

## PEEPING INTO THE MIND OF A TERRORIST

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Terrorism escapes definition, so does a terrorist. Even still we have terrorists in the real world despite confusing theoretical morass. The million dollar question is who he? What is his psychological profile? Is he a psychiatric patient, mentally ill or a normal person with typical idiosyncratic behavioral syndrome? or its a simple labeling proving tyranny of majority? Terrorism as i understand is a political communication between the controller and controlled, a weapon system of the weak, a propaganda of deed, whereby terrorists kill one to humiliate thousands to subvert the legitimate socio- political orders, its definitely not a philosophy nor an ideology for sure. Tentatively we understand terrorism is an organized system of extreme and violent intimidation to create instability within democracies. International terrorists seek to launch indiscriminate and unpredictable attacks on groups (police, army, multinational, business etc.) or nations to change the politico economic balance of the world.( T P Thornton,1964, Madnawat A.V.S. & Bhardwas, 2009 (In Press)) Individuals with particular personality dispositions are drawn to the path of terrorism. A feature in common among many terrorists is a tendency to externalize, to seek outside sources to blame for personal inadequacies. Without being frankly paranoid, there is an over-reliance on the ego defense of projection.( Kaplan, 1984)

Other prominent traits were a defensive grandiosity, an exaggerated self-absorption with little regard for the feelings of others. On the basis of psycho dynamically oriented interviews with a small group of Red Army Faction (RAF) terrorists, Bollinger found psychological dynamics resembling those found in narcissistic borderlines. He was particularly struck by the history of narcissistic wounds, which led to a deficient sense of self-esteem and inadequately integrated personalities. .( Buunk, B. P., Zurriage, R., Perior, J. M., Nauta, A., & Gonsalvez, I. (2005)) These psychological characteristics are associated with certain psychosocial features, a pattern of psychosocial vulnerabilities which renders those who become terrorists especially susceptible to the powerful influences of group and organizational

dynamics. In particular there are data which suggest that as a consequence of troubled family backgrounds many terrorists have an incomplete psychosocial identity and an exaggerated need to belong. But the recruits of terror today are not simply heretics, orphans, homeless, psychiatric patients and psychopaths. The classical psychiatric profile of a terrorists neither befitting nor relevant. The individual psychology of a terrorist portrays him as a person with particular personality disposition viz a tendency to externalize, to seek external source to blame for personal inadequacies, overreliance on ego defence of projectio, if not paranoid, defensive grandiosity and exaggerated self absorption sans little regard for others and having the psychodynamics resembling borderline narcissistic, low self esteem and disorganized personality .traditionally we also describe a pattern of psychosocial vulnerabilities like troubled family background and incomplete psychosocial identity. They are often said to be orphans and witness failure in job, education and personal life. though not suffering from serious psychopathology there is no profound distortion in motivation and reality testing they are people with psychosocial wounds, which make the vulnerable for like minded people to blame and malattribute.....( Franco Ferrcuti, 1982)

The major study sponsored by the Ministry of the Interior of West Germany is illustrative. In their study of the epidemiology of terrorism, they found twenty-five per cent of terrorists had lost one or both parents by age fourteen. Fully a third had been convicted in juvenile court. There was a high frequency of job and educational failure. The lives of the terrorists before joining were characterized by social isolation and personal failure. For these lonely alienated individuals from the margins of society, the terrorist group was to become the family they never had. .(Wyer, R. S., Jr. (2004).)

To recapitulate, from the perspective of individual psychology, terrorists are not in the main suffering from serious psychopathology. They do not suffer from mental illness which could lead to the profound distortions of motivation and reality testing one

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would expect to be associated with the driven motivation to carry out an act of terrorist violence. But while essentially normal psychologically, there are psychosocial wounds which predispose them to seek affiliation with like-minded individuals who share their tendency to externalize and blame society for their own personal short-comings. (Baron, A. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2006). Jerrold Post, (1984). It is important to emphasize that in most decision making groups, for reasons elaborated above, individual judgment tends to be suspended and subordinated to the group process. This is exactly the climate in which the phenomenon identified by Janis as 'groupthink', can flourish. Occurring when groups make decisions under crisis conditions, it is defined as: 'high cohesiveness and... an accompanying concurrence-seeking tendency that interfered with critical thinking ... a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action... a deterioration of mental efficiency, reality testing and normal judgment that results from in-group pressures'. (A Liazos, 1972)

**The symptoms of groupthink include-**(a) Illusions of invulnerability leading to excessive optimism and excessive risk-taking. (b) Collective rationalization efforts to dismiss challenges to key assumptions. (c) Assumption of the group's morality. (d) Unidimensional perception of the enemy as evil (thereby denying feasibility of negotiation) or incompetent (thereby justifying risky alternatives). (e) Intolerance of challenges by a group member to shared key beliefs. (f) Unwillingness to express views which deviate from the perceived group consensus. (g) A shared illusion that unanimity is genuine. (h) The emergence of members who withhold adverse information from the group concerning the instrumental and moral soundness of its decisions. (Bersntren et. al., 2008) Semel and Minix have specifically investigated the effects of group dynamics on risk-taking. In a group-problem-solving

task, they found that US army groups shifted in the direction of riskier policy choices than the individual members had preferred privately. Individual tendencies were strongly reinforced and intensified as a result of interactions within the group. Moreover, the tendency of group members to conform to the preferences of the group was found to increase with the length of interactions with the group. (Thorton (1964). The phenomena described by Janis and by Semmel and Minix occur with psychologically healthy mature adults. If mature adults with healthy self-esteem and appreciation of their own individuality can slip into such flawed decision processes under the pressures of group dynamics, what of groups composed of individuals with weak self-esteem who depend upon the group for their sense of significance? Does this not suggest that such groups would be subject to such distorted decision processes in magnified degree? But a distorted decision process is not equivalent to total irrationality. (Evans, G. W., & Wener, R. E. (2006). So far as future of terrorism is concerned Jenkin observes: (a) Terrorism certainly will persist. (b) Probably it will increase. (c) Large-scale incidents will become more common. (d) At the same time, I don't think terrorism will enter the mind-boggling world of high technology or mass destruction. (e) In terms of tactics, targets and weapons, terrorism will be for the foreseeable future a continuation of the past. (f) States will continue to exploit terrorism—to use it for their own purposes. We may enter a protracted worldwide guerrilla war. (g) And terrorists will create crises, forcing governments and corporations to divert more and more resources toward combating them. (Wilkinson, P, at. al. (1987) Given the sophistry, coordination and urban warfare guerilla type Mumbai attacks, the terrorist of modern world is using low technology and high concept attacks in very planned manner. We need not outmatch them in preventive technology but also outmatch them in cerebral use to dismantle their organizational, financial and strategic infrastructure. (Bhardwas, V.K., 2008)

#### References-

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