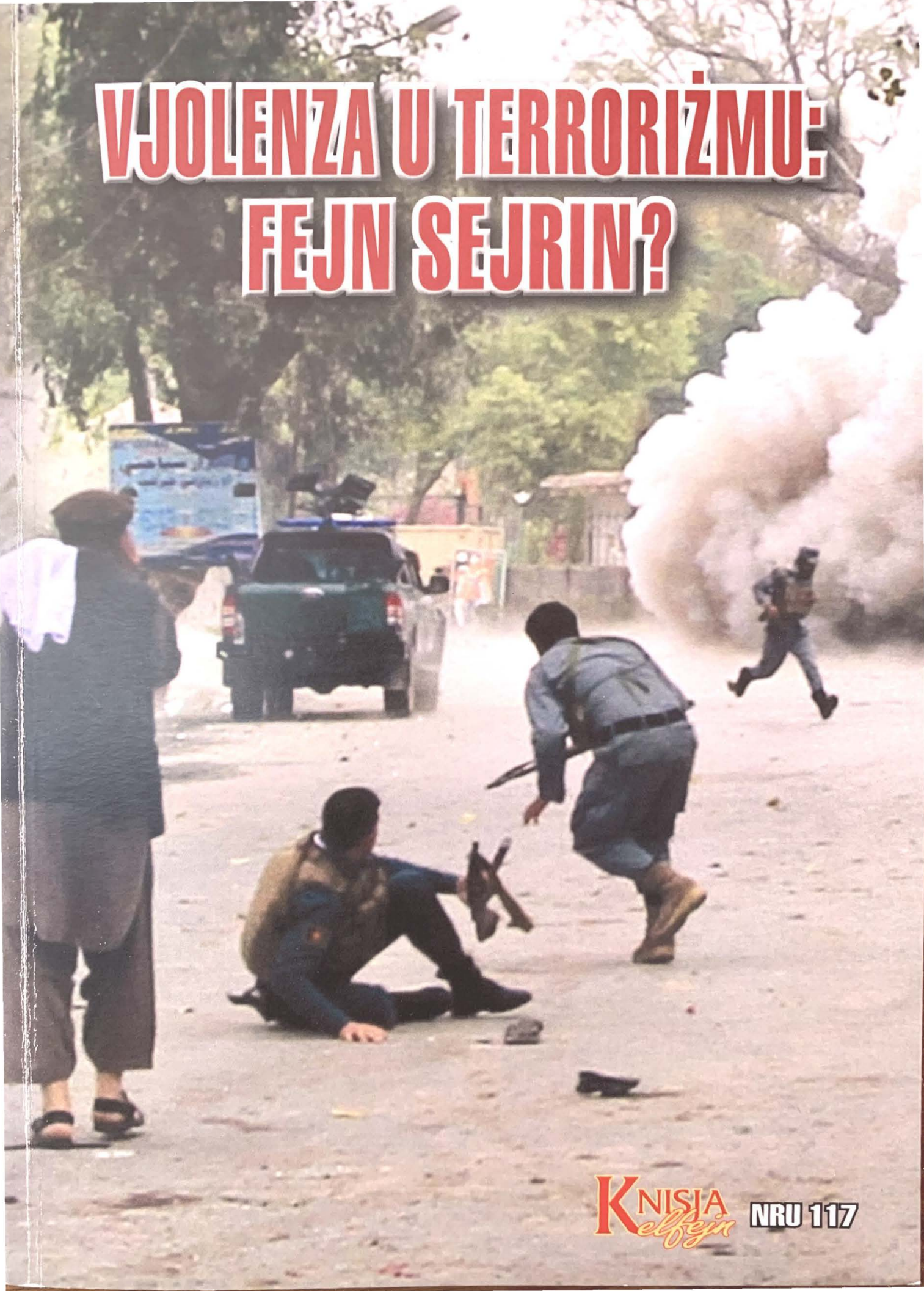


VJOLENZA U TERRORIZMU: FEJN SEJRIN?



History of terrorism

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We just passed half of 2016 and already major terror attacks have unfolded across the globe. Making sense of all this bloodshed is very hard when facing so much death and destruction. Some of the massacres that marked this year occurred in Orlando, Baghdad, Istanbul, Brussels, Nice, and Dhaka, Bangladesh. Thus 'terrorism' is a term that is very often heard of in the news because of incidents that involved tens if not hundreds of victims, or because governments decided to implement some form of counter-strategy that aims at mitigating this phenomenon. However, few ever notice that the history of terrorism stretches into the ancient world even though the general public perceives that is a very topical and contemporary issue. This short article will look at key instances in history where terrorism left an imprint and analyse the strategies, tactics and mind-sets that evolved through space and time.

Traces of what today we could call 'terrorist acts' or 'extreme violent acts' or even 'political violence' are documented as from ancient Greece. Nonetheless the target of the killings in this period would be somewhat different from the ubiquitous threat of the present days. Unjust rulers or better known as 'tyrants' would be the main target of the violent actors of this period. The killing of tyrants was considered as a legitimate act and it was called 'tyrannicide' (Dillinger, 2015:15). This implies that terrorism is not a modern phenomenon even though it was not labelled with the same term and examining the roots of these violent acts can help us understand better this phenomenon and its origins. The two that were labelled as 'The Tyrannicides' were Harmodios and Aristogeiton who stabbed to death Hipparchus in 514BC. Although the aim behind this killing was to end the reign of tyranny of Hipparchus, the tyrannical rule

did not end in the surviving brothers of Hipparchus. When Thucydides discussed the major points of the murderous act on Hipparchus, he concluded that it was an ill-planned assassination that did not take in consideration the risks taken, the guilt of the tyrant and the eventual outcome. Thucydides concluded that the tyrant's successors were even harsher tyrants than Hipparchus (Dillinger, 2015).

Aristotle considered that all political systems are there for the common good, but tyranny defied this purpose besides it was not a form of government but a violation of the "constitutional order" (Dillinger, 2015: 17). The deliberate abuse of power by tyrants could leave to some individuals to commit assassinations and these situations were completely justified for Aristotle. Fear, greed vengeance and ambition could be some of the motivating factors particularly for those individuals who suffered under the rule of the tyrant and prepare to die in order to eliminate the tyrant and his way of ruling.

Another interesting event that took place in 356 BC was that of Herostratos, an arsonist. Herostratos destroyed the Temple of Artemis one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Herostratos, considered as the first terrorist in history, was 'a shadowy figure of whose life nothing is known before he was apprehended, tortured, and executed' (Borowitz 2005: xi). Herostratos's death sentence included the *domnatio memoriae*. This clause implied a damnation of the person's memory imposing a ban on the mention of the name of that particular person.

'Herostratos became paradigmatic of the morbid quest for eternal fame through crimes of violence' (Borowitz 2005: xi). Herostratos was an example of destructive political violence and his acts encouraged attacks on lives and monuments, creating the 'Herostratos syndrome' (Borowitz 2005). The Herostratic criminal manifested self-destructive desires aiming to achieve goals with any means while simultaneously generating 'self-glorification' and feelings of insecurity among the public (Borowitz 2005). Herostratos's motivations paralleled contemporary terrorist motivations, who aspire to seek fame and improve the social situation from suffered experiences. In a Herostratic approach, sympathisers worship contemporary suicide bombers as martyrs. Leung (2003) reported, 'It is something to aspire to be, a martyr . . . In all my

teenage time, my symbols were body-builders and movie stars and singers and people like that. Then it changed . . . the guerrilla, the fighter, then it was the stone thrower, and today it is the martyr.'

Besides the justification of the killing of tyrants and the aspect of gaining popularity while committing violent act, history provides various aspects that show tactical and strategic similarities with modern terrorism. The Sicarii of Judea and the Assassins in Persia and Syria used violent *modus operandi* that are peculiarly similar to those used nowadays though adapted for the context. Thus, these two movements would be described as terrorists if they still existed. In the first century CE the Southern Levant was an environment that encouraged the expression of violent actions among the Jewish population, a kind of violence which modern society would mark as terrorism. The decades of foreign rule of the Roman province of Judea and the largely Hellenized Jewish social and religious elite created a context that forced radical groups within the community to adopt violent methods. Among these insurgents there were the Sicarii, who are still subject of debate among modern scholars of Jewish history (Taylor & Gautron, 2015: 28).

The Sicarii received their name from the kind of dagger they used. These daggers called *sicae* or *sica* by the Romans were small and curved similar to the Persian scimitar. Thus, the dagger could be easily concealed in their clothing and pulled out when attacking (Horsley, 1979). The targets of this radical group were Jews, particularly prominent leaders like priests that cooperated and sympathized with Roman authorities as well as the Romans. The *modus operandi* of this particular group was very similar to some of the attacks that we witnessed in the last few months. The Sicarii committed murders during the day and during particular occasions and festivals. Following the attack the Sicarii blended into the crowd to avoid detection (Taylor & Gautron, 2015). These tactics created anxiety, fear and terror and captured the attention of Roman authorities. The Sicarii also used kidnappings of prominent persons for political extortion and in order to set free fellow Sicarii that were incarcerated.

The critical components that are considered the catalyst of this exceptional form of resistance were religious, where the Romans infringed

the unrestrained expressions of Mosaic tradition. This situation was aggravated even further with the apocalyptic and messianic eschatological influence in Judaism that were pointed out by particular sects. Thus this intermingling of social, political and religious factors in Judea generated an unstable environment that soon resulted in an open war and a portion of this violence was perpetrated by the Sicarii on their fellow Jews.

Although there are various contextual aberrations, the Sicarii still present characteristics that are similar to terrorist groups in contemporary times. The Sicarii sought political and religious radical ideologies through their violent actions and this recalls the groups like Al-Qaeda as well as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). Another similar characteristic is the use of fear among civilians and non-combatants through the use of lethal tactics. As the Sicarii used these methods to undermine the relations between the general public and most importantly stimulate broad confrontation against Roman rule. Without these preconditions the Sicarii ceased to exist.

Another group that made history in the use of violence for ideological and religious justifications were the Assassins. In the contemporary world people would associate the term 'Assassins' with the games and films of the 'Assassins Creed' saga. Although the context in which the Assassins existed was different from the one described in the games and films, the Assassins did act in a similar fashion and thus they left a indelible mark in the history of terrorism. The Assassins were a tightly knit community with precise objectives that acted with strategic effectiveness and left a significant psychological impact. Lewis (1987) considered the Assassins as the first terrorists in history. Another aspect associated with the Assassins is that the myth of the "Old Man of the Mountain" where they trained and prepared themselves for the day when they had to commit their violent act. The Assassins, as commonly referred to by Western Christians, were Nizaris, adherents of a radical trend found in Persia at the end of the tenth century (Taylor & Gautron, 2015: 34).

Lewis (1987) explains that the use of assassinations or tyrannicides was considered as a viable method to eradicate illegitimate rulers while fulfilling religious obligations. Thus, assassinations were quite strategically planned and full of symbolic meanings. The targets of

these assassinations were political and military dignitaries, as well as religious figures that were involved in ideological campaigns against the Nizaris (Taylor & Gautron, 2015: 38). Lewis (1987: 127) explicated that the killing by the Assassins had a ritual that included a sacramental attribute and also a sacrificial element. A killing showed the Assassins commitment towards the community but also a sense of sacrifice because the tendency was that most of the Assassins would be caught and slaughtered on the spot. This commitment was highly praised by their community (Lewis, 1987).

Similar to the Sicarii, the Assassins used a dagger to eliminate their target. The Assassins acted in full daylight and generally in public places, such as in mosques during the days of prayer or the Ramadan. Although they aimed at fleeing from the scene, the Assassins were conscious that it was highly probable that they would be caught and their possibility of survival were minimal. However, this expression of boldness had a psychological impact that impressed the popular imagination and discourage the potential adversaries of the community.

The assassination tactics used by the Sicarii and the Assassins are unique to their respective context and though they used rudimentary methods one cannot avoid identifying similarities with modern terrorist groups. These two groups also show that without the use of modern technology, media or weapons their singular tactics were enough to spread fear even though the idea of terrorism and its use in the media and propaganda, as we know it today was still yet to come.

The terms “terrorist”, “terrorism” or “the Terror” came into use only during the French Revolution. Rapport (2015) citing Bienvenu (1968: 38) explains that on 5th February, 1794, Maximilien Robespierre defined this term as follows: “terror is nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice. . . . It is less a special principle than a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country’s most pressing needs.” This term had been used to describe emotional, religious, military and judicial systems but it was only during the French Revolution that “terror” was being considered as a “system of terror” or “regime du terreur”. This dark period imprinted itself on the revolutions ever since and the term was used and abused by various individual and entities that

formed theories and rhetoric of terror. These underlying contradictions became and still are an essential problem of modern terrorism where one questions the legitimate use of violence for peace and justice to emerge.

These movements in different epochs used violence to eliminate tyrannical rules and leaders using quite rudimentary methods. A drastic change in the *modus operandi* of extremist movements is evident through the methods used by the anarchist movement. Very much alike with the stereotype of terrorist organizations as expected in the current world anarchist terrorism was the first group in history to promote “propaganda by deed”, to use bombs in their attacks; and also was the first group to have international connections which included Europe, America and Australia among other countries.

The extremist Italian Carlo Pisacane is considered the progenitor of the axiom ‘propaganda by deed’ (Hoffman 2006: 5). Pisacane venerated the use of violence as the ultimate means to attract attention and to publicize the acts of a revolutionary group. According to Pisacane, ‘the idea of propaganda is a chimera... Ideas result from deeds, not the latter from the former, and the people will not be free when they are educated, but educated when they are free’ (Woodcock 1977: 43–44).

The reactions of governments and the media were integral in the establishing the aura of this violent movement. As Bach Jensen (2015: 111) states the words “anarchist” and “anarchism” became synonyms for “terrorists” and “terrorism” and this label was assigned to all those nationalists, socialists, radicals, mental unbalanced and agents provocateurs involved in violent actions. The anarchist ideologists like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin as founders of the nineteenth century anarchist movement never directly called for assassinations or bombings but violent actions were more effective in attracting attention of the bourgeois class, which was often the target of the attacks. The paradigm of “propaganda by the deed” developed to the extent that in 1878 commenced an era of anarchist terrorism that claimed the lives of various dignitaries from various parts of the world. These attacks were attributed to the Black International, which is the anarchist movement.

Revolutionary anarchist thinkers spread over Europe and the Americas invoking fear through propaganda by deed and established the Anarchist International (or Black International) (Gearson, 2002). Anarchist International aimed to spread 'a myth of global revolutionary pretensions, stimulating fears and suspicions disproportionate to its actual impact or political achievements' (Hoffman, 2006: 7). This movement annotated the move from tyrannicide to terrorism, from the dagger to the bomb (Rapoport, 1971). Anarchists exploited bombs to indiscriminately attack and used fear as a political tool. This *modus operandi* formed 'the impression of a giant international conspiracy... which in actual fact never existed' (Laqueur 1987: 18). This wave of terror made nineteenth century anarchism the progenitor of modern day terrorism, even though it 'made little tangible impact on both the domestic and the international politics of the countries affected' (Hoffman 2006: 7).

Bach Jensen (2015: 115) explicates that in the 1890s around ten countries experienced anarchist violence and these included countries in Europe, the United States, Australia and even Cuba. The aura of the anarchist terrorism grew even further when the methods of policing used in those days were not effective in controlling the situation or stopping an individual actor. François Claudius Ravachol planted a series of bombs in the quarters of high profile personalities as a reaction to the harsh treatment and sentencing of anarchists in the May Day demonstration. Other explosions by other anarchist actors targeted mining companies and army barracks. Émile Henry targeted what today are called 'soft targets', namely cafés and restaurants. Yet the climax of this wave of violence was the assassination of the French President Sadi Carnot who was stabbed to death by Italian anarchist Sante Geronimo Caserio. Carnot refused to change the death sentence of anarchist Auguste Vaillant who bombed the parliament even though there were no deaths or victims.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century these anarchist bombing occurred in Belgium, Spain and Italy, besides France. The anarchist terrorism that occurred in Spain was soon considered to be more deadly than the one in France. For instance an explosion in Barcelona's opera house in 1893 claimed the lives of thirty persons (Bach Jensen, 2015: 115). This was a period where bombings became the key apparatus

in the anarchist portfolio. The internationality of this group could be witness on how actors tended to attack on a global scale, going far beyond the national borders. As Bach Jensen (2015: 116) explains “outside Italy the Italian anarchists were consolidating their title as the foremost assassins of Europe”. As a reaction to these violent actions governments in Spain and Italy used draconian laws with the aim to control this wave of anarchist terrorism. Yet the police forces were not trained and educated, and lacked the proper tools for scientific policing and identification systems, as criticized by Lombroso (1895) in his work *Gli Anarchici*. This international network of terror was the catalyst that instigated the modernization of police forces around the world and most important initiated the creation of police networks in order to combat this international phenomenon of terror.

The examples mentioned were some of the salient parts in history that show how factions using extreme violence are not a unique phenomenon of the last few years. The twentieth century was also witness of various terrorist activities, the 1940s witness the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood among other extremist groups outside Europe (Laqueur, 1987). In the 1960s and 1970s, radical-left oriented groups predominated the scenes, such as, the German Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion commonly known as ‘Baader-Meinhof Group’), Italy’s Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse abbreviated as the ‘BR’), and the French Direct Action (Action Directe abbreviated as the ‘AD’). Ethno-separatist groups also started to emerge in this period, and included groups like the Spanish ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna meaning ‘Basque Homeland and Freedom’). Terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s involved the activities of various groups associated with the struggle against Israel. The activities of these groups included aircraft hijacks and hostage-takings, which resulted in international terrorism. Groups from various nations such as Chechnya, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Lebanon and Israel, adopted this modus operandi. The LTTE’s (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) suicide attacks provided significant evidence that in extreme political and psychological circumstances groups can resort to suicide terrorism even if they do not pertain to fundamental religious terrorist groups (Hoffman, 2006). Analyzing these different groups is interesting to explore the different

context that motivated terrorism. However there are still a myriad of questions that remain unanswered such as: what aspects of violence qualify as terrorism? What are the context, political, religious, ethnic or even personal issues that might put an individual in the trajectory of becoming a terrorist?

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