Terrorism
and
the
Boston
Marathon

Fear,
Hope,
and
Resilience

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What is “Terrorism”? 

political 

violence
The Academic Definition of Terrorism

• Terrorism is the use or threat of violence by a non-state group against non-combatants to inspire fear or alarm in an audience beyond the immediate target for political ends.

• Five parts
  – Use or threat of violence
  – Non-state perpetrator
  – Non-combatant target
  – Inspire fear or alarm
  – Committed for political goals
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Terrorism Inspires (Disproportionate) Fear

- Survey experiment across U.S. found students perceived terrorism as a medium threat to themselves and a large threat to the United States

- **Gallup Poll**: 79% of Americans see terrorism as an “extremely serious” or “very serious threat”, more than the federal debt, health care costs, unemployment, and the environment
Why Terrorism Inspires (Disproportionate) Fear

• Terrorism inspires fear because it is (or seems):
  – Unknown
  – Uncontrollable
  – Indiscriminate ("that could have been me")

• Lone wolves inspire the most fear because they are harder to identify and stop before an attack
U.S. Terrorist Attacks by Individuals

% U.S. Terrorist Attacks by Individuals, pre- and post- Oklahoma City

% Attacks by Individuals, pre-1995  % Attacks by Individuals, post-1995
Multiple Choice: Causes of Terrorism

Most individuals who commit terrorist attacks are:

a) Mentally ill
b) Poor
c) Uneducated
d) B and C
e) All of the above
Most individuals who commit terrorist attacks are:

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- All of the above
Causes of Terrorism

**Strategic**
- occupation
- discrimination
- war

**Organizational**
- competition
- notoriety

**Individual**
- social ostracism
- revenge
- humiliation
Each strategy of terrorism relies on provoking fear

- Attrition
- Spoiling
- Outbidding
- Intimidation
- Provocation
Terrorism Strategies: Attrition
Terrorism Strategies: Spoiling
Terrorism Strategies: Outbidding
Terrorism Strategies: Intimidation
Terrorism Strategies: Provocation
The Detrimental Impact of Fear

NEW YORK POST
Page Six

BAG MEN
Feds seek these two pictured at Boston Marathon

SEE PAGES 4, 5, 6, 7
Terrorism and Ethnic Polarization

Changes in the sectarian makeup of West Baghdad Suburbs 2003 - 2009
(Suburb Al’Adil is in the centre of the maps - north of Khadra, south of Hurriya)

2003
2006
2009

Red: Sunni
Green: Shia
Orange: Mixed

Sources:
# Hope: The Effectiveness of Terrorism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Analysis</th>
<th>Tactical</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
<th>Strategic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit of Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Objective</strong></td>
<td>Kill soldiers and civilians, destroy infrastructure, inspire fear</td>
<td>Increase the strength of the attacking organization (recruits, money, popular support)</td>
<td>Increase the security and prosperity of the movement (found a state, end an occupation)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tactical: Terrorism Deaths in the U.S.

US TERRORISM DEATHS

Number of Fatalities in US Terrorist Attacks

- 217 deaths in 1991-2000
- 25 deaths in 2002-2010
Tactical: Attacks and Deaths in the U.S.
Tactical: Attacks and Deaths in the U.S.
Tactical: Terrorism Deaths vs. Other Causes

- Car accidents and flu kill ~35,000 Americans per year
- Lightning kills ~55 Americans per year
- Lone wolf attacks cause fewer casualties on average than attacks by organizations
Organizational: Groups Rising and Falling
Strategic: Political Concessions

- The majority of terrorism campaigns get no significant political concessions.

- Many that do are part of a broader movement; it is not always clear whether violence helps or hurts the cause.

- Lone wolves have neither strength nor cohesion, the keys to strategic success.
• *Inspire* said "the Tsarnaev mujahideen were very clever by striking on the marathon day, in consideration that the event attracted 27,000 registered participants, in addition to approximately 500,000 spectators and about 1,000 media personnel from more than 100 outlets... Boston University and Boston College are located near the the blasts”
The “Effectiveness” of the Marathon Bombings

- **Tactical**
  - A lone wolf anomaly
  - Worst possible target to attack

- **Organizational**
  - No group claiming
  - No outpouring of support

- **Strategic**
  - No chance of concessions
  - Tactical “victories” and strategic defeats
Community Resilience

- Community resilience is the “sustained ability of a community to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations”

- Key factor in preventing attacks and their negative impact

- Effective community resilience stems from the creation and utilization of Cohesion, Knowledge, and Emotion
Community Resilience: Cohesion

• Building civil society can make terrorism less likely and lessen its negative effects when it does happen.

• Cohesive communities have better governance, fewer ostracized individuals, and built-in support networks when tragedy strikes.
Community Resilience: Knowledge

- Knowledge of terrorism, its history and precedents, and associated debates leads to better policy and community reactions.

- Survey experiment demonstrated those who took course on terrorism were significantly less fearful of terrorism and more confident to engage with their opinions.

- Clear communication and transparency with government, healthy skepticism based on fact not conspiracy theories.
Community Resilience: Emotion

• Emotional response to terrorism and its impact can be a source of strength, not weakness.

• Emotions overlooked in “rational” studies in academia, but can push people to lead and form the strongest bonds with others.

• Revenge best served cold, but resilience best served warm.
The Resilience of Boston

- David Diamond and the selfless reaction of first responders
- 10,000 volunteers and 36,000 runners in this year’s marathon, thousands turned away
- The courage and determination of Brittany Loring and other victims
Adrianne Haslet-Davis lost her leg in the Marathon bombings, said she’d dance again, did it in less than a year with a bionic prosthetic leg designed by researcher Hugh Herr at MIT, himself a double-amputee.
What Can I Do? Build Community Cohesion

Support the Campus School Bandit Marathon this Sunday

Run and attend events that fight prejudice and build community

Student Group Fights Islamophobia

By Devon Sanford
Assoc. News Editor
Published: Thursday, May 2, 2013
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Get/stay involved with service in the Boston community
What Can I Do? Increase Your Knowledge

- Take classes to better hold policymakers to account or to become one. BC offers great courses on terrorism, U.S. foreign policy, Middle East politics, civil liberties

- Analyze Boston’s response to the attacks and what you agree and disagree with

- Learn the names of the victims
Lu Lingzi, 23

Sean Collier, 27

Don’t try to remove your emotions from the equation, use them to help push you to do what your mind tells you is too hard, too daunting, too uncertain.
I look forward to our discussion