Chapter II

The Power of Terrorism

Objectives of This Chapter

√ Create a foundational understanding of traditional terrorism in order to apply its goals, methods, and means to cyber terrorism.
√ Identify the key elements that comprise the term terrorism.
√ Understand the political orientation of terrorism.
√ Become aware of many of terrorism’s actors throughout the world.
√ Discern many of the goals of terrorist organizations.
What is Terrorism?

There is no cyber terrorism without terrorism, period. Without a foundational understanding of terrorism in its various structures and forms, one can never fully appreciate its full exploitation of cyberspace. The true power of terrorism is fear enacted through violence. “Terrorism is an act and must be defined as such” (Flemming & Stohl, 2000). It is the intentional act of inflicting fear in an individual, group, and/or society with the intent to influence a wider audience. It is said that there are two basic motivations in life: the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. The focus of terrorism is to inflict such terror through violence as to make people do anything to avoid the possibility of future pain. In this respect, a form of control is exercised on unwilling participants.

In Title 22 of the United States Code (18 CFR Section 2656f(d)), terrorism is defined as:

\[ \text{The term 'terrorism' means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.} \]

If one looks closely at this definition, it can be recognized that the term “noncombatant” is applied to the term target. Terrorists view all people in a society within and without their borders as potential targets, and as such, do not distinguish between combatants and noncombatants. This can be best illustrated by Osama bin Laden’s fatwa for the Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders, which appeared in a British newspaper in 1998. The article included the following statement:

\[ \text{The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies — civilians and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God. (World Islamic Front, 1998)} \]