Introduction

This is a response to the reinforced initiative by the USA in Afghanistan -- framed as the world's prime training ground for terrorism -- and possibly to be understood as the arena of the greatest military strategic failures in history. The new strategy was formally presented by Barack Obama on 27 March 2009 and variously interpreted (US rethinks Afghanistan strategy, BBC News, 27 March 2009; Obama Sounds Cautious Note as He Sets Out Afghan Plan, New York Times, 27 March 2009; Obama escalates war in Central Asia, World Socialist Website, 30 March 2009).

The initiative coincides with a reframing of the "War on Terror" as "Overseas Contingency Operations" -- seemingly acknowledging that the threat that was is no longer what it was claimed so vigorously to be (Oliver Burkeman, Obama administration says goodbye to 'war on terror', The Guardian, 25 March 2009). The strategy is to be rephrased by the USA using the bureaucratic expression "overseas contingency operations". However, from a global strategic perspective, since every country has its "overseas", "Overseas Contingency Operations" would imply there is no longer any corresponding internal threat requiring a focus on "homeland security" -- anywhere.

The argument in what follows focuses on the context in which "terrorism" is defined. This provides an introduction to the statistics of other threats that are already as deadly in statistically terms, or may become so, or are a source of terror in their own right.

Definitional game-playing

The name of the game has been changed yet again. The "War on Terror" which was scheduled to last for generations -- like the 1000 Year Reich -- has been reframed with the flick of an e-mail (Oliver Burkeman, War on Terror is Over: overseas contingency operations. The Guardian, 26 March 2009 (posted online as Obama administration says goodbye to 'war on terror': US defence department seems to confirm use of the bureaucratic phrase 'overseas contingency operations'; 25 March 2009).

This follows an earlier exercise to reframe it to include "extremism" of every form, including incitement to "extremism" -- possibly qualified, if only implicitly, as "violent extremism". This initiative has been previously documented (Norms in the Global Struggle against Extremism: "rooting for" normalization vs. "rooting out" extremism? 2005; Presumption of Guilt by Association: reframing extremism in the response to terrorism, 2005).

These terminological exercises, on which there is no international consensus, have nevertheless provided every possible justification for the introduction of invasive and repressive legislation -- as many have documented. This is upheld as necessary for "national security" --
without ever clarifying the dimensions of the threat. That information too is a matter of "national security" and is therefore classified.

What is astounding is that there is still no clear international definition of the "terrorism" against which unprecedented resources have been allocated over a decade (Varieties of Terrorism: extended to the experience of the terrorized, 2004).

Such definitional game-playing has previously been noted with respect to terrorism as well as other issues (Is God a Terrorist? Definitional game-playing by the Coalition of the Willing, 2004; Conceptual gerrymandering and definitional game-playing, 2002; Interacting Fruitfully with Un-Civil Society: the dilemma for non-civil society organizations, 1996; Definitional Boundary Games and De-signing the 21st Century, 1995).

What is most curious is that it would appear unclear that there has been any shared definition of "terrorism" amongst the Coalition of the Willing that first intervened as a result of 9/11, or amongst NATO forces in subsequent activities in Afghanistan, or in the various worldwide efforts to coordinate responses in the "war on terror". What is much clearer is that an international group effort was made to respond to the terminological confusion in a "theoretical discussion" (Jeffrey L. Arnold, et al A Proposed Universal Medical and Public Health Definition of Terrorism, Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, April - June 2003) concluding:

Although a myriad of definitions of terrorism have been advanced over the years, virtually all of these definitions have been crisis centered, frequently reflecting the political perspectives of those who seek to define it. In this article, we deconstruct these previously used definitions of terrorism in order to reconstruct a definition of terrorism that is consequence-centered, medically relevant, and universally harmonized. A universal medical and public health definition of terrorism will facilitate clinical and scientific research, education, and communication about terrorism-related events or disasters. We propose the following universal medical and public definition of terrorism:

The intentional use of violence -- real or threatened -- against one or more non-combatants and/or those services essential for or protective of their health, resulting in adverse health effects in those immediately affected and their community, ranging from a loss of well-being or security to injury, illness, or death.

Unfortunately, given the explicit "medical" focus of this excellent document, it is unclear whether this definition effectively addresses the experiential issue of "terror" as opposed to actions which it is considered to be convenient to label by what is effectively a catch-all term, "terrorism" -- actions and effects which might however be appropriately indicated by other classes of labels for injury or fatality.

The report offers an extensive discussion of psychological harm, but it is unclear how this might be assessed in the conventional collection of statistics -- especially where "terror" may be associated with a "climate of fear" engendered in a community. This is especially significant where the "climate of fear" is engendered not by physical violence but by structural violence or by cultural violence.

Johan Galtung (Violence, Peace, and Peace Research, Journal of Peace Research, 1969) makes a vital distinction between physical violence and structural violence. He argues that physical violence is for the amateur, using weapons in order to dominate. For Galtung, structural violence is the tool of the professional employing exploitation and social injustice to achieve domination. In addition to "structural violence", Johan Galtung (Cultural Violence, Journal of Peace Research, 1990) has defined "cultural violence" as any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form. Symbolic violence built into a culture does not kill or main like direct violence or the violence built into the structure. Clearly both these forms of violence can induce terror but that terror, even as "psychological harm" may not be adequately recognized within the proposed definition of "terrorism".

It might be appropriate to conclude that definitions of "terrorism" -- or even its name -- are modified by political forces to demonstrate a level of threat and/or strategic success in responding to it. Further modifications are made to the definition if the strategy is not working. Governments can therefore make problems "disappear" by conceptual gerrymandering -- as with the transmogrification of "war on terror" into the strategy against "violent extremism" (or extremism alone), or into "overseas contingency operations".

There is a further vexatious political issue, as yet completely unresolved, namely that most independence movements are typically labelled as "terrorist" prior to their success -- including those of the USA, France and Israel. Thereafter the "terrorists" are accorded every honour and courtesy as fully-fledged members of the international community. It is their predecessors who are then labelled "dictators" (and the like) -- although not "terrorists". Such processes could prove to be a real challenge for longer-term diachronic studies of "terrorism".

Strategic priorities in the art of governance

The argument has been made that strategy elaboration and implementation in a global or national context is immeasurably simplified when a single unambiguous threat can be identified as requiring urgent action. Reservations and niceties can then be set aside -- checks and balances can be abandoned. The response to a single threat then becomes the preferred decision-making mode. This is a feature of decision avoidance in response to complex sets of issues (The Art of Non-Decision-Making -- and the manipulation of categories, 1997).

To the extent that very few operational decisions are made globally in practice, the ineffectiveness of token measures in response to other issues may be ignored in the anticipation of a greater threat (Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism: strategy of choice for world governance, 2002; Spin and Counter-spin: governance through terrorism, 2002). Any social unrest on the part of those attaching greater significance to other threats may then be framed as undermining the response to primary threat -- in effect a form of treason, which the anti-terrorist legislation has now been designed to suppress.

However, whilst attention has been so vigorously devoted to the threat of "terrorism" to "national security" in a global society, it is
especially intriguing that a globalized economy has become the victim of a cataclysmic disaster -- arising in the country most strategically preoccupied with "terrorism" and most threatened by it. The economy and livelihoods of that country have been undermined to a degree never imagined as resulting from terrorism.

More curious is that despite the learnings supposedly to be derived from the failure of the intelligence community to detect and prevent 9/11, and its failures to detect the absence of "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, somehow that intelligence community has subsequently proved to be incapable of detecting the threats to the financial system and the severity of its economic consequences. As argued elsewhere, these consequences might be seen as the "achievement" of the superior strategy of parties inimical to globalization and its proponents. In effect, those preoccupied with the strategic threat framed as primary -- namely "terrorism" -- "took their eyes off the ball" of globalization and its sustaining processes (Engaging with Globality -- through cognitive lines, circles, crowns or holes, 2009).

However, to the extent that ensuring the collapse of the global financial system is to be understood as a deliberate initiative (however inadvertent) resulting from extreme risk-taking, it is quite extraordinary the extent to which efforts have been made to reward such "extremism" by payments beyond the dreams of most. Even more extraordinary is the failure to associate disastrous results greater than any "terrorist" might have hoped to achieve with a form of "terrorism" -- of "higher dimensionality" -- which has escaped the definitional games by which "terrorism" and "extremism" are framed (Cognitive Ballistics vs. Derivative Correlation in Memetic Warfare: suicide bombing as a weapon of mass distraction? 2009).

Plainly it is claimed that such payments are contractual obligations -- as though any destructive act could be legally excused provided it was covered by an appropriate contract -- a sort of "007 licence to destroy". Could those narrowly defined as "terrorists" -- or the Eichmann's of the future -- defend themselves in this way? As a corrective, the possibility of framing extreme financial risk-taking as coming within the provisions of anti-terrorist legislation is discussed elsewhere (Extreme Financial Risk-taking as Extremism: subject to anti-terrorism legislation? 2009).

**Claiming appropriate governance by continual reframing of reality**

Given the leadership offered over the period during with the "war on terror" has been escalated, it is appropriate to learn from the new understanding of the strategic reality of world leadership.

One possibility is indicated by the neocon strategy of governance as presented by Ron Suskind (Without a Doubt, The New York Times, In The Magazine, 17 October 2004) following an exchange he had with an aide in the decision-making circle of President Bush:

> The aide said that guys like me were "in what we call the reality-based community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. That's not the way the world really works anymore, he continued. We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality -- judiciously, as you will -- we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."

Many people are now studying the aftermath of the financial disaster. It remains unclear who were "history's actors" engaged in creating their "own reality".

Is reframing the "war on terror" to be seen in this light? Has its role as strategic "chewing gum lost it's flavour" and capacity to offer coherence -- its "sticking capacity"?

The question in relation to threats such as "terrorism" is how such creative shifting of definitions of priority threats is simply to be understood as an inherent feature of strategic misleadership and incompetence in governance (Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council: misleading as vital to governance of the future? 2007). Is the "creative accounting" characteristic of corporate scandals such as Enron to be seen as matched by the "creative defining" of governance?

Confirmation of such a possibility is to be found in the politicization of statistics -- the "massaging" of official statistics that government can ensure. The most concrete examples are to be found in the massaging of statistics regarding "unemployment". Analogous massaging is to be found with respect to threshold levels of environmental pollution.

If governance currently only "works" in response to a singular challenge, it is then useful to explore how various challenges have been successively taken up and effectively abandoned: development, environment, global warming, energy, terrorism, etc. The "moving finger writes, and having writ moves on" -- leaving a trail of underfinanced, ineffectual bureaucracies trailing the imperial court in its quest for relevance. New threats must be nourished such as pandemics, asteroids, sun spot storms, extraterrestrials, and the like - each able to displace its predecessors as being irrelevant to the immediate challenge of the future.

In this sense the fashionable challenge of the day may be seen as disguising the implicit emergent problem -- or sequence of problems -- that will displace it (Climate Change and the Elephant in the Living Room, 2008; Climate Change as a Metaphor of Social Change, 2008; Climate of Change Misrepresented as Climate Change, 2008 ). The question is how to learn from this process and what collective entity might be expected to do so, if any (Systemic Crises as Keys to Systemic Remedies: a metaphorical Rosetta Stone for future strategy? 2008).

Especially problematic is the degree to which a multi-definitional reality is taking hold. Many are left defined and trapped within categories that have been operationally superseded by "history's actors" -- in neocon terms. Just as the current challenge for the frozen credit system is to get banks to lend to each other to recover global liquidity, so it might be said that the conceptual challenge is to "unfreeze the categories" in which most of society is trapped in order to enable a more fluid response to the challenges of the future (Framing the
Demonisation and sorcery: the sorcerer's advantage

As has been noted, governance works well when there is a clearly defined "enemy" -- especially one that is recognizable through computer profiling and weapons targeting. The Taliban could not be better suited to this purpose. The renewed effort in Afghanistan may be appreciated in these terms.

However the challenge is more complex. For governance to acquire credibility it is vital that any enemy be adequately demonised. This is a well-recognized requirement of psychological operations as used by military forces. It is important to be able to associate an image of unspeakable horror with a suitable enemy. The West has been endeavouring to do this with respect to Islam over centuries. Framing a "clash of civilizations" is but the latest round of this endeavor.

This must however be carefully done. For example, in focusing on the extremely regrettable condition of women in Afghanistan, it is import to isolate any such presentations from those in other Islamic countries who happen, currently, to be allies -- where such practices may be just as extreme. It is also vital to draw attention to the condition of women in the West -- within living memory -- when the constraints on women would now be considered totally unacceptable.

But the main requirement of demonisation is to engender a nebulous, "evil" aura around the enemy as a source of unspeakable threat.

Although concern is occasionally expressed about "demonisation", almost no attention is given to those engendering such "demons". It is typically the task, in advanced societies, of security services responsible for "psychological operations" and propaganda. Doc security services have departments or files labelled "demonisation"? What is ironic is the parallel with the activity of sorcerers and witches as archetypal roles in primitive traditional societies. Perhaps more ironic is the use of the term "spooks" to refer to members of the intelligence community.

Most significant in this parallel is the manner in which the sorcerer defines what is "taboo". He too must create an aura of threat associated with the infringement of taboo. The parallel between his "evil spirits" -- which only he is free to name and know about -- and "terrorists" is striking. He is free to label any disastrous incident to which the community is exposed as the action of evil spirits -- then to be placated through his good offices, and the contribution of appropriate resources. Whereas scientists may scornfully challenge such beliefs as "superstition" -- as overlaying reality with an imagined belief system -- the sorcerer can continue successfully to cultivate that belief. The extent of this success is notably to be seen in West Africa.

Of course if the credibility of the sorcerers case tends to weaken, the canny sorcerer can arrange for some form of incident to refocus the attention of the community. Typically such fabrication is unnecessary because there are enough incidents which can simply be reframed as having been provoked by evil spirits.

This reality reframing context is however currently very embarrassing for Christian fundamentalists. Having voted enthusiastically for the born-again George Bush and his faith-based priorities -- with all the consequences -- the question is whether God abandoned the President of the United States or whether the disasters are enabling a higher purpose to emerge (Resolving the Challenge of Faith-based Terrorism, 2005; Future Challenge of Faith-based Governance, 2003; Thinking in Terror Refocusing the interreligious challenge from "Thinking after Terror", 2005).

Statistics on terrorism -- the official position

Beyond the various resolutions of the United Nations on the matter, it is not apparent that the World Health Organization has committed itself to any definition of "terrorism" or of the collection of statistics on it. They may depend on the long revision cycle of its International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems.

The main international source of official statistics on terrorism is the USA. The main difficult with this source is that the definition of "terrorism" on the basis of which statistics were collected has been modified over the years -- as noted by various commentators. As a result of 9/11, the USA undertook to modify the provisions of the WHO classification system -- with the National Center for Health Statistics designating terrorism as a new classification of death. However this means there is no consistent statistical series regarding "terrorism" (as discussed in Terrorism: Tracking The Deaths, 2002).

New Classification for Deaths and Injuries Involving Terrorism JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association), 2002, 51 (Special Issue), pp.18-19

Classification of the deaths and injuries that occurred as the result of the events of September 11, 2001, presented CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) with a dilemma. Under the current classification systems for mortality and morbidity, the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) and the United States' International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM), deaths and injuries associated with acts of terrorism could not be identified uniquely.


National Counterterrorism Center. (USA): Worldwide Incidents Tracking System
Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Country Reports on Terrorism 2007

Annex of Statistical Information

According to NCTC definition, terrorism occurs when groups or individuals acting on political motivation deliberately or recklessly attack civilians/non-combatants or their property and the attack does not fall into another special category of political violence, such as crime, rioting, or tribal violence. For further guidance on criteria, see Methodology.

Because of the change in methodology during 2004, the NCTC data is only comparable starting with the 2005 calendar year data.

### Incidents of Terrorism Worldwide

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terror attacks worldwide</td>
<td>11,156</td>
<td>14,570</td>
<td>14,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks resulting in at least one death, injury, or kidnapping</td>
<td>8,032</td>
<td>11,125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks resulting in at least one death</td>
<td>5,137</td>
<td>7,434</td>
<td>7,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks resulting in the death of zero people</td>
<td>6,019</td>
<td>7,136</td>
<td>7,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks resulting in the death of only one person</td>
<td>2,882</td>
<td>4,142</td>
<td>3,993</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attacks resulting in the death of at least 10 people</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks resulting in the injury of at least one person</td>
<td>3,839</td>
<td>5,798</td>
<td>6,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks resulting in the kidnapping of at least one person</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>1,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People killed, injured or kidnapped as a result of terror attacks</td>
<td>74,309</td>
<td>75,211</td>
<td>72,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People worldwide killed as a result of terror attacks</td>
<td>14,612</td>
<td>20,872</td>
<td>22,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People worldwide injured as a result of terror attacks</td>
<td>24,853</td>
<td>38,455</td>
<td>44,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People worldwide kidnapped as a result of terror attacks</td>
<td>34,840</td>
<td>15,884</td>
<td>5,071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

This is an open-source database presenting information on terrorist events around the world since 1970 (currently updated through 2004), including data on where, when, and how each of almost 80,000 terrorist events occurred.


- 175 incidents that killed 625 in 2003
- 651 such attacks that killed 1,907 in 2004

Officials said the threefold increase was a result of changes in methodology and urged reporters at a hastily called briefing not to compare this year’s terrorism numbers with previous ones.

Provides a valuable compilation from official statistics of: international terrorism incidents, international terrorism fatalities, and international terrorism injuries -- over the period 1968 to 2007 -- commenting on the implications of the multiple changes of definition

Statistics on terrorism -- challenged

The official statistics have been challenged, notably by a group at the School for International Studies of the Simon Fraser University (Vancouver).


Challenging the expert consensus that the threat of global terrorism is increasing, the Human Security Brief 2007 reveals a sharp net decline in the incidence of terrorist violence around the world.

Fatalities from terrorism have declined by some 40 percent, while the loose-knit terror network associated with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda has suffered a dramatic collapse in popular support throughout the Muslim world.

Chris Weatherly. Terrorism Statistics Flawed. CDI Center for Defense Information, 12 April 2006

It has become a truism that any attempt to define or quantify terrorism is informed by political trends, and thus subject to fluctuations based not on hard facts but on political fashion. Yet the State Department's now defunct annual publication, Patterns of Global Terrorism, was the closest approximation of any government effort to provide information in an objective and consistent manner. As a successor to Patterns, the report produced by the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) -- called A Chronology of Significant International Terrorism for 2004 -- effectively ends over 20 years of analytical consistency in the U.S. government's terrorism accounting practices.


On US soil, there have been a total of zero terrorist attacks since 9/11. In France, zero attacks. In Germany, zero attacks. In Portugal, zero attacks. In Italy, zero attacks. In Europe, only Great Britain and Spain have suffered since 9/11. In fact, the new world in post-9/11 looks strikingly similar to the old world pre-9/11. There are as many terrorist attacks happening around today as were happening before 9/11 with one great exception - where the US has intervened in the affairs of other countries while 'fighting' this war on terror.

Benjamin Cook. Terrorism Statistics??? Over stating terrorism deaths. 27 May 2008

Canada's Simon Fraser University in an independent study came to the conclusion that death from terrorism is on the decline, and has been since 2001! They attribute this to the Global War on Terrorism and the lack of support from Muslims to terrorist groups because of terrorist tactics (this is not to say that many Muslims don't support the causes of terrorist organizations).

The data used in these studies does not include Iraq civilian war casualties like US government backed studies do. In many of the US backed studies Iraq can account for more than 50% of the total deaths. This makes no sense. Iraq is a war zone, and while the tactics and organizations suggest terrorism, by definition terrorism can't really happen in a war zone. Now this flies in the face of the Bush Administration's characterization of the conflict in Iraq. The Administration likes to call insurgents terrorists. But they are not. They are insurgents using terrorist tactics and belonging to terrorist organizations. When these insurgents step foot on a battlefield in a war zone they are no longer terrorists.

Miles Benson. Dangers from terrorism scant compared to other risks, experts say. Seattle Times, 8 August 2004


A study released on Wednesday reports a decline in fatal attacks of terrorism worldwide and says U.S. think-tank data showing sharp increases were distorted due to the inclusion of killings in Iraq....

For example, global terrorism fatalities declined by 40 percent between July and September 2007, driven by a 55 percent decline in the "terrorism" death toll in Iraq after the so-called surge of new U.S. troops and a cease-fire by the Shi'ite militant Mehdi Army, the brief said.

Bruce Schneier, Terrorism Statistics, 5 June 2007

The majority of terrorist attacks result in no fatalities, with just 1 percent of such attacks causing the deaths of 25 or more people.
A lot of this depends on your definition of "terrorism"

Elias Davidson. Statistics on terrorism fatalities in Western Europe. 9/11 Truth Europe, 15 January 2006

The fact that the threat emanating from global terrorism is outrageously inflated (between 2,000 - 4,000 die yearly worldwide from terrorist acts, as compared to 50,000-100,000 deaths from snake bites, or 10,000,000 child deaths from preventable causes) should give rise to serious questions regarding the real motives of those who have initiated and currently pursue the "war on terror".

Even according to utilitarian views, the deaths of 10 million children a year would deserve the expenditure of at least 1000 times more efforts and funds than to prevent the deaths of 2,000-4,000 people a year. The imbalance in tackling these two scourges tells much about motive.

Keith Mothersson. Health Stats and Getting Terrorism in Perspective. truthforum.co.uk, 7 September 2008

Statistics on terrorism -- challenging the challenges to the official position

The criticisms raised by the Human Security Report Project in their Human Security Brief have themselves been challenged by Daniel Benjamin, Director of the Center on the United States and Europe of the Brookings Institution (Washington, DC).

Daniel Benjamin. What Statistics Don't Tell Us About Terrorism: Terrorism, Transnational Security Threats, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Brookings (Center on the United States and Europe), 27 March 2009

That's because in order to judge the magnitude of the threat, we need to look at an array of indicators, not just total fatalities. Some of the criteria are not even quantitative....

Numbers tell you about the plots that succeeded, but to gauge the threat, we also need a sense of the jihadists' ambition....

More important, though, is the relative unimportance of numbers. It has been clear -- and somewhat reassuring -- since the immediate post-9/11 period that al-Qaida was not going to mobilize vast numbers of Muslims to take up arms against us. What matters, instead, is that it continues to accrete -- intelligence services around the world report that the group is consistently picking up recruits. Since terrorism is a problem of small numbers and large consequences, this is the bad news. Indeed, one could go further and say that tragic as the fatalities are in these statistics, almost all were strategically insignificant. What matters are the strategically significant ones -- the catastrophic attacks that may happen two, five, or 10 years apart. And that threat isn't going away.

What is scary about statistically based arguments is that they tend to be an invitation to complacency, and we have been there before.

This otherwise plaintive argument is very instructive:

- It appropriately stresses the need to focus on an array of indicators. This should of course be borne in mind when considering any problem or threat. Notably of significance is the relative importance of any threat in comparison with other real and potential threats. Clearly, whilst focusing on the problem of "terrorism", inadequate attention was paid to the indicators which resulted in an even greater disaster, namely those relating to the financial system. Of relevance also are indicators on the real capacity to act on any array of indicators, as discussed elsewhere (Remedial Capacity Indicators Versus Performance Indicators, 1981)

- A case is made for looking at intentions rather than simply at incidents alone. This argument should be borne in mind when considering the actions of other social groups, whether it be political parties or corporate enterprises. It is therefore not what they may have done as yet, but what it is their intention to do. It is appropriate to note that "jihadists" are sensitive to the intentions of Christian fundamentalists in this respect, notably the Great Commission. A similar point might be made with respect to the controversial official Catholic policy with regard to contraception -- and the number of people that suffer and die as a consequence, notably in Africa (Begetting: challenges and responsibilities of overpopulation, 2007).

- A case is made for the relative unimportance of quantitative indicators. This should clearly be borne in mind in any discussion where reference is made by environmentalists to the Precautionary Principle -- such as with respect to genetic modification of crops or nuclear reactor accidents. Although this has not apparently been necessary in the case of terrorism, curiously proving the numbers have been the focus of attention in relation to climate change. Most important however is the fundamental failure to process low frequency conditions relating to the numbers associated with the Gaussian copula (on which financial traders were so dependent) that resulted in the financial collapse of 2008 (Cognitive Ballistics vs. Derivative Correlation in Memetic Warfare, 2009) . The issue had been highlighted by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbale, 2007).

- Stress is placed on the actions of the few, which may indeed have unimaginably problematic consequences for the many, of strategic significance -- as was seen in the case of global financial meltdown (Extreme Financial Risk-taking as Extremism: subject to anti-terrorism legislation? 2009). They same may prove to be true as a consequence of geo-engineering initiatives in the pipeline in response to climate change (Geo-engineering Oversight Agency for Thermal Stabilization, 2008).
A case is made for taking account of qualitative indicators. As discussed below, this is the primary characteristic of experiential "terror" -- which escapes measurement (or consideration) in the current approach to terrorism, despite frequent reference to a "climate of fear" and a "politics of fear". (Ruth Rosen, Politics of Fear, San Francisco Chronicle, 30 December 2002; Frank Furedi, Politics of Fear, 2005)

An appeal is made to evidence in reports from intelligence services around the world confirming the level of threat. The embarrassing feature of this argument is that it is precisely such language -- epitomized by the statement of Colin Powell to the UN Security Council on 5 February 2003 (with respect to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq) -- which has proven to self-serving and without substance, not to say simply duplicative. It should be appreciated that both the WMD incident and the financial meltdown have reduced the credibility of such arguments to an extremely low level. They do not have a "AAA credit rating" as might previously have been assumed -- in financial terms they have the credibility of a "junk bond". Intelligence services have created this situation by appealing to "national security" whether legitimately or to conceal the weakness of the evidence they have -- and are now unable to recover their credibility other than by fabricating incidents which they can predict and forestall. "Terrorism" lends itself admirably to such efforts.

A case is made for the need to avoid complacency. This argument should be borne in mind when considering population overshoot in relation to the resources of the planet -- especially now that the conventional argument for a plateauing of population increase is recognized as having been made by disciplines that have proven to be disastrously incompetent in predicting financial meltdown and its economic consequences (Institutionalized Shunning of Overpopulation Challenge: incommunicability of fundamentally inconvenient truth, 2008; John L. Farrands, Challenge of Overpopulation: now for some real problems -- Don't Panic, PANIC, 1993). Curiously the cautious argument for attention to the risks of global warming has been framed by opponents as engendering a "climate of fear" (Global Warming: Climate of Fear? Fox News, 15 May 2006).

Emphasis is placed on the importance of relatively rare catastrophic future events, "two, five, or 10 years apart". This usefully highlights the relevance of such criteria in the light of threats -- other than terrorism -- which might otherwise be neglected. However it would be important to avoid any implication that the evidence for the potential impact of terrorism might be greater than the evidence for the impact of such other events. The financial meltdown provides an instructive example on which evidence was seemingly neglected whilst attention was focused on terrorism.

The emphasis placed on rare events, necessarily lending themselves to more dramatic coverage in the media, highlights the challenge of distinguishing between such peak problems and continuing low level problems. Typically (as indicated below) the latter, even though of low salience in the eyes of governors, may be associated with more deadly fatalities and suffering amongst the governed than the former.

Statistics on terrorism -- relative importance of other causes of fatality

Various comparisons of some understandings of "terrorism" have been made with other causes of fatality, notably for the USA. The Real Threat to Americans, StPeteforPeace.org, August 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoking related deaths</td>
<td>4,384,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity related deaths</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths from medical mistakes</td>
<td>2,225,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths due to lack of health care</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunk driving deaths</td>
<td>168,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths by homicide</td>
<td>163,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths on 11 September 2001</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ryan Singel. One Million Ways to Die. Wired, 09.11.06

Comparing official mortality data with the number of Americans who have been killed inside the United States by terrorism since the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma reveals that scores of threats are far more likely to kill an American than any terrorist -- at least, statistically speaking.

With that in mind, here's a handy ranking of the various dangers confronting America, based on the number of mortalities in each category throughout the 11-year period spanning 1995 through 2005 (extrapolated from best available data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mortality rates (USA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severe</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving off the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental poisoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dying from work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking down the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidentally drowning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statistics on terrorism -- specific comparisons

Comparisons of deaths from "terrorism" have been made with specific causes of fatality.

N. Wilson and G. Thomson. Deaths from international terrorism compared with road crash deaths in OECD countries. Injury Prevention, 11, 2005, 6, pp. 332-333

OECD countries for which comparable data were available, the annual average death rate from road injury was approximately 390 times that from international terrorism. The ratio of annual road to international terrorism deaths (averaged over 10 years) was lowest for the United States at 142 times. In 2001, road crash deaths in the US were equal to those from a September 11 attack every 26 days. Conclusions: There is a large difference in the magnitude of these two causes of deaths from injury. Policy makers need to be aware of this when allocating resources to preventing these two avoidable causes of mortality.

Jessica Fraser. Statistics prove prescription drugs are 16,400% more deadly than terrorists. Natural News, 5 July 2005

According to the groundbreaking 2003 medical report Death by Medicine, by Drs. Gary Null, Carolyn Dean, Martin Feldman, Debora Rasio and Dorothy Smith, 783,936 people in the United States die every year from conventional medicine mistakes. That's the equivalent of six jumbo jet crashes a day for an entire year. But where is the media attention for this tragedy? Where is the government support for stopping these medical mistakes before they happen?

Charles K. Fink. Terrorism and the Health-care Crisis: which is a greater threat? Z magazine, September 2002

There are, of course, greater threats to humanity than terrorism. It is telling, however, to compare how the United States allocates resources in response to these threats. Approximately 3,000 people died in New York and Washington as a result of terrorism in 2001. But that same year three million people died worldwide from AIDS, according to the World Health Organization.

Curiously "terrorism" is dissociated from "violence" although it might be assumed that much violence is associated with some form of terror. In a period when there have supposedly been no incidents of "terrorism" in the USA, it is therefore interesting to note the following presented by the US Student Peace Alliance (Statistics on Violence):

- In 2004, the World Health Organization estimated the cost of interpersonal violence in the U.S. (excluding war related costs) at $300 billion a year. (World Health Organization, The Economic Dimensions of Interpersonal Violence, 2004)

- In the U.S., youth homicide rates are more than 10 times that of other leading industrialized nations, on par with the rates in developing countries and those experiencing rapid social and economic changes. The youth homicide rate in the U.S. stood at 11.0 per 100,000 compared to France (0.6 per 100 000), Germany (0.8 per 100 000), the United Kingdom (0.9 per 100 000) and Japan.
The quality of life for millions of people in the UK, a study by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF) in 2009 finds that a catalogue of fears are eroding confidence, diminishing the quality of life for millions of people and damaging mental health. As noted by Mary O'Hara (Nation's growing unease 'hinders recovery', The Guardian, 14 April 2009):

A growing culture of fear triggered by widespread misconceptions about the risk posed by threats such as crime and terrorism is exacerbating the economic downturn and hindering recovery. Fear is overriding logical thinking, while anxiety levels are rising as a result of financial uncertainty, the report concludes. It suggests individuals and institutions are avoiding risk, too afraid to invest, spend or lend, creating economic paralysis.


Draws attention to findings of much greater cardio-vascular vulnerability among people in most fear of terrorism, and asked

- During 2007, More than one in every 100 adults in America was in jail or prison. Disproportionately, one in 36 Hispanic adults and one in 15 black adults was in prison, with one in nine black men between the ages of 20 and 34 in prison. From 2007-2008, the prison population rose by more than 25,000 inmates, totaling 2.3 million at the start of 2008, more than any other country in the world. China, four times more populous than the United States, is a distant second, with 1.6 million people in prison. Direct expenditures for corrections by local, state and federal governments between 1982 and 2004 increased 585 percent to $62 billion per year, and rising. [Pew Center on the States, 2008, International Center for Prison Studies at King's College London, International Herald Tribune, Direct Expenditures by Criminal Justice Function, 1982-2004, Bureau of Justice Statistics]

The same compilation indicates:


- Worldwide, an estimated 1.6 million people lost their lives to violence in 2000. About half were suicides, one-third were homicides, and one-fifth were casualties of armed conflict. (World Health Organization, World Report on Violence and Health, 2002)

- In 2006, worldwide terrorist incidents increased 25 percent to 14,000, and deaths caused increased 40 percent to 20,000 persons. (National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), Report on Terrorist Incidents, 2006 (issued April 2007))


Taking only the case of those imprisoned in the USA, with 25% of the world's prisoners and one in every 31 adults in prison or on parole, 20% of inmates report having been sexually assaulted by guards or fellow inmates (A Nation of Jailbords, The Economist, 4 April 2009). One might ask what kinds of statistics on "terrorism" would exclude any degree of terror from those practices. Or is the assumption made, as is so often made in the case of rape, that those complaining typically invited the "rape" and therefore are better understood as being themselves guilty of incitement to rape?

Statistics on terrorism -- fear

It is vital to note that the above mentioned indicators of "terrorism" make no attempt to measure the degree of fear that people experience in daily life when confronted by challenges which "terrify" them.

It is intriguing that the purported concern is with "terror" and in daily life it is a growing unease 'hindering recovery'. (Mental Health Foundation, 14 April 2009):

Far more people were killed in London by the IRA than were killed in 7/7 or by al-Qaida. Did we erode our civil liberties then? No. I really believe we have generated an unnecessary climate of fear. He said a Russian friend had recently told him he felt under more surveillance in Britain than he did in his own country.

- In a BBC Reith Lecture, Wole Soyinka (Climate of Fear, 2004) argues that fear can be bearable, even a force for good, for example bringing a community together to fight a common threat from the natural world like a forest fire, "a kind of fear one can live with, shrug off, one that may actually be absorbed as a therapeutic incidence".

Other kinds of fear, though, are "downright degrading". Crucially, they involve a loss of human dignity and freedom to act. First we had the fear of nuclear war between the superpowers, now "the fear is one of furtive, invisible power, the power of the quasi state, one that is not open to any negotiating structure." It is the unstructured, the totally unpredictable, those that have repudiated the norm, refuse to be bound by the code of formalised states that instil the greatest fear.

In the UK, a study by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF) in 2009 finds that a catalogue of fears are eroding confidence, diminishing the quality of life for millions of people and damaging mental health. As noted by Mary O'Hara (Nation's growing unease 'hinders recovery', The Guardian, 14 April 2009):

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It is curious that the increasingly fearful experience of daily urban life, with the risk of violence, mugging and the like, is not associated with any form of incidence of "terrorism". A knife attack in the street is not the subject of "anti-terrorist" legislation or aggressive "counterterrorism" initiatives.

**Terror -- an ultimate intangible**

**Intangible fear**: Any statistics on "terrorism", however defined, necessarily focus on the measurable. Hence the concentration on fatalities and other destructive impacts on the body -- or to a lesser degree on structures. This is most curious since these are then treated as measurable symptoms of the subjective condition to which the term actually refers -- without it being clear what is the relation between these symptoms and that subjective experience. Establishing any such a relationship has always been problematic. Furthermore, if the fatalities are instantaneous -- as in many suicide bombings -- then no terror may be experienced by the persons killed.

Even more intangible is the "intention" which transmutes the violent actions of an urban gang, supposedly with no "political" purpose, into those of "terrorists" inspired by some political agenda. This raises the challenging question of when an intention becomes "political" -- in the light of examples such as strikes against abortion clinics, or school shootings by the socially disaffected.

Little is said about the "terror" engendered by "terrorism" -- especially when that very same "terror" may be engendered by actions that are not framed as "terrorism". There are no measures or scales of fear -- of which "terror" may be understood as one extreme of the spectrum. Unfortunately that spectrum also includes the kinds of fear deliberately sought, as with a horror movie or certain fairground rides. Extreme sports may be experienced -- and sought -- as inducing a certain kind of fear providing an "adrenalin rush".

More subtle is the fear, even "blind terror", experienced by those who suffer from certain forms of phobia. Fear of heights, open spaces, snakes, the dark, public speaking, nakedness, etc.

The issue is further complicated with the involvement of others. In its mildest forms this may simply result from being "surprised" or "shocked" by the actions deliberately taken by others -- possibly as a joke to be laughed at thereafter -- whatever the fear induced in the moment. It may be induced by responding to a dare -- which typically requires confronting a degree of fear. An individual may be cajoled into going to a horror movie, taking drugs, engaging in some form of sex, etc -- all of which may require confronting fear and may be experienced as "terrifying".

**Intimidation**: There is however a borderline when the actions of the other are experienced as intimidation as in in many institutional settings, notably involving hazing. Bullying is an effort to induce "terror" and to take pleasure in the consequences. The borderline is most evident in bullying between siblings which may indeed induce what is experienced as a high degree of "terror". However much this is relativized by others as a necessary educational experience -- "part of growing up". The matter becomes more problematic when the bullying is transformed into the forms of intimidation to which the vulnerable (elderly, disabled, etc) may be exposed -- whether or not the purpose of any threat is to obtain money. The focus is however still on the actions of bullying -- and not the subjective terror induced.

**Dangerous driving**: It is here that the case of dangerous driving merits careful consideration. Whether or not the driver seeks that outcome, the style of driving may "terrify" passengers, pedestrians or the drivers of other vehicles. This is irrespective of whether the person so terrified is actually endangered as opposed to believing that they are -- not recognizing the skill with which the fear-inducing driver has just avoided any accident. It is difficult to see how dangerous driving may be dissociated from "terrorism" given the number of deaths which it may so obviously cause.

Dangerous driving is especially interesting because the driver of the vehicle may have no intention of causing "terror" and may deny being a source of any legitimate "fear" -- namely that any fear experienced is because the person experiencing it is "soft" in some way. More interesting is the fact that many eminent members of society, people of wealth, and fast car enthusiasts, would see driving "fast" as a right and quite unrelated to any "terror" they may induce. Just as "smoking" was experienced as offensive by some, and considered a pleasurable "right" by others (denying perceptions of its problematic consequences), so the cult of driving at speed is considered a right totally unrelated to "terrorism". It took decades for the formal recognition of "smoking kills". Whilst drunken driving is an offence, and is recognized as a prime cause of accidents, it is not considered to be a source of "terror" -- falling within the provisions of anti-terrorism legislation.

Especially problematic with respect to such legislation is the notion of "incitement to terrorism". The question is how media presentations promoting the driving of fast vehicles is then to be understood -- as a form of potentially violent extremism, especially when it is closely related to promotion of alcohol consumption. Again, in the case of smoking, efforts have been made to curtail promotion of tobacco products because "smoking kills". The terrifying consequences are not considered relevant to the promotion of fast vehicles -- despite the statistics on road accidents.

**State authorised terror: in-terror-gation and torture**

**Terror induced by security services**: Whilst the terror induced by "terrorists" has been the focus of the "war on terror", for those experiencing it such terror may indistinguishable from that induced by the "forces of law and order". However the terror experienced at the hands of such forces is not to be understood as terror within any definition of terrorism -- irrespective of whether it involves death of innocent parties ("collateral damage"), rape ("denied or challenged"), wounding, destruction of property, etc.

Any definition of terrorism necessarily excludes the "authorised" terror induced by government forces. It is questionable whether there is any legal concept of such "terror" since the experience is subjective and of no interest to those implementing official directives -- who
would challenge any such claim as irrelevant. Notions of "just war" do not focus on the interface with inducing terror.

This is of course curious given the manner in which weapons are designed to be used. Whilst they may cause fatalities, wounds and destruction of property, the question of how they engender terror is somehow dissociated from terrorism. On the other hand, there is a long tradition of military action extolled as "striking fear in the heart of the enemy". Terrifying the enemy is then totally desirable and legitimate.

Interrogation: These ambiguities are brought into focus in the case of interrogation -- especially when assisted by torture. Curiously in the extensive debate about the legitimacy of whatever is to be considered "torture", the focus is on the physical harm and not on the induction of terror. Much interrogation is however designed to induce fear -- "terror" -- as a catalyst to the process of extracting information.

It might even be said that the art of interrogation is to induce the maximum amount of terror without needing to resort to physical torture. The person may of course be subject to sleep deprivation and the like in order to augment as much as possible the level of fear experienced in a confused state. Inducing a subjective experience of terror is therefore the key to successful interrogation. The term might even be usefully written as it is pronounced -- "in terror gation" as the induction of terror by those in authority.

With respect to these issues, the current debate about the nature and legitimacy of torture needs to be seen in the context of the legitimacy long accorded to the processes of the Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church, as carried out by the Dominican Order in the name of the Pope and with his full authority. A procedural guidebook for inquisitors (Directorium Inquisitorum, 1578) explains that:

"... punishment does not take place primarily and per se for the correction and good of the person punished, but for the public good in order that others may become terrified and weaned away from the evils they would commit."

Instilling terror thus has a long tradition in processes of faith-based governance. Hence the interest in any debate on Is God a Terrorist? (2004).

Terrifying alternatives and differences

There has been widespread discussion of the "politics of fear". As with the sorcerer, power in society is maintained and enhanced by the ability to induce fear. As with the sorcerer, the more nebulous that which can be held to be fearful the better it serves this purpose -- occasionally "legitimated" by incidents, whether themselves induced or appropriately interpreted. The problem of the sorcerer is that it is impossible to substantiate this belief system in any objective manner. It is an exercise in superstition. Efforts to substantiate it cannot be distinguished from the myth-making that is otherwise used to sustain it.

Curiously the cultivation of fear extends significantly, as in the most primitive societies, to fear of difference and of alternative behaviour patterns -- which have their own quite distinct fears. Alternative modes of organization and differences of opinion are therefore to be feared as terrifyingly disruptive. As such they need to be demonised.

The western world, in its desperate efforts to define and promulgate "universal values" in its own image, is necessarily fundamentally fearful of any possible alternative -- held to be credible by others. Hence the rejection of alternatives to capitalism's "business as usual" -- beyond minimal corrective tweaking. This is as evident with respect to the emergence of alternatives within western societies as in relation to other cultures.

It is in this sense that any form of social unrest in protest against the failures of "globalization" is increasingly made subject to the repressive proclamations of anti-terrorism legislation. Demonstrations in favour of alternatives are conflated with "terrorism". Governments are "running scared", as are corporations and the academic disciplines complicit in their modes of organizations and mindsets -- and dependent on their funding. Of course "running scared" begs the embarrassing question as to whether such bodies could "run" if they were not "scared". Mainstream institutions may be appropriately said to be "terrified" of the complexities of a dynamic global society. Hence the definitions of "others" as being the source of such "terror", namely to be recognized as "terrorists".

It is this that empowers western governments, most notably the USA, to deploy historically unprecedented resources against a single country -- Afghanistan -- as the epitome of "difference" intolerant of western lifestyles. It is ironic that that country is the source of a drug which is much sought at all levels of western society to compensate for inadequacies in those lifestyles. More ironic is that no such use of resources is devoted to determining why people need such compensation and the alternative experiences with which it is associated.

Perhaps most to be regretted in a society dominated to such a degree by fear is the inability to explore the nature of difference without seeking to eliminate it. Every effort is devoted to achieving "universal agreement" on a nebulous set of "shared values" that few would be able to name or agree upon. Institutions like the European Community are totally focused on "harmonisation". The United Nations is focused on "normalisation". The challenge of working creatively with differences -- rather than simply tolerating them -- is not the focus of any significant resources.

The challenge of differences is evident in the lack of capacity to dialogue with those of distinct worldviews, whether political, religious, aesthetic or scientific (Guidelines for Critical Dialogue between Worldviews, 2006; Avoiding Dialogue with Alternative Worldviews at any Cost: timid hypocrisy in responding to terrorism, 2005). There is an extreme irony to the fact that 9/11, as the trigger for the "war on terror", occurred in the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The Dialogue Among Civilizations is a theory in international relations introduced by Mohammad Khatami, former President of Iran in response to Samuel P. Huntington's theory of Clash of Civilizations.

To the extent that governance is increasingly highly influenced by faith-based considerations, it is important to consider the degree of
existential terror to which religion offers a response -- if not as the "opium of the people" (Thinking in Terror Refocusing the interreligious challenge from "Thinking after Terror", 2005). This existential terror may prove to be intimately related to the terror in process of being engendered for the future as "demand" exceeds availability of resources. Here "demand" is the acceptable euphemism for a challenge whose name cannot be spoken in any international arena -- overpopulation.

With respect to radical difference, there is the potentially embarrassing prospect of the arrival of extraterrestrials who do not subscribe to the "universal" values of the United Nations and the USA -- and may consequently need to be demonised as the most fundamental threat to humanity (Communicating with Aliens: the psychological dimension of dialogue, 2000; Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity? 2008; Interplanetary Security Council Draft Resolution on Earth, 2003).

Afghanistan as the greatest source of terror on the planet

The decision in March 2009, despite decades of experience by overconfident military experts, is that further military resources should be allocated to this arena as the prime source of "terror" on the planet. The argument above endeavours to show that the definition of "terror" is carefully crafted to lend itself to any such justification. In the terms current at the time of the debate regarding the Blair government's decisions on WMD, it is a "dodgy dossier" which has been "egged up".

Richard Holbrooke, the US president's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, asserted on CNN (Transcript: David Petraeus and Richard Holbrooke on CNN, 29 March 2009) that in concluding on this policy "all the options were considered" as a means of eliminating terror as the greatest national security threat for the USA:

And in these discussions… I can assure you, and through you everyone who's watching, that every single option was considered, its pros and cons.

It is far from clear what other options were considered -- or where they are, identified, or how such options were collected for consideration -- especially given the process of groupthink whereby options were collected in support of the case for invasion of Iraq, and the analogous assertions made by Colin Powell to the UN Security Council in 2003. One option presumably not considered, for example, is engagement through poetry (Poetic Engagement with Afghanistan, Caucasus and Iran: an unexplored strategic opportunity? 2009) -- but then why should it be?

Unfortunately, in the light of the above argument of the Brookings Institution, it is indeed important to consider "intentions" in placing the military option in context. Factors of relevance might then include, whatever their relative significance:

- value of military action in a distant isolated arena to enable unconstrained testing of unconventional weapons, especially those which are defined as inhumane by international conventions, and cannot be effectively tested otherwise
- value of such an arena to train military forces under realistic conditions for action elsewhere, and notably in preparation for expected social unrest within the USA and NATO countries in general
- value of such action as a source of employment in an economy characterized by historically unprecedented levels of unemployment
- opportunity of reducing prison overcrowding, and ensuring availability of somewhat expendable military personnel, by offering a degree of clemency to certain classes of prisoner if they agree to enroll for military duty
- value of expenditure on military equipment as a means of providing a disguised bailout to defence corporations in a distressed economy
- as a distraction from failure, or unwillingness, to act on other issues -- or on the same issues (such as the treatment of women) in other countries with which it is vital not to disrupt diplomatic relations
- ability to focus on eliminating a primary source of drugs used in the western world and notably in the USA -- otherwise promoted as normal and desirable within all classes of society, thereby demonstrating in a most embarrassing manner the need for existential relief from its inherently unsatisfactory lifestyle pressures
- displace onto an external enemy the responsibility for the "terror" of the underlying threat of the internal of propensity for such drug use (to values and way of life) -- an internal threat currently contained by unprecedented levels of drug-related incarceration in the USA
- facilitating access of Christian propagandists to Islamic communities in fulfillment of the proselytizing commitment of their Great Commission -- as was previously the case when Franklin Graham, son of the Rev. Billy Graham (advisor to a succession of presidents, and one of the USA's most outspoken critics of Islam), indicated that he had relief workers "poised and ready" to roll into Iraq to provide for the population's post-war physical and spiritual needs (Crusaders sending in missionaries after the Blitzkrieg, 2003; Christianizing the Enemy, 2003)
- the need for a distant and radically dangerous "enemy" in order to sustain the viability and coherence of modern approaches to governance, as remarked in the case of the USA by various commentators, possibly as the only device that holds increasingly disparate forces together
- the need to demonstrate, if only for internal purposes, unquestionable military victory with a semblance of honour, especially in response to an enemy that echoes the creation mythology of the USA and the victories over the wild people in the western "badlands" as heroically mastered by its early pioneers
- the continuation of the "great game" of strategic rivalry with Russia to ensure a sphere of influence in Central Asia -- via NATO -- and notably to block Russian access to the Indian Ocean

Strangely it can be credibly argued that if it was the intention of al-Qaeda to ensure that the western world lived in a state of constant fear
or terror then its strategy has been surprisingly successful. However its achievement of it has been largely the work of western governments, especially the USA and the UK, in framing a "war on terror" and exaggerating its threat in comparison with any other challenge. They have thereby effectively introduced a "reign of terror" epitomized by the range of security devices now considered essential for the maintenance of law and order in freedom loving democracies.

It is most curious that a David and Goliath situation should have been created, in which the USA has been rendered fearful to such a degree -- triggered with such limited resources by a group of people living in the most distant backcountry of Afghanistan. This says much about the level of insecurity within the western world and the USA. Is it any wonder that there is a desperate need for the opium that Afghanistan is so willing to provide?

Future historians may explore the extreme irony, and profound psychological impact, that those targeted with unprecedented firepower in the badlands of Afghanistan are garbed in ways that few westerners would be able to distinguish from the dress of those central to its central biblical myths as depicted in Christian churches. This is especially true with respect to the "most wanted" person, whose capture is vital to any honourable declaration of "mission accomplished".

**Conclusion**

It is clear that "terror" is what a person experiences as "terrifying". What is to be understood as "terrorism" -- the process in which others engage in inducing this experience -- remains quite unclear. There are tangibles which can be counted as symptoms of the induction of terror but these may not encompass the subjective experience -- notably in the event of instantaneous death that leaves no time for the experience of terror.

An interesting challenge to the process of definitional game-playing and conceptual gerrymandering is the question of whether animals experience "terror" or may in any sense be "terrified" -- and therefore potentially victims of "terrorism". This would of course be vigorously denied by significant constituencies. However many animal owners, and those with experience with animals, would affirm the contrary. Of particular relevance is the work of Temple Grandin both on autism and as a consultant on animal behaviour in slaughterhouses (Animals in Translation: using the mysteries of autism to decode animal behavior, 2005; Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals, 2009). Arguably the dominant attitude to the irrelevance of the experience of terror by animals is analogous to the attitude of government to the legitimacy of any terror induced in those they consider a security threat. The understanding of future extraterrestrials in this respect will be most enlightening.

The collection of statistics on "terrorism" is clearly completely problematic and not based on any defensible methodology. The framing of "terrorism" is a purely political process, including that which is held to be dangerous and unacceptable in a given period and excluding that which is held to tolerable, however terrifying it may in fact be to some. Unfortunately, as with the officially confirmed data on the "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, statistics on "terrorism" might be caricatured as "WMD" -- Wonderfully Massaged Data, perhaps understood as based on Wonderfully Massaged Definitions. Given the rapidly eroding credibility of institutions and authorities of every kind, it is quite unclear who might be able to present credible statistics on the nature and extent of "terrorism".

Ironically a measure of the sense of terror experienced may in fact be the amount of defensive equipment that a person or a society requires. In this sense the USA might be understood as the most terrified society, whether in terms of its military armament, its bunkers, the proportion of the population believing they need to own arms, or the proportion incarcerated. The extent to which a society is terrified might also be measured by the security systems on their dwellings or their need to reside within gated communities -- appropriately protected by security services.

Identification of such tangible measures of terror might extend to the number of bodyguards felt to be necessary by an individual. This would lead to the most extreme irony that the person held to be the most powerful on the planet is actually the most terrified -- or that it is believed that he ought to be by his entourage. Furthermore, by this measure, the increase in the level of terror over time -- in the most democratic of societies -- might then be simply measured by the increase in number of bodyguards required by successive holders of that office when they travel outside their compounds. The "terrification quotient" of a global summit might even be measured by the proportion of bodyguards to active participants.

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