

Embedded Expertise and the New Terrorism

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Introduction

[T]here are known knowns, there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns - the ones we don't know we don't know.

Donald Rumsfeld, 2003¹

When Donald Rumsfeld made his famous remarks on knowns and unknowns they were widely ridiculed and dismissed as absurd White House rhetoric. Yet Rumsfeld's turn of phrase reveals more about US military strategy than it has been given credit for. In the contemporary 'war on terror' the claims generally made by state servants, politicians and 'experts' about something called 'al Qaeda', often reveal an important tension between the intangibility of the 'terrorists' and the extent to which they can be identified and indeed 'known'.

To the extent that it does exist as a tangible structure, al Qaeda somewhat defies categorisation and, as some have argued, can be more aptly understood as 'an aim of a movement or a tactic not the name of a group' to which certain small groups of individuals may have a degree of temporary allegiance (Burke, 2003 and 2004; McCloud and Dolnik, 2002). No matter how apparent it is that we do not - and most probably cannot - actually know very much about al Qaeda does not prevent a range of experts pontificating and presenting highly dubious conjecture as 'truth.' If one thing is certain, however, it is that al Qaeda have been created as a new class of global folk devil, readily invoked to legitimise military action and the re-channelling of resources necessary for conducting a war on terror.

The political process of folk-devil construction has been concisely described by Jefferson and Holloway (1997) who, in their analysis of the amplification of the fear of the outsider, argue that crime represents a powerful political tool in the

¹ *The Guardian*, 3rd December, 2003.

reproduction of social order. In contrast with the unknowable risks described in Ulrich Beck's 'risk society', fear of crime is powerful because it embodies offenders who are identifiable (making them *knowable*), relatively powerless (making them amenable to a response or *actionable*); and they are outsiders (making them *controllable*). 'Crime' has come to represent not only the material consequences of victimisation but, through the construction of 'fear', to symbolise a more generalised fear of the breakdown of tradition and order materially embodied in the criminal other. In the United Kingdom, the hyperbole surrounding the war on terrorism similarly articulates the other as a threat to the very fabric of civil society (see Burnett, 2004; and Fekete, 2004). There are important differences, of course, for the other in the war on terror is not as readily knowable (and therefore not as actionable and controllable) as enemies in wars on crime, since the terrorist other represents a global rather than local threat. However, as we will argue in this paper, the war on terror can be said to have a similar purpose in the political struggle for order. If wars on terrorism are to be successfully represented in those terms, the terrorist must be ideologically represented as knowable, actionable and controllable in a particular form. The construction of 'terrorism' as something that the state can do something about is central to the justification for the expansion of its juridical and military reach.

'Terrorism', as a unified political and ideological motif did not arise spontaneously in response to particular instances of political violence or the culmination of a series of such instances. By exploring the creative development of a set of ideological claims that have sought to establish a homogenised grand narrative of terrorism (the 'new terrorism' thesis), this paper will develop insights into the role that experts have played in creating the 'known unknowns' that support the rapid expansion of the punitive and military apparatuses of the state, and the acceleration of the US-led global march of neo-liberalism. In order to do so, we will make use of a case study of a small but highly influential group of experts. Before setting out this case study, however, the paper will turn to explore the central ideological claims developed in the doctrine of the new terrorism.

The New Terrorism

In the longer-term aftermath of the events of September 11th, marked by perpetual military engagement directed towards an ever expanding list of potential 'enemies', the idea that the adversary faced in this 'war on terrorism' somehow encapsulated a threat of a magnitude never before faced is gaining political currency if not widespread acceptance. However, the development of a coherent set of ideas around the 'new terrorism' as something both qualitatively and quantitatively different from what had gone before, began to emerge long before September 11th 2001 (see Guelke, 1998; Hoffman, 1998; Lesser et al, 1999; and Laquer, 1999).

An initial attempt to coin the phrase the 'new terrorism' in the present day context was made in an edited collection produced by the Institute for the Study of Conflict (ISC) in 1986 (Gutteridge, 1986), with a keynote opening chapter by terrorism expert Paul Wilkinson. The ISC text opened with the claim that:

The new wave of political violence in the Middle East and South Asia in the mid 1980s in which religious sectarianism is a potent factor has added other dangerous dimensions to the problem and at the same time focused attention sharply on the real danger to civilisation and international order which terrorism could pose (ibid: introduction).

Although the case for a truly 'new' terrorism was not to materialise in this book (the rest of the text focused largely on case studies of terrorist groups in Europe), this same year also marked an initial development of the term in media analyses. The development of new terrorism analysis began to gain some level of coherence in the 1990s via a series journalistic accounts - occasionally given intellectual credence by interventions by academics - which were not wholly consistent in their analysis of exactly who the 'new terrorists' were. Nevertheless, a certain set of coherent ideas can be identified: diasporas were assumed to underpin the advent of the new terrorism (see for example Cohen, 1995: 32-7; and Traynor, 1995: 11; Woollacott, 1995: 22); the new terrorism was global in its reach (Colvin, 1998); the threat was not only against particular states but a more generally defined conception of democracy (Payne, 1998: 9); and the potential for harm was dramatically increased (Boyes, 1999).

Laquer's text *The New Terrorism*, published in 1999, sought to establish the parameters for studying a new form of political violence. The text, complete with front cover endorsement by former CIA director James Woolsey, sought to establish two key 'new' dimensions of the new terrorism. First, in terms of what Laquer loosely terms its 'pathological complexion', by which he presumably means indicates some change in the belief system of protagonists:

Terrorism has taken some odd turns in the last couple of decades, and the future will see it assume even an older and more pathological complexion. Political and ideological motivations in the traditional sense, however far-fetched will recede, as fanaticism, whether sectarian, ethnic, or just personal, moves into the foreground (Laquer, 1999: 226).

Second, access to weapons of mass destruction marks out the new from the old: "A one time mainstay of science fiction, the doomsday machine, looms as a real danger" (ibid: 254). What is particularly interesting about this text as an academic study is its almost complete lack of any systematic analysis of the empirical data produced to support the paradigmical shift in terrorism it claims to portend. There is discussion of a few cases and an explanation of why chemical, nuclear and biological weaponry may be more accessible. There are also a few scattered examples of the use of chemical weapons (notably Saddam's massacre in Hallabja and the Aum Shinri Kyo attack upon the Tokyo underground in March 1995). But the analysis draws as much upon science fiction films and books as it does real world anecdotes to demonstrate this paradigmical shift. The result is a clumsy and unconvincing exercise in conjecture that fails to show any concrete trend towards a new "megaterrorism" (ibid.: 282).

A more careful if not necessarily more grounded development of the concept can be found in 'Countering the New Terrorism' – a collaborative project published in 1999 by members of the RAND Corporation – where it is suggested that during the final decade of the twentieth century the fundamental facets of 'terrorism' had altered at a pace which had rendered 'much previous analysis...obsolete' (Lesser et al, 1999: 2). This was based upon analysis purporting that a new form of terrorism could be marked via lines of changing techniques of terrorist attack, motivations for terrorist activities, increased lethality, and a growing numbers of 'amateur' terrorists (Hoffman, 1999: 7-38).

While we are not suggesting that there is an absolute and unchallenged consensus surrounding the new terrorism thesis across theorists and analysts who have developed the concept, the following identifies a number of inherent assumptions that are common to a range of accounts.

The Erosion of 'Traditional' Structure

First, a fundamental way in which the 'new' terrorism is said to depart from the 'old' is that its perpetrators are assumed to belong to organisations that no longer have clearly identifiable chains of hierarchy and command. Where the terrorist organisations of 'old' are said to have had structures that were tangible and amenable to infiltration, proponents of new terrorism are assumed to depart from this 'traditional' model. Further, the 'new terrorism' thesis rest upon the claim that terrorist organisations are increasingly networked globally. Clearly identifiable leaderships are being overtaken by loosely held together trans-national agreements between franchises, where there is no unitary or clearly defined leadership or central headquarters (Crenshaw, 2000: 411). This idea of conflict identifiable by its fluidity and intangibility has been developed most coherently by RAND in the concept of 'netwar' (see Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1993). Netwar is utilised, crucially, to encapsulate low intensity conflict that is globalised in nature – a form of conflict falling short of more traditional forms of warfare where actors are generally not acting on behalf of states, and fully utilise contemporary technologies. Further, netwar is said to encompass groups and organisations across a full spectrum of insurgency. As Arquilla and Ronfeldt explain in an assessment of the 'future' of terror and crime:

Netwar has a dual nature, like the two-faced Roman god Janus, in that it is composed of conflicts waged on the one hand, by terrorists, criminals and ethnonationalist extremists; and by civil-society activists on the other (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001a).

Greater Access to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

Second, in the new terrorism thesis those covered are said to have access to more potentially destructive weapons and technologies than the terrorists of old. In the aftermath of September 11th ongoing sporadic claims have informed us that al Qaeda potentially have, and are ready to use, a variety of 'dirty bombs'. For example, in

2002, Paul Wilkinson suggested that a withdrawn Home Office warning over the risk to the United Kingdom from 'dirty bombs' should in fact be heeded (BBC, 2002). Indeed the idea that there is a threat from chemical or 'dirty' weaponry has been further supported by the dissemination of expert analysts confirming the possibility of such attack. Commonly, those claims use the abstract assumptions generated by the 'new terrorism' thesis to consolidate or confirm intelligence speculation about the access some groups might have to WMD (see for example Miller, 2002; Wilkinson, 2002a; Huband, 2003).

An Indiscriminate Terrorism

Third, the new terrorism is said to be much less discriminating in its targets - more likely to target civilian populations - and has the ability to strike from remote distances without warning. Crucially, a hallmark of the new terrorism is that it has much greater lethality, and it poses a greater threat to a more diverse array of targets. Hoffman (1999: 93) suggests that certain developments in the new terrorism thesis - in particular terrorism "motivated in whole or in part by religious imperatives" - have resulted in more casualties than the "relatively more discriminate and less lethal incidents of violence perpetrated by secular terrorist organizations" (ibid). Further, Paul Wilkinson, discussing al Qaeda as the 'archetype of the new terrorism' described members of the organisation and affiliated groups as 'extremists who have no compunction about killing thousands of civilians...They do not feel constrained by any moral or humanitarian limits' (Urquhart, 2003: 7). Indeed, whilst the new terrorism thesis maintains that the greater and more diverse lethality of the new terrorism is equipped by supposed access to WMD, and generalised by a theory of 'netwar', it is informed by a conception of the new terrorist as incorrigible in beliefs and actions.

An 'Incorrigible' form of Terrorism

The new terrorism thesis sets up an understanding of an enemy that is not only more apocalyptic and dangerous, but also less amenable to traditional forms of control. This particular conceptualisation of new terrorist 'groups' as ideologically (as opposed to politically) driven organisations is supplemented with an assumption that they are beyond the boundaries of negotiation or reasoning. To this end, al Qaeda symbolises a broader threat to global order and civility than previous terrorist groups. In a memorandum to the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in 2003, Paul Wilkinson has articulated the 'incorrigible' basis of al Qaeda; stating that the organisations "reputation for mass killing and its absolutist doctrines and political ambitions make it unthinkable for any democratic government to negotiate with it" (Wilkinson, 2003: 4).

The relocation of the new terrorism as incorrigible lead to a fundamental reassessment in the methods and aims of counter terrorism measures, and in a broader sense, foreign policy goals. Although we are not suggesting a simple relationship between terrorism 'experts' and the actions of states in response to the complex ideological

claims that are produced by this scholarship, support for the ratcheting up of punitive and military responses to terrorism is a consistent theme in the new terrorism literature.

The New Terrorism and Political Discourse

By establishing those common features of terrorism, the 'new terrorism' thesis sets out (and therefore claims to 'know') the particular threats to the population at a particular time. However, by definition there remain limits upon its 'knowability.' Although we can estimate the threat of the new terrorism, we can never really know its full potential: the upper limit of which is catastrophic. What we do know is that the attacks upon New York and the Pentagon in September 11th happened. We know that the attacks on Bali and on Madrid were carried out by groups that have been labelled as al Qaeda. We also know that although there have been no attacks upon London, that there have been a succession of high profile anti-terrorism raids by the authorities and a series of arrests.

What the new terrorism thesis does is bring each of those events and non-events into a cohesive framework. This is how it seeks to make terrorism knowable. The capacity to inflict attacks upon unsuspecting population and access to WMD are generalised across all groups labelled 'terrorist', all of this compounded by a new mode of thinking about of 'netwar.' It is the universality of the new terrorism thesis; its utility as a grand narrative which provides a basis for making the terrorist 'knowable.' So, for example, we may not know precisely who possesses particular capacities at particular times, but we do know that the new terrorism *potentially* has the technologies of a 'dirty bomb' or biological weapons at its disposal. Yet expert knowledge can only ever construct an approximate threat that demands some form of action. If the terrorist is by definition not completely knowable, the job of the expert is to make it so. Only then can the state articulate a strategy to respond to the threat. In other words, making the terrorist knowable makes terrorism actionable and potentially controllable.

The war on terror, then, is rather similar to wars on crime, for although the problem is not constructed as a localised one, there is a similar tendency: to impose a set of common characteristics upon an enemy that enable it to be known. It is this process of making the terrorism knowable that ensures the demonisation of a range of groups now regarded as potential terrorists, not least of these Muslims, Arabs and asylum seekers.

When it is made knowable, the new terrorism – the mode and scale of attack, its indiscriminate targets and, crucially, its incorrigibility – constitutes a potential threat against which a proportionate response is justified. The features of its knowability, amplified by primary definers, politicians, state officials and experts, are used to argue for burgeoning resources, expanded police and military powers, and even responses outside the norms of domestic and international law in order to deal with a potentially catastrophic threat. There is no shortage of examples of this logic being developed in political rhetoric. George Bush (Jr.) in a 2002 address to graduates of the US Military

Academy, West Point suggested that the future threat in the war on terrorism would involve an enemy that lacked great armies and industrial capabilities and have no nations or citizens to defend. Yet it involved even greater and less discriminate potential victimisation:

The gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology – when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations (cited in Freedman, 2002: 40).

Close reading of Tony Blair's two key speeches that justified the invasion of Iraq reveal a similar consolidation of the language of the new terrorism. Blair, on receiving the Congressional Gold Medal, noted in his address to the US Congress:

[P]recisely because the threat is new, it isn't obvious. It turns upside-down our concepts of how we should act and when, and it crosses the frontiers of many nations. So just as it redefines our notions of security, so it must refine our notions of diplomacy (Blair, 2003).

Further, in his Sedgefield Address on 5th March 2004, which probably represents the single most developed justification by Blair for the invasion Iraq without UN Security Council approval, he argued of the occupation:

It is a new type of war. It will rest on intelligence to a greater degree than ever before. It demands a different attitude to our own interests. It forces us to act even when so many comforts seem unaffected, and the threat so far off, if not illusory.

If Blair does not make it explicit that he is referring to the new terrorism here, the language he is using is unmistakable. These quotes illustrate precisely how the new terrorism thesis is deployed by the powerful definers of the terrorism threat in Western governments in an attempt to repackage the illusory aspects of the new terrorism in a form that is credible, and ultimately seeks to justify the mode of response.

The idea of the 'new terrorist' in so far as the risk of terrorist attack is now said to be global, indiscriminate, and incorrigible, creates the rationale for a new counter-terror precautionary principle: a strategy that excuses the most extreme responses from state agencies and from the wider body politic. The new terrorism, since it is a ubiquitous threat, requires a ubiquitous response, most clearly seen in the rapid expansion of anti-terror policing resources and new policing powers and their use against Muslims, asylum seekers and protestors (see for example Fekete, 2002; and CAMPACC, 2003). It is a response that legitimises the targeting of groups that are tangentially associated with terrorists, whether this is translated into criminalisation, racial harassment, or violent victimisation (see Burnett and Whyte, 2004: 28-9).

The RAND-St Andrews Nexus

As the preceding discussion indicates, RAND Corporation has been perhaps the key institution in the development of the 'new terrorism' as an ideological formation. In the sections that follow, we look more closely at the impact of a network of experts that are organized around the RAND agenda in order to build a case study of the origins of the new terrorism thesis. Before proceeding further it is therefore necessary to say a little more about RAND Corporation and the wider intellectual network that it forms part of.

RAND Corporation is a non-profit making research foundation that is regarded as the single most important think tank for the US military. The corporation was formed in 1945 by the US Army Air Force as *Project RAND* and contracted to the Douglas Aircraft Company. In 1948, it separated from Douglas and became an 'independent' and non-profit research and development organisation. RAND has been credited with producing ideas that were seminal for the development of satellite technology and systems analysis. It also claims to have created the first computer and subsequently, the capacity for inter-computer communication, or the internet (Campbell, 2004: 50-9). RAND is currently estimated to have an annual budget of \$160 million, making it perhaps the largest private research centre in the world. Among its current administrators are Frank Carlucci (formerly Deputy Director of the CIA and Reagan's Defence Secretary, now president of the Carlyle Group). Further, a string of key individuals in the present Bush administration have links with RAND. For example Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan and long standing strategy advisor to Dick Cheney was a RAND analyst. Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld were also formerly administrators at RAND. In this context then, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Corporation has emerged not only as to stimulate and provide ideas for policy development, but to act effectively as an influential prestigious voice in the American military-industrial lobby and in world politics; particularly with regard to its interventions on the war on terror.

The Corporation's considerable influence within academia can be exemplified by its role in the establishment of what is regarded as the foremost centre for the study of terrorism in the UK: the University of St Andrews Centre for Studies in Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV). A key RAND expert, Bruce Hoffman, temporarily left RAND in 1993 to found the CSTPV (RAND, 1998) and the institutional ties between RAND and the CSTPV remain close. Bruce Hoffman is an Honorary Senior Research Associate and Brian Jenkins, a Senior Analyst at RAND who founded the corporation's terrorism research programme in 1972, is a member of the CSTPV Advisory Council. Both of these individuals rank amongst the most prominent terrorism experts in the US.² The relationship is further strengthened through the collaborative establishment of the RAND-St Andrews database of international

² As well as being a long-standing employee of RAND and the current Director of the Washington office, Hoffman has a virtually unrivalled international profile in the field of terrorism and is regularly described as one of the world's leading experts on terrorism. Amongst a host of impressive government appointments, he has served as a member of the U.S. Department of Defense Counterterrorism Advisory Board. In November 1994, the CIA awarded Hoffman the US Intelligence Community Seal Medallion, the highest level of commendation given to a non-government employee.

terrorism incidents; widely recognised as one of the most authoritative source of data on international terrorism.

Publication and Peer Review

The degree to which a RAND-St Andrews influence is established at the epicentre of the academic study of terrorism is indicated by the pivotal role of the experts that are based in both institutions in academic publishing. Members of the Centre and of RAND retain key editorial positions in the two foremost academic journals currently publishing work in the field of terrorism and political violence. Wilkinson is a co-Editor of *'Terrorism and Political Violence'* and Anthony Richards of the CSTPV is co-Assistant Editor. Bruce Hoffman and Brian Jenkins are on the editorial board. Further, Hoffman is editor in chief of the journal *'Studies in Conflict and Terrorism'*, a journal founded and controlled editorially by RAND. Many of the top editorial positions of this journal are occupied by RAND employees,³ and Magnus Ranstorp and Paul Wilkinson of the CSTPV have positions on the editorial committee of the journal. What this effectively means is that, in this context, peer reviewed publications are dominated by academics connected by this nexus of influence. Whilst we are by no means suggesting that the system of peer review being used is in any way corrupted or less rigorous than it is in other publications, if we consider that two of the key journals in the discipline are dominated by scholars from the RAND-St Andrews nexus, then this does say something about their ability to impose their influence upon the field.

The 'terrorism' that contributions to this journal focus on almost exclusively covers political violence directed against states, rather than *by* states. Where state terrorism does feature in analyses, it tends to be the political violence sponsored by states that are not allied to US or Western European countries (in other words, those described as 'rogue states'). But a key effect of this ideologically driven concern with the violence of groups who stand outside, or oppose, the Western sphere of political influence is not simply that the definition of terrorism is distorted.

This tendency manifests itself as a methodological flaw in one of the key contributions to the study of terrorism, the RAND-St Andrews Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents noted above. First, the database only records incidents that are defined as 'international terrorism'. This category in the RAND-St Andrews Database includes acts involving groups and individuals traveling abroad to strike targets, and those that select targets who have a connection to a foreign state. Yet it neglects violence carried out by 'terrorists', within their own country and against fellow nationals. As Hoffman and Claridge (1998: 139) put it, "Irish terrorists blowing up other Irishmen in Belfast" would not be included in the database. Most terrorist attacks that are included in the database occur in states that are peripheral in global economic terms. Since the chronology only records those incidents that are 'international', the database is orientated towards the recording of attacks on foreign

³ Respectively, the other top editorial positions are held by George K. Tanham (Founding Editor) and Peter Chalk (Associate Editor). All four list their contact address as RAND, Arlington, Virginia, USA.

visitors to, and military occupiers of, relatively poor countries. By definition those victims are normally business representatives and military personnel from economically strong, normally Western, nations. The second observation, which reinforces this latter point, is that the Chronology explicitly excludes acts of state terror committed by any government against its own citizens, and acts of violence occurring in war or in war-like situations (ibid). Incidents involving Western armies of occupation and businesses are included in the Chronology only where they are victims rather than the perpetrators of violence. Third, some of the methodological inconsistencies in the use of data in the Chronology database are reminiscent of the counter-insurgency position. It is possible to find non-violent activities and protests against state violence recorded in the database as 'terrorism.' Thus, for example we find rather bizarrely two Kurdish protests involving unarmed demonstrators included in the Chronology. An occupation of the German consulate in Athens in protest of the killing of a Kurdish youth in police custody, and secondly a protest outside the Turkish National Airline office in Athens (ibid: 147; and Hoffman and Hoffman, 1995: 208). In addition, and contra the methodological notes that accompany the publication of the Chronology, some acts committed in 'war-like situations' are included. Thus, for example, Serbian attacks against British UN forces during the Balkan conflict are included (ibid: 222).

The RAND-St Andrews Chronology of International Terrorist Incidents demonstrates clearly that the terrorism that the nexus is interested in is highly selective. The Chronology is driven by a highly inconsistent conception of the categories of political violence that are worthy of analysis. As such it mirrors the conceptual flaws in the application of definitions of terrorism that has been the norm in Western terrorology (see Herman, 1982).

The RAND-St Andrews Nexus and Iraq

Following the preceding discussion, it is of significance to note that experts associated with the RAND-St Andrews nexus have professional ties with businesses and military personnel that support on going counter-terrorism activity. Those professional ties can only be enhanced by the high profile international conferences involving private corporations, security intelligence officers and other government officials that the CSTPV have organised and played a leading role in (for example, ITI, 2004; Four Communications, 2002a).

One professional relationship that we can point to indicates a direct involvement. In 2001, David Claridge a founder member of the CSTPV and current Honorary Senior Research Fellow established Janusian Security Risk Management Limited, a private military intelligence and security company, as a subsidiary of the political risk firm The Risk Advisory Group. According to its own publicity, the company claimed to have been the first Western security firm with an independent operational office and a country manager permanently based in Iraq. It also claims to have 'run' three trade delegations into Iraq for western companies and to have "established access to the CPA, Ministries and the business community" (Janusian Security Risk Management

Ltd, 2004). The company is part of the fast growing military industry that has used the Iraq conflict to make windfall profits and gain a foothold in a fast-growing private market in military violence (Whyte, 2003). In the press statement accompanying its launch, Janusian acknowledged their link with the CSTPV:

The new company has created a number of proprietary tools to identify and evaluate the terrorist, criminal and other physical threats facing businesses around the world. The first of these, a unique collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St Andrews, includes shared access to research, intelligence sources and databases, and the expertise of the Centre's staff, as well as the development of sector-specific studies into areas of political risk (Four Communications, 2002b).

RAND Corporation have also been involved in providing intellectual resources to protect the businesses in occupied Iraq. In 2004, RAND and Janusian collaborated on a business survey that sought to understand the preparedness of businesses in Iraq to protect themselves from attack (RAND Europe and the Risk Advisory Group, 2004). In 2004, Bruce Hoffman was appointed as senior advisor on counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency to the Constitutional Provisional Authority in Iraq. During his period of office Hoffman authored a paper, published by RAND, which provides a marker for the strategic advice he was providing to the occupation forces. In the article, Hoffman argues that the occupation counter-terrorism strategy can only be successful if it adopts a British model of counter-insurgency. He singles out Frank Kitson's *Low Intensity Operations* as a model for the US occupation and argues that in order to defeat this 'netwar' - involving an enemy organised in a "loose, amorphous manner" or "postmodern insurgency" - return to the intelligence methods advocated by the counter-insurgency movement is required (Hoffman, 2004: 17-8).

The Counter Insurgency Legacy

There is an important link to the past here, for the intellectual heritage of this RAND-St Andrews nexus is rooted in a counter-insurgency movement that emerged in the early 1970s to provide the intellectual leadership for British and US imperial military strategies. The CSTPV's legacy can be traced to the work of Major General Richard Clutterbuck, who died in 1998.⁴ Clutterbuck had been a member of the Centre's Advisory Council since the Centre's inception, and bequeathed his archive to the CSTPV. His work drew upon this experience of 13 conflict hotspots in the post-war years and sought to provide practical, working theories for low level combat against 'insurgents'. Along with Clutterbuck, perhaps the most prominent writer from this counter-insurgency school was Frank Kitson. The counter-insurgency school tended to make crude links between labour disputes, popular protest movements, and 'terrorist' activity - often blamed on the KGB (see Schlesinger, 1978; and Herman,

⁴ Paul Wilkinson recognises this intellectual lineage, paying tribute to the work of both Frank Kitson and Clutterbuck in his introduction to *British Perspectives on Terrorism*. For a cross section of Clutterbuck's literature on counter-insurgency see Clutterbuck (1972; 1973; 1977; and 1978).

1998). The concept of a 'continuum of insurgency' or 'spectrum of political conflict' that was developed in Clutterbuck's work (see in particular, 1990) was a consistent theme in the counter-insurgency scholarship of the time. The central idea is that popular protest, industrial action and terrorism can be located on different points of a continuum of political violence. Kitson in *Low Intensity Operations* (1971) argues that military forces must recognise that subversion and insurgency are now part of 'one total war'. Moreover, he argued rather apocalyptically that no orthodox war in the future will be conducted without being supplemented by tactics of 'subversion and insurgency'.

The key to defeating subversion and counter-insurgency is tying the military and civil effort together (ibid.: chapter 3) whereby military personnel must be involved in the civil administrations and in shaping those strategies because civil administrations are not trained to fight subversion. Moreover it may be desirable to conduct this tying together of military leadership and civil administration covertly, since: "There is no danger of political repercussions to this course of action, because consultation can be carried out in the strictest secrecy" (ibid.: 68).

In both Kitson and Clutterbuck's work, infiltration of the local population can be achieved by covert operations, normally conducted by special forces rather than regular military units. At the heart of this was the strategy of 'turning.' Turning in the context of the colonial war in Malaya was described by Clutterbuck (1973: 212) thus:

"The method of acquiring and using agents was to spy on the guerrilla's contacts with the people, identify who those were in touch with them, persuade a number of those to turn traitor, and so disrupt the rest of the organisation so that the guerrillas were fairly sure to go on relying on at least some of those people that would in the end betray them by giving 'advance precise information.'"

This technique would be used to facilitate the further surrender of enemy personnel and the murders of those who allied themselves with the insurgents. Local populations who did not conform could be manipulated by, for example, cutting off their food supplies until they withdrew support for insurgent groups (ibid.).

Counter-insurgency theory is not concerned with the socio-economic and political roots of violence and insurgency, but merely the technical aspects of how states can respond militarily. It is a technicist inflection which is based upon the assumption that terrorism can be defeated by military means: Thus, "[h]istory has shown that terrorism can be and has been eliminated by a ruthless response to it, for power does ultimately lie with the government and its security forces." (Clutterbuck, 1978: 181).

We can see similar echoes of classic counter-insurgency strategy in the work of another former CSTPV-based expert. In Rohan Gunaratna's highly acclaimed text *Inside al Qaeda*, he discusses the necessity of short, mid, and long term responses to the organisation. Initially he advocates the destruction of the immediate threat, combining military action with the strangling of finances and sponsors. Further, rather

than ‘visible’ action, he suggests the assassination of high profile figures and leaders (Gunaratna, 2003: 233-5). Secondly, he maintains that ‘mid-term’ counter-terrorism strategies must be both military and ideological. Counter-terrorism must involve discrediting the ideological basis of al Qaeda’s Islamism (ibid: 236). Finally, a key facet of Gunaratna’s strategy is to physically create the conditions for ‘a modern system of government.’ This is likely to involve harnessing (reforming) education, media, and criminal justice systems and acting as a support system to those who oppose al Qaeda. In this analysis, the “West can help, but it is a battle that can best be fought and won by Muslims against Muslims” (ibid: 239). It is here that the new terrorism thesis picks up a familiar theme in counter-insurgency theory: that in order to win over subversion, sections of the population amenable to turning must be used against those who remain hostile. Moreover, that victory over terrorism and insurgency will ultimately only be won when the hearts and minds of those deemed potential terrorists are won. According to Kitson, “...it is in men’s minds that wars of subversion have to be fought and decided” (1971: 31).

Embedded Expertise

Just as those journalists who attach themselves to military units are now described as ‘embedded’ with the military, it is equally appropriate to use this term to describe experts that attach themselves to the occupying forces in Iraq. Those ‘embedded experts’ are the technicians of counter-insurgency. It is an *embedded* relationship which, if we were naive enough not to notice previously, alerts us to the difficulty with regarding the work of RAND Corporation and their colleagues as wholly disinterested. This is not to say that they benefit in any way from a relationship with military establishments, but it is to recognise that an effect of being embedded is that research cannot be regarded as objective scholarship in a traditional sense (see Tombs and Whyte, 2003: 13-14; on this question as it applies to terrorology, see Herman and O’Sullivan, 1989). The work done by those experts is based upon technocratic assessments that are of use to powerful state and corporate agents.

Moreover, it is an enterprise that abstracts the violence of those resisting the occupation from the conditions of the occupation itself. In his key contribution as advisor to the Constitutional Provisional Authority, Hoffman locates the problem of ‘insurgency’ in Iraq is a result of the US’s lack of adequate planning: “a critical window of opportunity was lost because we failed to anticipate the widespread civil disorder and looting that followed the capture of Baghdad (2004, 2). This was the key mistake that “breathed life into the insurgency.” The wholesale corporate looting of Iraq, in which at least \$4billion worth of oil revenue have gone missing (Christian Aid, 2004), or the wholesale sell off of Iraqi assets to Western corporations as a result of the collusive relationship between the Coalition Provisional Authority and US corporations (Open Society Institute, 2004) doesn’t figure in this analysis. Neither does the torture and summary justice meted out in the hastily erected penal archipelago, nor the 100,000 immediate casualties of war (*Washington Post*, 29 October 2004). If his embedded status was ever doubted, it is revealed consistently by the use of “our” strategy when referring to the US military strategy (see for

example reference to “our current involvement in Iraq”, Hoffman, 2004: 1; and “our entire strategy and approach”, *ibid.*: 18).

This is where we get closer to understanding the hegemonic effect of ‘new terrorism’ ideology. For just as continuum of insurgency theory enabled the ‘counter-insurgency movement’ to collapse all forms of protest, resistance and counter-state violence into a singular narrative of subversion, the overlaying of this conceptualization of terrorism with the framework of the ‘new terrorism’ reifies political violence. When violent resistance is abstracted from its formative conditions in this crude form, only then can the terrorist be known and recreated in a form that enables the Palestinian intifada, the Chechnyan resistance, and the various armed groups in Iraq to be understood as part of the same threat to order. Since the very particular historical and political conditions that enable us to understand political violence are abstracted from their specific location, our capacity for understanding the political and historical context for this violence is lost. By making the terrorism ‘knowable’ in this form, the new terrorism de-contextualises the formative conditions of violence and makes its socio-economic and political origins less knowable. This is the most useful effect of the new terrorism to strong states who wish to hide their own terrorism, since when the socio-economic and political roots of political violence are discussed and understood, too many awkward questions about Western state terror rise to the surface.

Consistent with the previous work of the experts associated with the RAND-St Andrews nexus, the violence of occupying powers does not figure in the analysis. An equally significant effect, then, is the way in which acts of state terror are easily transformed into counter-terrorism. Whether committed by Israel in the West Bank, or by the US in Kabul; acts of terror committed by Western states and their allies are transformed seamlessly into ‘counter-terrorism.’ For example, Bruce Hoffman has argued publicly that Israel’s ‘success’ in combating Palestinian terrorism is directly a result of the Israeli Defence Forces’ illegal occupation of the West Bank (CNN US News broadcast, 19th May 2003). Whilst the same parameters and definitions used by terrorologists could equally define the Israeli occupation as an act of terrorism, it is never discussed as such. It is a position that enables extra-judicial assassinations committed by Israel to be described as “ruthless acts of counter-terror” (Wilkinson, 2002b: 68).

Conclusion

The ideology of the ‘new terrorism’ conjures up the terrorist threat as a force that cannot be bargained with. In political terms, the claim is that the new terrorism represents a break from the past. Access to new technology and weapons of mass destruction - opened up by a crudely imagined process of globalisation indicates a rupture with previous forms of terrorism. Yet it is highly illuminating then that we see, in the example of Iraq, a simultaneous call for a return to the old counter-insurgency strategy. Despite all of the hyperbole surrounding the new ‘netwar’ and the new terrorism, it is being argued that this enemy should be dealt with in precisely the same manner as 20th century colonial rebellions.

In 2001, shortly after the September attacks on the US, RAND analysts proclaimed that “[T]heory has struck home with a vengeance” (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001b: 363) and suggested that the attacks had “confirmed their warnings” (ibid). As the responses to these events have taken shape, the ‘new terrorism’ has proven important in propaganda terms in legitimising the recent interventions made by Western powers in Afghanistan and Iraq. But if we look more closely in the locations in which netwars are supposedly taking place such as Colombia and Iraq, the new terrorism is being used to legitimise the presence of Western corporations and military personnel. We should be wary of a revival of counter-insurgency theory precisely because it establishes a basis for all forms of dissent to be homogenised. Rejuvenation of continuum of insurgency theory at the very least cautions us that embedded expert knowledge of the type offered by the RAND-St Andrews nexus will legitimate a growing range of forms of opposition to Western states within its range. After all, subversion was, for Frank Kitson and the counter-insurgency school clearly defined as *all* tactics that attempt to force governments into taking a particular course of action, including political and economic pressure, strikes, protest marches and counter-hegemonic propaganda.

If, despite the almost constant government and media talk about the growing risk of terrorism there remain few ‘knowns’ about the material realities of the threat of a catastrophic attack, there are some things that we can know for certain. It is certain that some elite groups will make a great deal of political and social capital out of this war on terror. It is equally certain that state interventions against the terrorists will continue to be supported by a manufactured conception of ‘new terrorism’ that is founded upon a highly questionable knowledge base. It is more important now than ever before for academics interested in combating the roots of terrorism (both Western terrorism and the terrorism committed by the relatively powerless; both the violence of the occupier and the violence of the occupied) to challenge the embedded knowledge that draws upon the imprimatur of the academy in order to provide the bankrupt intellectual leadership for this violent and socially corrosive war on terror.

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