

Bridge to Terror – Key Ingredients

Objectives

- Begin to understand the key milestones on the path to terrorism
- Introduce core cognitive and behavioural factors
- Dismiss incorrect assertions related to motivations for martyrdom

Brainstorm

- Where do terrorists come from? Is there a single type?
- Why do they want to engage in acts of terror? Suicidal acts of terror?
- Are they simply motivated by ‘virgins in paradise’? Desperation? Injustices?

Background & profile

- Terrorists do not come from a single background (established by various researchers)
- Heavenly rewards are secondary for the ideological terrorist
- Hard science backgrounds, hence reduced ability to appreciate scriptural diversity and esoteric meanings (established by research)
- Terrorists come from all walks of life – the ideology itself is simple but attractive, it connects the individual to a binary struggle of good vs. evil

Core ingredients

Terror comes about when individuals adopt a militant strand of Islamist thought. They have:

- A) Totalitarian ideological worldview
- B) Suspended morality
- C) Strong anti-Western/anti Islam mindset
- D) Ultra-conservative religious/nationalist outlook

Note: Each of these on their own are not inherent indicators of terrorism but are factors in the personality make-up

Ideologues vs. Foot-soldiers

- Ideologues fully embrace a militant strand of the ideology and usually focus on recruitment and logistics
- Foot-soldiers vary in their understanding and adoption of ideology but connect to a very basic good vs. evil struggle
- Foot-soldiers can be recruited from impoverished backgrounds in places like South Asia and in many cases are simply bribed, threatened or brain-washed

Summary

- There is **no single** background or profile for terrorists
- **Islamist** mind-sets and conservative or literalist approaches to scripture combine to create extreme (Islamist) terrorists
- **Four characteristics:**
 - Totalitarian
 - Amoral
 - anti-western / anti Islam
 - ultra-conservative views/ traits are shared by terrorists