

“Elephants in the Room”: Scary ‘R’ Us: The Exaggerated Threat of Terrorism

The US and Britain Train, Arm, Finance and Protect Terrorists

By [Rod Driver](#)

Global Research, December 11, 2020

Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#)

This is the sixth in a series entitled Elephants In The Room, which attempts to provide a beginners guide to understanding what's really going on in relation to war, terrorism, economics and poverty, without the nonsense in the mainstream media.

“Naturally the common people don’t want war, neither in Russia, nor in England, nor in America, nor in Germany. That is understood. But after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship...The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.” (Hermann Goering, Hitler’s 2nd in command(1)).

Terrorism is scary enough to work as an exaggerated threat to serve as an excuse for war. Almost any violent action by any group anywhere in the world can be portrayed as the act of terrorists, thus justifying military intervention, arms sales, repression and crackdowns on opponents of the government. One commentator suggested:

“terrorism is maybe the best excuse that has ever been invented for unlawful government action”(2).

The intelligence analyst, Edward Snowden, (who became a whistleblower when he revealed the extent of US government spying on US citizens) has explained that terrorism is what analysts call ‘cover for action’. This means that it convinces people to allow government actions that they would not normally allow.(3) The ‘war on terror’ is a propaganda term to justify invasions and overthrowing governments. Such a ‘war’ has no definable end, and the whole world is potentially the battlefield.(4)

The US and Britain Train, Arm, Finance and Protect Terrorists

Beginning in 1979, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Britain’s MI6 worked with Pakistan’s intelligence services and Saudi financiers to train terrorists in Afghanistan. Their role was to de-stabilise Afghanistan in order to draw the Russians into a long war, which has been described as ‘Russia’s Vietnam’.(5) During this training, recruits learned not only how to fight, but were also indoctrinated in the most extreme forms of Islam. That war ended a

decade later when the Soviet Union collapsed. Some of these fighters went on to become the terrorist group known as al-Qaeda.(6) Many of the terrorists involved in attacks around the world, such as the World Trade Centre bombing in 1993, were veterans of these training programs. Over time, al-Qaeda funded other groups, split into different factions, spread into other countries and developed into organisations such as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria).(7) These religious extremists fought in different parts of (what was) Yugoslavia. First in Bosnia, then in Kosovo and Macedonia. US and British support for terrorists overseas has continued to the present day. More terrorists were used to overthrow the government in Libya, and the terrorists trying to overthrow the government of Syria received weapons and support from Britain and the US.

A few years ago there were regular discussions about the Finsbury Park mosque in London, because it was associated with terrorist recruitment. Preachers at the mosque, such as Abu Hamza and Omar Bakri, had been trained at CIA-backed training camps in the 1990s. They travelled to central Asia with the support of the British intelligence agency, MI6. These people then train and radicalise others, including the four people who participated in the July 2005 attacks on the transport system in London. Britain operated what was known as a 'covenant of security'.(8) This was an informal agreement that extremist preachers would be tolerated, provided that they did not preach violence against Britain. Their usefulness in recruiting for wars abroad was considered more important than the violence that they incited. British attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq brought this covenant to an end, so Britain then became a target. Terrorist attacks in Britain and the US, triggered by our policies abroad, are sometimes called 'blowback'.(9) The bomber who carried out the 2017 Manchester bombing had previously travelled to Libya, in order to participate in terrorism there, with the assistance of the British Intelligence agency MI5.(10) The bomber who killed 49 people in the 2016 attack on an Orlando nightclub claimed that it was in response to US bombing in Iraq and Syria. The former leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, correctly pointed out in 2017 that

“British invasions abroad provoke terrorism back home.”(11)

On various occasions the FBI wanted to investigate individuals who would later be involved in the terrorist attacks in New York on September 11th 2001, but they were told by other US government agencies not to question them.(12) The security services of other countries have found these policies to be very frustrating, because attacks in their countries were carried out by terrorists formerly working with the US, or incited by preachers in Britain. Egypt has denounced Britain for protecting the killers who were involved with a massacre at Luxor in 1997. Macedonian intelligence complained that US interference was the biggest obstacle to dealing with extremists in 2001.(13)

A closer examination of US policy reveals further hypocrisy about terrorism. America has actually provided a safe haven for large numbers of international terrorists for many years because those same individuals have carried out the CIA's bidding in other countries.

Florida has been described as the retirement home of choice for mass murderers, torturers and assassins from Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Chile, Argentina, Honduras, Somalia, Indonesia, Iran and South Vietnam. This includes Cuban exiles, Luis Posada Cariles and Orlando Bosch, who blew up a Cuban passenger airliner in 1976 and killed 73 people. Documents indicate that US intelligence agencies knew that such an attack was planned, but did not inform the Cuban authorities. Many other terrorists have been flown to

alternative countries, known as safe havens, where they are unlikely ever to be charged for their crimes.(14)

State-Sponsored Terrorism – Governments Are The Most Dangerous Terrorists

Terrorism is the use of violence and fear to achieve political goals. Many US invasions and CIA crimes, discussed in earlier posts, involved extreme violence, were intended to create fear, and were intended to achieve political goals, and thus should be labeled terrorism. When the US government described their strategy in Iraq as ‘shock and awe’, they made it clear that their intention was to terrify the Iraqi population.(15) In other words, modern warfare is simply terrorism carried out by governments. Despite this, the terms “state-terror” and “state-sponsored terrorism” rarely appear in the media to describe violence by Western governments.

Governments try to distinguish their violence from terrorism by saying that they do not deliberately target civilians. This is propaganda, because the governments concerned know that many of their actions will inevitably lead to huge numbers of civilian deaths. As one commentator noted, from the point of view of a civilian being blown up:

“there is little moral difference between a stealth bomber and a suicide bomber. Both kill innocent people for political reasons”.(16)

The US and Britain have close ties to some of the world’s most repressive regimes (some of them discussed in earlier posts). They provide support for these governments in order to maintain control of trade and resources. Each time the US or British government provide weapons, military training, finance or other assistance to a repressive regime, such as Saudi Arabia, they help to create circumstances where the repressed population will correctly blame the US and Britain, and might fight back.(17) These unpopular governments frequently commit state terrorism against their own populations. A study that analysed the motives of suicide bombers concluded that they are overwhelmingly aimed at foreign occupiers (such as US soldiers), and that when the occupiers leave, the suicide attacks tend to decrease significantly.(18)

Governments Like To Exaggerate A Threat...

In Britain we were repeatedly warned that there were as many as 2,000 terrorists in the UK ready to strike at any moment, yet since 2005 there have only been a handful of incidents and a small number of successful prosecutions. In fact the statistical threat of terrorism to people in the US or Britain is minimal. Calculations for the US show that you are more likely to drown in the bathtub than to be killed by a terrorist.(19) In 2005 the FBI admitted that they had not identified a single al-Qaeda sleeper cell in the entire United States.(20) In 2007, the Director of Public Prosecutions openly stated that “there is no war on terror in the UK”.(21) In 2009 the CIA admitted that the total number of al-Qaeda in both Afghanistan and Pakistan was less than 100.(22) The number of terrorists operating overseas has increased dramatically in the last decade, as the US and Britain have poured weapons into the Middle East to destabilise multiple countries and overthrow governments, but this does not appear to have increased terrorism at home.

...to justify state crimes

Ordinary people have struggled for hundreds of years to develop laws that protect us against corrupt governments, but the supposed crackdown on terrorism gives the government an opportunity to create oppressive laws at home. The US government has manipulated the legal system since 2001 so that it can carry out activities that are, or should be, illegal. This includes secret surveillance unregulated by courts, arrest without trial and indefinite detention.(23) Former President Bush effectively legalised torture and kidnapping by the state. Intelligence agencies have been given special powers, people's freedoms have been restricted without any crime having taken place, and courts now use secret evidence. US laws would place all government power in the hands of the President in the event of a catastrophic emergency.(24)

Amnesty International released a report in 2017 explaining that European countries had:

“rushed through a raft of disproportionate and discriminatory laws... eroded the rule of law, enhanced executive powers, peeled away judicial controls, restricted freedom of expression and exposed everyone to unchecked government surveillance... dismantling hard-won human rights protections.....EU governments are using counter-terrorism measures to consolidate draconian powers ... and strip away human rights under the guise of defending them. We are in danger of creating societies in which liberty becomes the exception and fear the rule.”(25)

The US and British governments have tried to convince us that there are huge numbers of fanatics around the world who have different beliefs, and who want to slaughter anyone who does not agree with them. The truth is that the number of people who think like this is small. There have always been some people with extremist beliefs, but these few people are unlikely to be a serious threat unless they have the support of the population. If we continue with our existing policies, where we invade other countries for oil and support repressive regimes, leading to the deaths of large numbers of people, then the number of those who hate us will grow, and terrorism will continue. If we seriously want to end terrorism, the following steps are necessary(26)

- Stop invading other countries and committing terrorist acts ourselves
- Stop supporting other nations that commit terrorist acts and repress their populations
- Stop training, funding, arming and harbouring terrorists
- Deal with terrorists like ordinary criminals
- Attend to the grievances of people everywhere

As one commentator noted:

“The irony of the ‘war on terror’ is that the US can win it only when it finally stops fighting it.”(27)

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This article was first posted at medium.com/elephantsintheroom

Rod Driver is a part-time academic who is particularly interested in de-bunking modern-day US and British propaganda.

Notes

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