What Terrorists Really Want

Max Abrahms

Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy

What do terrorists want? No question is more fundamental for devising an effective counterterrorism strategy. The international community cannot expect to make terrorism unprofitable and thus scarce without knowing the incentive structure of its practitioners.[1] The strategic model—the dominant paradigm in terrorism studies—posits that terrorists are rational actors who attack civilians for political ends. According to this view, terrorists are political utility maximizers; people use terrorism when the expected political gains minus the expected costs outweigh the net expected benefits of alternative forms of protest.[2] The strategic model has widespread currency in the policy community; extant counterterrorism strategies are designed to defeat terrorism by reducing its political utility. The most common strategies are to mitigate terrorism by decreasing its political benefits via a strict no concessions policy; decreasing its prospective political benefits via appeasement; or decreasing its political benefits relative to nonviolence via democracy promotion.

Are any of these counterterrorism strategies likely to work? Can terrorism be neutralized by withholding political concessions, granting political conces-

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1. See Louise Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat* (New York: Random House, 2006), p. 44.
2. Martha Crenshaw refers to what I call the strategic model as the "instrumental model." For summaries of this model, see Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches," in David C. Rapoport, ed., *Inside Terrorist Organizations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 13–31; Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice," in Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 7–24; Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 6 (June 2003), p. 482; and Gary C. Gambill, "The Balance of Terror: War by Other Means in the Contemporary Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Autumn 1998), pp. 51–66. For applications of the strategic model, see Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005); Max Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Fall 2006), pp. 42–78; Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer 2006), pp. 49–80; and James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 3.

sions, or providing peaceful outlets for political change? In other words, does the solution to terrorism reside in diminishing its political utility? The answer depends on whether the strategic model is externally valid, that is, on whether terrorists are in fact rational people who attack civilians for political gain. If the model is empirically grounded, then the international community can presumably combat terrorism by rendering it an ineffective or unnecessary instrument of coercion. If the model is unfounded, however, then current strategies to reduce terrorism's political utility will not defuse the terrorism threat.

Despite its policy relevance, the strategic model has not been tested. This is the first study to comprehensively examine its empirical validity.[3] The strategic model rests on three core assumptions: (1) terrorists are motivated by relatively stable and consistent political preferences; (2) terrorists evaluate the expected political payoffs of their available options, or at least the most obvious ones; and (3) terrorism is adopted when the expected political return is superior to those of alternative options.

Does the terrorist's decisionmaking process conform to the strategic model? The answer appears to be no. The record of terrorist behavior does not adhere to the model's three core assumptions. Seven common tendencies of terrorist organizations flatly contradict them. Together, these seven terrorist tendencies represent important empirical puzzles for the strategic model, posing a formidable challenge to the conventional wisdom that terrorists are rational actors motivated foremost by political ends. Major revisions in the dominant paradigm in terrorism studies and the policy community's basic approach to fighting terrorism are consequently in order.

This article has four main sections. The first section summarizes the strategic model's core assumptions and the empirical evidence that would disconfirm them.[4] The second section demonstrates the empirical weakness of the strategic model. In this section, I present the seven puzzles—based on the records of dozens of terrorist organizations from the late 1960s to the present,

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3. Martha Crenshaw has raised important questions about the strategic model's empirical validity. See, for example, Crenshaw's "Theories of Terrorism" and "The Logic of Terrorism."
4. There is a debate within the social sciences about whether a hypothesis's assumptions need to be empirically valid. Milton Friedman famously argued that the merit of a hypothesis depends strictly on its predictive power, whereas many other theorists believe that the core assumptions of a hypothesis must also be grounded in reality. For a summary of this theoretical debate, see Jack Melitz, "Friedman and Machlup on the Significance of Testing Economic Assumptions," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (February 1965), pp. 37–60. In the field of international relations, most theory testing takes the assumptions as exogenous, but this is not always the case. For two important exceptions that criticize realism because of its assumption of anarchy, see David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); and Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 391–425.

supplemented with theoretical arguments from the bargaining and coercion literatures—that cannot be reconciled with the model's underlying assumptions. The third section develops an alternative explanation for terrorism. The argument is not that terrorists are crazy or irrational; as Louise Richardson notes, psychiatric profiles of terrorists are "virtually unanimous" that their "primary shared characteristic is their normalcy."[5] Rather, I contend that the strategic model misspecifies terrorists' incentive structure; the preponderance of empirical and theoretical evidence reveals that terrorists are rational people who use terrorism primarily to develop strong affective ties with fellow terrorists.[6] If terrorists generally attach utmost importance to the social benefits of using terrorism, then extant strategies to reduce its political benefits will fail to counter the terrorism threat. In the final section, I suggest a reorientation of counterterrorism strategy in light of what terrorists really seem to want.

The Strategic Model

In classical economic theory, rational agents (1) possess stable and consistent preferences; (2) compare the costs and benefits of all available options; and (3) select the optimal option, that is, the one that maximizes output.[7] Modern decision theory recognizes that decisionmakers face cognitive and informational constraints. Rational actor models therefore typically relax each assumption such that the rational agent must only (1) possess relatively stable and consistent goals; (2) weigh the expected costs and benefits of the most obvious options; and (3) select the option with the optimal expected utility.[8] The strategic model is explicitly predicated on this trio of assumptions.

First, the strategic model assumes that terrorists are motivated by relatively stable and consistent political goals, which are encoded in the political plat-

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5. Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, p. 14.

6. Sociologists routinely treat social objectives as rational. See, for example, Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Organizations and Organization Theory* (Boston: Pitman, 1982), pp. 9, 42–43, 62, 72, 256. Rational choice theorists in economics and political science also frequently treat social objectives as rational. See, for example, Jon Elster, "Introduction," in Elster, ed., *Rational Choice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 1; Gary Becker, "The Economic Approach to Human Behavior," in Elster, *Rational Choice*, pp. 115, 119; and John C. Harsanyi, "Rational Choice Models of Political Behavior vs. Functionalist and Conformist Theories," *World Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (July 1969), pp. 513–538.

7. See David M. Kreps, *A Course in Microeconomic Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 480; Elster, "Introduction," pp. 4, 16; Sidney Verba, "Assumptions of Rationality and Non-Rationality in Models of the International System," *World Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (October 1961), pp. 93–117; and Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2d ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), pp. 17–18.

8. Elster, "Introduction," p. 5; and Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, p. 18.

form of the terrorist organization. That West Germany's Red Army Faction (RAF) identified itself as Marxist, for example, implies that RAF members participated in the organization to achieve its stated revolutionary agenda.[9] Disconfirming evidence would therefore reveal that the RAF expressed a protean set of political objectives, fought mainly against other groups with its identical political platform, or continued using terrorism after its stated political grievances had been resolved.

Second, the strategic model assumes that terrorism is a "calculated course of action" and that "efficacy is the primary standard by which terrorism is compared with other methods of achieving political goals."[10] Specifically, the model assumes that terrorist groups weigh their political options and resort to terrorism only after determining that alternative political avenues are blocked.[11] Disconfirming evidence would therefore demonstrate that terrorism is not a strategy of last resort and that terrorist groups reflexively eschew potentially promising nonviolent political alternatives.

Third, the strategic model assumes that the decision to use terrorism is based on "the logic of consequence," that is, its political effectiveness relative to alternative options.[12] Specifically, it is assumed that terrorist organizations achieve their political platforms at least some of the time by attacking civilians; that they possess "reasonable expectations" of the political consequences of using terrorism based on its prior record of coercive effectiveness; and that they abandon the armed struggle when it consistently fails to coerce policy concessions or when manifestly superior political options arise.[13] Disconfirming evidence would therefore reveal that terrorist organizations do not achieve their political platforms by attacking civilians; that they do not renounce terrorism in spite of consistent political failure or manifestly superior political options; or that they do not even use terrorism in a manner that could potentially coerce policy concessions from the target country. Below I identify and then describe seven tendencies of terrorist organizations that challenge the strategic model with disconfirming evidence of its core assumptions.

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9. See McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," p. 482; and Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," pp. 15, 27.
10. McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," p. 481.
11. Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," p. 16. See also Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1988), pp. 122–123.
12. See James G. March, *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen* (New York: Free Press, 1994), pp. 2–3. See also Crenshaw, "The Logic of Terrorism," p. 20.
13. See Pape, *Dying to Win*, p. 62. See also Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," p. 16; and Schmid and Jongman, *Political Terrorism*, pp. 122–123.

The Seven Puzzling Tendencies of Terrorist Organizations

Seven empirical puzzles vitiate the strategic model's premise that terrorists are rational people who are motivated mainly to achieve their organization's stated political goals. The seven puzzles contradicting the strategic model are (1) terrorist organizations do not achieve their stated political goals by attacking civilians; (2) terrorist organizations never use terrorism as a last resort and seldom seize opportunities to become productive nonviolent political parties; (3) terrorist organizations reflexively reject compromise proposals offering significant policy concessions by the target government; (4) terrorist organizations have protean political platforms; (5) terrorist organizations generally carry out anonymous attacks, precluding target countries from making policy concessions; (6) terrorist organizations with identical political platforms routinely attack each other more than their mutually professed enemy; and (7) terrorist organizations resist disbanding when they consistently fail to achieve their political platforms or when their stated political grievances have been resolved and hence are moot.

PUZZLE #1: COERCIVE INEFFECTIVENESS
In the strategic model, people participate in a terrorist organization because they are deeply committed to achieving its political platform. The strategic model is explicit that success for a terrorist organization requires the attainment of its stated political goals.[14] Even if all other strategies are blocked, terrorism is not based on the logic of consequence and is thus irrational according to the model unless organizations achieve their political platforms at least some of the time by attacking civilians.[15] A major puzzle for the model then is that although terrorism is by definition destructive and scary, organizations rarely if ever attain their policy demands by targeting civilians.[16]

The Rand Corporation reported in the 1980s that "terrorists have been unable to translate the consequences of terrorism into concrete political gains. . . . In that sense terrorism has failed. It is a fundamental failure."[17] Martha

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14. Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," p. 15.
15. Sun-Ki Chai, "An Organizational Economics Theory of Antigovernment Violence," *Comparative Politics,* Vol. 26, No. 1 (October 1993), p. 100.
16. The strategic model focuses on strategic terrorism, not redemptive terrorism. The former aims to coerce a government into changing its policies, whereas the latter is intended solely to obtain specific human or material resources such as prisoners or money. On this distinction, see Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," p. 46.
17. Bonnie Cordes, Bruce Hoffman, Brian M. Jenkins, Konrad Kellen, Sue Moran, and William Sater, *Trends in International Terrorism, 1982 and 1983* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1984), p. 49.

Crenshaw remarked at the time that terrorist organizations do not obtain "the long-term ideological objectives they claim to seek, and therefore one must conclude that terrorism is objectively a failure."[18] Thomas Schelling reached the same conclusion in the 1990s, noting that terrorist attacks "never appear to accomplish anything politically significant."[19] In a study assessing terrorism's coercive effectiveness, I found that in a sample of twenty-eight well-known terrorist campaigns, the terrorist organizations accomplished their stated policy goals zero percent of the time by attacking civilians.[20] Although several political scientists have developed theoretical models predicated on the notion that terrorism is an effective coercive instrument, their research fails to identify a single terrorist organization that has achieved its political platform by attacking civilians.[21]

Terrorist organizations may not realize their policy demands by targeting civilians, but do these attacks generally advance their political cause? Walter Laqueur notes that for terrorist organizations, the political consequences of their violence is nearly always "negative."[22] Polls show, for example, that after the Irish Republican Army (IRA) attacked the British public, the British people became significantly less likely to favor withdrawing from Northern Ireland.[23] Similar trends in public opinion have been registered after groups attacked civilians in Egypt, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, the Philippines, and Russia.[24] Although the international community frequently appeals for target countries to appease terrorists, terrorist attacks on civilians have historically empowered hard-liners who oppose, as a matter of principle, accommodating the perpetrators. For this reason, numerous studies have shown that terrorist attacks tend to close—not open—the bargaining space between what terrorist groups

18. Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," p. 15.
19. Thomas C. Schelling, "What Purposes Can 'International Terrorism' Serve?" in R.G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris, eds., *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 20.
20. Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," pp. 42–78.
21. Proponents of the strategic model claim that terrorism is an effective coercive instrument. Yet their confirming examples are limited to successful guerrilla campaigns, which are directed against military and diplomatic—not civilian—targets. See, for example, Pape, *Dying to Win*, p. 39; and Kydd and Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," p. 49. On the distinction between terrorist and guerrilla campaigns, see Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," pp. 44–46.
22. Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), p. 117.
23. Peter R. Neumann and Mike Smith, "Strategic Terrorism: The Framework and Its Fallacies," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (August 2005), p. 587.
24. See, for example, John Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them* (New York: Free Press, 2006), p. 184; and Claude Berrebi and Esteban F. Klor, "On Terrorism and Electoral Outcomes: Theory and Evidence from the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 6 (Spring 2006), pp. 899–925.

demand and what target governments are willing to offer.[25] In sum, the strategic model posits that rational people participate in terrorist organizations to achieve their stated political goals. In practice, however, terrorism does not accomplish them. Predictably, terrorism's political ineffectiveness has led scholars to question its rationality and motives.[26]

PUZZLE #2: TERRORISM AS THE FIRST RESORT

The strategic model assumes that groups turn to terrorism only after weighing their political options and determining they are blocked. In the parlance of the model, the decision to use terrorism is a "last resort," a "constrained choice" imposed by the absence of political alternatives.[27] In reality, terrorist groups do not embrace terrorism as a last resort and seldom elect to abandon the armed struggle to become nonviolent political parties.

Terrorist groups never lack political alternatives.[28] Large-*n* studies show, first, that only the most oppressive totalitarian states have been immune from terrorism, and second, that the number of terrorist organizations operating in a country is positively associated with its freedom of expression, assembly, and association—conditions conducive to effecting peaceful political change.[29] The "paradox of terrorism" is that terrorist groups tend to target societies with the greatest number of political alternatives, not the fewest.[30] Case studies on terrorist organizations confirm that the decision to use terrorism is not a last resort.[31] In their study of Italian terrorist organizations in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, for example, Donatella Della Porta and Sidney Tarrow found that terrorism was "part of the protest repertoire from the very beginning," even

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25. See, for example, Alan B. Krueger, *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 130–131; and Christopher Hewitt, *Consequences of Political Violence* (Sudbury, Mass.: Dartmouth, 1993), pp. 80, 97–98.

26. See Ariel Merari, "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Winter 1993), p. 229; Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, p. 75; and Martha Crenshaw, "How Terrorists Think: What Psychology Can Contribute to Understanding Terrorism," in Lawrence Howard, ed., *Terrorism: Roots, Impact, Responses* (New York: Praeger, 1992), p. 75.

27. See McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," p. 483; Crenshaw, "How Terrorists Think," p. 72; and DeNardo, *Power in Numbers*, p. 242.

28. Crenshaw, "How Terrorists Think," p. 71.

29. See, for example, William L. Eubank and Leonard B. Weinberg, "Does Democracy Encourage Terrorism?" *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 1994), pp. 417–443; and Leonard B. Weinberg and William L. Eubank, "Terrorism and Democracy: What Recent Events Disclose," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 1998), pp. 108–118. See also Laqueur, *Terrorism*, p. 220.

30. Bonnie Cordes, "When Terrorists Do the Talking: Reflections on Terrorist Literature," in Rapoport, *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, p. 150. See also Walter Laqueur, "Interpretations of Terrorism: Fact, Fiction, and Political Science," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 1977), p. 1.

31. Laqueur, "Interpretations of Terrorism," p. 1; and Laqueur, *Terrorism*, p. 80.

though opportunity abounded for nonviolent, constitutionally protected political protest.[32] More generally, the authors concluded that terrorism "tended to appear from the very beginning of the protest cycle" for the dozens of terrorist organizations operating in Western Europe during this period.[33]

Relatively few terrorist organizations have elected to abandon the armed struggle to become normal political parties.[34] More commonly, terrorist organizations toil alongside peaceful parties, refuse to lay down their arms after participating in national elections, or sabotage open elections that would have yielded major political gains for the group, such as today's militant Sunni groups in Iraq.[35] In many instances, nonviolent strategies are believed to be more policy effective, but terrorist organizations tend to retain, in one form or another, the path of armed resistance.[36]

For these reasons, Crenshaw has sensibly asked, "Why use terrorism when it cannot be justified . . . as a last resort?"[37] The answer of most terrorism experts is that terrorist groups seem to possess "an innate compulsion" to engage in terrorism and an "unswerving belief" in its desirability over nonviolence, contradicting the strategic model's assumption that groups employ terrorism only as a last resort upon evaluating their political options.[38]

PUZZLE #3: REFLEXIVELY UNCOMPROMISING TERRORISTS

As a rule, terrorist organizations do not compromise with the target country. Bruce Hoffman has observed that terrorist organizations are notorious for their

32. Donatella Della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, "Unwanted Children: Political Violence and the Cycle of Protest in Italy, 1966–1973," *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 14, Nos. 5–6 (November 1986), p. 616. See also Peter H. Merkl, ed., *Political Violence and Terror: Motifs and Motivations* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), p. 146.
33. Della Porta and Tarrow, "Unwanted Children," pp. 14, 53.
34. Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 59.
35. Examples of the first point include the dozens of United States– and European-based Marxist terrorist organizations from the late 1960s to the late 1980s, such as Action Directe, the Communist Combatant Cells, the RAF, the Red Brigades, and the Weather Underground. Examples of the second point, including terrorist organizations overtly aligned with a "parent" political wing, are Aum Shinrikyo, the Communist Party of Nepal, the Communist Party of the Philippines, Dev Sol, ETA, Fatah, Hamas, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Hezbollah, the IRA, the Japanese Red Army, Kach, the PKK, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and the Revolutionary United Front. On the relationship between terrorist organizations and political parties, see Leonard Weinberg and Ami Pedahzur, *Political Parties and Terrorist Groups* (London: Routledge, 2003).
36. See Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, "Does Terrorism Work? Comparing Strategies of Asymmetric Warfare," presentation to the Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, London, March 2007. See also Crenshaw, "How Terrorists Think," p. 71; and Laqueur, "Interpretations of Terrorism," p. 1.
37. Crenshaw, "How Terrorists Think," p. 72.
38. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 174; and Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Summer 2006), p. 11. See also Laqueur, *Terrorism*, p. 119.

"resolutely uncompromising demands."[39] Crenshaw has likewise noted that terrorist organizations are characterized by "an intransigent refusal to compromise."[40] It is far more common for them to derail negotiations by ramping up their attacks.[41] In fact, no peace process has transformed a major terrorist organization into a completely nonviolent political party.[42] Proponents of the strategic model claim that terrorists are acting rationally in opposing compromise because their policy preferences are inherently extreme, precluding a mutually acceptable bargain solution with the target country.[43] This argument is empirically and theoretically flawed.

First, terrorism is an extremism of means, not ends.[44] Many terrorist organizations profess surprisingly moderate political positions. Russian terrorist groups of the mid-nineteenth century were known as "liberals with a bomb" because they sought a constitution with elementary civil freedoms.[45] The expressed goal of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades is to achieve a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—a policy preference held by most of the international community. Robert Pape points out that even in his sample of contemporary suicide terrorist organizations, "the terrorists' political aims, if not their methods, are often more mainstream than observers realize; they generally reflect quite common, straightforward nationalist self-determination claims of their community . . . goals that are typically much like those of other nationalists within their community."[46] Yet terrorist organizations rarely commit to negotiations, even when these would satisfy a significant portion of their stated political grievances. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, for example, responded with an unprecedented wave of terror to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's January 2001 offer of the Gaza Strip and most of the West Bank.[47]

Second, even when terrorist groups are motivated by extreme policy preferences, a negotiated settlement is always preferable to political deadlock, ac-

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39. Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, p. 128.
40. Martha Crenshaw, "An Organizational Approach to the Analysis of Political Terrorism," *Orbis*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Fall 1985), p. 481.
41. See Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "Sabotaging the Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 263–296. See also Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 5–53.
42. Wilkinson, *Terrorism versus Democracy*, p. 59.
43. See, for example, David A. Lake, "Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century," *Dialog-IO*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 15–29.
44. Anthony Oberschall, "Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Collective Action Theory," *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (March 2004), p. 26. On the types of political demands that terrorist organizations make, see Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," pp. 53–54.
45. Laqueur, *Terrorism*, p. 37.
46. Pape, *Dying to Win*, p. 43.
47. See Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (New York:

cording to the logic of the strategic model.[48] Most bargaining theorists do not accept "issue indivisibility" between rational adversaries as a viable explanation for conflict because contested issues are typically complex and multidimensional, enabling the warring parties to find linkages and side payments that create a mutually beneficial bargain solution.[49] Hamas, for example, has opposed surrendering claims to all of historic Palestine, but the Islamist group professes to value the West Bank and Gaza Strip. If acting solely to optimize its political platform, Hamas would therefore be expected to accept the Palestinian territories in exchange for peace. Hamas, however, acts as a spoiler, depriving its members of policy goals that the organization purports to support. In sum, bargaining theory dictates that the rational course of action is for terrorist organizations to compromise—even if that means securing only partial concessions over continued deadlock—but they rarely do. The tendency for terrorist organizations to reflexively oppose compromise undercuts the strategic model's assumptions that terrorists weigh the most obvious political options and select terrorism because of its relative political effectiveness.

PUZZLE #4: PROTEAN POLITICAL PLATFORMS
The strategic model assumes that terrorists are motivated by relatively stable and consistent goals reflected in their organization's political platform. But terrorist organizations often have protean political platforms.[50] The Rand Corporation described France's Action Directe in the 1980s as a "chameleon organization" that "rapidly refocused" on a host of faddish policy issues, from opposing Israel to nuclear energy to the Catholic Church.[51] For Ely Karmon, Action Directe's hodgepodge of stated goals reflected the organization's inability to agree on basic ideological principles.[52] Action Directe was an unusually

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004). See also Robert Malley, "Israel and the Arafat Question," *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 51, No. 15 (October 7, 2004), pp. 19–23.
48. See DeNardo, *Power in Numbers*, p. 90; and Navin A. Bapat, "State Bargaining with Transnational Terrorist Groups," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (March 2006), p. 214. For a seminal work on compromise from a rationalist bargaining perspective, see Robert Powell, "Bargaining Theory and International Conflict," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 5 (June 2002), pp. 1–30.
49. See James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 382, 390; and Robert Powell, "War as a Commitment Problem," *International Organization*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Winter 2006), pp. 176–178, 180. For a contrarian perspective on issue indivisibility, see Monica Duffy Toft, "Issue Indivisibility and Time Horizons as Rationalist Explanations for War," *Security Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (January–March 2006), pp. 34–69.
50. See Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," p. 20. See also Cordes et al., *Trends in International Terrorism*, p. 50.
51. Quoted in Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," p. 20.
52. Ely Karmon, *Coalitions between Terrorist Organizations: Revolutionaries, Nationalists, and Islamists* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2005), p. 141.

capricious terrorist organization, but even the crucial case of al-Qaida has purported to support a highly unstable set of political goals.[53] In "The Protean Enemy," Jessica Stern charts al-Qaida's transitory political agenda, as the movement morphed rapidly and unpredictably from waging defensive jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan to fighting local struggles in Bosnia, the Philippines, Russia, Spain, and in Muslim countries to its eventual targeting of the "far enemy" in the late 1990s. The marked fluidity of al-Qaida's political rationale is reflected in the fatwas Osama bin Laden issued throughout the 1990s, which contain a litany of disparate grievances against Muslims.[54] Only in his fourth call to arms on October 7, 2001, did he emphasize the Israeli occupation, which is known in policy circles as his "belated concern."[55] Al-Qaida members have frequently criticized the inconsistency of their organization's jihadi message. The al-Qaida military strategist, Abul-Walid, complained that with its "hasty changing of strategic targets," al-Qaida was engaged in nothing more than "random chaos."[56] Other disgruntled al-Qaida members have reproached the organization for espousing political objectives that "shift with the wind."[57] Not surprisingly, the "opportunistic" nature of al-Qaida's political platform has led scholars to question the movement's dedication to achieving it.[58]

Some of the most important terrorist organizations in modern history have pursued policy goals that are not only unstable but also contradictory. The Basque separatist group ETA, for example, is criticized for failing to produce "a consistent ideology," as its political goals have wavered from fighting to overturn the Franco dictatorship in Spain to targeting the emergent democratic government—a progression similar to that of the Shining Path, Peru's most notorious terrorist organization.[59] The Kurdistan Workers' Party— Turkey's most dangerous contemporary terrorist group (known by the Kurdish acronym PKK)—has likewise vacillated between advocating jihad, a Marxist revolution, and a Kurdish homeland governed without Islamist or

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53. For an excellent recent study on al-Qaida's protean nature, see Vahid Brown, "Cracks in the Foundation: Leadership Schisms in al-Qaida from 1989–2006," CTC Report (West Point, N.Y.: Combating Terrorism Center, September 2007), p. 2.

54. Jessica Stern, "The Protean Enemy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (July/August 2003), p. 1.

55. Samuel R. Berger and Mona Sutphen, "Commandeering the Palestinian Cause: Bin Laden's Belated Concern," in James F. Hoge Jr. and Gideon Rose, eds., *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2001), p. 123.

56. Quoted in Brown, "Cracks in the Foundation," p. 10.

57. Omar Nasiri, *Inside the Jihad: My Life with Al Qaeda, A Spy's Story* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), p. 295.

58. Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends," pp. 41–42.

59. Crenshaw, "An Organizational Approach to the Analysis of Political Terrorism," p. 71.

Marxist principles.[60] The Abu Nidal Organization staged countless attacks against Syria in the 1980s and then "almost overnight switched allegiance" by becoming a Syrian proxy.[61] According to Leonard Weinberg, the most feared international terrorist group of the 1980s was willing to carry out a terrorist attack "on behalf of any cause," even conflicting ones.[62] Similarly, Laqueur points out that many well-known groups that began on the extreme right— such as the Argentine Montoneros, Colombian M-19, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—ended up on the left as far as their phraseology was concerned.[63] Hoffman has likewise noted that in the 1980s, right-wing terrorist groups in West Germany temporarily adopted left-wing rhetoric and began attacking targets that are the traditional choice of left-wing groups. Predictably, the police initially suspected that dozens of their attacks were the work of communist groups.[64] That terrorist organizations often pursue unstable, even inconsistent, political goals undermines the assumption that terrorist members are motivated by a stable and consistent utility function encoded in their organization's political platform.

PUZZLE #5: ANONYMOUS ATTACKS
The strategic model assumes that terrorism is based on the logic of consequence, specifically, its ability to coerce policy concessions from the target country by conveying the costs of noncompliance. For this reason, proponents of the model describe terrorism as a form of "credible signaling" or "costly signaling."[65] A basic principle of coercion, however, is that the coercer must convey its policy demands to the coerced party.[66] A puzzle for the strategic model is that most of the time terrorist organizations neither issue policy demands nor even take credit for their attacks.

Since the emergence of modern terrorism in 1968, 64 percent of worldwide terrorist attacks have been carried out by unknown perpetrators. Anonymous terrorism has been rising, with three out of four attacks going unclaimed since September 11, 2001.[67] Anonymous terrorism is particularly prevalent in Iraq,

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60. See Ami Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp. 87, 89. See also Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 112.
61. Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), pp. 287–288.
62. Leonard Weinberg, *Global Terrorism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), p. 83.
63. Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism*, p. 205.
64. Bruce Hoffman, "Right-Wing Terrorism in West Germany," No. P-7270 (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1986), pp. 8–15.
65. Pape, *Dying to Win*, p. 29; and Kydd and Walter, "Strategies of Terrorism," p. 50.
66. Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), p. 371.
67. Author's calculations from RAND's MIPT data set, http://www.tkb.org.

where the U.S. military has struggled to determine whether the violence was perpetrated by Shiite or Sunni groups with vastly different political platforms.[68]

Policy demands are rarely forthcoming, even when the terrorist organization divulges its identity to the target country.[69] In the early 1990s, Schelling captured this point: "Usually there is nothing to negotiate. A soldier is killed in a disco in Germany. A bomb explodes in front of an Israeli consulate. Japanese Black Septembrists unpack automatic weapons in the Lod airport and start shooting. The perpetrators don't ask anything, demand anything."[70] The tendency for terrorist organizations to refrain from issuing policy demands increased in the late 1990s, leading Hoffman to conclude that the coercive logic of terrorism is "seriously flawed."[71] After the attacks of September 11, David Lake also observed that the terrorists "did not issue prior demands," and therefore a theory premised on coercion "would seem ill-suited to explaining such violence."[72] In sum, the strategic model assumes that terrorism is an effective coercive instrument. Yet terrorist groups rarely convey through violence their policy preferences to the target country, precluding even the possibility of successful coercion.

PUZZLE #6: TERRORIST FRATRICIDE
The strategic model assumes that terrorists are motivated by a consistent utility function reflected in their organization's political platform, but terrorist organizations with the same political platform routinely undercut it in wars of annihilation against each other. Particularly in the early stages of their existence, terrorist organizations purporting to fight for a common cause frequently attack each other more than their mutually declared enemy.

The Tamil Tigers, for example, did not target the Sinhalese government in the mid-1980s. Instead, it engaged in a "systematic annihilation" of other Tamil organizations "espousing the same cause" of national liberation.[73] Pape

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68. See Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism,* pp. 114–115.
69. See Eqbal Ahmad, "Comprehending Terror," *MERIP,* No. 140 (May–June 1986), p. 3; and Bonnie Cordes, "Euroterrorists Talk about Themselves: A Look at the Literature," in Paul Wilkinson and Alasdair M. Stewart, eds., *Contemporary Research on Terrorism* (Aberdeen, Scotland: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p. 331.
70. Schelling, "What Purposes Can 'International Terrorism' Serve?" p. 24.
71. Bruce Hoffman, "Why Terrorists Don't Claim Credit," *Terrorism and Political Violence,* Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1997), p. 1. See also Mark Juergensmeyer, "The Logic of Religious Violence," in Rapoport, *Inside Terrorist Organizations,* p. 172.
72. Lake, "Rational Extremism," p. 15.
73. Shri D.R. Kaarthikeyan, "Root Causes of Terrorism? A Case Study of the Tamil Insurgency and

observes that the "apparent implication" of the Tigers' target selection is that the violence had "little to do with the political grievances of Tamil society or the relationship between the Tamils and their Sinhalese opponents."[74] Ami Pedahzur alludes to the fact that the Tigers' target selection is difficult to reconcile with the strategic model: "In contrast to what might be expected from a guerrilla or a terrorist organization whose [expressed] goals were national liberation, the first violent actions initiated by the Tigers were not aimed at any army forces or Sinhalese politicians. . . . The Tigers systematically liquidated leaders and sometimes activists of other [Tamil] organizations."[75] Similarly, in the early years of the Algerian War, the National Algerian Movement (known by the French acronym MNA) and the National Liberation Front (FLN) mainly attacked each other, not their French occupiers.[76] Proponents of the strategic model might reason that the MNA and the FLN were battling to determine the political future of Algeria. Benjamin Stora points out, however, that "for both organizations the nature of the future independent Algerian society was not at issue."[77] Predictably, the interorganizational violence had a "devastating" effect on the mutually expressed goal of the MNA and the FLN to end the French occupation.[78] Terrorist organizations also undermined their political platforms by targeting each other more than their mutually declared enemy in the violent clashes in Aden between the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen and the National Liberation Front in 1967; in Argentina between Marxist terrorist organizations in the late 1970s; and in the Gaza Strip between Palestinian groups "fighting for a common cause" during the first intifada.[79] In recent years, the same phenomenon has been endemic in terrorist hot spots. In Chechnya, local terrorist organizations have been terrorizing each other despite their joint political platform to establish Chechen independence. And in southern Iraq, Shiite militias with a shared ideological stance have been mainly blowing each other up, to the obvious benefit of the Sunnis.[80] That ter-

the LTTE," in Tore Bjorgo, ed., *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality, and Ways Forward* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 134.

74. Pape, *Dying to Win*, pp. 139–140.

75. Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, pp. 81–82.

76. Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Context* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1995), p. 483.

77. Benjamin Stora, *Algeria, 1830–2000: A Short History*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 59.

78. Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, p. 484.

79. Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, p. 44. See also Jonathan Schanzer, "Palestinian Uprisings Compared," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Summer 2002), pp. 27–38; and Peter H. Merkl, "Approaches to the Study of Political Violence," in Merkl, *Political Violence and Terror*, p. 45.

80. Ann Scott Tyson, "Attacks in Iraq Continue to Decline," *Washington Post*, October 31, 2007; and Anthony H. Cordesman, "Still Losing? The June 2007 Edition of 'Measuring Stability in Iraq,'"

rorist organizations frequently undercut their stated political agenda is puzzling for the strategic model because terrorists are presumed to be primarily motivated to achieving it.

PUZZLE #7: NEVER-ENDING TERRORISM
The strategic model assumes that terrorist organizations disband or renounce terrorism when it continuously fails to advance their political platforms.[81] To act otherwise, Pape says, is "deeply irrational" because "that would not constitute learning."[82] Yet terrorist organizations survive for decades, notwithstanding their political futility.[83]

The primary explanation for war in the bargaining literature is that rational actors miscalculate the capability and resolve of their opponents.[84] Proponents of the strategic model might speculate that terrorist organizations are acting rationally; they simply overestimate the likelihood that attacking civilians will coerce their governments into making policy concessions. The problem with this argument is that informational explanations provide a poor account of protracted conflict. James Fearon has shown that after a few years of war, fighters on both sides are expected to develop accurate understandings of their relative capabilities and resolve.[85] The idea that terrorists misjudge the coercive effectiveness of their violence therefore does not obtain because terrorist organizations exist for decades despite their political hopelessness. As Loren Lomasky observes, the strategic model "impute[s] to terrorists no lesser rationality than that which social analysts routinely ascribe to other actors. . . . Rational agents are not systematically unable to distinguish efficacious from inefficacious activity."[86] The longevity of terrorist organizations relative to

Working Paper (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 20, 2007), http://www.thewashingtonnote.com/archives/IraqStab&Security06-20%5B1%5D.htm.
81. See Bruce Hoffman and Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* Vol. 27, No. 4 (July 2004), p. 252. See also Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism," p. 16.
82. Pape, *Dying to Win,* pp. 63–64.
83. Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," p. 47. See also Martha Crenshaw, "How Terrorism Declines," in Clark McCauley, ed., *Terrorism Research and Public Policy* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), p. 79.
84. Erik Gartzke, "War Is in the Error Term," *International Organization,* Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer 1999), p. 573.
85. James D. Fearon, "Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer than Others?" *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 41, No. 3 (May 2004), p. 290. See also Branislav L. Slantchev, "The Power to Hurt: Costly Conflict with Completely Informed States," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), p. 123.
86. Loren E. Lomasky, "The Political Significance of Terrorism," in Frey and Morris, *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice,* p. 90.

their political accomplishments therefore conflicts with the strategic model's assumption that terrorism is based on the logic of consequence.

Conversely, the strategic model assumes that because terrorists are motivated by relatively stable policy aims, the violence will cease when the organization's stated grievances have been lifted.[87] A puzzle for the model then is that terrorist organizations resist disbanding when their political rationales have become moot.[88] Pape's research demonstrates that contemporary guerrilla campaigns have coerced major policy concessions from target countries; yet none of the organizations that also use terrorism have disbanded.[89] Hezbollah, for example, remains an operational terrorist group, despite the fact that its guerrilla attacks on the Israel Defense Forces achieved the stated goal of liberating southern Lebanon in May 2000. When their political rationale is losing relevance, terrorist organizations commonly invent one. Klaus Wasmund's case study of the RAF shows, for example, that the German terrorists were "aggravated" when the Vietnam War ended because they suddenly faced a "dilemma of finding a suitable revolutionary subject." Instead of abandoning the armed struggle, the RAF turned overnight into a militant advocate of the Palestinian cause.[90] Similarly, the 9/11 commission explains that upon discovering in April 1988 that the Soviets were planning to withdraw from Afghanistan, the mujahideen made the collective decision to remain intact while they hunted for a new political cause.[91] In this way, terrorist organizations contrive a new political raison d'être, belying the assumption that terrorists are motivated by relatively stable policy preferences reflected in their organizations' political platforms.

What Terrorists Really Want

These seven puzzles challenge the strategic model with disconfirming evidence of its core assumptions that terrorists (1) are motivated by relatively consistent and stable political goals issued by the terrorist organization; (2) weigh the expected political costs and benefits of the most obvious options; and (3) opt for a strategy of terrorism because of its expected political effectiveness
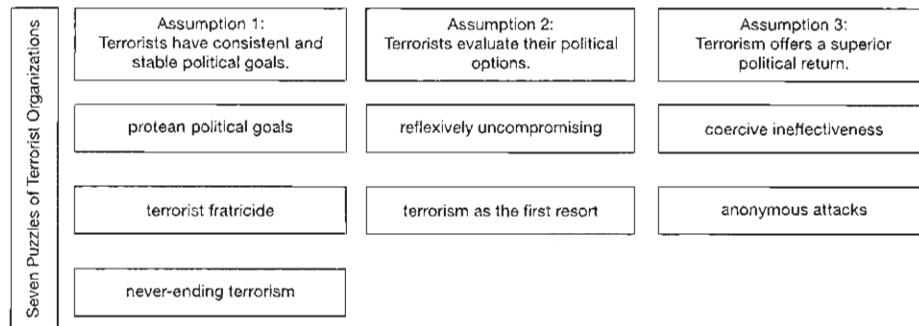
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87. See Pape, *Dying to Win*, p. 94.

88. See Crenshaw, "How Terrorism Ends," p. 80. See also Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (July 1981), p. 397.

89. Pape, *Dying to Win*, p. 109.

90. Klaus Wasmund, "The Political Socialization of West German Terrorists," in Merkl, *Political Violence and Terror*, p. 221. See also Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, p. 179.

91. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), p. 56.

Figure 1. The Empirical Weakness of the Strategic Model

	Assumption 1: Terrorists have consistent and stable political goals.	Assumption 2: Terrorists evaluate their political options.	Assumption 3: Terrorism offers a superior political return.
Seven Puzzles of Terrorist Organizations	protean political goals	reflexively uncompromising	coercive ineffectiveness
	terrorist fratricide	terrorism as the first resort	anonymous attacks
	never-ending terrorism		

NOTE: The strategic model's assumptions are obviously interrelated; there is no implication that each puzzle violates only one of them.

(see Figure 1). The puzzles suggest that the strategic model is flawed in one of two ways: either terrorists are irrational people who minimize their utility or the model misspecifies their incentive structure. Psychiatric studies reveal that terrorists are not irrational.[92] This implies that the foremost objective of terrorists may not be to achieve their organization's political platform.

The tremendous number and variation of terrorist organizations in the world preclude a single causal explanation for terrorism that obtains in every situation. The equifinality of terrorism ensures that any causal explanation is necessarily probabilistic, not deterministic.[93] This section demonstrates, however, that an alternative incentive structure has superior explanatory power. There is comparatively strong theoretical and empirical evidence that people become terrorists not to achieve their organization's declared political agenda, but to develop strong affective ties with other terrorist members. In other words, the preponderance of evidence is that people participate in terrorist organizations for the social solidarity, not for their political return.

Organization theories are potentially useful for explaining terrorist motives because nearly all terrorist attacks are perpetrated by members of terrorist organizations.[94] The natural systems model, a leading approach in organization theory, posits that people participate in organizations not to achieve their

92. Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, p. 14. See also Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 81.
93. Karen Rasler, "Review Symposium: Understanding Suicide Terror," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (February 2007), p. 118. See also Krueger, *What Makes a Terrorist*, p. x.
94. See Christopher Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to al-Qaida* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 57. See also Krueger, *What Makes a Terrorist*, p. 71.

official goals, but to experience social solidarity with other members. After briefly describing the natural systems model, I demonstrate its applicability to understanding terrorists' motives.[95]

THE NATURAL SYSTEMS MODEL

Organization theory has been dominated by two dueling models since the 1930s: the classical model and the natural systems model, which counts many more adherents.[96] Classical organization theorists such as Max Weber and Frederick Taylor conceived of the organization as a set of arrangements oriented toward maximizing output. In the classical model, members participate in an organization solely to achieve its stated goals. According to this view, the effectiveness and rationality of an organization therefore depend entirely on the degree to which its actions advance its official aims.[97] In assuming that terrorists are motivated to achieving their organizations' stated political goals, the strategic model is predicated on the antiquated views of the classical model, which faced almost immediate opposition.

Chester Barnard, the father of the natural systems model, exposed the classical fallacy of equating the official goals of an organization with the goals of its members. Barnard demonstrated that most individuals engage in a cost-benefit analysis of whether to participate in an organization based on its personal inducements, which have little if any connection to the organization's stated goals. For Barnard, the most important incentive is what he called the "condition of communion," the sense of solidarity from participating in a social collectivity.[98]

The natural systems model stresses that there is often a disconnect between the official goals of an organization and the latent social goals governing its behavior. The loose coupling of organizational practices with official goals implies that the failure to achieve them may be entirely satisfactory from the perspective of its members.[99] In fact, the model emphasizes that organizations

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95. In the select cases where terrorism scholars have explicitly employed a variant of organization theory, they invariably present it as a secondary lens to complement—not contest—the strategic model. See, for example, Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, p. 3; Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, p. 79; and Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, pp. 11, 25.
96. See Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1972), p. 75; and Pfeffer, *Organizations and Organization Theory*, p. 72.
97. Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* (London: Heinemann, 1988), p. 149; Paul S. Goodman and Johannes M. Pennings, eds., *New Perspectives on Organizational Effectiveness* (London: Jossey-Bass, 1981), p. 3; and W. Richard Scott, "Effectiveness of Organizational Effectiveness Studies," in Goodman and Pennings, *New Perspectives on Organizational Effectiveness*, p. 75.
98. Chester I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), pp. 17, 85, 145–146, 148.
99. Ibid., pp. 145–146, 148. See also W. Richard Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Sys-*

will act to perpetuate their existence—even when doing so undermines their official goals—whenever members attach utmost importance to the social benefits of the organization.[100]

If people participate in terrorist organizations primarily to achieve social solidarity, one would therefore expect to find (1) evidence at the individual level that people are mainly attracted to terrorist organizations not to achieve their official political platforms, but to develop strong affective ties with other terrorist members; and (2) evidence at the organizational level that terrorist groups consistently engage in actions to preserve the social unit, even when these impede their official political agendas. There is compelling evidence at both levels of analysis.

TERRORISTS AS SOCIAL SOLIDARITY SEEKERS
Empirical evidence is accumulating in terrorism studies and political psychology that individuals participate in terrorist organizations not to achieve their political platforms, but to develop strong affective ties with fellow terrorists.

First, psychologist Jeff Victoroff has concluded in a précis of the terrorism literature that "the claim that no individual factors identify those at risk for becoming terrorists is based on completely inadequate research."[101] Terrorist organizations appeal disproportionately to certain psychological types of people, namely, the socially alienated. Melvin Seeman defines alienation broadly as the feeling of loneliness, rejection, or exclusion from valued relationships, groups, or societies.[102] Demographic data show that the vast majority of terrorist organizations are composed of unmarried young men or widowed women who were not gainfully employed prior to joining them.[103] Other demographic

tems, 3d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992), pp. 5, 51; and Walter W. Powell, "Expanding the Scope of Institutional Analysis," in Walter.W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 183.
100. See David M. Austin, "The Political Economy of Social Benefit Organizations: Redistributive Services and Merit Goods," in Herman D. Stein, ed., *Organization and the Human Services: Cross-Disciplinary Reflections* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), p. 170. See also David L. Clark, "Emerging Paradigms: In Organizational Theory and Research," in Yvonna S. Lincoln, ed., *Organizational Theory and Inquiry: The Paradigm Revolution* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1985), p. 59.
101. See Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (February 2005), p. 34.
102. Melvin Seeman, "Alienation and Engagement," in Angus Campbell and Philip E. Converse, eds., *The Human Meaning of Social Change* (New York: Russell Sage, 1972), pp. 472–473.
103. For research on the prevalence of these demographic characteristics in a wide variety of terrorist organizations, see Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, pp. 151–152; Alex P. Schmid, "Why Terrorism? Root Causes, Some Empirical Findings, and the Case of 9/11," presentation to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France, April 26–27, 2007, p. 12; Ariel Merari, "Social, Organizational, and Psychological Factors in Suicide Terrorism," in Bjorgo, *Root Causes of Terrorism*, p. 75; Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, p. 95; Rex A. Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism" (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, September 1999); Charles

studies show that terrorist organizations are frequent repositories for people undergoing dislocation from their native homeland who are therefore detached from family, friends, and the host society they are attempting to join. Marc Sageman's study of 172 global Salafi jihadists demonstrates that these risk factors are particularly prevalent among the crucial case of al-Qaida members, 80 percent of whom are "cultural outcasts living at the margins of society" as unassimilated first- or second-generation immigrants in non-Muslim countries.[104] Analysts who study al-Qaida are increasingly finding that European Muslims are unassimilated in their host countries and represent a core constituency of al-Qaida, whereas Muslims in the United States are comparatively assimilated and detached from the al-Qaida network.[105] Variation on the independent variable of alienation or social isolation can therefore explain variation on the dependent variable for joining al-Qaida. The high correlation of what Albert Bandura calls "conducive social conditions" among the hundreds of terrorist members for whom data exist is consistent with my argument that most individuals participate in terrorist organizations to achieve social solidarity.[106]

Second, members from a wide variety of terrorist groups—including ETA, the IRA, the Italian Communist Party, the RAF, the Red Brigades, Turkish terrorist organizations, and the Weather Underground—say that they joined these armed struggles not because of their personal attachment to their political or ideological agendas, but to maintain or develop social relations with other terrorist members.[107] These are not the statements of a small number of terrorists; in the Turkish sample, for instance, the 1,100 terrorists interviewed

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A. Russell and Bowman A. Miller, "Profile of a Terrorist," in John D. Elliott and Leslie K. Gibson, eds., *Contemporary Terrorism: Selected Readings* (Gaithersburg, Md.: International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1978), pp. 81–95; and Stern, "The Protean Enemy," p. 6. In Sageman's sample, many of the jihadists are married, but most researchers believe that the jihadist population is overwhelmingly single.

104. Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, p. 92. See also Olivier Roy, "Terrorism and Deculturation," in Louise Richardson, ed., *The Roots of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 159–160; Stern, "The Protean Enemy," p. 7; and *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 231.

105. See Roy, "Terrorism and Deculturation," p. 166.

106. Albert Bandura, "Psychological Mechanisms of Aggression," in Mario von Cranach, ed., *Human Ethology: Claims and Limits of a New Discipline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Proponents of the strategic model reject the idea that individuals turn to terrorism because they are socially alienated; their evidence, ironically, is that people who join a terrorist organization are sometimes embraced, even celebrated, by their surrounding communities. See, for example, Pape, *Dying to Win*, chap. 10.

107. See, for example, Schmid, "Why Terrorism?" p. 11; Robert W. White, "Political Violence by the Nonaggrieved," in Donatella Della Porta, ed., *International Social Movement Research*, Vol. 4 (Greenwich, Conn.: Jai Press, 1992), p. 92; Wasmund, "The Political Socialization of West German Terrorists," pp. 209–212; Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism," p. 37; and Richard G. Braungart and Margaret M. Braungart, "From Protest to Terrorism: The Case of the SDS and the Weathermen," in Della Porta, *International Social Movement Research*, p. 73.

were ten times more likely to say that they joined the terrorist organization "because their friends were members" than because of the "ideology" of the group.[108]

Third, recent studies on al-Qaida, Fatah, Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Turkish terrorists have found that the key scope condition for their joining the terrorist organization was having a friend or relative in it—a conclusion consistent with prior research on ETA, the IRA, and both Italian and German right-wing and Marxist terrorist groups.[109] These findings are also consistent with a fascinating July 2007 study of Guantanamo Bay detainees. Researchers from West Point's Combating Terrorism Center found in their sample of 516 detainees that knowing an al-Qaida member was a significantly better predictor than believing in the jihad for turning to terrorism—even when a militant definition of jihad was used and other variables were held constant.[110] The strategic model cannot explain why the vast majority of politically discontented people do not use terrorism. Yet the requirement of social linkages to the terrorist organization can explain the difference between the large pool of socially isolated people and the relatively small number who become terrorists.[111]

Fourth, case studies of al-Qaida, Aum Shinrikyo, Hezbollah, the IRA, the RAF, the Weather Underground, and Chechen and Palestinian terrorist groups have concluded that most of the terrorists in these groups participated in the armed struggle to improve their relationships with other terrorists or to reduce their sense of alienation from society, usually both.[112] These studies emphasize that social bonds preceded ideological commitment, which was an effect, not a cause, of becoming a terrorist member.[113]

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108. See Schmid, "Why Terrorism?" p. 11.
109. See, for example, White, "Political Violence by the Nonaggrieved," p. 93; Jerrold M. Post, Ehud Sprinzak, and Laurita M. Denny, "The Terrorists in Their Own Words: Interviews with 35 Incarcerated Middle Eastern Terrorists," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (March 2003), pp. 171–184; Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, p. 92; and Schmid, "Why Terrorism?" p. 11.
110. Joseph Felter and Jarret Brachman, "An Assessment of 516 Combatant Status Review Tribunal Unclassified Summaries," CTC Report (West Point, N.Y.: Combating Terrorism Center, July 15, 2007), pp. 24–25, 34.
111. For discussion of the fundamental problem of specificity in terrorism studies, see Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, chap. 4. See also Weinberg, *Global Terrorism*, p. 82.
112. See, for example, Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism," p. 148; Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, p. 95; Merkl, "Approaches to the Study of Political Violence," p. 42; Jerrold M. Post, "The Socio-cultural Underpinnings of Terrorist Psychology: 'When Hatred Is Bred in the Bone,'" in Bjorgo, *Root Causes of Terrorism*, p. 55; *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 231; and Braungart and Braungart, "From Protest to Terrorism," p. 68.
113. The studies on suicide terrorists devote extra attention to this point. One explanation for why suicide terrorists appear relatively apolitical is that organization leaders prefer expending members with no prior connection to the organization or its political cause. See Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, pp. 126, 131–133, 152–154. See also Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, pp. 93, 135.

Fifth, many terrorist foot soldiers and even their leaders never develop a basic understanding of their organization's political purpose. This finding strengthens the argument that ideological commitment enters through the back door, if at all, of terrorist organizations. In his study of the IRA, for example, Robert White found that nearly half of the terrorists he interviewed were unaware of the discrimination in Northern Ireland against Catholics, despite the salience of this issue in IRA communiqués.[114] According to Olivier Roy, Mia Bloom, and a former mujahideen, al-Qaida foot soldiers and their leaders are often ignorant about the basic tenets of Islam, if not bin Laden's political vision.[115] Al-Qaida is unexceptional in this regard; Richardson's research shows that "a striking and quite surprising" aspect of terrorism is that the leaders of "very different terrorist movements" are unable to explain their basic political purpose.[116] When asked to describe the society that their organizations hoped to achieve, the leader of the Shining Path conceded, "We have not studied the question sufficiently"; the founder of the RAF responded, "That is not our concern"; the leader of the Japanese Red Army replied, "We really do not know what it will be like"; and the spokesman for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia acknowledged, "I must admit that we have yet to define this aspect."[117] Audrey Cronin has found that leaders of both left-wing and anarchist terrorist groups are also "notorious for their inability to articulate a clear vision of their [political] goals."[118] That even terrorist leaders frequently cannot explain their organizations' political purpose suggests that members have a different motive for participating in them.[119]

Sixth, terrorist organizations focus their recruitment on the socially isolated, not on people with a demonstrable commitment to their given political cause.

114. White, "Political Violence by the Nonaggrieved," p. 83. See also Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, *The Terrorists: Their Weapons, Leaders, and Tactics* (New York: Facts on File, 1981), p. 32.
115. Roy, "Terrorism and Deculturation," pp. 159–160; Mia Bloom, "The Transformation of Suicide Bombing Campaigns: Sectarian Violence and Recruitment in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq," paper presented at the "Terrorist Organizations: Social Science Research on Terrorism" conference, University of California, San Diego, May 4, 2007; and Nasiri, *Inside the Jihad*, p. 279.
116. Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, pp. 85–86. See also Laqueur, *Terrorism*, p. 81.
117. Quoted in Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, pp. 86–87.
118. Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends," p. 23. See also Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, p. 172.
119. That terrorist members often appear uninterested and uninformed regarding their organization's official political agenda is actually not surprising. Terrorists—be it al-Qaida operatives, Red Brigadists, RAF members, the Weathermen, or the Tupamaros of Uruguay—have rarely hailed from the constituencies they claim to represent; many terrorist organizations do not train or indoctrinate their members in any ideology; and terrorists are often "walk-ins" who have no prior association with the terrorist organization or its political cause before volunteering for an operation. See *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 228, 232; Dipak K. Gupta, "Exploring Roots of Terrorism," in Bjorgo, *Root Causes of Terrorism*, p. 19; Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, pp. 132–133; Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, p. 15; and Crenshaw, "How Terrorists Think," p. 73.

Pedahzur's research, for example, shows that Hezbollah, the PKK, and Chechen and Palestinian groups recruit young, unemployed men "who have never found their place in the community," not fervent nationalists committed to political change.[120] Similarly, Peter Merkl shows that Marxist terrorist groups have historically recruited unemployed youth with "failed personal lives" who lacked "political direction."[121] Gregory Johnsen likewise suggests that al-Qaida, at least in Yemen, focuses its recruitment not on committed jihadists, but on "young and largely directionless" socially marginalized Muslim men.[122]

Seventh, terrorist organizations are particularly attractive outlets for those seeking solidarity. According to political psychologists, terrorist groups are far more tight-knit than other voluntary associations because of the extreme dangers and costs of participation, as well as their tendency to violate societal expectations.[123] This observation may account for the fact that even when terrorist organizations fail to achieve their political platforms, committing acts of terrorism tends to generate new recruits, boost membership morale, and otherwise strengthen the social unit.[124]

Eighth, terrorists seem to prefer participating in terrorist groups and activities most conducive to developing strong affective ties with fellow terrorists. Jacob Shapiro has found that within the al-Qaida network, terrorists prefer operating in more centralized, cohesive clusters of cliques.[125] Indeed, since the emergence of modern international terrorism, terrorists have flocked to where other terrorists—regardless of their political orientation—were gathered. In the 1970s, thousands of terrorists from dozens of countries and organizations descended on training camps run by the Palestine Liberation Organization; in the 1980s and mid-1990s, the locus of terrorist activity shifted first to Afghanistan to train with the Afghan mujahideen and then to al-Qaida camps. Based on her interviews with terrorists, Jessica Stern has likened these adventures to an "Outward Bound" experience for young men seeking challenges, excitement, and above all "friendship" with fellow terrorists of diverse political

120. Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism*, pp. 137–138, 168.
121. Merkl, *Political Violence and Terror*, p. 42.
122. Gregory Johnsen, "Securing Yemen's Cooperation in the Second Phase of the War on al-Qa'ida," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (December 2007), p. 34.
123. Crenshaw, "How Terrorists Think," p. 73; and Crenshaw, "The Psychology of Political Terrorism," in M.G. Hermann, ed., *Political Psychology: Contemporary Problems and Issues* (San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 1986), p. 394. See also Shira Fishman, "Perceptions of Closeness as a Function of Group Importance," University of Maryland, 2007.
124. See Richardson, *What Terrorists Want*, p. 301; Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, pp. 19, 39; and Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, pp. 73–75.
125. Jacob N. Shapiro, "The Terrorist's Challenge: Security, Efficiency, Control," paper presented at the "Terrorist Organizations: Social Science Research on Terrorism" conference.

backgrounds.[126] First-hand accounts from these camps confirm that the terrorists often had little idea or preference where they would fight upon completing their training.[127]

Ninth, there is circumstantial evidence that terrorist organizations collapse when they cease to be perceived as desirable social collectivities worth joining. David Rapoport's research demonstrates that throughout history terrorist organizations have disbanded when their members grew old, tired of waging the armed struggle, and their group failed to appeal to the younger generation.[128] Cronin's research on the decline of terrorist groups also lists "generational transition failure" as their leading cause of death.[129] The tendency for terrorist groups to die out in the course of a "human life cycle"—irrespective of the state of their political grievances—suggests that they appeal to new members primarily for social, not political, reasons.

The research landscape is constrained by the limited reliable demographic data on terrorists, representative samples, and controlled studies to firmly establish causation. In the aggregate, however, there is mounting empirical evidence that people may participate in terrorist organizations mainly to achieve social solidarity, not their official political agendas. This incentive structure is testable. The natural systems model posits that when members attach utmost importance to an organization's social benefits, the organization will seek to prolong its existence, even when doing so impedes its official goals. This is precisely the way terrorist organizations typically behave.

THE PUZZLES REVISITED

The seven puzzles are perplexing for the strategic model because they demonstrate that terrorist organizations behave more as social solidarity maximizers than as political maximizers. The puzzles are easily resolved from the vantage of organization theory. The natural systems model predicts that terrorist organizations will routinely engage in actions to perpetuate and justify their exis-

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126. Stern, *Terror in the Name of God*, p. 5.
127. Nasiri, *Inside the Jihad*, pp. 151, 178, 217.
128. David C. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism," *Current History*, Vol. 100, No. 650 (December 2001), pp. 419–424. See also David C. Rapoport, "Generations and Waves: The Keys to Understanding Rebel Terror Movements," paper presented at the "Seminar on Global Affairs," Ronald W. Burkle Center for International Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, November 7, 2003, http://www.international.ucla.edu/cms/files/David_Rapoport_Waves_of_Terrorism.pdf.
129. Cronin's superb study identifies seven reasons why terrorist organizations have historically gone out of business. More terrorist organizations suffered from the failure to make the "generational transition" than from any of the other six reasons explored. It should be noted that Cronin does not purport to categorize the universe of terrorist groups. See Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends," p. 19.

tence, even when these undermine their official political agendas. True to the model, terrorist organizations (1) prolong their existence by relying on a strategy that hardens target governments from making policy concessions; (2) ensure their continued viability by resisting opportunities to peacefully participate in the democratic process; (3) avoid disbanding by reflexively rejecting negotiated settlements that offer significant policy concessions; (4) guarantee their survival by espousing a litany of protean political goals that can never be fully satisfied;[130] (5) avert organization-threatening reprisals by conducting anonymous attacks, even though they preclude the possibility of coercing policy concessions; (6) annihilate ideologically identical terrorist organizations that compete for members, despite the adverse effect on their stated political cause; and (7) refuse to split up after the armed struggle has proven politically unsuccessful for decades or its political rationale has become moot.

None of these common tendencies of terrorist organizations advances their official political agendas, but all of them help to ensure the survival of the social unit. Together, they reveal the operating decision rules of terrorist members. Whereas the strategic model locates the motives of terrorists in the official goals of the terrorist organization, the trade-offs it makes provides direct insight into its members' incentive structure. Just as economists measure utility functions through revealed preferences, terrorism scholars need not make comparisons among utilities.[131] The seven puzzles discussed above contradict the strategic model because terrorists already make such trade-offs by regularly prioritizing the maintenance of the terrorist organization over the advancement of its official political agenda as predicted by the natural systems model.[132]

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130. The tendency for terrorist organizations to issue protean political demands may dissuade target countries from making policy concessions. See Paul Wilkinson, "Security Challenges in the New Reality," paper presented at the 33d IFPA-Fletcher Conference on National Security Strategy and Policy, Washington, D.C., October 16, 2002, http://www.ifpafletcherconference.com/oldtranscripts/2002/wilkinson.htm.

131. For a similar argument unrelated to terrorist motivations, see Jeffrey Pfeffer, "Usefulness of the Concept," in Goodman and Pennings, *New Perspectives on Organizational Effectiveness*, p. 137. On revealed preferences, see Amartya Sen, "Behaviour and the Concept of Preference," in Elster, *Rational Choice*, pp. 61, 67.

132. In this way, the role of social solidarity is very different in terrorist organizations than in conventional armies. In the military, training is designed to foster in-group cohesion not as the end goal, but as a means to enhance battlefield performance. Unlike terrorist organizations, conventional armies therefore do not regularly sacrifice their political goals for the social benefit of the fighting unit. On the complementary relationship between small unit cohesion and military performance, see James Griffith, "Institutional Motives for Serving in the U.S. Army National Guard," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 20, No. 10 (May 2007), pp. 1–29; and Guy L. Siebold, "The Essence of Military Group Cohesion," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (January 2007), pp. 286–295.

In sum, the seven puzzles for the strategic model challenge the prevailing view that terrorists are rational people who use terrorism for political ends. The preponderance of theoretical and empirical evidence is that people participate in terrorist organizations not to achieve their official political platforms, but to develop strong affective ties with fellow terrorists—an incentive structure reflected in the trade-offs terrorist organizations typically make to maintain their survival. If terrorists generally attach greater importance to the social benefits than to the political benefits of using terrorism, then extant counterterrorism strategies require fundamental change.

Counterterrorism Implications

The most common counterterrorism strategies are designed to reduce terrorism by divesting it of its political utility. The predominant strategy is to deter terrorism by decreasing its political utility via a strict no concessions policy.[133] Like most heads of state, President George W. Bush believes that terrorism will desist when its practitioners realize that "these crimes only hurt their [political] cause."[134] Although target governments rarely appease terrorists, there is also a widespread belief in the international community that they can be defused through political accommodation.[135] Proponents of this second strategy urge rekindling stalled peace processes, for example, to deny prospective political benefits from using terrorism. The third most common counterterrorism strategy is democracy promotion, which is intended to decrease terrorism's utility by empowering citizens to peacefully address their country's political problems.[136] All three strategies have poor track records. As I have shown, terrorist organizations often resist disbanding in the face of consistent political failure, in spite of the ending of their immediate political grievances, and even when presented with peaceful alternatives for political gain.

Why does withholding political concessions, granting political concessions, or providing nonviolent political alternatives fail so often to eradicate terrorism? The strategic model's premise that terrorists are political maximizers is empirically weak. Strategies to dry up the demand for terrorism by minimizing its political utility are misguided and hence unlikely to work on any sys-

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133. See Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism, Legitimacy, and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), p. 10.
134. Quoted in Alan M. Dershowitz, *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 17.
135. Laqueur, *Terrorism*, p. 5.
136. See George W. Bush, "President Discusses War on Terror," National Defense University, Washington, D.C., March 8, 2005, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/03/20050308-3.html.

tematic basis. The evidence is stronger that terrorists tend to think and act more as social solidarity maximizers, which requires a different counterterrorism approach.

Both supply-side and demand-side counterterrorism strategies must be informed by the terrorist's incentive structure. Supply-side strategies can help law enforcement identify potential terrorists, unravel covert networks, and even thwart terrorist attacks by exploiting the knowledge that people tend to participate in terrorist groups to develop strong affective ties with fellow terrorists. There is no single "terrorist personality," but certain communities are prone to terrorism. Law enforcement must pay greater attention to the socially marginalized than to the politically downtrodden. This includes diaspora communities in Western countries that host large unassimilated, dislocated populations such as the Maghrebin in France; single, unemployed, Islamist men residing in comparatively secular Muslim countries such as in Pakistan; restive, youthful populations that feel estranged from the state such as in Saudi Arabia; and prison populations, which, by definition, are home to the socially isolated and dislocated. These are impossibly large groups of people to monitor. Law enforcement can tighten the noose considerably by exploiting the fact that terrorist groups are composed of networks of friends and family members, and that knowing one of them is the key scope condition for entry into the group. Governments should utilize this knowledge to aggressively boost funding of social network analysis (SNA) research. SNA is a mathematical method for mapping and studying relationships between people, with untapped counterterrorism potential. The basic idea is to trace the social relations or "links" emanating from known terrorists or suspects, and then connect the dots between these "nodes" of people, to estimate the probability of their involvement in the terrorist network. People who email, talk on the phone, or intentionally meet with terrorists or their close friends are statistically more likely to be complicit. In this way, SNA can help law enforcement identify and then surveil the inner circle. Because acquaintances can also play a critical role in the network, greater data-mining power and accuracy need to be developed to expose these weak ties without undue infringements on civil liberties.[137]

Demand-side strategies should focus on divesting terrorism's social utility, in two ways. First, it is vital to drive a wedge between organization members. Since the advent of modern terrorism in the late 1960s, the sole counterterrorism strategy that was a clear-cut success attacked the social bonds of the

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137. For a useful primer on SNA, see Patrick Radden Keefe, "Can Network Theory Thwart Terrorists?" *New York Times*, March 12, 2006. See also Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, pp. 163, 169, 178.

terrorist organization, not its utility as a political instrument. By commuting prison sentences in the early 1980s in exchange for actionable intelligence against their fellow Brigatisti, the Italian government infiltrated the Red Brigades, bred mistrust and resentment among the members, and quickly rolled up the organization.[138] Similar deals should be cut with al-Qaida in cases where detainees' prior involvement in terrorism and their likelihood of rejoining the underground are minor. Greater investment in developing and seeding double agents will also go a long way toward weakening the social ties undergirding terrorist organizations and cells around the world. Second, counterterrorism strategies must reduce the demand for at-risk populations to turn to terrorist organizations in the first place. To lessen Muslims' sense of alienation from democratic societies, these societies must improve their records of cracking down on bigotry, supporting hate-crime legislation, and most crucially, encouraging moderate places of worship—an important alternative for dislocated youth to develop strong affective ties with politically moderate peers and mentors. In authoritarian countries, an abrupt transition to democracy risks empowering extremists.[139] These regimes must, however, permit the development of civil society to provide opportunities for the socially disenfranchised to bond in peaceful voluntary associations. Counterterrorism operations must also redouble their efforts to minimize collateral damage, which invariably creates dislocation, social isolation, and calls for revenge. Such policies will help reduce the incentive and therefore incidence of terrorism by diminishing its social benefits, which are what its practitioners apparently value most.

138. See Bruce Hoffman, "Foreword," in Cindy C. Combs, *Twenty-first Century Terrorism* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1996), pp. v–18.
139. F. Gregory Gause III, "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (September/October 2005), pp. 62–76.