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**E 310 Strategy for Nuclear Security and Combating Terrorism**  
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**Terrorist Groups:  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Threats**

**Term paper**  
**Based on a seminar presentation titled**  
**“Nuclear Terrorism: A Threat Assessment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**  
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**Table of contents**

**List of figures.....1**

**List of tables.....1**

**Introduction.....3**

**1. What is terrorism?.....4**

**1.1. Main definitions.....4**

**1.2. Different connotations of the concept.....4**

**1.3. Historical development.....5**

**1.4. Major reasons behind terrorism.....7**

**2. Main types of terrorist groups and examples .....9**

**2.1. Nationalist-separatist .....9**

**2.2. Social-revolutionary.....10**

**2.3. Right-wing.....10**

**2.4. Religious-fundamentalist.....12**

**2.5. New-religious.....17**

**3. Terrorism and WMD.....18**

**3.1. Major developments and threats for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.....18**

**3.2. Which groups is most likely to use WMD and why?.....19**

**3.3. Ways of prevention.....20**

**Conclusion.....21**

**References.....22**

**List of figures**

**Figure: Deaths in 2005 by Perpetrators Category.....19**

**List of tables**

**Table: Differentiating Motivations and Constraints for WMD Terrorism by Group Type.....20**

## **Introduction**

The September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania marked a turning point in history. This has been mainly because they marked a new type of terrorism, which is more determined and violent than ever. Despite the fact that terrorism is not a new phenomenon and there have been numerous and arbitrary definitions on the matter, the violence we face today is more dangerous, practiced by more educated and intelligent people who are prone to the use of WMD. The perpetrators, however, have not given up religion as their main tool to gain support and to legitimate bloodshed.

The end of the Cold War led to the end of the domination of the so called secular movements considered to be less violent and averse to the use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. There has been a process of returning to the religiously motivated terrorism that has been quite more violent than its 19<sup>th</sup> century predecessors. The factors for this shift have been numerous, the most notable one the end of the Cold War itself, globalization, the need of the young people to establish an identity and the constant rivalry among the terrorist groups.

This paper is going to present and analyze the main developments of terrorism, its perpetrator groups and the likelihood of one or more of these groups to employ nuclear weapons in their attacks. The main argument will be in favor of the political approach in explaining the reasons behind the major development in the history of terrorism, i.e. the return to religion. Thus the main focus of the paper will be on the use of religious dicta on the behalf of the terrorist leaders to motivate followers and supporters to their cause in order to achieve certain political aims. The outlook of several authors will support the major points of the paper, mainly Gavin Cameron's ideas and analyses on religious and ideological terrorism, and the comparison between left-wing and right-wing groups thus making a conclusion about the possibilities of the use of nuclear weapons; Bruce Hoffman' book "Inside Terrorism" which assesses the causes and the reasons behind the escalation of terrorist activities; and several other authors who have stated their opinion on the problems of the changing nature of terrorist groups and the respective new threats which those developments pose to our world at present.

The research methods include review and comparison of various views of academic literature writers to provide a comprehensive understanding on different themes. The first

chapter ponders on the concept of terrorism and its different connotations and usage; the problems related to the lack of a common definition, as well as the historical development of the concept through the ages. The second chapter provides information about the five main types of terrorist groups and their most “famous” names and attacks. The third chapter considers the relationship between terrorism and WMD, the likelihood of the use of nuclear weapons by a terrorist group in the near future and the possible ways for prevention from such grave threats. The conclusion lays out several recommendations which could be subject to further investigation and analysis. The paper is relevant because the use of nuclear weapons is considered to be one of the major goals of the modern terrorist groups which employ the use of religion, recruit highly educated people who are not afraid to die in the name of the cause and thus pose an imminent threat to numerous states and their people.

## **1. What is terrorism?**

### **1.1. Main definitions:**

There are numerous definitions of terrorism and no common one exists up to now. According to the 2005 UN panel, terrorism is the “intended [act] to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.”<sup>1</sup> The US States Department of Defense explains terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.”<sup>2</sup>

### **1.2. Different connotations:**

The main reasons for the lack of a common understanding and explanations of terrorism are many but for the purposes of this paper two of them are mostly important. First, definitions are often created by certain state agencies which serve the interests of their respective governments and thus are biased and allow the states’ agencies to apply double standards to the different groups. Second, it has been extremely difficult to define who is a terrorist and who is not accordingly to the common saying that “one man’s terrorist is another

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/terrorism\\_definitions.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/terrorism_definitions.html)

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <http://www.globalterrorism101.com/UTDefinition.html>

man's freedom fighter." All of the persons accused in terrorism have refused to acknowledge such accusations by perceiving themselves as patriots and even martyrs for independence. Thus the ultimate judgment is extremely subjective and ultimately not close to the truth. It is important to be noted that despite the difference among the numerous definitions and the connotations they bring, the modern people see terrorism in a negative, immoral and illegal way. All of the presently existing definitions depict terrorism in terms of its usage of violence or threat of violence which ultimately seeks to bring death and fear among the public and the governments. It is the change of the type of threat, however, as well as the degree of violence that mark the development of terrorism through the ages.

### **1.3. Historical development:**

Unlike the common thinking portrayed in the everyday media reports, terrorism is not a new phenomenon which started on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The earliest accounts of its existence, according to Hoffman, go back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century A. D., when the Zealots, a millenarian Jewish sect, were fighting against the Roman Empire's occupation of the lands of today's Israel. The Zealots employed various tactics against their enemy, including assassination of the Roman legionnaires at public places thus serving the ultimate aim of inflicting fear upon the public. Thus, it could be considered that the powerful message that terrorist attacks seek in all of their activities goes quite far back in history. Another example for the antiquity of terrorism again refers to the 7<sup>th</sup> century A. D. when the Thugs, an Indian religious cult, practiced ritual murders as sacrifices in the name of the Hindu goddess of terror – Kali. The Thugs attacked innocent people and foreign travelers and strangled them in the name of their cult. The example of the Assassins is the third example that Hoffman provides to prove his idea that terrorism is not a new thing in history. The Assassins lived in the period 11 - 12<sup>th</sup> century A. D. and were primarily fighting Christian crusaders at the lands of present-day Syria. They were usually intoxicated (the word "assassin" literally means "hashish eater") and they viewed violence as most of the modern religious terrorists do, i.e. as a "sacramental act, a divine duty, commanded by religious text and communicated by clerical authorities" (p. 84). In this way, the Assassins perceived violence as their obligation to accelerate the upcoming of the end of the world, the Armageddon which will free them and establish a new world order, even at the expense of their death and evaporation. All these traits are related to the tactics of many present – day terrorist groups: the millenarian goals, the readiness and usage of suicide attacks, martyrdom, etc. It should be acknowledged, however, that the above

– mentioned examples fall within the groups of religiously motivated terrorism which is quite different from its counterpart – the secular terrorism.

Religious terrorism has not always been predominant on the domestic and international arena. Moreover, terrorism used to have primarily a positive connotation in the past. According to Bruce Hoffman, it was up to the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century that religious terrorism was dominant among the various rebellious groups. The end of the Monarchical rule gave rise to nationalism and desire for self – determination which are the main features of secular terrorism that is to be discussed in the next chapter of the paper. The aspirations of freedom, liberty and republicanism; the resentment towards the royal absolutism and the privileges of the nobles throughout the French Revolution led to the creation of the modern term of terrorism with the ultimate “Reign of Terror,” wielded as an instrument of governance by the new revolutionary state and designed to intimidate the counter – revolutionaries. Terrorism thus, though violent had a positive connotation, as Hoffman put it in his book, because it was closely associated with the ideas of democracy and justice. The type of terrorism back then was not random but highly systematic and organized, targeted against the corrupt and undemocratic political system and the abuse of power. The French Revolution had an impact upon Europe because it led to the creation of the nation – state through the advent of nationalism, the ideas of statehood and citizenship. It also led to major socio - economic changes as result of the upcoming age of industrial revolution and the following ideas of Marxism and communism born out of the feelings of alienation and exploitation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century capitalism.

Nationalist – terrorism was dominant in Tsarist Russia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well. It bore the same revolutionary connotations of a fight against the existing state system. The Italian republican extremist Carlo Pisacane, cited by Hoffman, invented the “theory of propaganda by deed” when explaining the course of revolution in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia. Violence, according to Pisacane, was necessary not only to draw attention or generate publicity for a cause, but to inform, educate and rally the masses behind the revolution. An example of Pisacane’s theory was Narodnaya Volya (transl. “People’s Will”), a small group of Russian constitutionalists founded in 1878 to challenge the tsarist rule. Their acts of violence aimed at attracting attention to their cause. For them, as Hoffman writes, “propaganda by deed” meant the selective targeting of specific individuals who they

considered to be part of the oppressive rule (the Tsar, the members of the royal family, the government officials, etc.).

The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries also saw the upsurge of state – sponsored terrorism, i.e. the active and often secret support and assistance of terrorist groups by foreign governments. This was result of the policies of deterrence between the US and the USSR and the threat of a total nuclear annihilation which ultimately led to the so called indirect or proxy wars – limited wars among the satellite states of the big superpowers as the only way for them to fight. The indirect confrontation between the US and the USSR has given the rise of many terrorist groups in the Middle East because of their state – sponsorship (the US support for the anti – Soviet Afghan Mujahedeen during the 1980s; the USSR alleged assistance for the PLO and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the late 1960s). Throughout the Cold War and the reign of communism in the Soviet Union, terrorism changed its meaning from revolutionary violence against the unjust governments to the practices of a mass repression of the state against its own citizens. Here, one must differentiate between terror and terrorism. The former implying the internal political violence directed against domestic populations by their own governments, while the latter primarily signifies the usage of violence by non – state entities.

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union proved that the ideas of democracy, liberalism and capitalism are stronger than the communist ones. The old state – sponsorship evaporated and most of the terrorist groups found themselves alone. They had to continue their existence by finding new tactics in the competition among each other. This ultimately has led to a re – invention of religion as the main tool, the instrument which legitimizes violence. All of the above mentioned examples show an evolution of the tactics of terrorism, but there has been an increase in the degree of violence employed. Today's terrorist groups have been far more lethal and determined, far more violent and indiscriminate. Before giving an account of the five major types of modern terrorist groups, however, this paper will present a brief account of the major factors that have led to the re – emergence of religious terrorism which is of primary significance and a threat of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **1.4. Major reasons behind terrorism:**

Despite the fact that there are many important reasons behind the re – employment of religion in terrorist attacks, four of them have been considered as the most significant ones. Firstly, the end of the Cold War, as it was stated above, showed the defeat of the old ideologies like communism by the capitalist ones. Also, the post – Cold War era led to major economic, political and social insecurity among many people thus ultimately bringing them to the reinvention of religion and tradition as the only safe havens. This leads to the second factor and maybe the most significant among all, the process of globalization and the perceived economic inequality, erosion of traditional values by the mass Western culture and domination, and once again the ultimate feelings of insecurity, instability and uncertainty about the future which has led many people to perceive “religion as a refuge, familiar, and reflecting constant values, in an age of change” (Cameron, p. 78). The third factor is partly related to the process of globalization, because of the need of many terrorists to establish their identity at a state of constant insecurity. The need to establish an identity is a very important factor among the young people who alleviate their feelings of social alienation by joining a religious group and projecting their personal weaknesses onto the “enemy.” The final result, as Cameron states in his book, is the psychological dependence of those people upon the group as it is the only one in the world which employs their “qualities.” The organizational factor, according to Cameron, is also a very important factor to lead back to religious terrorism. It has been evident that competition happens even among the terrorist groups, which at the end leads to an intensification of violence and torture as the only way of those movements to keep a niche on the market. In this way, “the rival groups seek to outdo each other in exhibiting their piety and rigor” (p. 91). For example, the Palestinian terrorist organization, Hamas, had a big challenge when entering the scene because of the existence of the PLO as a pre – eminent force in the liberation movement. Thus, Hamas had to employ even more violent means, including sacrifice bomb attacks, to distinguish itself and to make the other groups perceive it as determined to fight for its cause (Hoffman, pp. 146-153). No matter what are the initial factors behind the modern terrorist actions, one thing is clear in the overall evolution – there has been a conscious and very determined re – usage of religion as the main instrument of today’s terrorists to get support and to legitimize violence. It should be clear, however, that the desire for martyrdom and the establishment of new order is primarily a politically driven goal, rather than inspirational or spiritual one. The next chapter will firstly give an account of the present day types of terrorist groups and then provide examples which prove the idea that politics and power are the major driving forces behind violence.

## **2. Main types of terrorist groups and examples.**

### **2.1. Nationalist-separatist:**

The nationalist – separatist type of terrorist groups are driven by aspirations towards acquiring autonomy or independence, a separation of certain region from the territory of a state that governs it. Examples of separatist movements are the 1971 Pakistan division into East and West, the USSR division into 15 new states in 1991, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union nationalist – separatist groups have become less active mainly due to the fact that they were state – sponsored during the Cold War (Hoffman, p. 85). Despite that fact, however, there are still numerous militant groups. One such group has been the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). According to the 2002 US Congressional Research Service Report, the PFLP was founded in December 1967 at Damascus, following the Arab defeat in the Six Day War with Israel, by Marxist – Leninist ideology. It has been active in international terrorism during the 1960s and 1970s, hijacking airliners, blowing up aircrafts, car bombings and attacks against Israelis. Syria is the state, considered as its main sponsor, together with Lebanon. The PFLP has been inactive for some time but appears to be reviving its activities recently, especially after the assassination of its leader Abu Ali Mustafa in 2001 by an Israeli missile strike on his West Bank office. Mustafa's successor is Ahmed Sadat, arrested in 2002 by the Palestinian Authority police. Another example of a nationalist – separatist organization, especially active at present, is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). It was founded in 1974 by Abdullah Ocalan whose goal has been the establishment of a Marxist Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey resided primarily by Kurdish population. The PKK generally targets government forces and civilians in eastern Turkey. It also attacked Turkish diplomatic and commercial facilities in several Western European cities in 1993 and 1995. Ocalan was captured in 1999 by the Turkish authorities and was sentenced to death for treason and murder of about 30,000 Turks since 1984. The implementation of the sentence, however, has been suspended by the European Court of Human Rights. Ultimately, Ocalan called on his supporters to cease armed operations against the Turkish government (pp. 21-26). Though outright PKK violence against Turkish government has subsided for some time, recent developments have been worrisome. According to BBC reports, in October 2007, PKK set up an ambush close to the border with Iraq that took the lives of seven guards, five civilians (including the life of one child) and

wounded two other persons.<sup>3</sup> The Turkish newspaper Zaman reported that PKK opened machine gun fire against a minibus carrying 13 people and killed 12 of them.<sup>4</sup> There are many other news reports which claim the death of many other people taken by the PKK ethno - separatist group which proves the fact that this type of movements is still existent and active despite the change of the international situation.

## **2.2. Social – revolutionary groups:**

This type of extremist organizations may fight for different causes ranging from religion to politics. Most communist organizations are social – revolutionary and their goals have been stated to be equality, freedom from exploitation for the peasants, the workers, the animals and the environment) (Robinson, 2006). This type of groups has been also known as left – wing that, according to Cameron, have been least likely to cause a high – level act, such as nuclear terrorism. This is mainly because the perpetrators of those acts are usually unwilling to attack people indiscriminately because they seek for the public support and approval. This type of terrorism is based primarily on Marxist – Leninist ideologies, like the nationalist – separatist movements, but at the same time possesses a limitation of what is moral so that those groups avoid unnecessary violence. According to Robinson, leftist organizations draw on Marxist and neo – Marxist theories to justify their revolutionary strategy but few of them employ highly violent tactics (p. 30). The present environmentalist groups usually attack power lines or sabotage through other means the work of nuclear plants. An example of such organizations is the US Evan Mecham Eco – Terrorist International Conspiracy (EMETIC) founded in 1987. It has been considered responsible for the attack on the power lines at Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station in 1986 and the 1988 destruction of the power lines feeding uranium mines around the Grand Canyon (Cameron, p. 120). Though considered to be least dangerous among all other types of terrorist groups, one must admit that such groups can easily become part of a wider terrorist network that would ultimately seek for intensive violent actions, including the usage of WMD.

## **2.3 Right – wing terrorist groups:**

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7056151.stm>

<sup>4</sup> Cited by BBC, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7033075.stm>

Right – wing terrorism, according to Cameron, is “led by a desire for authoritarian leadership, antipathy towards liberalism, communism and socialism” (p. 99). Usually right – wing terrorists fight private wars against particular targets over various issues, such as ethnicity, religion, race, sexual orientation, etc. This type is considered to be extremely conservative and reactionary and closely resembling some fundamentalist movements (Forbes, 2002). The role of martyrdom is very important for the right – wingers. Thus, this type of terrorism, as Cameron writes, has been among the most lethal ones. Nevertheless, it is not indiscriminate and it is an instrument to further particular outcome rather than an end in itself. The author makes a distinction between two sub – types of right – wingers: “old type” and “new type.”

“Old – right” terrorism is “pro – state,” meaning that the employment of violence is in defense of the state from its enemies. It is perpetrated by those who have lost political power or are in a position of losing it. Thus their goals are primarily political; they are interested in power and the preservation of the existing system. An example of an old – right terrorist group was the Algerian Secret Army Organization (OAS) during the Algerian War in the 1950s. It used armed struggle to prevent Algerian independence and its perpetrators attacked police officers and activists for independence.<sup>5</sup>

“New – right” terrorism, on the other hand, is anti – revolutionary and counter – revolutionary. Those groups are of Fascist and neo – Fascist nature fighting against all kinds of people considered to be belonging to “inferior races.” One of the biggest threats that this type of organizations may pose, according to Cameron, is their use of millenarian terrorism. Such an example is the Aryan Nations Organization, one of the most famous new – right terrorist groups. It is an American extremist, anti – Semitic, neo – Nazi group of white supremacists, survivalists, and militant tax – resisters. It was founded in 1974 by Reverend Richard Butler, a former aeronautical engineer from California who moved to Idaho where he established his group. It acts as an umbrella for many like – minded groups, providing coordinating functions and holding congresses every year. Since Butler’s death it has not been that active, mainly so in the Internet space to proclaim Aryan ideals. Aryan Nations ideology is a mixture of racist and seditious dicta. According to the followers of the group the Aryans are the children of God, the True Israel. They believe in the “day of reckoning” when the

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://www.britannica.com/eb/topic-531855/Secret-Army-Organization>

Yahweh's people will return to their roots and a new world will be created ordered by the white people (a theme which defines many of those groups as millenarian). These beliefs involving the inevitability of Armageddon is crucial in the thinking of those groups because they do not want to sit and wait for it to happen, but rather to contribute to its accelerating through violence.

Another representative group of the new – right wave is the one of the Skinheads. The Skinheads are representative for the youth counterculture movement. The most important features that distinguish it from other movements are that the Skinheads are not systematic terrorists and are not driven by political aims but rather by whim and as Cameron put it “glorification of brutality.” The Skinheads attack homeless people, elderly, gays and lesbians, handicapped people and various minority groups: Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, etc. An interesting feature is that Skinheads violence occurs within the group itself, a way for the followers to prove themselves and to “establish an identity of arbitrary violence” which is a prerequisite of membership. To be a Skinhead is usually a full-time occupation. Those people suffer from a higher degree of alienation from society (while most terrorists from other groups lead normal lives). Another difference between the Skinheads and the followers of other groups is the occupation. Most Skinheads have lower education and tend to take inferior occupations, which goes back to the psychological reasons behind violence, such as the feelings of alienation and the fear that the more educated “foreigners” get better jobs, which ultimately adds to the negative feelings even more (Cameron, pp. 102-106).

#### **2.4. Religious fundamentalist type of groups:**

Before giving an account of the traits and the examples of religious fundamentalist groups, there is a need to elaborate on the concept of religious terrorism since it is slightly different from the ones that were mentioned earlier in this paper. Religious terrorism is motivated by violence that is regarded as “a divine duty, a sacramental act which justifies bloodshed”; it also requires a scripture or a clerical authority's approval in order for violence to take place. The main characteristics of religious terrorism despite the perpetrators' idea of violence as a theological imperative are that religious terrorism often disregards the political, moral or practical constraints (Cameron; Hoffman). Religion, rather than an aim in itself, however, serves as an instrument that legitimizes violence and that has other goals, which could be messianic or simply political. Nevertheless, it is well known that religion is efficient

in gaining supporters and perpetrators who are usually young, uneducated and naïve people who tend to bind their actions on the “higher” authority and the blessing of the clerics before undertaking their terrorist operations. The examples of religious terrorism are numerous. All are marked, however, by the same desire of the perpetrators to destroy the existing rules and to impose their own which is a major difference from the expectations of the secular terrorists who seek to become part of society through violence. This is not the aim of the fundamentalists, who feel absolutely estranged and alienated from the existing system and wish to overthrow it completely, even at the expense of their own lives. Such examples are evident within all of the the main religions in our world – Christian, Jewish and Islamic.

Among the most “famous” examples of terrorist groups in Christian terrorism have been the Army of God and the Nagaland Rebels. The Army of God is a US, non – abortion terrorist organization using Christian religion to justify the acts of violence against American abortion clinics in order to end their practices. Its existence is supposed to go back to 1982 when abortion provider of Illinois and his wife were kidnapped by Benny Anderson, Matthew and Wayne Moore to be later released unharmed. The three perpetrators were arrested and convicted for this act and for the arson of several abortion clinics. Other violent incidents alleged to the Army of God include the 1984 death threat sent to the Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun; the bombing of several abortion clinics and offices of the National Abortion Federation and the American Civil Liberties Union; the acknowledged bombing of an abortion clinic and gay bar in Atlanta, GA; the 1998 shooting of Dr. Slepian, Dr. Romalis in Vancouver, BC and Dr. Short in Ancaster in 1995. The Manual of the Army of God has been considered to be drafted in 1988; it consists of three editions which advocate and call for an escalating violence and the murder of abortion providers as the only way to end abortion. The manual provides a practical suggestion how to blockade entrances, how to purport butyric acid attacks, arson, bomb – making, etc. It condemns not only the practices of abortion but also contains anti – government and anti – gay/lesbian sentiments. The Army of God organizes annual meetings to gather anti – abortion supporters. Though the organization is considered to be leaderless, one of the main figures of the movement at present is thought to be Michael Bray, an author of a book which gives a biblical justification for the use of force against abortion providers; he has been also jailed for bomb attacks against clinics. This

terrorist group has been also active through dissemination of petitions to gain support for their practices of justified violence against abortion.<sup>6</sup>

The Nagaland Rebels organization is another example of Christian terrorism. The Insurgency took place in India in the period 1954 – 1975. Nagaland is part of India but the Naga people wish to be independent since they are Christian and possess different culture and beliefs from the predominantly Hindus and Muslim people in India. The latter became independent from British rule in 1947, but the Naga territory has been seeking its own freedom ever since. A strong nationalist movement began fighting for a political union of the Naga tribes for an outright secession from India. This movement led to violent incidents and clashes with the Indian army called to restore order. Despite the cease – fire agreement of 1957 unrest continued under the form of general lack of cooperation with the Indian government, nonpayment of taxes and attacks on the army. In 1960, the Nagaland achieved statehood among the Indian Union and elected its government democratically in 1964. Rebel activity, however, continued its existence in the form of banditry among the tribes so that a direct presidential rule was imposed on the state. A small group of rightist extremists is still agitating for independence and fighting against the rule of the Indian Constitution.<sup>7</sup>

There have been several examples of Jewish terrorism as well, the most “notable” in the face of the Kach and the Gush Eminent. The former is a far – right Israeli party founded by the American – Israeli Rabbi Meir Kahane in 1970. It was banned from participation in elections because of propagating racism. Kahane preached hatred of all Arabs, calling them “monkeys” that “multiply like fleas.” This derogatory language by a priest, however, had politics and power as the ultimate aims; Kahane also tried to reverse the image of the Jews as a victim by denouncing the “soft” policies of the Israeli government towards the Palestinians. He was assassinated in 1990 which led to the split of the Kach party into two others to be banned in 1994. The successors of Kahane and his party have been still active. They established the Gush Eminent movement (transl. “Block of the Faithful”) and undertook an attack against an Islamic school in Hebron. Upon a Rabbinical blessing, they succeeded in

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<sup>6</sup> Information about the Army of God is available at:

[http://www.prochoice.org/about\\_abortion/violence/army\\_god.html](http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/violence/army_god.html)

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/november/nagaland1954.htm>

shooting 3 and wounding 33 Islamic students. Allegedly, they have been also suspected for the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Rabin in 1995 (Hoffman, pp. 97-99).

An abundance of Islamic terrorist groups exists, the most well - known of which are the Hizballah, Hamas and Al – Qaida. Hizballah is a Shia extremist political – religious movement based in Lebanon and led by Ayatollah Khomeini. It was initially formed to resist the Israeli’s presence in Lebanon in 1982. Its followers are extremely anti – Western and anti – Israeli having as their ultimate goal the establishment of an Islamic government in Lebanon by the eradication of all kinds of Western domination in the region. They use movies, ideological seminars and radio broadcasts to gain support and recruit new followers. The latter believe that the struggle against the US and Israel is divinely ordained since it has been supported by the Muslim clerics (Mufti) and by their blessing (Fatwa). In a 1985 manifesto, the Hizballah stated that the “Western influence is detrimental to following the true path of Islam” and the state of Israel is a product of Western imperialism as a way of the US to dominate and exploit the resources of the region. In this way, Israel has to be completely eradicated, “wiped out from the map of the Earth.” Hizballah perceives itself as the savior of all oppressed Muslims and terrorism as its divine instrument to achieve its goals: to establish a Shia Islamic state in Lebanon, to destruct Israel and to sabotage the peace process in the Middle East. The movement uses different tactics to achieve its aims, including suicide bombing attacks (The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism, 1999).

Hamas (transl. “zeal”), is a Palestinian Islamic resistance movement against Israel. It was founded in 1987 upon the start of the Palestinian Intifada by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his followers of the Muslim Brotherhood Society. Its attacks are primarily targeted at Israeli soldiers. Hamas’ leadership has become fractioned between its political leadership (situated in Jordan) and its grass – roots leaders and young militant activists who are operating with an increasing authority and popularity. In 1992 Hamas allied with Iran within the Intifada movement. In 1993, Hamas resisted the peace agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel and maintained a violent campaign to disrupt the peace process. Most of the attacks were under the form of suicide bomb attacks (Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism, 1999). According to Hoffman, “terrorists have become increasingly attracted by suicide attacks because of their unique tactical advantages...Suicide tactics are devastatingly effective, lethally efficient, have greater likelihood of success, and are relatively inexpensive.” This type of tactics, as the author claims, is not a result of desperation but a

rational calculation as one of the most efficient instruments of warfare. Hamas' adoption of suicide terrorism, in this way, can be analyzed not in terms of some kind of a religious frantic devotion, but rather as an act out of necessity of the group to establish itself. From its establishment, Hamas has found itself in a constant competition with the PLO as the most representative body of the Palestinian liberation movement. By embracing the suicide terrorist attacks, Hamas has tried to find its niche on the terrorist market and to be seen as a deliberate and determined entity that deserves a place within it (pp. 132 - 145). Hamas' suicide bombers are usually coming from the military wing of the group composed of tight cells of fanatics who are ready "to die for Allah." Those persons are young (between 12 and 17 years) and have a close relative or friend killed, wounded or jailed by the Israelis. Thus the recruits are most of time young people who feel hatred and desire for revenge who are thus easily manipulated by the terrorists in serving their own ends. Most of those young people are convinced that by dying in a suicide attack, they would become martyrs and go to heaven where they are promised "an afterlife replete with gold places, sumptuous feasts, and obliging women." The students are made to believe that "the Jews have no right to exist on land that belongs to Muslims." Some of them are even buried in mock graves for a night before action to further affect and manipulate their psychology. At the same time, the families of the suicide bombers believe that the deaths of their children will bring them salvation. Most of them are "compensated" for their loss by Hamas with stipends of about \$ 1,000 which is an enormous amount of money for the extremely poor Palestinian people.

Despite the mostly known image of Hamas as a suicide terrorist group, it has been also considered as one of the largest socio – religious movements responsible for numerous civic – action projects among the Palestinian refugee camps. It has been considered to run a whole range of cultural, educational, political and social activities within the local mosques, community groups, schools, orphanages, clinics and hospitals. In this way, Hamas has ensured a massive popular support coming from the Palestinian people, especially the poor ones who are looking for the lost family in the face of the terrorist group (Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism, 1999).

Al – Qaida (transl. "the base"), is an extremist Sunni organization led by the Saudi Arabian Osama bin Laden. It was founded in 1998 as an umbrella organization named the Islamic World Front for the Struggle against the Jews and the Crusaders. Al – Qaida's primary objectives are directed against the US and its domination in the Middle East. Another

important goal is the destruction of the Israeli state and the liberation of the Palestinian people from Jewish occupation. At several video materials, Osama bin Laden claims, that the actions of Al – Qaida are the result of the Western domination which is seen as a threat to the Islamic religion, tradition and culture. In a statement of October 2001, bin Laden declared that the 9/11 attacks have officially “divided the world into two sides – the side of the believers and the side of the infidels...[and] every Muslim has to rush to make his religion victorious” (Hoffman, p. 93). According to Bodansky, the group has been active in developing chemical, biological and possibly radiological weapons (cited in *Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism*, 1999).

## **2.5. New – religious groups**

One of the most famous new – religious groups has been the Buddhist millenarian cult of Aum Shinrikyo (transl. “Supreme Truth”) led by the Japanese Shoko Asahara. This cult is representative of a new type of religious terrorist groups having its own distinctive features which mark the overall evolution of terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Shoko Asahara has adopted a different approach to terrorism by modeling his group on the structure of the Japanese government. Each of his “ministers” has a separate department like commerce, defense, foreign affairs, etc. An important element is the department which has been devoted to “Science and Technology” that has the goal to develop WMD by bringing together a core group of scientists skilled in modern technologies. Aum Shinrikyo’s Sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway system in 1995 proved the determinacy of the cult not only in theory but also in practice. The most dangerous element, however, has been the involvement of extremely intelligent and educated people in the movement, some of them are considered to be Japan’s brightest scientists, computer experts and other highly – trained professionals. Those people usually look at the cult as a refuge and a way of rebellion towards the oppressive Japanese system, their families or friends. Thus, the cult is able to recruit brilliant young people who are alienated from society and who “are fascinated by Aum’s dramatic claims to supernatural power, its warnings of an apocalyptic future, its esoteric spiritualism.” The cult’s techniques of recruitment also include physical, psychological abuse and even murder as a sanction of transgressions. Nevertheless, Aum Shinrikyo has achieved to gain recognition as an official Japanese religion in 1989. As result of the total defeat of the group on the political arena, it revealed its dark side by preaching a “doomsday” scenario to its

followers. The millenarian nature of the group is extremely threatening since it has not been interested anymore in becoming part of the existing system but rather at overthrowing it completely and creating a new one. The Armageddon, however, has not been conceived as something that should be awaited for. Asahara's plan has been to develop WMD to make Armageddon a reality and to accelerate its upcoming (Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism, 1999). The millenarian ideology, together with the educated perpetrators turn the cult into the embodiment of the new type of terrorism which employs religion as a tool that legitimizes violence and at the same time is capable of causing mass destruction of nuclear nature. The Tokyo attack seems an ominous forerunner of the WMD terrorism in the near future.

### **3. Terrorism and WMD**

#### **3.1. Major developments and threats for the 21<sup>st</sup> century:**

Despite the specific differences among the various types of groups there is at least one element that makes those movements alike – their perpetrators sincerely believe in the rightness of their cause. Religious terrorism has been predominant up to the 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century to give the floor to its secular counterparts during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. After the end of the Cold War, as this paper has traced, there has been a re – emergence of religious terrorist activities. Through religion, the present day terrorists seek for a justification of violence that has one and only aim – to achieve political power. The terrorist leaders attract followers by promising the approval of a higher authority, i.e. God, to make them perceive the atrocities they commit as their only guarantee for a life in heaven after death. In this way, religion has turned out to be a very successful modern weapon and a tool for rallying the masses and attracting new followers. The religious propaganda has had the utmost strength to influence the poor and desperate people and to affect their opinion and readiness for sacrifice. Just like nationalism and history have been successful during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, religion has ultimately re – gained its status as one, if not the most powerful weapons of stereotyping and inducing hatred by certain people with the only aim to preserve their traditional power.

#### **3.2. Which groups is most likely to use WMD and why?**

The re – emergence of religious terrorist groups has proved them to be the most resilient of all types of terrorism. Throughout the ages, right – wing and religious terrorist groups have proved to be more lethal than the left - wing secular ones (Figure: Deaths in 2005 by Perpetrators Category). Or as Cameron implies in his book, the new threat to the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been exactly this new type of religious movements and cults which employ millenarian ideologies and perceive the accumulation of WMD. According to the report prepared under the Interagency Agreement by the US Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, in the 1970s and 1980s it had been commonly assumed that terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction would be counterproductive because such an act would be widely condemned, or as Brian Jenkins declared (cited in the report), “[t]errorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead.” This assumption, however, has proved to be valid only in regard to the secular nationalist type of terrorist groups. Since they did not seek the overthrow of the system and they needed the support of the public, they were not interested in acquiring WMD. The new – religious type of groups, however, are not interested in the opinion of the people, they act indiscriminately and seek to destruct the existing system and replace with a new one. The new trend of recruiting very educated and intelligent people also proves their readiness to achieve their apocalyptic goals. Al – Qaida and Aum Shinrikyo reveal the new traits of terrorist groups that are not centralized entities anymore and are harder to be traced. Their outlook divides the world into “us” and “them” and leaves no room for compromise thus making the usage of WMD highly possible and likely in the near future (Table: Differentiating Motivations and Constraints for WMD Terrorism by Group Type).

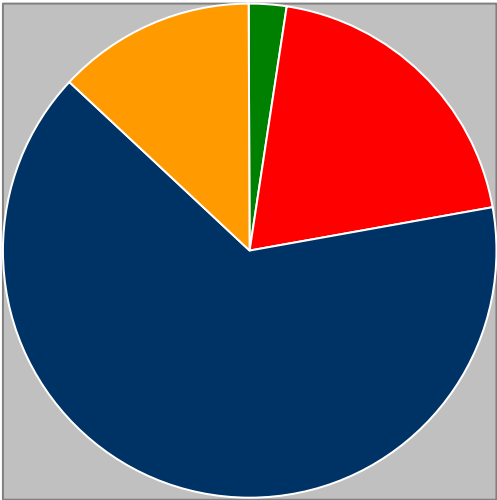


Figure: Deaths in 2005 by perpetrators category (own illustrated):  
 Unknown: 8, 455

Islamic Extremist: 4,090

Other: 391

Secular: 2, 534

Source:  
[http:// www.fas.org/irp/threat/nctc2005.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/nctc2005.pdf)

Table: Differentiating Motivations and Constraints for WMD Terrorism by Group Type (own illustrated):

Group Type	Large-scale Conventional	CBRN Hoax	Limited Scale CBR	Large-scale CBR	Superterrorism/ Catastrophic CBRN
Social-Revolutionary	V*	V	V*	X	X
Nationalist-Separatist	V*	V	V*	X	X
Religious-Fundamentalist	V	V	V*	V*	V*
New-Religious (Cults)	V	V	V	V	V
Right-Wing	V	V	V	X	X
Single-Issue Extremists	V	X	X	X	X

V\* Designates reduced constraints against discriminate WMD terrorism.  
 X Designates major constraints against WMD terrorism.  
 V Designates reduced constraints against WMD terrorism.  
 CBR Chemical, Biological, and Radiological.  
 CBRN Chemical, Biological, Radiological, or Nuclear.

Source: Source: Post, Jerrold.

**3.3. Ways of prevention:**

The lack of a common definition of what terrorism is raises the issue of the inability of many governments to fight it effectively. One way of narrowing down the threat of terrorism would be for all states’ agencies to decide upon a common definition in their fight against this crime, irrespectively of their particular interests and biases. An important element of this strategy of prevention is the ending of state – sponsorship of terrorist groups through economic or military sanctions. Also, it should be known that the technological innovations and the media contribute to the perfection of the terrorist structures, tactics and attacks. By aiming at cutting down the possible channels of information and money flows, the international agencies would reduce the capabilities for terrorist activities. The only possible way to compete with the terrorist development is not only to exploit the same techniques but also to become even more innovative and to try to be at least one step ahead. And probably the most important way of prevention is to understand its initial causes, which are not embedded in the innate evilness and backwardness of those people as often depicted by the

media, but the factors of economic instability, the processes of globalization and the perceived threats of Western and US domination. The reasons for hatred, as stated by the terrorists themselves, serve as an argument for Michael Scheuer, the author of the book “Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror”, who argues that America is hated and attacked because the Islamists understand what the real US intentions in the Middle East are - to dominate the Arab world politically and economically. Thus the real causes for hatred, according to Scheuer, lay not in the “cowardice, poverty, illiteracy and backwardness” of the Muslim people, but in the US politics of domination over the whole world (2005). Because of the initial misunderstanding on the Bush Administration, the present War on Terror is further increasing the feelings of hatred among the fundamentalist religious groups by creating more human suffering and the possibility for more people to be recruited and manipulated in the future. Most probably, the future US policy of non – interference would alleviate the problem because one thing has been clear up to now, democracy could be hardly exported with military means and human suffering.

## **Conclusion**

The primary aim of this paper has been to provide information about the concept of terrorism, the five major types of terrorist groups and the evolution of their tactics having the ultimate goal to gain political power and influence. Most importantly, however, there has been a need for giving an answer to one of the most relevant questions today: Which terrorist group is most likely to employ nuclear weapons in its attacks? Despite the fact that both left – wing and right – wing groups are equally dangerous in terms of determinacy to use violence to achieve their goal, history has proven the re – emergence of religious terrorism as the most efficient and the most lethal weapon of modern times. Groups like Al – Qaida and cults like Aum Shinrikyo give us a hint of what would be the new threats of 21<sup>st</sup> century: the acquaintance and usage of WMD. This has been mainly because of the millenarian nature of those groups which are not interested in the public opinion but seek its complete elimination. The recruitment of intelligent and highly educated people within the terrorist networks is probably the most worrisome fact since this trend proves the lack of barriers in the desire of those entities for a new order. The 9/11 attacks and the 1995 Sarin bombing in Tokyo show us the existence of a new generation of terrorists who embrace apocalyptic attitude and would use WMD if they have them at their disposal. One step to prevent this is to end state –

sponsorship of terrorism and the other is to admit that Western culture is not and could not be the most dominant one in this world; once the European and US countries realize that terrorism is an act of the weak and the desperate not the evil and the backward, they would start to cure not the symptoms of this illness but its causes.

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