation. In addition, exclusion was not necessarily limited to political perception, as there was also a very real awareness of actual economic exclusion, given the defective economic systems of the Middle East and North Africa. Furthermore, they often seem to have experienced a discordance between their formal education and aspects of their innate culture. This heightened their sense of exclusion, since it now applied on both the social and the political spheres. In part this was a consequence of the secularisation of knowledge attendant on the process of modernisation that ran at odds with the often very intense piety of traditional backgrounds. Not surprisingly, therefore, such groups, if unable or unwilling to integrate into the transitional societies that form the majority of regional states, tend to retreat into ideologies which are culturally appropriate and which explain their exclusion. In addition, such ideologies, if they are activist in nature, offer an alternative strategy to inclusion or to replacement of the discourse from which they feel excluded.

Furthermore, over time and as the confrontation between state and non-state groups intensifies, the social origins of those engaged in coercive violence change. Genuinely disenfranchised social strata are drawn into the non-state groups, so that the education level of participants declines. Similarly, in the past it has been notable that the average

ages of participants also declined. In Egypt, in the 1970s for example, the age of 61 per cent of Islamist members was between 25 and 30 years, 79 per cent of them had higher education and 51 per cent were members of a major profession, whilst 55 per cent of them lived in large cities. By the 1990s, 71 per cent were below the age of 25 and only had secondary or intermediate education and 85 per cent lived in small towns, shantytowns or villages. In Algeria, it was notable that the *hittistes* — unemployed youth — increasingly supplied recruits to the more extreme and often criminalized Islamist groups.

The trans-national dimension

This sense of exclusion also provides one of the mechanisms by which such groups extend their reach beyond the national arena. They are often able to operate through family, kin and locational networks in migrant communities abroad, in Europe and elsewhere. Often such networks sensitise locally-based communities which have links of origin in the South Mediterranean and which have their own reasons for a sense of exclusion inside the host country in which they live. They therefore become engaged in a domestic struggle for reasons that are quite foreign to the issue itself. This was, in many respects, the mechanism that allowed violence from Algeria to spill over into France as a result of the *banlieusard* phenomenon — the alienation of youth of North African origin in the suburbs of major French cities. A similar process in reverse was responsible for the short-term violence in Morocco in August 1995, when French citizens of North African origin were responsible for a series of attacks in Morocco on behalf of extremist groups in Algeria!

Over-arching non-state networks that transcend national boundaries are still rare, despite the vast improvements in communications technology. Insofar as they do exist, they usually reflect national networks that extend beyond national boundaries. This has been the case with recent Palestinian rejectionist movements, such as *Hamas* which, in addition to its presence inside the West Bank and Gaza, has links in Jordan and representation in Iran. It seems particularly true of the irredentist faction of the Egyptian *Gam'iyat Islamiyya* which, although its bases inside Egypt have been successfully eradicated, now has or has recently had a presence in Afghanistan, Albania and Yemen. Even though there have been claims that it is now linked to the Saudi dissident, Usama bin Ladin through the alleged *al-Qa'ida* organisation, the tangible evidence of substantive links is still weak.

Indeed, insofar as cross-national links exist inside such networks, they stem from the American- and Saudi-backed initiative of encouraging recruitment for the *Mujahidin* movement in Afghanistan at the start of the 1980s. Those Arabs involved in this struggle later became involved in a wide range of conflicts, from Bosnia to Chechnya and some of those involved certainly acquired links with groups engaged in asymmetric conflict inside the Middle East and, later, North Africa — often because those groups or representatives from them, such as Shaykh Umar Abdurrahman in Egypt

— now in prison in the United States — were encouraged to act as recruiting agents, as, indeed, was Usama bin Ladin himself originally. Western manipulation of the Afghanistan conflict, in fact, contributed significantly to rendering involvement with the conflict itself and, more importantly, with the ideologies and discourse connected with it licit even though they could easily be turned against Middle Eastern governments supported by the West.

Types of terrorism and crime

In essence, the analysis of terrorism in the Middle East is primarily concerned with non-state groups that have a clear agenda of confronting the state. Their purpose is either to force from the state significant political concessions — moral, legal or material — or to replace the state itself. They are primarily linked to national bases and are thus examples of *domestic political terrorism*, although they may have cross-border linkages, as with the *Gam'iyat Islamiyya* or *Hamas*, but even then are still primarily concerned with a domestic national agenda. Even when directed against Western or American influence in the region, which provides their message with a greater international content, the primary agenda is still domestic in that such movements seek to force specific governments to alter their behaviours.

There are, however, other kinds of terrorism or political and social behaviour that are akin to terrorism that exist in the region. One of the most important of these is *internationally-organised crime*, which is usually based on existing criminal networks. These networks, originally domestic in scope, acquire control of certain activities that lend themselves to international activity and thus make a quantum-leap in the nature of their activities. The two most typical activities that generate this dramatic expansion in activities are drugs smuggling and people smuggling into Europe. They are associated with a corresponding "back-wash" effect which involves money-laundering as a result of these activities. They are similar to terrorism in that they involve an asymmetric threat to existing legal structures, although they rarely involve terrorist-like violence, for their activities are usually highly discriminate. They are thus subject to the techniques described below for countering asymmetric threat, apart from those involved in compromise and negotiation. They are also — and this is important — in large measure a consequence of perceptions of exclusion, usually from economic benefit, even though European demand provides a powerful attractor for them.

A further type of asymmetric threat that does occur in the Middle Eastern region is *epiphenomenal terrorism*, now often called *millenarian terrorism*. This is indiscriminate violence in which there is no apparent object beyond the act itself or where the declared objectives are, to the external observer, irrational and thus not amenable to normal processes of control. The Aum Shin Riko sect in Japan is a good example of this in which the best form of defence is pre-emption, although legal problems can be raised by state actions designed to inhibit actions before they take place. This problem has already confronted the Israeli authorities in their actions against

allegedly extremist Christian groups. There is little that can be done to inhibit such groups beyond excellent intelligence over them and pre-emptive action once their intentions are established. This is also seen as a major future threat in the USA, where militia groups and religious cults are expected to generate the major form of asymmetric threat in the future.

The final form of terrorism that occurs in the Middle East is that directed by states for purposes of national interest where normal diplomatic discourse is deemed inadequate or inappropriate and where formal warfare is unacceptable because of the attendant risk. It involves any action by a state directly or indirectly, whether through its own agents or through agents it controls, which involves illegal and indiscriminate violence against individuals or organisations that it perceives to threaten its interests. Insofar as such action is indirect it can be handled by the techniques and methods suggested below, supplemented by action in the international arena, usually involving sanction by the international community. In most respects, this is a declining phenomenon today, but certain states continue to exploit the potential.

One ironic consequence of a related kind of action — the CIA-backed decision to support recruitment from the Arab and Muslim world in order to oppose the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, generated a support-base for widespread and integrated terrorism within the Middle Eastern and North African region. The importance of this development must not be over-exaggerated, however, for it can otherwise cloud accurate assessment of the domestic origins of most terrorism and asymmetric threat throughout the region. One consequence has, however, been to enlarge the area inside which such actions may take place from the core Middle East and North African regions (the Arab world, Turkey and Iran) to include the Caucasus, Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Balkans. Intelligence operations connected with terrorist activities must, therefore, be aware of this expanded geographic area, even if their concerns will continue to be primarily domestic in nature.

Responses to terrorism

The usual state response to political terrorism by non-state actors is to engage in repression of those involved. Whilst this may succeed in the short-term, it requires a disproportionate use of force that is often poorly directed. This, in turn, causes alienation throughout the population-at-large who become the innocent victims of both terrorism and the state's response. It is, furthermore, solely symptomatic in nature, rather than curative, for it does not address the basic circumstances that engender the terrorist acts. As a result, its effectiveness may only be short-lived, unless it is rapidly accompanied by other more prophylactic measures. Even then, the generalised nature of repression may limit the effectiveness of such measures, simply because of popular alienation from government. Rendering responses more effective requires a detailed understanding of the drivers of asymmetric threat and of the appropriate response mechanisms and tools.

The basic approach

Essentially, the essence of the asymmetric response, just as with the original initiative, is to present the adversary with problems for which he is unprepared, so that he can be goaded into inappropriate responses and his legitimacy can thus be undermined. Furthermore, the objectives sought should be attained through both direct and indirect pressures on the adversary. This implies that direct confrontation is not the only technique that may be mobilised, for the psychological impacts of both approaches will have to be maximised. Neutralisation of asymmetric threat thus requires that the motivation of the adversary be properly understood and that asymmetric counter-measures should be employed against him.

One important aspect of motivation is to determine whether the threat is conditional or unconditional. In other words, is it motivated by ideology or belief, in which case any sacrifice may be thought of value to attain the ultimate objective — an unconditional motivation — or is it motivated by gain, so that the commitment to action is balanced by the costs involved — a conditional motivation? This is clearly an important distinction, for it will condition the appropriate response and will help to determine whether conventional responses, such as negotiation, have a role to play in resolving the situation or whether the issue has to be treated as one of a security threat, amenable merely to direct repression.

Similarly, the nature of the response — insofar as it itself should also be asymmetric — may seek to overwhelm the original perpetrator by increasing the redundancy of his systems of response by targeting them, or it may seek to disable him by targeting critical response systems. It can be focused or general in nature, directed against a particular group or against a generalised threat. Thus the use of militia systems in Algeria during the recent unrest was generalised, whilst the activities of the security forces against particular GIA groups in the Beilen forest during 1998 was focused. However, the success of these types of operation depends, once again, on the proponent's ability to accurately define the nature and magnitude of the threat — for excessive response carries with it the danger of delegitimisation of both the response itself and of the proponent for being responsible for it. This, in turn, underlines the crucial role played by accurate and up-to-date intelligence.

Secondly, there is always an accompanying danger that the population-at-large will not accept the legitimacy of the action, so care must therefore be taken to prepare public opinion for anti-terrorist responses by the state. This is rendered more difficult by the fact that the very nature of terrorist asymmetric threat is to atomise society and render communication with it and control over it more difficult. At the same time the growing individual access to information means that it also becomes more difficult to use communication as a means of building up support since control both of the means and the content have become more dispersed.

Designing a response

Four factors are key in designing a response to asymmetric threat:-

- Time: The ability to control the length of a counter-threat campaign is essential for this enables the best mix of force structure and information control to be established;
- Space: The management of space, both physical and legal-moral space, is crucial for this allows the respondent to establish the physical and psychological parameters of the response to asymmetric threat. It has been traditional for international bodies such as the United Nations to set legal and moral parameters but this is now changing as more super-state actors appear. Thus the European Union and even the G-7 Group have begun to enunciate on the dimensions of asymmetric threat.
- Knowledge: The importance of the role played by intelligence, as discussed above, is self-evident. Its role is three dimensional; informing public opinion, establishing the dimensions of threat and denying knowledge of response modes. It is worth bearing in mind that the quality of intelligence is the key and that this is not necessarily best served by the quantity of information amassed.
- Perception: This refers not only to the ability to accurately evaluate information but also, and most importantly, to the respondent's ability to ensure that his opponent will mis-perceive and mis-evaluate information received.

The most effective response to asymmetric threat will be one that exploits the inherent synergy in these four factors and one that seeks to wrest control of the interaction between threat and response from the adversary who has initiated the phenomenon. It is crucial that any response should be coherent in seeking to achieve defined objectives and not be simply reactive. Furthermore, the response must be perceived by public opinion to be legitimate and should contain elements to address genuine grievances that the original asymmetric threat may have mobilised as part of its legitimisation. Thus the successful control of the district of Imbaba in Cairo was both a consequence of the removal of Islamist elements controlling the population there and the introduction of effective and fair administration services in their place. Similarly, the genuine grievances of the Catholic population of Northern Ireland had to be addressed as an integral part of shaping the security environment in order to respond to IRA violence.

In effect, the respondent — the state or its security services — must shape the security environment in its own terms if it is to make an effective response and not allow this to be done by its adversary. A key element in this process is to ensure, as far as possible, that it is only the opponent that is affected by the measures introduced and not the wider community — that, in the language of American anti-terrorist specialists, the "zones of chaos" should be reduced. A further element is to deter potential participants in asymmetric threat from engaging in such activities or, when this cannot be done in the short-term, to isolate them in order to contain a threat rather than to eliminate it. This

process of "hedging" against terrorism by containment is in itself a mechanism for ultimate elimination, for it provides time to prepare public opinion for the compromises that may have to be made — once again, the case of the peace process in Northern Ireland illustrates what can be done by appropriate hedging and containment.

The shaping of the security environment and containment also depend on how the state perceives an asymmetric threat. Three categories are most commonly defined:

- either it threatens national security, in which case it would be dealt with by the traditional armed and security forces since the situation would approximate to war;
- or it is a threat to the security of the population, perhaps the most difficult situation for the state to handle;
- or, finally, it is a threat to certain institutions of the state or to its interests and thus of little danger to the population at large.

In fact, for the asymmetric non-state actor, this last case represents the softest target of all, for it can powerfully affect public opinion without engaging the public itself in risk, simply through the psychological effect of underlining the vulnerability of the institutions of the state — and thus, by extension, of society itself. It is also important to realise that, as the environment in which the state operates changes, so does the potential nature of threat. The globalisation process, therefore, amplifies the potential arena for this kind of threat — thus external threats to European gas supply have an immediate domestic resonance in, say, Britain, because of the consequences in energy supply to the population, a factor that would not have been important when the main source of energy there was coal- and not gas-based.

Designing strategy

Behind these statements lies a fundamental assumption; that such operational planning is based on an articulated strategy which must be flexible enough to encompass the changing nature of the threat arena. Furthermore, such a strategy should have a clear statement of its objectives and of the mechanism by which those objectives should be achieved. Necessarily, such a mechanism, which encompasses the actual methods to be used to address the threat, should be appropriately operationalised in the planning outlined above. The strategy itself is, in effect, an example of "grand strategy" and constitutes the articulation of policy. Such policy is inter-linked with the threat environment for each will affect the other over time. This mutual interaction has to be assessed, to see to what extent the effect of the environment on strategy can be predicted so that, if appropriate in terms of cost-effectiveness, pre-emptive measures can be adopted. Thus, in Morocco, for example, the potential threat of radical political Islam has been pre-empted by the mobilisation of the religious legitimacy of the monarchy — an approach that has been effective to date.

It is clear that, in the case of trans-national threat, such approaches to the formulation of grand strategy must be endorsed by all states involved, both in terms of definition and in terms of pre-emption. There is also a question — as the Westphalian state system declines — as to whether states are the only actors in the definition of grand strategy, for there are, increasingly non-state actors that are involved. This is particularly important in view of the growing role of the European Union and the future implications of the construction of a second Maastricht pillar around the secretary-general of the common foreign and security policy and the new directorate for external policy in the Commission. In addition, the mechanisms of operationalising such a strategy must also be mutually acceptable, otherwise discordance between different tactical approaches will negate the overall strategic approach. It is, no doubt, for this reason that South Mediterranean states often complain over European asylum practices, although it should also be said that such complaints often reflect a domestic failure to shape the security environment appropriately or to hedge asymmetric threat effectively, as described above.

This, in turn, can lead to further problems. The perceptions of threat environment by the asymmetric actor and the grand strategist (however defined) overlap; indeed, they must otherwise the one cannot address the other in a common discourse of confrontation. Similarly, the perceptions and prescriptions of the grand strategist and the operationalising tactician must significantly overlap — ideally they should coincide, otherwise strategy and tactics will not be appropriately linked. However, since the flow of information to the grand strategic level for the formulation of policy is mediated through the tactical mechanism (since this is where the intelligence function is primarily located) there is always a serious danger that crucial information about the threat environment and the non-state actor is omitted. This lack of coincidence in knowledge of the asymmetric threat between the strategic and operational levels can seriously threaten the relevance of the overall grand strategy itself and, conversely, can also endanger the operational effectiveness of the tactical response. Consequently, steps must be taken to minimise this possibility. A further difficulty will arise if the external non-state actor perceives the discordance in knowledge between the tactical and strategic levels of response for he will then be able to shape his actions to maximise the discordance.

It is therefore necessary to ensure the maximum coincidence between the grand strategic and the tactical levels of any response, the maximal capture of information about the external non-state actor's objectives and knowledge of the threat environment and the most appropriate definition of response in the light of that capture of information and knowledge. This requires an iterative approach in which strategy and tactics are constantly re-evaluated in the light of information received and the knowledge that is derived from it. Such an approach will determine the maximum effectiveness of any response that can be made to threat and thus determine the degree to which the security environment can be shaped and to what degree the threat itself must be hedged.

It is also important to evaluate the threat in terms of its predominant characteristics — is it primarily ideological, epiphenomenal, mobilisational or technological in nature? In other words, is it necessary to design responses that are directed primarily at countering conceptual opposition, psychopathology, organisationally mobilised threat or technically

sophisticated means of attack? To counter this, the grand strategist must maximise his own freedom of action, for there are always constraints on the type of response that can be applied — legal, moral, intelligence-based, threat location and resource availability, to mention the major factors. The weighting accorded to this mix of constraints must, therefore, maximise the range of possible responses without endangering the overall acceptability of the grand strategy and the associated tactics in the wider public arena. The ultimate objective is to apply the maximum possible pressure to the adversary to hinder or prevent his asymmetric actions and to seize, if possible, the initiative from him.

The available tools

The essence of asymmetric warfare is to achieve success by avoiding the opponent's strengths and exploiting his weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Furthermore, attack must be designed to unbalance the opponent so that he cannot capitalise on those strengths but is forced back on the defensive and into a purely reactive mode. This will probably require a multifaceted mode of attack so that the opponent is ultimately persuaded that he cannot resist or responds irrationally, thus damaging his own ideological position in the eyes of the ultimate arbiter, public opinion.

The non-state asymmetric actor will engage in assaults which are unrestricted in terms of moral or legal constraint — that is, after all, the essence of terrorist threat, in that the image of danger is sufficiently persuasive so that actual violence forms only a small part of the threat. Furthermore, such attacks will be designed to avoid the conventional security and military strengths of his opponent and will try to blur the distinction between the civilian and military spheres of the state's realm of action. The reaction must be designed to counter such approaches and seek to de-legitimise his actions, again in the eyes of public opinion. This, in turn, implies that actual defeat is not the ultimate objective, rather the realisation by the non-state actor that his objectives cannot be achieved — as occurred with the majority *Gam'iyat Islamiyya* leadership in Egypt or with the *Jaysh Islamiyya li'l-Inqadh* in Algeria.

In addition to the specific security responses that are mobilised to respond to asymmetric threat, there is also a major propaganda battle to be waged, for ultimately the struggle should be over control of discourse. It is important to underline the contrast in responses between non-state and state actor to the advantage of the latter — but this can only be done if there is a concordance between claim and reality. The state actor is, therefore, constrained by the requirement that he observes moral and legal codes, even if his adversary does not. This is particularly important if the media, responding to public distaste at terrorist action, demand unrestrained responses — a temptation to which no concession should be made. Yet, in the modern world, the media is essential in shaping the public arena and must be conscripted into the propaganda struggle, where possible.

The issue of information control is rendered more difficult by the process of globalisation and the decline of the international state system. The techniques of modern

information dissemination will prove increasingly difficult for the state to control, as they tend to empower the individual. Even though, in theory, the state can monitor electronic means of communication, as has been the case with radio and telephone communications technology, the volume of electronic communication alone will make such an approach increasingly difficult in the future, particularly given modern techniques of encryption. The result is that the non-state actor is in a much improved position to exploit international networks against the state — as has been seen in the Middle Eastern context, although such networks have not involved an inter-connection between different groups, merely the ability of a particular group to operate in an international context. In theory, international organisations should be able to control such information technology better than national organisations, although the necessary corpus of international agreement and law is still inadequate. However, such organisations will still rely on inputs from national policing and monitoring bodies and, insofar as these are weakened, so are their international counterparts. Considerable attention therefore needs to be given to ways in which international cooperation over monitoring, whilst still respecting individual legal rights, can be effectively achieved.

This requirement provides a means by which effective mechanisms for a response to non-state asymmetric threat can be devised. Any response by the state to such threat must exploit the information it receives so that it can construct a mechanism of response on the basis of such information. Such a mechanism must incorporate internationally-accepted restrictions on the means by which information is obtained and must set reasonable and legal bounds to the response mechanism itself. In short, internationally recognised and generally acceptable legal principle should determine how far the state may exploit its monopoly of legitimate violence against the asymmetric threat. The actual response itself will depend on the way in which the non-state actor can be defined and described — in terms of structure, size, *modus operandi* and the ends sought — for these will define the extent of the state's response. The nature of the response and the organs through which it is to be articulated — police or military — will be determined by five other considerations; the location of the threat, the context in which it develops, the kind of action involved, its effect on the wider community, and the region of the country affected.

The military option

There are a series of specific factors that enter into the construction of a specific response to asymmetric threat and that are essential to its success. In the case of a military response — which is usually required if the asymmetric threat of major proportions and threatens the ability of the state to maintain its formal responsibilities and activities — the following factors must be considered:-

Intelligence

The most important requirement is information about the nature of the non-state actor and this should receive the highest priority in fashioning a response. It is not, however, limited to the non-state actor alone; it is crucial that those fashioning the response should have an accurate understanding of the real capabilities of their own forces and, if necessary, plan for the development of an appropriate response capability. This is an area in which international co-operation can be of invaluable help.

Innovation

Whatever the response designed, it is crucial that it be proactive, not merely reactive. It must address both the manifestation of asymmetric threat and its cause and it must do so in innovative, constructive ways, otherwise the essential popular support for state response will be lacking and, even if the immediate, proximate problem is resolved, the threat will re-emerge. Military or police action alone is rarely sufficient to resolve asymmetric threat; constructive social and political measures are also usually necessary.

Commitment

Once a response has been designed, it is then necessary to ensure that it is carried through with commitment. At the same time performance of the response must be continuously monitored so that it can be perfected through an iterative evaluation. This must not, however, reduce commitment to the response itself.

Strategic vision

Commitment, in turn, arises from a proper strategic vision of what the state seeks to do when confronted with a non-state asymmetric threat. This will have been determined at the level of both grand strategy and operational tactics and will be based on the exploitation of intelligence and innovative initiatives designed to exploit the opponent's weaknesses, thus generating an asymmetric response. Such a vision, therefore, cannot be simply reactive and will determine whether the response is to be military or policing in nature.

Restraint

As has been discussed earlier, whatever strategic response is chosen, it must abide by established legal restraint, despite the limitations that this may place on its effectiveness in the short-term. In the long term it provides an essential advantage to the state by allowing it to claim a moral superiority that contributes to the legitimacy of the action it undertakes in the popular mind — an essential means of destroying the moral ambiguity of the asymmetric threat itself.

Secure base

Military responses can only operate effectively if they are sustained by secure basing facilities. This is essential, otherwise military capacity is distracted by threats to its own

security. It is also necessary to ensure a rigid separation from the population-at-large so that the asymmetric non-state actor has no opportunity to exploit contact between military and population to its advantage as a new variant of asymmetric threat.

Objectives

Clearly, the primary objective is to neutralise and eliminate the asymmetric threat. However, this begs the question of what is intended to occur to the non-state actor responsible for the threat. Is the primary objective to discredit his objectives and thus ensure his defeat or is it to destroy the non-state actor so that he physically ceases to be a threat? This decision also involves consideration of the legal status of any response and of the overall grand strategy.

The police alternative

With low-level, localised asymmetric threat, a response through the police, rather than the military, may well be more appropriate. It is also possible that successful military response may, after time, create conditions in which a police-based response might be more appropriate. The objective of such a response will be to shape the security environment appropriately by reducing the freedom of action of the non-state actor and by making best use of available resources — which may, in turn, lead to military back-up to police action. This was eventually the pattern adopted in Northern Ireland before the security forces themselves began to be withdrawn, leaving the police in sole charge of containing any threat whilst political initiatives were taken to eliminate it entirely.

The specific aims of police action against asymmetric threat differs from those of military action in that the primary purpose is to disrupt the non-state actor's actions through control of the threat environment in order to limit the damage done by such threat and protection of the threatened community by understanding the nature of the threat and of the community's response to it. Four principles govern such action, all of which are designed to separate the non-state actor from the community in order to achieve such aims:-

Maintain public order

Insofar as police action is designed to handle localised and low-level threat, one aspect of it must be to preserve public order so that normal community life can be maintained as far as possible. This helps to isolate the non-state actor from the community and minimises the effects and consequences of the asymmetric threat.

Adhere to the rule of law

This principle mirrors that recommended in the case of military action for the same reason; it further isolates the non-state actor and increases trust between community and state even if it makes the elimination of the asymmetric threat more difficult.

Balanced strategy

Once again, this in part mirrors principles laid down for military action for it requires an iterative strategy that is refined in the light of experience. However, it also involves ensuring that, whatever approach is adopted to deal with asymmetric threat, it should not alienate popular support for police action. Such an approach supports the application of the first two principles enunciated above.

Community focus

The final principle of action really sums up the implicit objectives of the previous three in that it emphasises the importance of isolating the non-state actor from the community and ensuring that, whatever action is taken, it should be designed with community interests in mind.

Keys to success

The following principles, in essence, should inform the process of policy formulation in developing counter-measures to asymmetric threat:-

- It is essential that the policies adopted to deal with asymmetric threat must not be simply reactive, repressive and cathartic in nature. This will tend to generate a hydra-headed response as new groups within the population are alienated and seek to support the non-state actor.
- Simplistic responses, dealing only with symptomatic manifestations of such threat will not provide lasting solutions, even if they appear to generate short-term benefit. It therefore follows that successful counter-action measures will also be based on seeking to address the causes of the original asymmetric threat, insofar as this is practical.
- Responses in any case must be flexible and innovative, with a high degree of technical integration between the different arms of government and security forces structure involved. Above all, effective and properly evaluated intelligence is the key to successful action and flexibility of response is a natural adjunct to this so that policy rigidities do not vitiate the response.
- The actual nature of the response must reflect the principles of asymmetric response and response to low intensity conflict discussed above. It should seek to "shrink zones of chaos" in order to isolate the non-state actor, both in geographic and ideological terms. It should also seek to seize the initiative so it can shape the security environment in patterns which are most appropriate to its resources.

- Key to this process is the need to maintain legality and — to the degree commensurate with strategy and tactics — transparency as part of the accompanying propaganda campaign. Unless the objective is to actually destroy the asymmetric opponent, the possibility of eventual negotiation must form part of the definition of policy, provided that such negotiation can be conducted from a position of strength. If this is not done, the opponent has no viable exit strategy and opposition will thus become entrenched.

Behind these principles there is a basic presupposition that those defining the strategy and tactics of response can be sufficiently detached and objective to realise that there may be objective causes of asymmetric threat that require correction and that the state often has responsibility for this. The immediate response may only be symptomatic in nature but prophylaxis will also be necessary and that in designing strategy and tactics, the state must be aware of its own weaknesses and failings. Above all, take the long-term view as asymmetric threat, by its very nature, is persistent and adaptable!