

## **Introduction to Terrorism: 3 Motivations**

### **Criminology Forensic Science**

**Mrs. Ham and Mr. Krieger**

- Step #1** Read the three perspective of terrorism below.
- Step #2** Read the attached profile of Osama bin Laden
- Step #3** After you read the profile about bin Laden, answer the following questions by completing the graphic organizer on the last page. You will tear-off and submit the last page.

- 1. What insight or understanding does the psychological perspective give us about bin Laden?**
- 2. What insight or understanding does the ideological perspective give us about bin Laden?**
- 3. What insight or understanding does the strategic perspective give us about bin Laden?**

The causes of terrorism appear to be varied. There does not appear to be one lone factor that leads people to engage in acts of terror. Scholars have categorized motivations for terrorism to include psychological, ideological, and strategic.

### **Psychological Perspective**

Those who engage in terrorism may do so for purely personal reasons, based on their own psychological state of mind. Their motivation may be nothing more than hate or the desire for power. For example, in 1893 Auguste Vaillant bombed the French Chamber of Deputies. Prior to his conviction and subsequent execution Vaillant explained his motivation in terms of hate for the middle classes. Vaillant wanted to spoil the sense of economic and social success, by tainting it with his violence. In many respects this terrorist is interested in getting attention from others for his or her act, rather than some grand ideological or strategic goal.

### **Ideological Perspective**

Ideology is defined as the beliefs, values, and/or principles by which a group identifies its particular aims and goals. Ideology may encompass religion or political philosophies and programs. Examples of terrorist groups motivated by ideology include the Irish Republican Army (IRA), in Sri Lanka the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and the Bader Meinhoff in Germany. The IRA is motivated by a political program to oust the United Kingdom from Ireland and unite Ireland under one flag. Similarly the LTTE seek to establish a separate state for their people, the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Finally, the Bader Meinhoff was a terrorist group made up of middle-class adults who opposed capitalism and sought to destroy capitalist infrastructure in Germany.

### **Strategic Perspective**

Terrorism is sometimes seen as a logical extension of the failure of politics. When people seek redress of their grievances through government, but fail to win government's attention to their plight, they may resort to violence. From this viewpoint, terrorism is the result of a logical analysis of the goals and objectives of a group, and their estimate of the likelihood of gaining victory. If victory seems unlikely using more traditional means of opposition, then one might calculate that terrorism is a better option. For example, in South Africa the African National Congress only turned to the use of terrorism after political avenues were explored and failed. Of course, not just individuals may feel let down by the political process. States may use terrorists in the pursuit of their own strategic interests. States may sponsor terrorist groups, especially when the objectives of the state and the terrorist group are similar. For example, Libya used terrorists to explode a bomb aboard Pan Am 103 flying from London to New York in 1988, allegedly in response to U.S. and British bombing of Libya.

## **Profile of a Terrorist: Osama bin Laden**

The youngest son of Saudi construction magnate Muhammad Bin Ladin, Osama bin Laden joined the Afghan resistance almost immediately after the Soviet invasion in December 1979. He played a significant role in financing, recruiting, transporting, and training Arab nationals who volunteered to fight in Afghanistan. Bin Ladin founded al-Qaida—the Base—to serve as an operational hub, predominantly for like-minded Sunni Islamic extremists. In August 1996, Bin Ladin issued a statement outlining his organization's goals: drive U.S. forces from the Arabian Peninsula, overthrow the Government of Saudi Arabia, “liberate” Muslim holy sites in “Palestine,” and support Islamic revolutionary groups around the world. His organization sent trainers throughout Afghanistan and the world and trained fighters from numerous other countries including the Philippines, Egypt, and Libya. Bin Ladin also had close associations with the leaders of several Islamic terrorist groups and probably aided in creating new groups since the mid-1980s. He trained their troops, provided safehaven and financial support, and probably helped them with other organizational matters.

Since August 1996, bin Ladin was very vocal in expressing his approval of and intent to use terrorism. He claimed responsibility for trying to bomb U.S. soldiers in Yemen in late 1992 and for attacks in them in Somalia in 1993, and reports suggest his organization aided the Egyptian al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya in its assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak in Ethiopia in 1995. In November 1996 he called the 1995 and 1996 bombings against US military personnel in Saudi Arabia “praiseworthy acts of terrorism” but denied having any participation in those bombings. At the same time, he called for further attacks against US military personnel, saying: “If someone can kill an American soldier, it is better than wasting time on other matters.”

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Below is an interview with Osama bin Laden by ABC's John Miller (conducted on May 28, 1998). The interview presents a number of different insights concerning the origins of terrorism (such as the psychological, ideological, and strategic). You will note bin Laden attempts to speak on behalf of all of Islam—which of course in reality he does not.

JOHN MILLER Mr. bin Laden, to Americans you are an interesting figure: A man who comes from a background of wealth and comforts who ended up fighting on the front lines. Many Americans would think that's unusual.

OSAMA BIN LADEN Thanks be to Allah. It is hard for one to understand if the person does not understand Islam. In our religion we believe that Allah created us to worship him. Allah is the one who created us and blessed us with this religion, and orders us to carry out the holy struggle jihad to raise the word of Allah above the words of the unbelievers. We believe this is a form of worship we must follow despite our financial ability. This is a response to Westerners and secularists in the Arab world who claim the reason for the awakening and the return to Islam is financial difficulties. This is untrue. In fact, the return of the people to Islam is a blessing from Allah, and their return is a need for Allah. This is not a strange issue. During the days of jihad, thousands of young men who were well off financially left the Arabian Peninsula and other areas and joined the fighting—hundreds of them were killed in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya. We pray Allah grants them martyr status.

MILLER You have been described as the “World's Most Wanted Man.” There is word that the American government intends to put a price on your head in the millions for your capture. Do you think about that? Does it worry you?

OSAMA BIN LADEN Praise be to Allah. It does not worry us what the Americans think. What worries us is pleasing Allah. The Americans impose themselves on everyone who believes in his religion and his rights. They accuse our children in Palestine of being terrorists. Those children that have no weapons and have not even reached maturity. At the same time they defend a country with its airplanes and tanks, and the state of the Jews, that has a policy to destroy the future of these children. President Clinton stands after Qana<sup>1</sup> and defends the horrible massacre that severed the heads of children and killed about 100 persons. Clinton stands and claims Israel has the right to defend itself. We do not worry about American opinion, or the fact they place prices on our heads.

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<sup>1</sup> Qana is a village in Lebanon where, on April 18, 1996, Israeli artillery shelled a compound in response to an attack allegedly launched by forces

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Graphic Organizer  
Criminology Forensic Science  
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Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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psychological perspective give us about bin Laden?**

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