

TERRORIST & COUNTERTERROR ORGS

“The terrorist and the policeman both come from the same basket. Revolution, legality – counter moves in the same game; forms of idleness at bottom identical.” **Joseph Conrad (1907) *The Secret Agent***

In what ways are terror campaigns similar to or different from mass murder, genocide, insurgency, guerrilla war, other conflict forms?

Are terrorists: crazy, evil, patriotic, rational, holy, ...? Does it matter?

What are the tactics, strategies, goals of terrorist organizations?

How and where do terrorist networks operate? Can social network analysis methods help to identify & prevent attacks?

What can counterterrorist orgs do to reduce, if not prevent, terrorism? Or must we learn to live indefinitely with possibility of terror attacks?

What were U.S. public policy responses to terror threats to national security? Have American civil liberties been harmed by terrorism?

What is the connection between the “War on Terror” and the Iraqi War? Has the Iraqi War lessened the terror threat to the U.S.?

What is Terror(ism)?

Numerous conflicting definitions have been proposed, many depending on whether the actions are opposed or supported.



The word “terrorism” originated in the French Revolution: “*terrorisme*” from Latin *terrere*, to frighten. It was first used for the Jacobin Club’s arrests and executions of opponents.

During the 1793-1794 “Reign of Terror” (*la Terreur*), the Committee on Public Safety killed between 15-40,000, and ultimately some of its leaders (Danton and Robespierre).

Dr. Joseph-Ignace Guillotin was not victim of his invention.

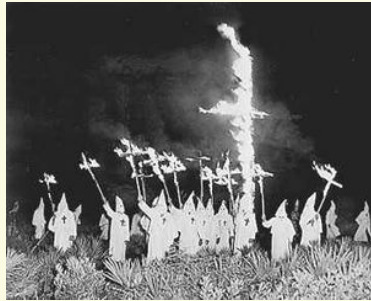
What, if anything, do you see as problematic about these definitions?

Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th Ed. (2001): “the threat or use of violence, often against the civilian population, to achieve political or social ends, to intimidate opponents, or to publicize grievances....”

USA PATRIOT Act (2002): "activities that (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the U.S. or of any state, that (B) appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping, and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S."

Historical U.S. Terrorism

Throughout its history, the U.S. saw several dramatic incidents of terrorism, mostly committed by American-born or recently immigrated persons. Is violence “as American as cherry pie?”



Ku Klux Klan & Nightriders used beatings, burnings, and lynchings to terrorize blacks and intimidate their white supporters following the Civil War. They were active in both the North and the former Confederacy.

In 1886, a bomb killed eight policemen at an anarchist rally held in Chicago’s Haymarket Square. Four radicals were hanged, one committed suicide, and three were pardoned. None were directly connected to the crime.



More recent U.S. bombings – Oklahoma City by Timothy McVeigh; Olympic Games by Eric Rudolph – seem mainly acts of tiny conspiracies or a “lone wolf,” rather than by broader-based organizations.

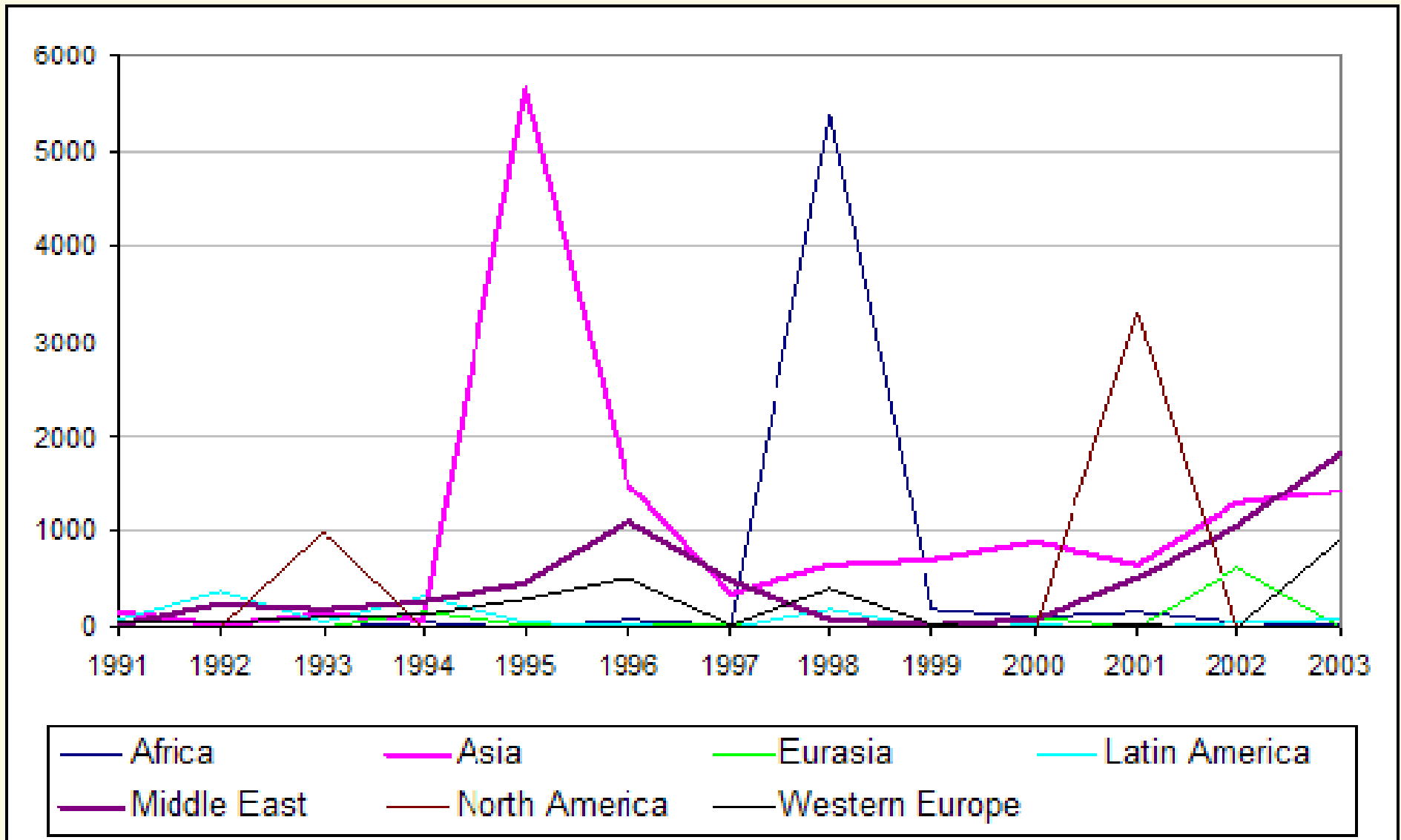
International Attack Trends

The State Dept tallies annual international attacks and casualties.
What region(s) do you suspect had the most terrorist activity?



SOURCE: U.S. Department of State (2006) *Patterns of Global Terrorism*

International Casualties



What is a Terrorist Organization?

Groups that commit violent acts never label themselves as terrorists, because the term has connotations of illegitimacy.

They prefer positive labels, such as: rebel, patriot, revolutionary, liberator, jihadi or mujaheddin (“struggler”), freedom fighter, ...

[Who said, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter?”]



Since 1997, the U.S. State Dept has published a list of **Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)**, “based on a demonstrated capability and/or willingness to engage in terrorist methods that threaten the U.S. national security interests.” FTO leaders can be denied visas to enter U.S. and the organization’s assets can be frozen.

The 2007 list has 42 FTOs (+42 “groups of concern), of which 29 are Islamic, 4 South American, 2 Irish, 2 Greek, one Filipino, Sri Lankan, Basque (ETA), Jewish (Kach), and Japanese (Aum Shinrikyo).

Five nations are listed as **state sponsors** of terror:
Iran, Syria, North Korea, Sudan, Cuba,

Why was Libya was removed from the list in 2005?

Hamas Behind the Mask

Watch an excerpt from *Hamas Behind the Mask* , a 2005 documentary by Canadian filmmaker Shelley Saywell.



“Interviews with leaders in hiding, militants, and activists are juxtaposed with Israeli experts and victims, as the film examines how Hamas turned the once secular struggle for Palestine into a religiously motivated Jihad. And even though they were put on the international terrorist list by the United States, they were able to increase their funding.”

How does Hamas recruit Palestinians to become suicide bombers?

What justifications does Hamas offer for its “martyrdom missions?”

What motivates these participants to accept their assignments?

What causal explanation does an Israeli terrorist expert offer?

Can you suggest any ways to break the terror-counterterror cycle?

Goals of Terror Organizations

Orgs use terror as means to achieve diverse goals. Although every campaign has unique aims, two broad classifications are:

Ethno-nationalist struggles for independence or autonomy:

Separatist: Chechens, Turkish Kurds, IRA in N. Ireland, ETA in Spain,

Decolonization: Cuba Libre, South African Boers, Kenyan Mau Maus,

Occupier eviction: Palestinians in Occupied Territories, Iraqi insurgents,

Ideological and political trans/reformation:

Marxist/class conflict: Nepal, Shining Path in Peru, FARC in Colombia

Democratization: Czechoslovakia, Baltic States, Ukraine,

Environmentalist: Earth First!, Animal Liberation Front,

Messianic/visionary: Lord's Resistance Army, Symbionese Lib. Army

Islamic fundamentalist: Al Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, Hizballah,

Is terrorism best conceptualized as just one of many **organizational tactics** used by social movements, insurgencies, & revolutions to achieve **strategic goals**?

Psychological Explanations

Psychological theories of terrorism focus on the individuals who are predisposed to join terrorist orgs and to commit violent acts. What motivates some people to attack others, even blow themselves up?



- Mental & emotional instability, from childhood traumas
- Relative deprivation feelings, but not absolute poverty
- Self-esteem boosted by participating in a noble cause
- Moral justifications provided by religion or ideology
- Beliefs that actions will win revenge, martyr/hero status

Are psychological theories limited to explaining who joins terror orgs, but unable to account for the emergence of such groups?

Terror management theory: People confronted with psychological terror of their own ultimate deaths often react by believing strongly in a mystical transcendence (paradise, reincarnation). Traumatic experiences can bond people to follow strong leaders who promise protection from such dangers.

Does TMT explain the extraordinarily high public support for Pres. Bush and New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani immediately after 9/11?

Sociopolitical Explanations

Sociopolitical theories of terrorism emphasize structural factors in the emergence & success or failure of terrorist campaigns. What are the social positions of perpetrators & their relation to power-holders?

International experts, meeting in Oslo, identified these pre-conditions for terrorism:



- Lack of democracy, civil liberties, & the rule of law
 - Failed/weak states unable to control territory & monopoly of violence
 - Rapid modernization, in the form of high economic growth
 - Extremist ideologies of a secular or religious nature
 - Historical antecedents - political violence, civil war, dictatorship, revolution, occupation - may lower threshold for acceptance of political violence
 - Hegemony and inequality of power
 - Illegitimate or corrupt governments
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- Powerful external actors upholding illegitimate governments
 - Repression by foreign occupation or by colonial powers
 - Experience of discrimination on the basis of ethnic or religious origin
 - Failure/unwillingness of states to integrate dissident groups or emerging social classes
 - Experience of social injustice
 - Presence of charismatic ideological leaders
 - Triggering events are the direct precipitators of terrorist acts

What research could sort out the relative impacts among these causes?

SOURCE: Tore Bjørge. 2003. "Root Causes of Terrorism" <www.nupi.no/IPS/filestore/Root_Causes_report.pdf>

Covert Cell Structure

Resistance undergrounds, criminal, and terrorist orgs often use **covert cell structures** to thwart detection and penetration by law enforcement.



- Cells are deliberately kept very small (3 to 6 members)
- Most members only know the identities of their cell mates
- Only cell leader knows & communicates with other leaders
- Damage is limited if a member is captured & interrogated

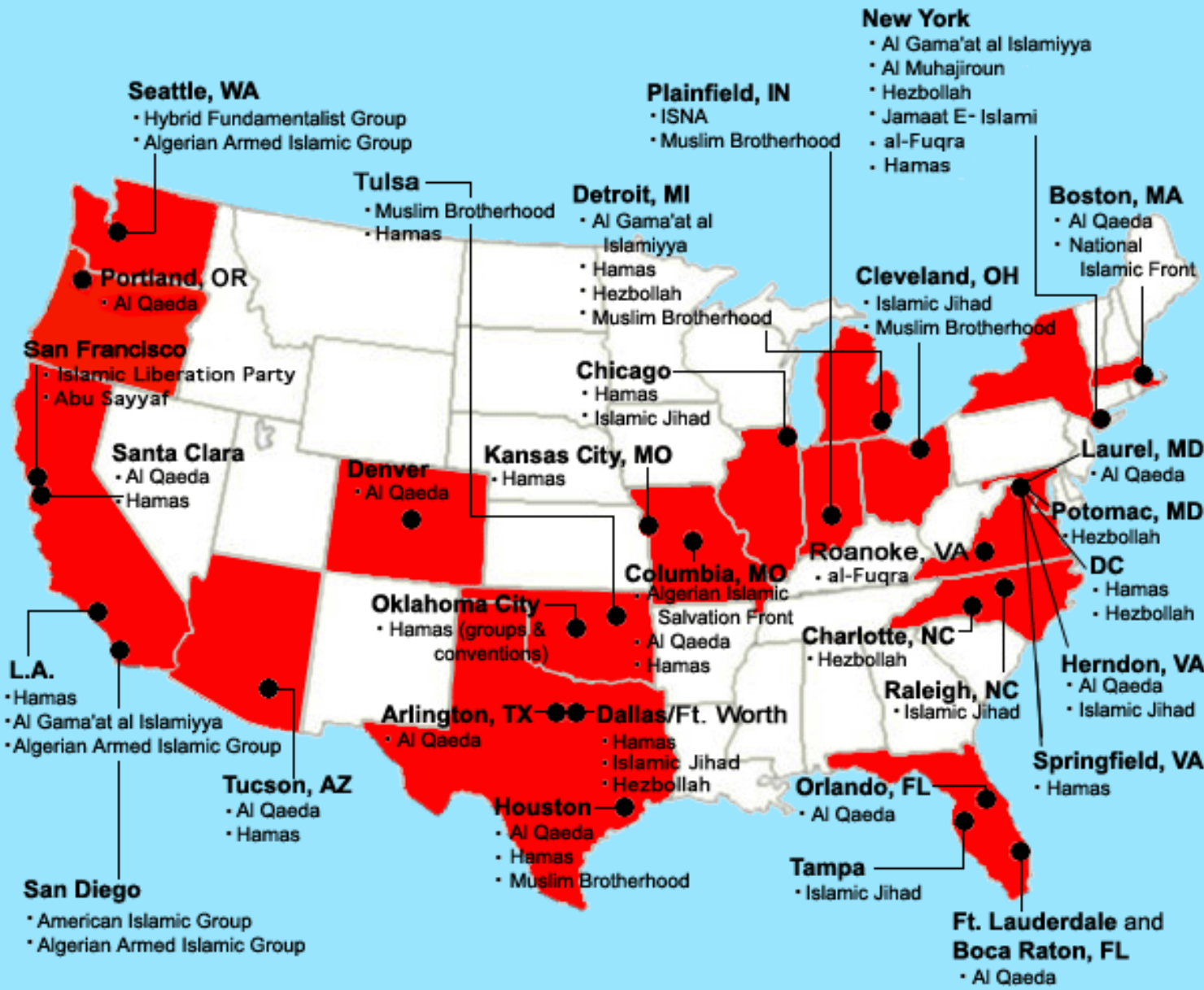
In a videotape found in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden described a classic cell structure for 9/11: **“Those who were trained to fly didn’t know the others. One group of people did not know the other group.”**

A “sleeper cell” may stay dormant in place for years, waiting to be activated at the right time. In 2003, six U.S. citizens of Yemeni descent, living in Lackawanna, New York, pled guilty to providing material support to Al-Qaeda.



WATCH online: <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/sleeper/inside/>>

ISLAMIC TERRORIST NETWORK IN AMERICA



© Holly Deyo, 2002-03, www.standeyo.com

Primary Source: Steven Emerson, "American Jihad"
 Secondary Sources: independent investigators and news agencies

Connecting the 9/11 Dots

Shortly after 9/11, network consultant Valdis Krebs began to map the hijacker network using newspaper reports on their ties.



“The 19 hijackers appeared to have come from a network that had formed while they were completing terrorist training in Afghanistan. Many were school chums from many years ago, some had lived together for years, and others were related by kinship ties. **Deep trusted ties**, that were not easily visible to outsiders, wove this terror network together.”

In hindsight, Krebs reported the CIA knew that two suspects with links to al-Qaeda (Alhazmi and Almihdhar), living in Los Angeles since 1999, had been photographed at a meeting of known terrorists in Malaysia in January, 2000, before returning to L.A. Also attending the Malaysia meeting was one of the chief suspects (Khallad) in the subsequent *USS Cole* attack (October, 2000).

- All 19 hijackers on 9/11/01 were within 2 steps of the two original suspects uncovered by the CIA in early 2000! (see Figure 2)
- Social network analysis reveals that Mohammed Atta *emerged as the central person linking together the hijacker cells*

Could network analysts have uncovered the 9/11 plot?

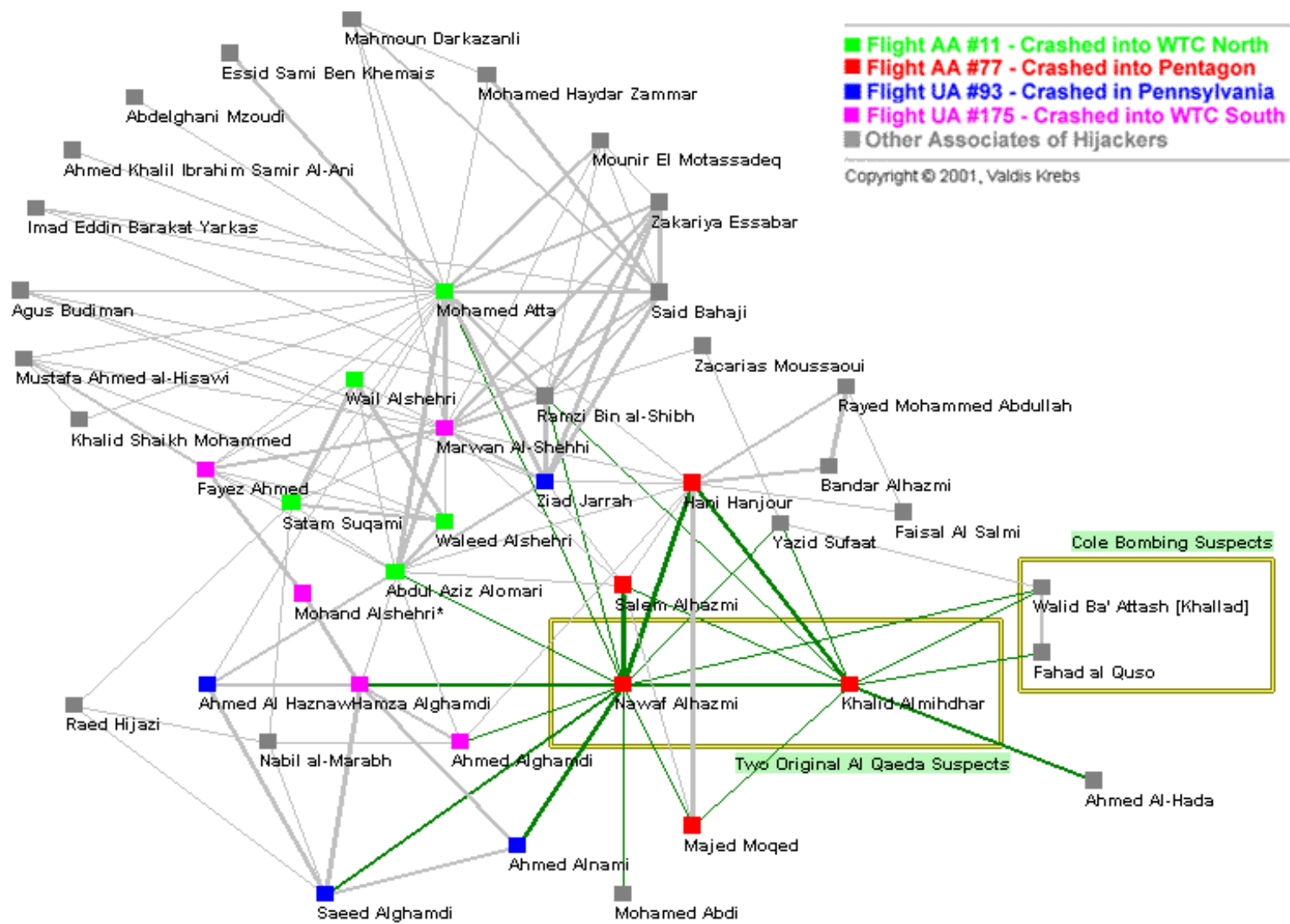


Figure 3 - All Nodes within 2 steps / degrees of original suspects

“Dark Networks as Problems”

Terrorist networks can be viewed as one of several types of “dark networks” – weapons trading, drug trafficking, immigrant smuggling.



Jörg Raab & Brint Milward proposed a “holistic view” of how network structures & governance forms could be used for criminal or immoral ends. To fight them more effectively, law enforcement agencies must understand such illegal networks.



From three comparative case studies, they induced four propositions:

1. Dark networks are very flexible, enabling quick reaction to pressures by nation-states and other opponents to survive
2. Dark nets need a territorial base to be effective; e.g., civil war regions
3. Dark nets must find different solutions than “light nets” to meet similar challenges of differentiation & integration, due to the threat of detection
4. Western nation should: (1) increase pressure via international cooperation and sanctions; (2) assist countries to avoid becoming failed states

Answer These Opinion Questions

Then compare your views to some recent national polls:

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling the U.S. campaign against terrorism?”

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling protecting Americans' privacy rights as the government investigates terrorism?”

“As it conducts the war on terrorism, do you think the United States government is or is not doing enough to protect the rights of American citizens?”

"Do you think the Republicans in Congress or the Democrats in Congress would do a better job of dealing with terrorism?"

"How much confidence do you have in the ability of the U.S. government to protect its citizens from future terrorist attacks: a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?"

"Compared to before September 11, 2001, do you think the country today is safer from terrorism or less safe from terrorism?"

Counterterror Organizations

Counterterrorism: Institutions, policies, actions by government, law enforcement, military, & other organizations to fight terrorism



First responders - police, SWAT, medical teams, ...

State governments & business community

National intelligence – NIA, CIA, FBI, NSA, DIA,

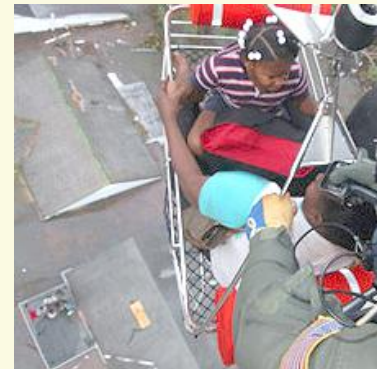
Combat forces - military, special forces,

International - State Dept, UN, IAEA,

The Department of Homeland Security was created to “develop and coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to secure the United States from terrorist threats or attacks.”

How competently did FEMA and Homeland Security respond to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita disaster in New Orleans in Fall 2005?

How secure do you feel today from terror, including biochemical & nuclear attacks?



Coordinating Intelligence

The **Intelligence Community**, headed by Director of National Intelligence, coordinates the foreign and domestic intelligence, military planning, and espionage activities of 16 federal agencies: FBI, CIA, DHS, NSA, DIA, ...



The 9/11 Committee's 2005 report strongly criticized CIA and FBI for intelligence failures that allowed the attacks to occur. Commissioners claimed that, if the agencies had acted more wisely and aggressively, the attacks might have been averted. The 9/11Comm's report recommended creating the DNI post.

Improving the capacity to acquire, share, and interpret terror information – among U.S. agencies, and in their cooperation with intelligence organizations around the world – should become a top priority for counterterror organizations.

What steps could be taken to overcome usual bureaucratic turf battles and reluctance to share information and credit?

“Expatriate Games”

Newsome states 4 hypotheses why international CT is so difficult. A 7-day simulation (war game) tested the validity of these hypotheses.



Al-Qaeda bombed a Bali night club in October 2002, killing 202 mostly Western tourists. U.S. & Australian warned of attack, but Indonesia security forces failed to act on that information. Other nations (Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Israel) use counterterror to repress own dissidents.

1. **ICT “practically impossible” without interorganizational coordination**
2. **Political partnerships are neither necessary nor sufficient for ICT**
3. **Orgs’ internal orientations have negative effects on coordination**
4. **Competing goals among orgs also have negative coordination impact**

How can interorganizational coordination be strengthened to improve international counterterrorist efforts?

Could simulation drills train CT teams enhance interorg’l coordination, e.g., with local police & military forces, tour operators, ...

What Price National Security?

Patriot Act, the anti-terrorist legislation passed after 9/11 and renewed in 2006, gave the executive branch sweeping powers. It also amended 1978 **Foreign Intelligence Security Act (FISA)**.



Many critics feel it has weakened Constitutionally protected civil liberties. Others believe its powers are essential to fight enemies who play by no rules. U.S. Senate voted in September, 2007 to extend President Bush's warrantless wiretapping program.

In the Global War on Terror, Bush Admin has designated captured terrorists as **enemy combatants**, asserting they have no rights under the Geneva Conventions. Many have been held for years in Gitmo.

Other alleged misconduct includes the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib & "extraordinary renditions" to nations that allegedly use force and torture during interrogations (Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan).



Are these counterterror actions legal, moral, & effective?