

Introduction to the Special Issue on Terrorism

Michael Lamport Commons

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Terrorism as we all know is a world wide omnipresent condition. What people do not realize is that the lethality of terrorist attacks is now extremely low. They are not easily triggered without blowing up the carrier. Remote controlled detonators already exist. For some reason, they are not used in the Middle East. In the future, terrorists will have available not only biological weapons, but small easily transportable nuclear weapons. Think about the amount of illegal drugs smuggled worldwide. Then think that smuggling nuclear weapons will not be any different in difficulty.

It is for these reasons that these articles were written to address these problems from an adult developmental perspective. Why would an adult developmental approach be important? One of the problems is that terrorists are not like conventional armies. They do not have a location, so that conventional wars against them do not show the same

promise. With the Internet and its successors the ability to organize activities worldwide is great. At the moment, many of the attacks are suicidal, but there is no reason to believe that that is necessary given remote detonation devices that are widely available. These articles address the larger issue of how to manage and reduce conflict between terrorists and their targets. The approaches for the most part are adult developmental stage based. The history of the stage theory harks back to Piaget, then Kohlberg and his students such as Kegan, Selman and one of the authors, Commons. The articles provide a systematic framework for viewing many present suggestions that abound in the policy area. What is different is they provide a diagnostic means for deciding what actions are appropriate for a society and a terrorist group at a given time. We hope that these articles will stimulate discussion and comment.

M. L. Commons (✉)
Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, Cambridge,
MA, USA
e-mail: common@tiac.net

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