



NEWSLETTER | Volume 2, Number 1, 2009

Welcome to another issue of the Society for Terrorism Research *Newsletter*! For those of you who are new to our *Newsletter*, let us briefly begin by mentioning the goal of this circular. Essentially, we aim to serve as an outlet to facilitate communication between STR members and non-members. The *Newsletter* provides an opportunity to get information about STR events that are either in the planning stages or have already taken place. Additionally, the *Newsletter* summarizes recent research articles and findings in the field, and/or discusses other important developments. We are always looking for contributions by students, professionals and other interested, so please spread the word!

Since the last issue came out, the evolution of STR has continued and several exciting things have been accomplished or will be taking place in the near future. On the top of exciting happenings are: (1) the publication and continued success of *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression (BSTPA)*, STR's flagship journal, and; (2) the planning and organization of the 3rd annual conference with co-sponsor, CICA (Coloquios Internacionales sobre Cerebro y Agresion), to be held in Northern Ireland in September 2009.

Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression

The third issue of STR's flagship journal was recently made available by our Publisher, Routledge: Taylor and Francis, rounding out a very successful and rewarding inaugural year for the journal. In fact, this third issue reflects the thriving evolution of the journal with the publication of articles from several prominent scholars including Fathali Moghaddam (*Violent Islamist Extremism in the Global Context: Statement to the United States Senate Committee*

on Homeland Security and Government Affairs), Clodie Tal and Yoel Yinon (*Terrorists, their Motives, and their Victims as Perceived by Israeli Jewish and Arab Children and Adolescents*), Frederick Coolidge and Daniel Segal (*Is Kim Jong-II like Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler? A Personality Disorder Evaluation*), and Carol Ireland and Gregory Vecchi (*The Behavioral Influence Stairway Model (BISM): A Framework for Managing Terrorist Crisis Situations*), as well as a book review by Shahid Bux.

These authors follow a list of other important scholars and academics who have published articles in *BSTPA* in 2009 (Issue 1: Arthur Kendall, Tom Pyszczynski, Matt Motyl, Abdolhossein Abdollahi, Richard Komaiko, Robin Goodwin, Stanly Gaines Jr., and Peter Tikuisis; Issue 2: Kevin Lanning, Ari Rosenberg, Kenneth Lachlan, Patric Spence, Matthew Seeger, Irem Uz, Markus Kemmelmeier, Emrah Yetkin, and Tali Walters). We welcome all readers to check out the articles on www.informaworld.com/bstpa!

Perhaps most important, the journal has been successful in following its primary objective of publishing international (the authors come from a variety of countries including Israel, Iran, United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States) and interdisciplinary work (i.e., psychology, sociology, political science). Further, in keeping with the mission of STR and the journal, these papers continue to present new theoretical and/or empirical models for understanding these complex issues. The quality of articles has also been recognized in the field, and the journal was recently positively reviewed by the *Magazines for Libraries*, a reference book for libraries that provides reviews of new journals. With respect to *BSPTA*, they recently wrote:

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“Given the increase in both terrorism and political aggression worldwide, this is a peer-reviewed journal whose time has come.

Its purpose is to address the issues of terrorism and political aggression by ‘bringing together timely, consistently scientifically and theoretically sound papers... from an interdisciplinary, integrative, and behavioral science perspective (encompassing biological, evolutionary, developmental, ecological, personality, social, military, and neuroscience approaches to psychology, as well as anthropology, economics, history, political science, nonlinear dynamic systems, and sociology.’ It is explicitly stated that ‘the journal is not intended as a forum for articles presenting policy or opinion, but instead will publish empirical and theoretical papers, letters to the Editor, and invited visionary manuscripts by leading experts in the field, which have a strong base in behavioral science research.’

The preceding statement seems like a tall order, but it is one that the journal does aim to fill in its first two issues. The opening editorial, ‘Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression: integrating the science of political violence across disciplines, cultures, and nations,’ by Samuel Justin Sinclair and Daniel Antonius, lays out the journal’s philosophy and *raison d’être*, providing the context for why it is needed and a quick review of the papers in that issue, which include: ‘Low hanging fruit: reflections about studying terrorism,’ ‘Righteous Violence: killing for God, country, freedom, and justice,’ ‘The hegemon’s dilemma: internalizing international terrorism,’ ‘Terrorism perception and its consequences following the 7 July 2005 London bombings,’ and ‘On the relationship between weak states and terrorism.’ No puff there at all. The editorial board is international, as is the authorship, and although the scope of the journal, as outlined above, seems extraordinarily demanding, the first two issues do begin to fulfill its stated purpose. This is recommended for academic and scholarly audiences.”

LaGuardia, C. (2009)

<http://www.serialssolutions.com/promotion/MFL/mfl13.html>

We at STR are looking forward to another successful year with *BSTPA* and the publication of high-quality work that addresses complex issues of terrorism and political violence.

Annual CICA-STR Conference

The 3rd Annual CICA-STR International Conference (*Political Violence and Collective Aggression: Remembering the Past, Imaging the Future*) is right around the corner (September 2-5, 2009), and many of you will likely read this issue of the *Newsletter* during the conference. The conference is discussed

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in greater detail in the following article (by Dr. Tali Walters) in this issue of the Newsletter, thus, we will not spend too much text on this exciting gathering here. However, we would like to express our gratitude and excitement of once again collaborating with CICA and Dr. J. Martin Ramirez, and continuing a partnership that has yielded successful meetings in Poland (2008) and Spain (2007). This year, the meeting is being held in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where Dr. Rachel Monaghan and the University of Ulster will be the local conference organizer. She (with the help of Drs. Walters and Ramirez) has done a tremendous job organizing and preparing for the meeting, and this year's conference is shaping up to be an incredible gathering of scholars. We at STR are looking forward to the conference and getting a chance to meet all of you!

Best Regards,

Daniel Antonius, Ph.D.

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STR Organizes Third Annual International Conference with CICA

By Tali K. Walters, Ph.D.

Vice President – Society for Terrorism Research

On September 2, 2009, 100 members of the world social sciences community will gather in Belfast, Northern Ireland, at the Jordanstown campus of the University of Ulster for the 2009 CICA-STR International Conference on Political Violence and Collective Aggression (<http://www.socsci.ulster.ac.uk/spri/conf/>). The Society for Terrorism Research (USA) and the International Colloquium on Conflict and Aggression (CICA) (Spain), along with the Social and Policy Research Institute (SPRI) at the University of Ulster will host researchers, thought leaders, and practitioners from around the globe in the third annual gathering to learn, share ideas, and collaborate in the study of political aggression and terrorism.

This year, Rachel Monaghan, Senior Lecturer in Criminology in the SPRI, is the onsite conference organizer. With her extensive professional contacts, Dr. Monaghan brought together many of her colleagues from the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland) to present on such wide ranging topics as the definitions of aggression and terrorism, the use of words in terrorism and violence, the impact of interface areas in Northern Ireland, and the current state of the Northern Ireland conflict. Global issues

related to terrorism and political aggression will be addressed by participants from the United States, Estonia, Poland, Italy, Croatia, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Portugal, Macedonia, Japan, Spain, Australia, and Mexico.

The Society for Terrorism Research is proud to host a celebration at the conference to launch their flagship journal *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*. Along with wine and cheese, there will be an opportunity to meet journal co-editors Samuel Justin Sinclair and Daniel Antonius. In addition, all abstracts that were accepted to the conference will be published in an upcoming edition of the journal.

This year, we welcome back many participants from past years. They know that, through well planned organization, personal attention to attendants, and a sound scientific program, they will have the opportunity to share their research and ideas, learn from international colleagues, and develop interdisciplinary relationships that lead to long term personal and professional collaboration.

Registration for the conference remains open to all who wish to have access to the most recent research and thought leaders in the study of political aggression and terrorism.

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Research Roundup

By Anders Goranson and Stephanie Miller

Vazquez, C., Hervas, G., & Perez-Sales, P. (2008). **Chronic thought suppression and posttraumatic symptoms: data from the Madrid, March 11, 2004 terrorist attack.** *Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 22*, 1326-1336.

Several weeks following the March 11th, 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spanish researchers from Complutense University and Hospital La Paz surveyed a general population sample (N=503) and found individuals who scored higher on chronic thought suppression exhibited increased levels of PTSD symptoms. The study also found that high chronic thought suppression scorers demonstrated increased levels of the use of avoidant coping strategies following the attacks. Despite having initially protective effects following a traumatic event, chronic thought suppression is hypothesized to inhibit the processing of emotional information and the integration of traumatic experience into existing knowledge. The authors suggest greater communication with effected individuals concerning the normalcy of intrusive thoughts. In addition, the authors emphasize the importance of exploring cognitive and behavioral avoidance as a possible predictor of PTSD symptomatology.

Arsovska, J., & Kostakos, P.A. (2008). **Illicit arms trafficking and the limit of rational choice theory: the case of the Balkans.** *Trends in Organized Crime, 11*, 352-378.

The article examined organized crime or terrorism-related illegal arms trafficking in the Balkans during the 1990's for the purposes of understanding motivating variables in order to inform more effective deterrence methods. The authors discuss the predominant economic model of rational choice theory which posits that criminal decisions such as arms trafficking are done in a cost versus benefit evaluation. The authors emphasize the importance of examining other "irrational" variables such as power, culture, and social connections in better understanding the multifactorial mechanisms involved in illegal arms trading and the best methods of deterring such activity. Of particular importance, the authors suggest that law enforcement understand the cultural and homophilial factors that influence criminal decision making.

Montiel, C.J., & Shah, A.A. (2008). **Effects of political framing and perceiver's social position on trait attributions of a terrorist/freedom fighter.** *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 27*, 266-275.

Using Malay Muslims, who lack social power in their country, and Filipino Christians who predominate in social power within their country, the article attempted to better understand the role of social position in relation to positive perceptions of the words "terrorist" and "freedom fighter." Using a trait attribution measurement scale, the findings of the article indicate that those lacking social power more positively rate the term "freedom fighter" than "terrorist." Those sampled who had social power rated "terrorist" more positively than "freedom fighter." The authors discuss the use of language by both terrorists and non-terrorists in driving cultural opinion about each of their causes. Emphasis is placed on examining how language can influence the opinions of different cultural groups.

Goodwin, R., & Gaines, S. (2009). **Terrorism perception and its consequences following the 7 July 2005 London bombings.** *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 1*(1), 50-65.

Seeking to understand the relationship between terrorism anxiety and both behavior and cognition, the article focuses on gathering information about acute reactions of individuals following the July 7, 2005 London bombings. Information was gathered (N=429) using a terrorism anxiety inventory that also elicited data about perceived future attacks and related cognitions and behaviors. The authors found that anxiety was a significant predictor of increased interpersonal interactions, negative coping, and workplace distraction.

McCartan, L.M., Masselli, A., Rey, M., & Rusnak, D. (2008). **The logic of terrorist target choice: An examination of Chechen rebel bombings from 1997-2003.** *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 31*(1), 60-79.

Building on previous research that examined how terrorists use the timing of attacks to maximize utility, the article attempts to expand this understanding by focusing on terrorist bombings within the Russian-Chechen conflict. The researchers found that civilians are more likely to be targets in Russia and non-civilians are more likely targets when the attacks occur in Chechnya. The authors emphasize closer analysis of context when understanding these findings. Specifically, since a common byproduct of terrorism-related civilian deaths is decreased support for the terrorist cause, the terrorists exhibited greater discrimination when bombing in Chechnya (measured in *less civilian casualties*) compared to bombings in Russia. This strategy maintained public support while simultaneously terrorizing the Russian populace. Other findings indicate that more attacks occur during summer months than during the winter, which is hypothesized to be related to the harsh Russian/Chechen winters and the tactical advantage of warm weather.

Baldwin, T.E., Ramaprasad, A., & Samsa, M.E. (2008). **Understanding public confidence in government to prevent terrorist attacks.** *The Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, 5*, 1-20.

The study attempts to measure public confidence in the federal, state and local governments to protect against terrorist attacks. Surveyed participants' opinions were recorded before and after watching mock television broadcasts covering a variety

of hypothetical terrorist attacks. In sum, researchers found that overall confidence is low, but that within the population there are optimists and pessimists; optimists' confidence growing with time while pessimists' confidence decreasing with time. Within these two groups, confidence recovery had different patterns. With both groups, the researchers found that there is an "incubation period" for confidence, where recovery to pre-attack confidence levels is stagnant; the authors postulated a period of one to five years. Findings also suggested that the public may be discriminating in their ability to assess the impact of the timing, nature and duration of a terrorist attack.

Hellmich, C. (2008). **Creating the ideology of Al Qaeda: From hypocrites to Salafi Jihadists.** *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 31*, 111-124.

In conducting a survey of recent popular theories used to explain and understand the ideology of Al Qaeda, explanations were explored that centered on focal perspectives that varied from seeing Al Qaeda as Wahhabis, Salafi-Jihadists, religious hypocrites, or simply, madmen. The authors critique these attempts, suggesting that these theories have abandoned academic stringency and attempted to oversimplify the complexity of Islamic thought, thus misrepresenting the phenomena they are attempting to understand. The researchers suggest a new approach that utilizes cross-collaboration between disciplines, integrating knowledge from political science, Islamic studies, anthropology and communication studies.

McCauley, C., Moskaleiko, S. (2008). **Mechanisms of political radicalization: pathways towards terrorism.** *Terrorism and Political Violence, 20*, 415-433.

To better understand the pathways to terrorism, the authors determined 12 unique mechanisms to political radicalization. Of these 12 mechanisms, ten were found to function within group identification and reaction to a perceived threat to the group. The authors emphasize the importance of examining issues of interpersonal conflict rather than individual psychology to better understand political radicalism. The article also provides a discussion on how competing interpersonal groups contribute to the radicalization of each other.

Koc-Menard, S. (2009). **Trends in terrorist detection systems.** *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 6, 1-15.

The authors present a review of methods of terrorist detection programs since 9/11 and discuss three emerging trends that are influencing security procedures in North America. The first discussed trend is a shift from evidence-based detection to rule-based detection. This represents a shift from the use of moles and physical evidence to the use of indicators or rules to determine if individuals are a threat. The second trend is a move from an observation of actual behavior to a review of electronic records. The final trend reviewed is a shift from national to multinational systems of detection. The authors address the challenges presented by issues of privacy related to biometric identification and public surveillance and identify the balance that must be struck between terrorist detection and personal privacy.

Kruglanski, A., Crenshaw, M., Post, J., & Victoroff, J. (October 5, 2008). **The psychology of “the war on terror” and other terms for counterterrorism.** *Scientific American Mind*.

The focus of this article is on the war on terror and how the use of metaphorical language by world leaders affects how the public perceives them and how public policy is shaped. The authors suggest that *battle* metaphors are mentally manageable but not representative of the complexity involved and may lead to selective perception. The authors suggest the use of law enforcement metaphors, which may be more nuanced, more focused, and less costly both economically and in human lives. The authors suggest the development of a collaborative relationship between the military, law enforcement and the social sciences and point to the promise of the 2002 University Programs Initiative to fund the study of behavioral and social aspects of terrorism.

Innes, M.A. (2008). **Deconstructing political orthodoxies on insurgent and terrorist sanctuaries.** *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. 31, 251-267.

The article encourages a shift in foreign policy's current focus on insurgent and terrorist sanctuaries as identified targets. The author draws parallels to the concept of the war

on terror and the futility of declaring a war on a tactic. Rather than looking at territorial boundaries to better locate terrorist activities, the author suggests closer study of “cracks in the system” that do not limit themselves to physical dimensions but reside in material, human and cognitive dimensions that provide less examined pathways to terrorist activity.

Carlsmith, K.M., & Sood, A.M. (2009). **The fine line between interrogation and retribution.** *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45, 191-196.

The article attempted to better understand support for the use of harsh interrogation techniques. By surveying a broad national sample of US residents, the authors found that the use of such tactics is driven, in part, by the motive of retribution. In addition, researchers determined that the drive to use harsh interrogation tactics is mediated by how “bad” the targeted individual is perceived to be. However, the authors also found that this drive is not mediated by the perceived effectiveness of the harsh technique.

Hobfoll, S.E., Palmieri, P.A., Johnson, R.J., Canetti-Nisim, D., Hall, B.J., & Galea, S. (2009). **Trajectories of resilience, resistance and distress during ongoing terrorism: the case of Jews and Arabs in Israel.** *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. 77, 138-148.

The article summarizes the results of the first longitudinal examination of trajectories of resilience and resistance within a population under frequent threat of mass casualty; Jews and Arabs in Israel between 2004-2005. A sample of 709 subjects indicated a resistance trajectory; exhibiting fewer symptoms of depression or traumatic stress than what has been found in previous studies examining mass casualty incidents. Individuals exhibiting a resilience trajectory, characterized by initial symptoms of depression and trauma and then moving into being relatively non-symptomatic, were found in 13.5% of the sample. Common predictors of these two trajectories were found to be majority (Jewish) status and less psychosocial resource loss.

Cunningham, K. (2003). **Countering female terrorism.** *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 113-129.

This article discusses the emergence and threat of female terrorists. The author explores three organizations in which female terrorists are involved: right wing organizations in the United States, Chechen separatists, and Palestinian organizations. In each case, the author addresses the way in which counterterrorism efforts were flawed in terms of how female terrorist actions were handled. According to the author, the future of female participation in terrorist attacks will become rampant throughout Global Islamic groups and Ecoterrorist groups in the United States. The author concludes with five proposals to overcome counterterrorism failures so that terrorism experts are aware of the potential and possible threat to the security of their country.

Dingley, J. & Mollica, M. (2007). **The human body as a terrorist weapon: Hunger strikes and suicide bombers.** *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 459-492.

Suicide tactics among terrorists include the use of the human body as a weapon. In order to understand this phenomenon, the authors explored the motivations of hunger strikes and suicide bombers and the influence of the social contexts of these suicide terrorists. A comprehensive history of the development of hunger strikers is presented, and the article addresses the social, political, cultural, and religious symbolism that plays a role in the hunger strikes as well as suicide bombers' actions. The authors conclude with the implication that governments need to understand the etiology and motivation for suicide tactics so that counterterrorism efforts are effective.

Hellmich, C. & Redig, A. (2007). **The question is when: The ideology of Al Qaeda and the reality of bioterrorism.** *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 375-396.

According to the authors, despite the prohibition of biological warfare among most countries, there is a growing need to re-evaluate the reality of the possibility of such an attack, especially by Al Qaeda. The authors provide an analysis of

Al Qaeda's ideology and the advancements of molecular biology in the development of biological weapons. While Al Qaeda has not used biological terrorist tactics, it is probable that Al Qaeda will incorporate bioterrorism into their tactical operation in the future.

Sedgwick, M. (2007). **Inspirations and the origins of global waves of terrorism.** *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30, 97-112.

This article addresses the origins of terrorist groups, primarily that of the global environment. The author takes a productive approach in addressing the determination of a terrorist strategy in relation to the perceived success of the chosen strategy. This perceived success is based upon the inspiration from the previous terrorism wave. The author redefines Rapoport's "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism" and concludes that inspiration from previous terrorism waves, rather than ideology, is the contagious element for terrorist groups in their decision to choose a successful terrorist strategy.

Shapira, S. & Oren, M. (2006). **Ethical issues of bioterror.** *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29, 395-401.

The increased probability of future bioterror attacks has ethical implications for counterterrorism responses. This article addresses the medical and ethical issues that can arise from bioterrorist attacks, specifically during the containment and control of epidemic outbreaks. The author discusses several ethical dilemmas that are present in both the prevention of and control of bioterrorist attacks, and which should be considered in the development of pre-event and event information policies.



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