

# **THOUGHTS, WORDS AND ACTIONS - DISUNITY IN THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN STRUGGLE AGAINST GLOBAL TERRORISM?**

**A Monograph  
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## **Abstract**

THOUGHTS, WORDS AND ACTIONS – DISUNITY IN THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN STRUGGLE AGAINST GLOBAL TERRORISM? By Major Neal S. Croft 9/12, British Army, 54 pages.

Currently Britain and America are engaged in an unprecedented struggle against global terrorism. This new, complex and challenging threat is proving difficult to overcome and the struggle against it, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq, is not going well.

One of the major reasons for this issue is that disunity of effort in the struggle exists between the two countries. This disunity stems from the lack of a common concept and definition of terrorism both in and between the two countries. This has led to differences in approach when dealing with the threat. Essentially the UK views terrorism as a criminal matter where the US deals with terrorism as an act of war. Therefore the UK and US ends, means and ways are different with detrimental effects.

The implications of this disunity can be seen from the strategic to the tactical levels and felt both domestically and globally. They include wasted resources and growing opposition to the different means of combating terrorism which have led to a longer struggle and an increasing threat of terrorism.

For this disunity to be reduced, greater discourse, ideally leading to common consensus on a concept and definition needs to be conducted. Whether this is achieved or not other actions can also help to reduce the friction. These include greater emphasis and utilization of countries' strengths and better synchronization between the UK and US.

Global terrorism is predicted to be a long term threat. For the UK and US to have greater success in dealing with it there needs to be improvement in their unity of effort.

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

Terrorism is not a new tactic in the history of warfare; it has been employed for many hundreds of years in many conflicts with varying degrees of success across the planet. Prior to 2001 however, terrorism was rarely regarded in a global context or tackled in global terms. Most nations regarded terrorism as a mainly local concern, associating it with internal revolutionary movements and violence directed against governments and leaders. Terrorism was, therefore, perceived as a secondary threat to that of violently competing nations.

The terrorist attacks on the United States by Al Qaeda (AQ) on 11 September 2001 (9/11) changed this perception. Most nations now regard terrorism in global terms and see it as the pre-eminent global threat to peace and security. The end of the cold war with the systems and technology that enable globalization have also further enabled terrorists. Improvements in communications such as the internet have meant that terrorists can swiftly communicate ideas, messages and images to a global audience, and easily raise terrorism from the local level to a global scale.

This global threat required a global response. The United States (US) Presidential declaration of war on terrorism, known commonly as the Global War On Terrorism (GWOT), was initiated shortly after the attacks of 9/11 and pushed countering terrorist activity to the forefront of world issues. This declaration acknowledged terrorism as a global issue. The US is conducting this fight using all instruments of national power including military full spectrum operations. Since 2001, the US has led the war on terrorism across the globe.

Due to the nature of global terrorism, the US has not sought to defeat it alone; it attempts to fight terrorism in concert with multinational and coalition partners as stated in its National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. “The United States will constantly strive to enlist the support

of the international community in this fight against a common foe.”<sup>1</sup> The US is keen to lead these partners under the GWOT banner. Specifically, it is tackling terrorist organizations in partnership with the United Kingdom (UK). Prime Minister Blair and President Bush have stood side by side in the struggle against terrorism from the time of President Bush’s address to a joint session of Congress on 14 September 2001, when Prime Minister Blair was present. Although foreign leaders have addressed the US Congress in the past, this was the first time that a Foreign Leader was present in the Chamber when the President addressed the Congress. This gesture was an indication of the closeness of the UK and US. This UK/US special relationship is unprecedented; there are no other nation states so uniquely tied.

Across the world many other countries and organizations have also acknowledged this new threat of global terrorism. Due to the perceived nature of this complicated and global threat, collective action is seen as key to effectively dealing with it. As a result, many of the world’s other national leaders have spoken of the increased threat posed by transnational terrorism and have taken action to deal with it internally and through working with other countries and organizations. This collective action is exemplified by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its allies in Afghanistan since late 2001 and the resolutions passed by the United Nations (UN) since that time. For example, 192 Member states signed the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy on 8 September 2006. This, the latest UN resolution, heralds further progress in collective action against terrorism through its agreed common strategic approach.

Multinational and coalition operations bring with them, among other things, legitimacy, extra resources, specific regional intelligence, and expertise in certain key areas. By participating in such operations, the US government (USG) and other governments have acknowledged the globalized and complex nature of the terrorism threat. In attempting to win the ongoing GWOT,

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<sup>1</sup> United States Government, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington DC: February 2003) 2.

the USG has made it clear that it expects all nations to participate in this struggle. The US questions the motivations of those nations that do not support the GWOT, may judge such nations negatively and consider them as supporters of terrorism. Not supporting the US may even result in action being taken against them. President George W Bush emphasized this point in a speech to a joint session of Congress and the American people on 21 September 2001 when he stated, “Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the US as a hostile regime.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite this increased co-operation among nations, the threat of global terrorism has not appeared to diminish. Current approaches to the global terrorist threat appear to have little positive effect and may have exacerbated the issue. There continues to be and have been many terrorist attacks and attempted attacks since 9/11. Examples include the 7 July 2005 bombings in London, the Madrid train bombings in March 2004, and thwarted attacks in Australia and the US. In addition, the Middle East appears more destabilized as indicated by an increase in anti-Semitic and anti-Western rhetoric from the Iranian leadership to the Hezbollah attacks against Israel in autumn 2006. There has also been an increase in GWOT related violence in the Horn of Africa region as reported by the media. In early 2007 the level of terrorist activity throughout the world still remains extremely high, apparently undiminished and perhaps even larger and growing in scale. Therefore the results of this increase in cooperation seemed to have brought little or no successes. What has gone wrong?

One reason for the world communities inability to effectively address this global terrorism threat is the lack of common agreement between countries on the definition of terrorism or on concepts of terrorism. Countries currently differ in their definitions internally and between

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<sup>2</sup> President George W. Bush to a Joint Session of the United States Congress, Washington DC 21 September 2001.



other countries as manifested in the absence of agreement on the definition of terrorism by the UN. Although the term *terror* has been used at least since the French Revolution, there is still no common agreed definition of terrorism and of what comprises terrorism. The absence of a common definition has been an issue for sometime. Between the first and second World Wars, the League of Nations first attempted to develop an internationally accepted definition but failed.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of an internationally agreed upon definition, there exist many definitions today. A recent study by the US Army counted 109 definitions of terrorism that included 22 elements.<sup>4</sup>

Differing definitions of terrorism exist between close allies such as the UK and US, countries whose leadership proclaim counter terrorist activity as their priority and who are very closely linked in dealing with it. Her Majesty's Government (HMG) conducts counter terrorist activity under the title of Countering International Terrorism or Global Counter Terrorism (GCT) whereas the USG is fighting the GWOT. Within these countries' governments and societies there are also differences in definitions and concepts of terrorism. These differences are not nuances or subtleties. The differences in definitions based on different concepts have led to variations in way each tackles terrorism.

The aim of this research is to demonstrate that differences between US and UK concepts and definitions of terrorism have led to a disruption of unity of effort in countering terrorism with detrimental effects i.e. failure. These different concepts and definitions lead to different approaches or ways of tackling terrorism. A review of literature on terrorism reveals three basic approaches to terrorism: a law enforcement approach, a military, or war based approach, and a third approach that views terrorism as a legitimate method of achieving self determination. An examination of HMG and USG definitions of terrorism highlights how these countries follow two

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Weinberger, *Defining Terror*, Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations (Winter/Spring 2003), 66.

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism* (The US Army War College/Strategic Studies Institute; Carlisle PA, 2003) 6.

different counter terrorism approaches. The UK rests in the law enforcement camp whereas the US falls into the war or military action camp. In essence, the UK and US approaches differ because their ends and means in fighting terrorism also differ.<sup>5</sup>

Because the UK and US approaches to tackling terrorism differ due to their divergent concepts and definitions of terrorism, unity of effort in the struggle against terrorism is compromised. A common definition of terrorism and concept of terrorism would significantly alleviate this problem because commonality would support unity of effort, harmonize approaches to terrorism, and improve the struggle against terror.

This research will review the differing UK and US definitions of terrorism by examining UK and US concepts and approaches to terrorism. These approaches contribute directly to the current state of coalition global counter terrorism activity. The driver for this study is that fact that the subject is a matter of consequence; there is an acknowledged problem which needs a solution. A reevaluation of the concepts and definitions of terrorism may have an impact on how nations deal with global terrorism, and this could lead to a solution or an improvement in dealing the death blow to global/transnational terrorism. This is particularly important because the world perceives the struggle against terrorism across the globe and progress in Iraq—the centerpiece of the US GWOT—as a failure. There is also doubt concerning the effects of NATO progress over five years after the GWOT began, in the other major military theatre Afghanistan. In that theater, levels of terrorist attacks were 400% higher in December 2005 compared to December 2006 and were expected to be extremely high in Spring 2007.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The third camp is based upon the view that terrorism is a legitimate method of gaining self determination, is rejected by the majority of the global community including the UK and US. Although this approach does not involve countering terrorism, it is important to note because this method is advocated by some countries in the Middle East and is directly linked to the Israeli nation state issue. Although examination of the third approach in detail is beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note that this group is substantial and opposed to the UK and US methods of dealing with terrorism.

<sup>6</sup> National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*. 16 January 2007.

Coalition action on a global scale rather than unilateral action has been sought by the UK and US, among others, as the best method to deal with this preeminent global threat. The White House September 2003 “Progress Report on the War on Terrorism” stated that there were 170 nation participants engaged in the war on terrorism.<sup>7</sup> These actions, however, must have unity of effort to effectively counter terrorism. The foundation for coalition success in tackling terrorism is a common concept and definition of terrorism.

Unity of effort is a principle held in great esteem by many organizations, including militaries. The UK and US militaries have both enshrined unity of effort as a tenet and see it as vital for success. The US sees it under Unity of Command in their list of Principles of War<sup>8</sup>, and the British see it under a key principle of mission command.<sup>9</sup> In the same vein, Strategic planning also requires unity of effort; Mintzberg, in his book, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* consistently refers to the importance of unity of effort to ensure success.<sup>10</sup> Unity of effort and its importance are regularly cited, a recent example of its recognition being the US Congressional confirmation hearings of Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus (since appointed coalition Commander in Iraq) when he assured Congress that he would strive to achieve unity of effort in Iraq. He stated, “I will work to ensure unity of effort with the Ambassador and our Iraqi and coalition partners.”<sup>11</sup> The subject was raised after Congress noted the perceived lack of unity of effort in Iraq which they saw as directly contributing to the lack of success in Iraq.

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<sup>7</sup> National Security Council. *Progress Report on the War on Terrorism* (Washington DC: September 2003) 8.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Defense. *Joint Publication 3-0 Joint Operations* (Washington DC: September 2006) II-I.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Defence Doctrine Concepts and Development Centre. *Army Doctrine Publication Land Operations* (London: HMSO, 2005) 116.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (New York: The Free Press, 1994) 68.

<sup>11</sup> Lieutenant General David H Petraeus Senate Confirmation Hearing, 23 January 2007, “The only assurance I can give you is that, if confirmed, I will provide Multinational Force Iraq the best leadership and direction I can muster; I will work to ensure unity of effort with the ambassador and our Iraqi and coalition partners; and I will provide my bosses and you with forthright, professional military advice with respect to the missions given to Multinational Force Iraq and the situation on the ground in Iraq.”

The definition of concepts and definitions are important to understand as they form the foundation for the initial part of this study that examines the concepts and definitions of terrorism published by HMG and USG. Concepts are essentially abstract ideas, or ideas which help to sell or publicize something.<sup>12</sup> They are generic ideas conceived of in the mind from particular experiences.<sup>13</sup> Flowing from concepts and partly distilled from them are definitions. Definitions are a statement of the exact meaning of a word or the nature or scope of something.<sup>14</sup> Definitions are the act of determining something specifically.<sup>15</sup>

To fully examine the issues related to terrorism and produce recommendations, one must seek answers to a number of questions. These questions will form the basis of the monograph structure and therefore its sections. The monograph will be broken into five sections. The first section, in addition to this introduction, will include assumptions, scope and delimitations. Following this, Section two will address the question: What are the concepts and definitions of terrorism different in the UK and US and within their government departments? The responses to these questions will then lead to section three: What evidence is there demonstrating lack of unity of effort? Section four will next address: What are the implications of the lack of unity of effort? Finally section five will conclude this study, offer recommendations, and indicate possible further work that could be undertaken regarding the subject.

This monograph examines and analyzes approaches and responses to terrorism between 11 September 2001 and 1 February 2007. Although the current terrorism threat is global, this thesis will concentrate on what is understood to be international terrorism, primarily extremist activity emanating from the Middle East. More specifically, it will focus on military operations conducted in Afghanistan and Iraq by the UK and US, but not to the exclusion of the UK and US

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<sup>12</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "concepts."

<sup>13</sup> Webster's Miriam Dictionary, s.v. "concepts."

<sup>14</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "terrorism."

<sup>15</sup> Webster's Miriam Dictionary, s.v. "terrorism."

domestic terrorist threats. Although this study will refer to the nature of the polity of the UK and US and their differences and implications, it will not provide a description of these issues as such analysis is beyond the scope of this monograph. However, to best frame the issue an understanding of the natures of the polities should be held. The study will be conducted in the unclassified realm. As a result, it may miss real national aims, concepts, perceptions and methods of executing the GCT and GWOT. The analysis will also be limited to and concentrate on definitions and concepts, where they exist, which are produced by the UK Cabinet Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) and in the US from the National Security Council (NSC), Department of State (DoS) and Department of Defense (DoD).

The current struggle against terrorism has been forecast by UK and US leadership to continue for quite some time. However this struggle may become longer, more costly and could potentially be lost unless HMG and USG achieve greater unity of effort in their approaches to dealing with the threat posed by terrorism. The US and UK can achieve unity of effort if they adopt common concepts and definitions. Governments will then enter the same conceptual camp and take the same approach to dealing with the challenges of global terrorism. This will increase unity of effort to the degree possible between two sovereign nations that have disparate political systems. This unity of effort along with better synchronization will close seams which terror organizations currently exploit.

## SECTION 2: UK AND US CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS OF TERRORISM

UK and US concepts and definitions of terrorism must be studied to understand why there is a disruption in the unity of effort in countering terrorism. Therefore it is appropriate to initially review the UK concept of terrorism and HMG definitions followed by a discussion of the US concept of terrorism and USG definitions. Comparisons between UK and US concepts and definitions will highlight the divide between the close allies.

Methods of dealing with terrorism emanate from national concepts of terrorism. National concepts of terrorism are formed from within national societies and their constituents. If viewed pictorially, societies could be seen as ropes and the intertwined strands found within the rope seen as the constituents. These constituents include, among other aspects, the national rule of law, education, commerce, humanitarian and health perspectives, information systems, the military, economics and diplomacy, administration, and government factors.<sup>16</sup> History and culture are products of societies, and these along with demographics need to be taken into account when viewing national concepts. Explaining a country's concept of terrorism is not an easy task, as much is subjective due to the vast and wicked nature of the problem.<sup>17</sup> Every member of society has an individual concept of terrorism, however basic or developed, and together these form the national concept. This national concept is stated by the country's government, and through the democratic governing process, government common consensus is reached. Due to their nature and the number of inputs into the process, national concepts are not formulated into a precise objective statement but rather an imprecise and, in the main, subjective assessment of what terrorism is. Unique to each national concept will be a number of identifiable themes. Other

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<sup>16</sup>Ministry of Defence Doctrine Concepts and Development Centre, *Army Doctrine Publication Land Operations* (London: HMSO, 2005)116.

<sup>17</sup>Wicked problems are exceptionally complex problems which are constantly morphing creating yet more problems. Rittel, H J. and M Webber. *Dilemmas in a general theory of planning* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Scientific Publishing, 1973) 155-169.

themes may not be unique, i.e. they may also be common to other nations' concepts of terrorism. As themes become more vague and subjective rather than more precise and objective, they become more open to interpretation. This is to be expected when dealing with a wicked problem. The problem is constantly morphing, and there will always be many unknowns. However, it should be noted that when the themes are bound together as a whole they comprise the national concepts.

### **The UK concept of terrorism**

There are a number of themes and perspectives which form the UK's concept of terrorism. These are summarized by HMG in its unclassified document: *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy July 2006*. The three key and uniquely British themes are first, terrorism is a historical and changing rather than a new phenomenon. Second, terrorism is a criminal matter, and third, current major terrorist threats to the UK come from within the UK, i.e. they are domestic rather than external. The major implication derived from these perspectives is that the UK can and does conduct counter terrorist activity, but it cannot fight a "war" on terrorism—if it were fighting a war, it would be fighting elements of its own population. Demographically, the UK partly comprises people with origins in the Middle East who view terrorism as a legitimate form of achieving their goals in the UK and globally. Fighting a war against its people at home would create both enormous legal and constitutional issues in the UK. It is therefore seen as unacceptable.

The first theme within the UK concept of terrorism is that terrorism is viewed in historical terms; it is not a new threat to the UK although it is acknowledged that the nature of terrorism evolves over time. The UK's current counter terrorist strategy, *Countering International Terrorism*, published in July 2006 makes this clear when it states, "terrorism is not a new

phenomenon. For example, the UK experienced repeated domestic terrorist attacks as a result of the long running troubles in Northern Ireland.”<sup>18</sup>

The UK’s recent, pre 9/11, terrorism experience is centered mainly on Northern Ireland with its linked activities on mainland Great Britain and occasionally mainland Europe. However, the experience also included unique events. These range from the December 1988 Pan Am Flight 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, to minor attacks such as those perpetrated by animal rights activists. Northern Ireland centered terrorism has been conducted on and off since at least the 1920s by groups such as the Irish Republic Army (IRA) and its similarly named Catholic organizations: PIRA, CIRA and RIRA. Prior to the recent Northern Ireland troubles and the unique terrorist attacks mentioned above, the UK terrorism experience was based on Cold War related terrorism mainly carried out on the geographical fringes of the central Cold War theater and terrorism linked to the British Empire and its dying days. Examples of terrorism and counter terrorism in this period include counter terrorist operations during the campaigns in Borneo and Brunei in the 1960s. The UK therefore has a long history of experiencing and dealing with terrorism across the globe and acknowledges, through its experience, that terrorism changes over time.

The UK’s second unique terrorism theme is that HMG has regarded terrorism as a criminal activity and dealt with it as such since at least the start of the recent Northern Ireland problems. The UK counter terrorist legislation reflects the government’s position. Frequent legislative initiatives by HMG over time have attempted to deal with the changing threat. Important legislation included the 1974 – 1989 Prevention of Terrorism Act (Northern Ireland), and the terrorist acts passed in 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005 and 2006. The aim of this legislation has

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<sup>18</sup> Her Majesty’s Government, *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom’s Strategy* (London: July 2006) 6.



been to support the UK counter terrorist effort and marginalize terrorists and terrorism. This legislation treats terrorism as a criminal act and deals with such acts accordingly.

The consequence of treating acts of terrorism as crimes means HMG has used its police forces and intelligence agencies as the lead in its counter terrorism efforts instead of military action. At times in the 1970s and mid 1980s, there was military primacy in Northern Ireland due to the situation. However in the main, military action has been restricted to a supporting activity carried out under the title Military Aid to the Civil Power (MACP). Under MACP military resources are supplied at the request of and put under the control of the civil powers. Examples of MACP include the use of the military in Northern Ireland and in support of London's Metropolitan Police countering terrorist activity at UK airports such as London's Heathrow airport.

The third unique theme concerns the fact that although HMG acknowledges the threat from terrorism is genuinely international, recent acts of terrorism and counter terrorism events indicate that the major threat is against domestic UK targets rather than members of the UK population or assets overseas. This threat is now seen as emanating from within the UK but with some significant links abroad.<sup>19</sup> Indications of this have been the July 2005 London bombings and a series of thwarted attacks since 9/11. Although for security reasons many successful counter terrorist events are not publicized, there have been enough publicized and high profile counter terrorism successes in the UK recently to underline the high domestic threat. Successful counter terrorism operations have included the arrest of a terror cell planning trans-Atlantic airline bombings and the arrest of another terror cell planning to execute Muslim British soldiers while on leave in the UK.

Of note has been the generally small scale of 'successful' acts of terrorism in the UK. Successful terrorist attacks have not to date included huge casualty spectacles such as some

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<sup>19</sup> For discussion on the matter see p. 8 above.

terrorist attacks seen abroad such as the massacre at Beslan School in South Ossetia, Russia.

Although the 7 July 2005 attacks were the biggest domestic terrorism attacks the UK has seen and they undoubtedly had an impact, they were not among the largest global terrorist attacks. This does not mean to suggest that attacks resulting in mass casualties have not been planned or will be planned, but the experience to date has been one of relatively small scale attacks. This fact has added to the UK concept of terrorism.

Therefore, the UK concept of terrorism is based on a number of unique factors. These factors include the view that terrorism is not a new phenomena but an old one that frequently occurs and will continue to do so. Second, the UK acknowledgement that the threat has and is constantly changing and this change takes time to understand, adjust to and deal with; something that is complex. Finally, there is the view that the most dangerous current terrorism threat is aimed at its own population and in the main emanates from within the UK population with substantial outside links. The major issue is that the UK can and does conduct counter terrorist activity, but it cannot fight a war on terrorism. Otherwise it would be fighting elements of its own population which would be unconstitutional. This leads to the final and most important point: the UK views terrorism as a criminal matter which should be dealt with in the courts of law rather than by a military lead. These unique concepts of terrorism added to other factors have led to the few existing UK definitions of terrorism.

## **UK Definitions of Terrorism**

In line with the scope of this paper, definitions, if they exist, will be examined from the Cabinet Office, FCO and the MOD only. Although beyond the scope of this study, there is no common definition of terrorism used across the other parts of HMG. Indeed, many government

departments that deal with HMG's highest priority, terrorism, as part of the comprehensive approach<sup>20</sup>, do not have, appear to use, or allude to a definition of terrorism in their publications. HMG carries out its Counter Terrorism (CT) strategy and planning through the Cabinet committee and through the Ministerial Committee of Defence and Overseas Policy (Sub-Committee on International Terrorism) (DOP(IT)) chaired by the Prime Minister. Since early 2003 the UK has had a long-term strategy for countering global terrorism (known within the government as CONTEST). The key public document regarding CONTEST is *Countering International Terrorism; the UK's Strategy July 2006*. This states that the aim of CONTEST is "to reduce the risk from international terrorism, so that people can go about their daily lives freely and with confidence."<sup>21</sup> The Cabinet Office has not, in this or any other unclassified document issued or published a specific and commonly used definition of terrorism.

There are, however, interpretations, statements, characteristics, and examples of terrorism. Statements include: "Terrorism is a difficult and complex problem", and "terrorism is an international phenomenon that takes many forms."<sup>22</sup> The CONTEST document highlights that the principle terrorist threat is currently from radicalized individuals who are using a distorted and unrepresentative interpretation of the Islamic faith to justify violence. It states that "such people are referred to here as Islamist terrorists."<sup>23</sup>

Of the three major pieces of legislation related to terrorism passed this decade, the Terrorism Act 2000, the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, and the Terrorism Act 2006, the latter provides the fullest explanation of HMG's definition of terrorism. The Terrorist Act 2000 and the

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<sup>20</sup> Her Majesty's Government, *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy* (Londo: July 2006) 2.

<sup>21</sup> Her Majesty's Government, *Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy* (London: July 2006) 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

other acts elaborate on terrorism, but fall short of a concise, succinct definition which is widely used.<sup>24</sup> The Terrorist Act 2000, which offers the fullest explanation, partly states:

(1) In this Act “terrorism” means the use or threat of action where-

(a) the action falls within this subsection

(b) the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and

(c) the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

(2) Action falls within this subsection if it-

(a) involves serious violence against a person

(b) involves serious damage to property

(c) endangers a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action,

(d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or

(e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system

(3) The use or threat of action falling within subsection (2) which involves the use of firearms or explosives is terrorism whether or not subsection (1) (b) is satisfied.

Therefore, although terrorism is described in these acts, it does not appear as in an overt definition format in unrestricted documents produced by the Cabinet Office, the center of UK government. However, government documents do provide the history and characteristics of terrorism as well as the examples of terrorism from which inferences can be drawn.

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<sup>24</sup> Her Majesty’s Government, The Terrorist Act 2000, Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 and The Terrorism Act 2006 (London: 2000, 2005, 2006).

The FCO's current work is explained in its 2006 White Paper: *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The UK's international priorities*. In this command paper the FCO lists ten strategic international priorities; the first of these regards terrorism and is titled: "*Making the world safer from global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction*."<sup>25</sup> The paper expands and states, "[t]he major threats to our security in the decade ahead will come from terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international organized crime and conflict."<sup>26</sup> It further elaborates, "[t]errorist attacks now constitute the most immediate threat to the security of the UK and to our interests."<sup>27</sup> The FCO expands, later in the document, on its first priority in *Tackling the Underlying Causes of Terrorism and Assisting with Counter Terrorism Capacity Building*. However, the FCO does not in this paper or any other public documents define or try to define terrorism or allude to where a definition could be found.

The MOD's doctrine on countering terrorism is set out in *Countering Terrorism; the UK Approach to the Military Contribution* published in 2004 by the MOD's Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre. The pamphlet is based on both current UK military doctrine, and the recently completed Strategic Defence Review New Chapter. In the introduction to the latter document, the MOD states that "the terminology used in the UK response to terrorism is not set in tablets of stone, nor is it prescriptive as the UK is constantly learning and adapting."<sup>28</sup> In section 2—*Understanding The Threat from Terrorism*—the pamphlet poses the question, "[w]hat is terrorism?" It then provides, "[t]here is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. At present the UK MOD uses the NATO agreed definition."<sup>29</sup> According to NATO terrorism is, "the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property in an attempt

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<sup>25</sup> United Kingdom Her Majesty's Government. *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World, The UK's International Priorities* (London: HMSO, March 2006) 18.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, *Countering Terrorism, The UK Approach to the Military Contribution* (London: HMSO, 2003) 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

to coerce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.”<sup>30</sup>

Within HMG the UK concept of terrorism is reasonably clear. What is also understandable across the UK is that as terrorism evolves so does the concept of it. However, what is not so clear, with the exception of within the MOD, and this does not mirror or allude to the HMG legal acts, is how HMG defines terrorism. Although there is no clear and easily located common definition (with the exception of the very long detailed explanations in the terrorism acts to which HMG barely alludes), there are many descriptions of terrorism. However, what is clear and key is that the UK currently views terrorism as the pre eminent threat and that terrorism is viewed as a criminal matter to be dealt with in the courts of law.

## **The US concept of terrorism**

If applying a similar analogy to US society as was earlier applied to the UK concept of terrorism, i.e. US society seen as a rope formed from strands, then the US too possesses unique strands amongst the strands that are otherwise common to other countries. These unique strands form the US national concept of terrorism. The unique and defining themes that form the US concept of terrorism are: first, its historical (pre 9/11) terrorist experience; second, its small domestic terrorism threat; third, the immense impact of 9/11 on the US; and finally, the US perspective that terrorism is viewed as an act of war and terrorists are therefore combatants rather than criminals.

First, the US has undoubtedly felt the effects of and dealt with terrorism, prior to 9/11, through its history as stated in the opening pages of the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism 2003.<sup>31</sup> However, this experience has not been widely felt by the majority of its

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<sup>30</sup> NATO Allied Administration Publication 6, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> National Security Council, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington DC: February 2003) 1.

population spread across the vast land mass that constitutes the USA and therefore, has not really been taken into consideration. Prior to 9/11 terrorism or dealing with terrorism only involved, directly and indirectly, a small percentage of the US population, and as such, it was not perceived as a significant threat. To a certain extent the US has therefore failed to take into consideration its own and other countries' histories of terrorism when determining how to counter terrorism.

Second, terrorism experienced before 9/11 by the US and its citizens, was in the main, experienced overseas and therefore perceived as an issue that occurred abroad. Although there have been a number of domestic terrorism incidents within the US, terrorism was, until 9/11 regarded by the majority of the population as a minor domestic issue. Domestic incidents of terrorism that did take place were primarily small scale and on the whole conducted by unconnected individuals who were not bound by a unifying extremist ideology. The most notable pre 9/11 domestic terrorism incidents include the 1996 Centennial Olympic Park, Atlanta, and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombings. Their impact was shocking, in line with the aims of terrorism, and they undoubtedly received wide attention at the time of their occurrence. However, they were not regarded as the major threat of their time; they were viewed as unconnected isolated events that did not change the perception of terrorism from that of a minor threat. These incidents were also not supported by large elements of the US population seeking to achieve group goals through perceived legitimate ways. The main threats were rightly perceived to be from other nation states such as Russia during the Cold War and perhaps more recently China. Due to the size of the US and its relatively inward looking nature, terrorism experienced abroad rarely directly impacted those at home with the exception of major events that affected US citizens such as the 1984 US Marine barracks bombing in the Lebanon, the three US embassy bombings in 1998, and the attacks on USS Cole in 2000. This perceived lack of direct domestic terrorism experience linked to a perceived lack of domestic terrorist threat resulted in the perception that terrorism was not a major threat to the US. In turn, the perceived lack of threat led to a lack of concern for countering terrorism in the lives of the majority of the population and in the USG.

Because terrorism was perceived as a minor domestic threat 9/11 was therefore an enormous shock to the US for a number of reasons. The attacks and their physical results were on an unprecedented scale. Never have there been terrorist attacks of 9/11 proportions in the world. Additionally, 9/11 was the first time that the US homeland had been directly attacked since the Second World War. The last attacks on the US homeland were carried out during the Second World War by the Japanese, against targets on the West Coast of the US. These attacks were minimal in scale and impact against a country that was already at war. They were also an act of military and national aggression by state actors. 9/11, on the other hand, was unexpected by the majority of the US population and was conducted by non state actors. Finally, the manner of the attacks in terms of their method, targets and spectacular nature was truly shocking. The massive impact of the 9/11 attacks within the US can rarely be understood by non US citizens. This is key and a point which most non Americans fail to understand; a new era in US history began on 9/11. Writings and speeches by US citizens shortly after 9/11 give only an indication of the feelings of Americans to foreigners about the impact of 9/11. The 9/11 Commission report gives perhaps one of the best descriptions of the collective American mentality shortly after the attacks.<sup>32</sup>

Due to the scale the 9/11 acts of terrorism were perceived as acts of war as opposed to criminal acts. The USG, almost wholly supported by the US population, declared that America would do everything in its power to prevent a repeat of these kinds of attacks, through preemptive action if necessary, and that it would hunt down and punish those responsible. President Bush made this clear when he stated, “No group or nation should mistake America’s intentions: We will not rest until terrorist groups of global reach have been found, have been stopped, and have been defeated.”<sup>33</sup> To achieve these ends and in retaliation against what it saw as an act of war, the US therefore went to war against terrorism. Its method of going to war, the unique declaration by

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<sup>32</sup> Kean, Thomas H. and Lee Hamilton. 9/11Report: The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2004), xv.

<sup>33</sup> President George W. Bush. Washington DC. November 6, 2001.



the President rather than by Congress, is perhaps an indication of the feeling in the US at the time. It is significant that this declaration of war was made at a time of extreme uncertainty. There were expectations of further attacks, and the President, as leader of the nation, was under considerable pressure to act in a bold manner. War therefore seemed the only logical option in response and most effective method for the US to defend itself from further attacks. War was also a guaranteed method, partly due to legal reasons, of galvanizing the world's remaining super power into action. The President in his role as Commander in Chief had the legal power to initiate immediate warlike action whereas even had he wanted to, he would not have had the power to pursue terrorists as criminals through the courts of law with immediate effect. In addition, even if he had taken a criminal approach, the US at the time of 9/11 did not have the comprehensive terrorism legislation that other countries had to punish terrorists because the US had not foreseen the need for it. Therefore, anything short of war was unlikely to achieve the demands made by the US population. Since its declaration shortly after 9/11, the GWOT has played center stage in the life of the US and its Citizens. An indication is the constant media attention it receives and the preeminent position it holds in USG policy.

The US concept of terrorism is therefore based on a number of unique themes. These themes include: 1) the perception by the majority of the US population that terrorism was not a major issue prior to 9/11. This was due to the perception that there had been relatively few domestic terrorism events prior to 9/11; 2) The feeling that there was only a small domestic terrorism threat; 3) The understanding that terrorism really began for the US, after it directly affected the US in an unprecedented way, on 9/11; and 4) Finally and most importantly is the concept that the US views terrorism as an act of war which should be dealt with by war in order to defeat it and punish those responsible. This unique US concept of terrorism added to other factors has led to US definitions of terrorism.

## US definitions of terrorism

Again in line with the scope of this paper and in comparison with UK definitions (where they exist), this monograph will examine USG definitions of terrorism. These emanate from the National Security Council (NSC), the Department of State (DoS), and the Department of Defense (DoD).

The National Security Council is at the heart of USG foreign policy, as it resides in the White House. Although Congress and the States maintain control over most federal and state policy the NSC still has a large role to play. The NSC is the primary forum for evaluating crises and advising the President on all matters of national security. Although the composition varies slightly with each administration and sometimes for each meeting, the NSC essentially comprises four statutory members: the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State. In addition, it has three statutory advisors: the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of National Intelligence and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The primary public document it produces is the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America. This document, written by the NSC, outlines the security issues the US faces and how the administration aims to deal with them through use of the US instruments of National power. The latest NSS was produced in March 2006 and the one prior to it in September 2002. The March 2006 NSS's second point is: "*Strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends*" Under this heading the USG outlines the current US threat with regard to terrorism and states how the administration aims to combat it. The document does not define terrorism in this section or elsewhere.

The NSC also produces other documents related to terrorism such as The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) published in February 2003 and September 2006, the National Strategy for Victory in Iraq, published in November 2005, and The National Strategy for Homeland Security produced in July 2002. The February 2003 NSCT describes terrorism as

“premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non combatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents.”<sup>34</sup> This is in line with section 2656f(d) of Title 22, United States Code. The United States Code is a compilation of federal legislation. However, the September 2006 NSCT states, under the heading *Today’s Terrorist Enemy*, “Yet the enemy we face today in the War on Terror is not the same enemy we faced on September 11.”<sup>35</sup> The 2006 NSCT continues by stating, “Today the principle terrorist enemy confronting the United States is a transnational movement of extremist organization, networks, and individuals – and their state and non-state supporters – which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends.”<sup>36</sup> The document then expands on the official US concept of terrorism, the current terrorism threat and methods of combating it.

The DoS key public document regarding terrorism is its *Country Reports on Terrorism* produced annually. The most recent edition for 2005 was published in April 2006. The report clearly defines terrorism under its first section, Legislative Requirements and Key Terms, as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non combatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents.”<sup>37</sup> In line with the definition found in the 2003 NSCT, the DoS definition follows the United States federal law under Code Title 22. 2656f(d)(2). The remainder of the document expands on DoS’s work to combat terrorism.

The primary public document from DoD that addresses terrorism is The National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism (NMSP-WOT), dated 1 February 2006. The NMSP-WOT “presents the approach the DoD will take in fulfilling its role within the larger national

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<sup>34</sup> National Security Council, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, DC February 2006) 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Department of State. *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005*, (Washington, D.C., April 2006), 9.

strategy for combating terrorism.”<sup>38</sup> The NMSP-WOT is derived from Presidential directives, NSC documents and DoD documents. The plan defines the terms ‘extremist’ and ‘moderate’ in its opening pages but not terrorism; the focus of the document.<sup>39</sup> A definition of terrorism is not given until the annex where it is defined as:

The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological. The term terrorist refers to those who commit ‘terrorist acts.’<sup>40</sup>

The DoD produces other documents regarding terrorism such as *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2005, and *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2005. Each uses similar definitions as the NMSP-WOT. In addition, DoD produces Joint Publication 1-02, DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, amended 5 January 2005, in which it defines terrorism in the same terms as the NMSP-WOT.<sup>41</sup>

## **Differences in the UK and US concepts and definitions of terrorism**

Having studied both the UK and US concepts of terrorism it is important to compare and contrast these different national themes to understand their sources and whether they contribute to a lack of unity in the US/UK approach to terrorism. This is the purpose of the next major section of this monograph which will ask the question; What evidence is there demonstrating a lack of unity of effort?

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<sup>38</sup> Department of Defense. *National Military Strategic Policy on the War on Terrorism* (Washington DC: 1 February 2006) 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>41</sup> Department of Defense. *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington: 5 January 2007).

Both the UK and US have long histories of dealing with terrorism. Terrorism has affected each country over time although there are differences in the way it has affected each and the way each has chosen to use these experiences. The UK has a good deal of recent, both pre and post 9/11, domestic and overseas terrorism experience. This has included frequent but small scale incidents of terrorism. Although the current threat is acknowledged to be different from threats in the past, the UK has used its experience to deal with the current terrorist threat and this is alluded to frequently in HMG counter terrorism policy as described.<sup>42</sup> The US too has much experience of dealing with terrorism, but it has mainly been experienced abroad. In addition, due to the nature and size of the US, terrorism has affected a relatively low percentage of its population. In the US, therefore, terrorism has not been perceived as a major threat, and past US experience in addressing terrorism has not been as readily understood or used as it has with the UK. However, the experience the US gained from 9/11 and other terrorist events across the globe since 9/11 has changed this perception to the extent that combating terrorism is now central to the American way of life.

In contrast, while the UK now has the concept that the major terrorist threat to it probably comes from within, the US sees its major terrorist threat as definitely emanating from external sources. The implications of this are enormous and lead to the biggest single difference in concepts of terrorism. The UK, partly, due to its major 'homegrown' threat both now and in its previous dealings with terrorism sees terrorism as a domestic criminal offense and deals with it accordingly. It can not fight a war against its own people because it would probably cause constitutional issues. The US, however, views terrorism, mainly due to the spectacular nature of 9/11, the nature of its polity and its 9/11 experience of terrorism coming from abroad, as an act of war and deals with it as such.

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<sup>42</sup> Her Majesty's Government. Countering International Terrorism: The United Kingdom's Strategy (London: July 2006) 2.

There are undoubtedly differences, if only subtle, between the UK and US definitions of terrorism partly because HMG does not have a common definition of terrorism and USG has a number of them. The definitions that the two countries and their government departments use, where they exist, have been partly distilled from their concepts of terrorism.

HMG does not have or appear to use a common definition of terrorism across the government or in most government departments. The MOD is the only department in the scope of this work that appears to overtly use a fixed definition. The MOD uses the NATO definition, “*the unlawful use of or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.*”<sup>43</sup> However, government departments within the scope of this work, in addition to those outside, who deal with terrorism, do discuss terrorism and its facets in some conceptual detail. HMG legal acts also cover the matter in detail although government departments do not openly allude to them.

The USG in contrast has a clear definition of terrorism which is federally prescribed in Title 22 of the US Code and is in the main used across USG departments: “*Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non combatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents.*”<sup>44</sup> There is however some confusion over more modern explanations of the term terrorism.

The most obvious difference between the two definitions is that 1) that the UK uses the word unlawful which alludes to criminality whereas the US does not do so in its definition from Title 22 of the US Code but does in other definitions and 2) the US states who the perpetrators can be, i.e. sub national groups or clandestine agents, whereas the UK does not and leaves the

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<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Defence. *Countering Terrorism, The UK Approach to the Military contribution* (London: MS, 2003) 26.

<sup>44</sup> National Security Council. *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington DC: February 2006) 1.

matter open. These minor differences spring from the nations' different concepts of terrorism and from their methods of dealing with terrorism.

This section reviewed the UK and US concepts and definitions of terrorism and the differences between the two in order to lay a basis for understanding why the two countries lack unity of effort in countering terrorism. An understanding of these differences is key to understanding the different UK and US approaches to terrorism. It also provides a base of knowledge from which to begin an examination of evidence to demonstrate there is a lack of unity of effort in tackling terrorism.

## **SECTION 3 – WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE DEMONSTRATING A LACK OF UNITY OF EFFORT?**

There is a lack of unity of effort within and between the UK and US when dealing with terrorism due to differences in concepts and definitions of terrorism. Evidence exists to suggest disunity within HMG and USG and between them. The section will highlight these differences by initially examining evidence within HMG and then within USG. Then it will reveal evidence that reflects the lack of unity of effort between the UK and US when combating terrorism. Evidence will be reviewed under strategic, operational and tactical headings. The following section will then study implications of the lack of unity of effort for the UK and US and those combating terrorism.

### **Disruption in unity of effort in the UK**

Due to the heightened threat of both international and domestic terrorism, HMG counts combating terrorism as its highest priority. A great deal of debate on the subject surrounds the matter, quite naturally, for a democratic society. Although key and much debated, there is disruption in the unity of effort within the UK because of differences in concepts of terrorism and therefore approaches to terrorism. For example, an indication of this at the strategic level has been the delays and even thwarting of new counter terrorist legislation HMG has suffered. In addition, government departments and agencies are not working as one even though the comprehensive approach has been a well heralded policy. Finally, at the tactical level, counter terrorism budgetary issues point to divisions and disunity.

Generally, HMG updates UK CT legislation in response to changes in the terrorism threat. Since 9/11 the heightened threat level has prompted the call for more legislation. Aside from political discourse and political party rivalry, which is expected and natural for a democratic country, this call for further legislation has caused much debate within Parliament and produced a considerable divide in opinion. HMG recognizes the real threat of terrorism but has failed to



reach common ground on the foundational legislation to combat it. Much of this debate emanates from conflicting concepts and definitions of terrorism. An indication of the divide manifests itself in Parliament where delays and in some cases blocks in legislation result. For example, the opposition and some government MPs defeated HMG on the floor of the House of Commons, in the worst defeat for a government since 1978, over the Terrorism Act 2006. The act, which was introduced to Parliament in late 2005, was a response to the 7 July 2005 London bombings. The act sought to create new offences related to terrorism and amend existing ones including the contentious detention issues.

Another example is reflected in HMG structure despite the concept of the comprehensive approach. Although much publicized, this government mechanism for unified action has failed to produce a government counter terrorism lead department or agency that unifies all UK counter terrorism efforts. Although DOP (IT) carries out strategy and planning in Downing Street, more effort, capacity and structure is needed to control and coordinate the substantial UK approach. A unified approach is lacking as government departments work largely independently, to their own agendas and in an uncoordinated way on their counter terrorism activities. An indication of this was the announcement from the UK Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) when he denied Britain was caught up in a “war of terror”, and who later called for “legislative restraint” when he addressed the Legislative Bar Association in UK.<sup>45</sup> In this case, the DPP was at odds with official government policy, and was clearly not supporting the government position. This indicates to a lack of unity of effort in dealing with HMG’s highest priority. If the DPP does not support the policy how can the government prosecute those involved in terrorism in a unified manner? The Home Secretary is currently battling with other HMG ministers, the FCO, Treasury and the heads of a number of police forces in his quest to establish a new UK domestic counter terrorism lead and structure. This tension has been exacerbated by his predecessor supporting the current

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<sup>45</sup> Clare Dyer, “There is no war on terror,” *The Guardian*, Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007, p 3.

approach rather than the formation of a new counter terrorism department as suggested by the current Home secretary.

In addition, the UK lacks a central UK counter terrorism budget. Central budgets, for example the UK defence budget, are used as a control mechanism of governments to ensure unity of effort. A central UK defence budget ensures co-operation and control in all UK defence matters. The budget codifies all priorities for the entire armed services. There is no similar budgetary mechanism to provide these controls to HMG's counter terrorism effort.

This disruption at the UK strategic level has undoubtedly affected unity of the UK approach at the operational and tactical levels. For example, at the tactical level there is still no immediate prospect of achieving radio communication interoperability between government departments.<sup>46</sup> Clearly some government departments do not hold the threat of terrorism, HMG's declared highest priority, in high enough esteem to change their radio systems to match others so they can effectively respond and coordinate actions. This was illustrated after the July 2005 London bombings when, as highlighted in the world's media, there were serious communication failures between the emergency services involved in the incident. The recommendations in a previous report had not been implemented.<sup>47</sup> In the same vein, there is a real divide between the preparedness of some areas of the UK to deal with terrorism.<sup>48</sup> These disconnects in approaches reflect the differences in the perceived threat, concepts and definition of terrorism.

Although it is difficult to prove some causal effects links, there remains a lack of unity of effort in countering terrorism within HMG and the UK at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. This issue is complicated by many other factors that are beyond the scope of this paper

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<sup>46</sup> Frank Gregory and Paul Wilkinson. *Riding Pillion For Tackling Terrorism is a High Risk Policy* (London: Chatham House ISP/NSC Briefing Paper, 05/01 July 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

such as UK politics. Much of the issue, however, can still be attributed to the lack of a common concept and definition of terrorism with detrimental effects.

## **Disruption in unity of effort in the US**

Within the US too there is disruption in the unity of effort in dealing with terrorism. Clearly the GWOT is the USG's highest priority and as such, like the UK, the debate on it has been contentious and far reaching. However, although the debate has gone beyond normal and expected political discourse and shown deep divisions within the US, the reasons for lack of unity within the USG are mainly due to a lack of cooperation and coordination rather than disagreement over concepts and definitions.

The national division was highlighted by the results of the 2006 USG mid term elections which were essentially regarded by the American population as a vote on the GWOT and its vital ground, Iraq. The ruling Republican party's approach to the GWOT was found lacking and the party lost both the Senate and the House of Representatives to the Democratic opposition. The results also displayed a massive divide in political and popular opinion and therefore a disruption in the national unity of effort in combating terrorism. The Secretary of Defense resigned immediately afterwards amid a hail of criticism from both the public and government about his leadership of the DoD and his position regarding DoD participation in the GWOT.

The Iraq Study Group (ISG) then compounded the Republicans' loss when it published the report commissioned by Congress in December 2006.<sup>49</sup> The report stated that “[t]he situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating.”<sup>50</sup> It discussed the lack of unity of effort, and the matter was directly mentioned in the opening paragraphs of the letter from the Co-Chairs when they wrote: “[Terrorism] demands unity of effort by [US] government agencies. And its success depends on

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<sup>49</sup> The Congress. The Iraq Study Group Report, Letter from the Co-Chairs (Washington: December 2006).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

the unity of American people in a time of political polarization.”<sup>51</sup> Other failings have been well documented in a number of other reports and literature such as the UK Butler report<sup>52</sup> and in *State of Denial* written by the acclaimed Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward.<sup>53</sup>

At the US strategic level the debate on the GWOT continues to rage indicating a lack of consensus. Currently the Congress is debating methods to curtail the President’s powers in the GWOT. This debate has credible and arguably growing support. Other indications of the lack of unity at the US strategic level include the debate surrounding the implementation of the PATRIOT Act and similar acts such as the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). In question is the legality, in relation to the Fourth Amendment, of domestic wire tapping.

The disruption within the USG manifests itself mainly at the operational level. Lack of interagency coordination is very much the issue; this has been acknowledged and described regularly in a variety of media such as the Iraq Study Group (ISG) report and Chapter 13 of the 9/11 Commission Report which is solely concerned with improving unity of effort. When serving as US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld repeatedly stated that the US interagency process was not working. Moreover, USG departments and agencies continue to disagree on a single correct approach to terrorism. Why, for example, is the US military Special Operations Command (SOCOM) the lead USG organization in the GWOT when the main effort of the USG counter terrorism activity comprises non military tasks?

At the tactical level too there is a lack of unity of effort in the US efforts to counter terrorism. Much of this stems from lack of cooperation and coordination at the strategic and operational levels and is linked to budgetary and legal considerations. As with the other levels, this disruption is exacerbated by other factors such as organizational culture and the different

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Her Majesty’s Government. The Lord Butler Report: Review of Intelligence on Iraqi WMD (London: 2004).

<sup>53</sup> Bob Woodward. *State of Denial* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).

processes, education, and training that predictably exist between organizations that work together for example, the differences in DoS and DoD planning processes.

Therefore, although there is a lack of unity of effort in the US as a whole due to differences in concepts and suggested ways of dealing with terrorism the reasons for disunity within the USG are different. The reasons mainly stem from interagency coordination and cooperation issues rather than differences in concepts of terrorism. Problems at the strategic level have undoubtedly affected the operational and tactical levels. It should be noted that this disruption has been added to by other factors such as the polity of the US and US societal constituents. Disunity, however, goes beyond mere politics. Although the USG has a clearly defined definition of terrorism, many groups still disagree on the scope and approach.

### **Disruption in the unity of effort between the UK and US**

Although there is disruption in unity of effort in countering terrorism within the UK and within the US for different reasons, the outcome has been the same and has been manifested in disunity which this has been detrimental to their national efforts to tackle terrorism. This disruption has been exacerbated when the UK and US have worked together. In line with the examination of these problems at the national levels, evidence demonstrates the bilateral disruption in unity of effort due to different concepts and definitions of terrorism and under the strategic, operational and tactical headings.

Strategically there is disruption because the US views the centerpiece and main effort of its GWOT as Iraq whereas the UK views its centerpiece as its domestic threat. The US therefore invests the majority of its GWOT effort in Iraq and Afghanistan. An indication of this includes its recent reinforcement of troop levels in these theaters to continue the fight in order to try to win. Because the UK sees the terrorism threat differently, it regards its current primary consideration in countering terrorism as the UK domestic terrorism threat which it regards as a criminal matter. The domestic arena rather than overseas is therefore where the majority of HMG's efforts are

being focused. However, abroad and secondary to the UK domestic threat, the UK perceives its terrorism concern as the terrorist networks in the Pakistan and Afghanistan region because of the close links to its primary domestic threat. As a result, the UK is reinforcing its overseas comprehensive approach effort to support its campaign in that region rather than in Iraq where it is reducing troop numbers. Indications of the added UK effort in the region, broadcast by the world media, include extra diplomatic efforts, increased military force levels, and increased military operational tempo. In addition, unlike the US Commander and his staff in Iraq, the lead for this UK effort, produced through using comprehensive approach mechanisms, is not the military. The FCO lead but the military play a major role where appropriate for example, in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Clearly linked to the strategic level is the operational level at which there are also issues between the UK and US. At the operational level in Afghanistan there have been issues over different approaches. The US and certain NATO coalition countries, such as the Germans, have been at odds with the UK approach to making arbitrary peace deals with the Taliban and the lack of pressure applied by the UK on Pakistan to deal with AQ operating from within it. An example of this was the opposition to the UK arbitrated deal, in early 2007, involving UK forces and elders in Musa Qala, Helmand province. Essentially a withdrawal of UK troops was agreed in return for peace and the withdrawal of Taliban fighters from the town. This truce was subsequently broken, and the Taliban retook control of the town soon after the agreement and withdrawal of British troops. NATO has since had to retake the town in a major military operation.

At the operational and tactical levels within theaters the most common manifestations of the problem are to be found in the use of national caveats and differences between national Rules of Engagement (ROE). The differences between these directly correspond to differences in countries' concepts, definitions and approaches to terrorism. Greater differences in national caveats and ROE therefore lead to greater disruption in coordination and cooperation between

countries. Differences in national caveats, imposed by national governments, can result in the prevention of some nation's troops supporting other nation's troops in certain tasks. Examples include the preclusion of some nation's troops from conducting combat operations or employment as theatre reserve forces. They may only be able to conduct tasks such as conducting Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) work or non combat tasks. For example, it reportedly took two months for HMG politicians to make the decision to authorize the move of UK troop reinforcements (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Blackwatch battlegroup) into a US Marine Corps area of operations in October 2004 in Central Iraq.<sup>54</sup> This lack of swift support to US forces proved disruption in the unity of effort between the UK and US. In the same vein, differences in ROE may preclude some nation's troops from protecting themselves as they could. Therefore operationally imposed restrictions can also cause disunity at the tactical level. For example, if personnel from the UK work with US personnel then the UK personnel have to legally abide by UK ROE which are different than US ROE. This can compromise security of troops, can cause a loss of credibility, among other potential issues, and is therefore a disruption between the UK and US.

There are other examples of disruption in unity of effort at the tactical level. Domestically, the UK and US employ different suspect handling procedures and methods of gaining evidence. In the UK police conduct surveillance, to gain evidence for use in court, more freely whereas in the US the fourth amendment restricts such action. In other words US courts will not accept some evidence from UK based on UK means of collection. These differences create a disruption when dealing with international terrorists. Second, in a similar vein, is rendition which the US conducts, but which the UK deems illegal and does not conduct or support. The implications of this will be looked at below.

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<sup>54</sup> Author's personal experience.

In summary, as seen by reviewing a small portion of unclassified evidence available, there is a lack of unity of effort in combating terrorism at the strategic, operational and tactical levels between the UK and US. The disagreement goes beyond the expected level of friction between coalition and allied countries and is due to differences in concepts, definitions and therefore approaches to dealing with terrorism. The lack of unity is not without implications that ripple throughout the UK and US counter terrorism effort. The next section will examine some of these implications.



## **SECTION 4 – WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE LACK OF UNITY OF EFFORT?**

As demonstrated by reviewing some of the evidence available in the previous section, it is clear that unity of effort is lacking between and within the UK and US due to differences in concepts and definitions of terrorism. What, therefore, are the implications of this problem? There are many, both direct and indirect and they are seen at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. They include wasted resources and opposition to the different means of combating terrorism which have led to a longer struggle and increasing threat from terrorism.

### **Wasted resources**

The differences in approach to terrorism have led to the use of different means to achieve different ends. If they were unified, there would be a requirement for fewer resources, and these savings could be applied where there are other needs. Duplication of effort due to different ends and means is therefore wasteful, inefficient and causes disruption. Neither the UK nor the US have limitless resources. Indeed both are under considerable pressure to maintain their current counter terrorism commitments, and this pressure could be increasing due to the spread of terrorism.

The UK and US reluctance to use the same procedures when dealing with captured terrorists demonstrates wasted resources. Some information gained from militant combatants captured and interrogated by members of US other government agencies can not be used by US allies, including the UK. This is due to the method of the information's extraction, as published and debated in HMG, in order to gain advantage in their operations. Therefore HMG would have to question detained suspects separately. If a common approach, used by the UK, US and their coalition partners were adopted, savings in resources and a greater unity of effort would be achieved. A common venue currently exists in the International Criminal Court (ICC). Savings in

money, effort and manpower spent on these different systems could be more efficiently spent on other areas of the struggle against terrorism to better effect. This would likely have other consequences such as greater international support and therefore greater international resourcing of other areas of the GWOT.

At the operational level in Afghanistan the US and its coalition partners have separate headquarters. Essentially NATO controls operations in the western provinces and the US headquarters controls operations in the eastern provinces. The dual structure allows the US leaders to prosecute an offensive war while the remainder of the NATO force is limited to reconstruction and defensive stability operations in support of the Government of Afghanistan. However, there is at times overlap of the two forces and their tasks. These separate headquarters therefore serve to create a lack of unity of effort. Multiple headquarters create not only wasted resources but also add to friction, due to the need for added cooperation and coordination. This leads to waste, over complication and confusion as opposed to unity. In a complex and demanding environment troops and resources are always needed elsewhere, and fewer headquarters would free these for other vital tasks and increase unity of effort. A single headquarters in Afghanistan could do this and free the other headquarters for tasking elsewhere. If concepts and definitions were the same, then at the operational or theater level means and ends could also be similar aiding unity of effort. An implication could include fewer theater headquarters being employed in Afghanistan.

In addition, at the tactical level there is duplication of effort. For example, a US aircraft flying over Iraq as an 'on call' close air support aircraft will be able to support US ground troops with its weapons systems. However, it will be unlikely to be able to support UK ground troops because the UK MOD deems most weapon systems on the US aircraft a disproportionate use of force and illegal. Therefore, at times two aircraft with different weapon types are required to support troops instead of one. This is wasteful, causes friction and disruption in the unity of

effort. There would therefore be less waste if concepts and definitions of terrorism were the same.<sup>55</sup>

## **Opposition to the different means of combating terrorism**

Differing concepts, definitions and approaches to terrorism bring greater opposition to countering terrorism rather than greater unity that common means and ends achieved would. This causes friction which exacerbates the issue. Therefore growing global opposition to warlike methods of dealing with terrorism, under the GWOT banner, is currently occurring. The current campaigns and the methods of their execution against terrorism, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, are attracting a good deal of protest and opposition not only within the UK and US, but between them and across the globe. This is undoubtedly affecting unity of effort in combating terrorism.

In 2003 many countries, such as France and Germany, refused to join the US led invasion of Iraq. Although they were operating alongside the US in Afghanistan and other theaters, they did not agree with the US concept that Iraq supported AQ and international terrorism. They therefore opposed the US led action because their concepts and definitions of terrorism differed. Due to this, Iraq is perceived to detract the lead nation, the US, from other arguably more important areas such as the base of AQ, the agreed greatest threat, in Afghanistan. Partly in line with this view, HMG is trying to extract its forces from Iraq as swiftly as possible in order that it can reinforce the Afghanistan theater where greater forces are needed.

Since the start of coalition action in Afghanistan, some participants have withdrawn from or are changing their posture in the struggle against terrorism. Many believe the continuing approach being taken in Southern Afghanistan by the US is not the right approach because it is overly kinetic. Members of the British forces took the view that this exacerbates the terrorism

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<sup>55</sup> Author's personal experience.

problem rather than solve it. This is more than a disagreement on tactics; it is rooted in separate definitions of terrorism. Some other nations have taken a more radical stance. The French are withdrawing their forces from some areas of Afghanistan, and they along with the Germans, Spanish and Italians refuse to support other NATO countries' combat operations in the South. This is therefore forcing a number of countries, namely the US, UK, Canada and the Netherlands to shoulder more of the burden in countering terrorism. These actions demonstrate a disruption in unity of effort. This disruption will likely lead to a longer struggle since less resources are available to address the problems in the South.

In line with this and as the situation in Iraq has developed, other implications of lack of unity of effort in countering terrorism have occurred. These include a number of countries leaving the US led Iraq coalition and others who now refuse to participate further in combat operations. An example of this was the dramatic withdrawal of the Spanish contingent from coalition operations in Iraq, on 18 April 2004, a day after the new Spanish President took office and soon after the Madrid bombings. This situation is being made more complicated, in line with wicked problems by the growing issue and perception that terrorism in Iraq is now being regarded as different to sectarian violence and that the two matters need dealing with differently.

Another example of disunity between the UK and US, which has caused a further seam and opposition, has been the global debate and action regarding US handling of terrorists and rendition. The implications of this include growing opposition and more friction which has fed a cycle of further opposition to US actions. The USG believes it is acceptable to carry out rendition of captured individuals associated with terrorism. However, many countries including the UK do not. A further implication, adding to the friction, which results from this is the banning by HMG of USG aircraft associated with rendition into UK airspace. This restricts USG freedom of movement. In a similar vein, members of HMG have publicly condemned the lack of criminal justice and treatment that suspected terrorists are receiving. There is the requirement for different UK and US prison facilities in Afghanistan and Iraq. This provokes, among other issues,

opposition to the varied handling conditions of terrorists. Resources are also duplicated where they need not be if there was a common approach. Other countries such as Germany and Italy have gone further. They are considering legal action against the USG and some of its members as a result of perceived illegal USG actions on their sovereign territory.<sup>56</sup> Therefore implications of disunity include increased friction leading to more scrutiny and opposition to the different means of countering terrorism.

There are clear domestic implications of the lack of unity of effort. These along with other factors such as growing UK and US casualty figures, have led to a growing questioning of the counter terrorism effort as a whole which has fuelled the threat. There has been a disagreement over concepts and actions to deal with terrorism and a growing feeling that domestically, both the UK and the US have approached combating terrorism from the wrong angle. Internally, in the UK and US, there is a growing divide on counter terrorism activity in Iraq and Afghanistan. Indications range domestically in the US from the Supreme Court's ruling that it would hear the case of Osama Bin Laden's former driver, Salim Ahmed Hamdan in 2005, to the torture debate and the Geneva Convention issues championed by Senator McCain and others in November 2005. In the UK there has been vigorous debate, legal wrangling and the resignation of a number of members of HMG over the issue such as Miss Clare Short, the Department for International Development Minister (Dfid). This has likely had the effect of weakening politicians' and the governments' stances on countering terrorism and increasing opposition to the different means of combating terrorism.

## **A longer struggle**

Growing opposition and duplication of resources have contributed to a longer struggle. Due to disunity there is no common template for each coalition or allied counter terrorism event.

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<sup>56</sup> Khlaid el-Masri, a German citizen has alleged that he was abducted in 2003 by the CIA and subject to torture in Afghanistan.

Therefore time is needed to renegotiate rules and missions. It also takes time to smooth over friction caused by opposing views and methods of dealing with prior terrorism events. More resources are also needed due to duplicity of effort and these take time to gather as they may already be committed.

Therefore major military counter terrorism operations continue today long after they were planned to end. Initial coalition successes in the GWOT were impressive particularly in Afghanistan in 2002 and in Iraq in 2003 where initial objectives and regime change were quickly effected. However, a pause and perhaps even regression have followed these mainly military successes. Certainly there are many explanations of this failure. Enemy activity is a simple example. However, one source of the problems that followed early successes was the lack of a clear and achievable strategy supported by sound analysis. This failure was in part due to the lack of a common concept and definition of terrorism; there was no common base upon which to build analysis. Strategies to deal with terrorism were not published until long after 9/11; the US and UK strategies to deal with international terrorism were not published until 2003 and April 2004 respectively. These lacked unity of effort due to their different approaches. This delay lost the coalition the initiative and time which allowed the opposition to strengthen its position and protract the situation further.

Therefore, as a result of the lack of a common concept, definition and approach to countering terrorism, major combat operations continue in these two main military theatres. These operations have not prevented terrorism. AQ still exists and there are regular terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, there have been secondary effects, the UK and US have failed to meet many other goals such as Iraqi and Afghan government department reconstruction and development. Indeed, both theatres are now experiencing very high levels of violence - much higher than previously experienced - and have not matured as expected. In Afghanistan levels of violence rose dramatically in the summer of 2006 rather than the quieter

time that was envisaged for this country which was at the time perceived as succeeding in dealing with terrorism.

One of the secondary results of this delay has been that troop levels have had to be raised in both countries in order to try and deal with the increase in threat rather than be reduced as planned. The increase in threat has occurred due the failure to deal with terrorism initially and the adaptive nature of the opposition. In turn these increases in troop levels have attracted more terrorists and further exacerbated the situation by creating a cycle of violence. In short, the coalition forces in Iraq have become part of the problem by encouraging terrorism through their presence as outlined by senior HMG figures such as the British Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Richard Dannett.<sup>57</sup> As a result currently there is no end to the campaigns which were meant to be short. This is partly as a result of the failure initially to understand or define who the enemy was, agree on a common concept and definition of terrorism and how to approach it in a unified manner. This lack of coordination and cooperation in turn led to a disruption of unity of effort, the partial loss of the initiative to the opposition who have adapted and the situation in which the coalition finds itself today.

A longer struggle has also been manifested in other areas. NATO and its allies, under the ISAF banner, took considerable time to agree and organize for assuming command of all coalition troops and operations in Afghanistan from the US. Until recently, long after coalition action began in late 2002, there were a large number of separate headquarters in Afghanistan because there was little consensus on the approach to operations. The issue remains open and the disruption of common action remains today. This is seen through the use of separate national caveats and differing ROE as discussed above. In Iraq too, there are issues of a similar nature within the coalition. This lack of unified action and effort has prolonged the campaigns.

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<sup>57</sup> Sarah Sands, "Sir Richard Dannatt: A Very Honest General," The Daily Mail, 12 October 2006, 1.

The Prime Minister and President have to a certain extent acknowledged these failings and are acting to reinvigorate the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. The revised 2007 Whitehouse Iraq Strategy, a revised plan for Iraq, is a product of this. There has also been considerable effort by the NATO coalition in Afghanistan to reappraise and reorientate the situations. Between the two countries outside of Iraq and Afghanistan there have been other implications. For example, issues arise if HMG requires evidence from the USG on a suspect residing in the US which it could get if the suspect were operating in the UK but can not get if the suspect is in the US because of fourth amendment issues. Although much of the detail of HMG and USG evidence collection is classified, it should be expected that this disconnect is translated to overseas operations when the two countries are working together abroad. This once again protracts the struggle due to the different ways of combating terrorism.

Within the UK and US, the struggle has also been prolonged. One implication of HMG being defeated in Parliament is that HMG is likely to delay the introduction of more counter terrorism legislation, even if proposing such legislation is appropriate and is supported by and required by its departments, because it risks being defeated again. In addition, the lack of a HMG counter terrorism lead figure supported by a dedicated staff, department or agency has also lengthened the struggle because there is a lack of coordination and cooperation. A supported lead figure would control, coordinate and harmonize and therefore improve the UK counter terrorism unity of effort. The lead would ensure stakeholder 'buy in' and ensure through discourse that agreement on definitions, concepts and approaches to dealing with terrorism are achieved across HMG. In a similar vein the lack of a central UK counter terrorism budget has also lead to a disruption in unity of effort. A well managed central counter terrorism budget supporting a central counter terrorism lead and staff would assist greatly in unity of effort through its use as a control mechanism as seen in other government departments. However, this has not occurred nor will it until government departments and agencies agree on a common definition of terrorism and therefore approach the matter in a unified manner.



## The Increasing Threat

Wasted resources and a longer struggle have also brought about an increasing threat from terrorism and its supporters. Wasted resources create seams in many areas that the opposition can and does take advantage of. This is exacerbated over time. These seams occur at the national, international, strategic, operational and tactical levels. They have emboldened those who believe terrorism falls into the third camp i.e. terror is a justified use of force. They have seen the energizing of terrorism networks which have adapted, expanded and further exploited disunity giving them greater redundancy. This action can be seen in the use of the media to their advantage and was summed up by the Director General of the British Security Service when she stated that “[t]he propaganda machine is sophisticated and Al Qaida itself says that 50% of its war is conducted through the media.” She continues, “Chillingly we see the results here, young teenagers being groomed to be suicide bombers.”<sup>58</sup>

A further indication of the increasing threat is that the US designated state sponsors of terrorism, including members of the ‘axis of evil’, show little evidence of renouncing terrorism. They see no need to. Their leaders’ rhetoric and actions, although difficult to directly link to terrorism, encourage it and continue in the same vein and have arguably grown since 9/11. Iran has been heavily implicated in destabilizing activities in the Middle East. It provides support to Shia militia and allegedly support to attacks in Iraq against coalition members and Sunni Muslims which seems to be growing. Iran also supports Hezbollah activities in the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. Therefore the world is currently perceived to be a more violent, less stable and less predictable place since the GWOT began. Actions and words by these countries have encouraged

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<sup>58</sup> The Director General British Security Service. “The International Terrorist Threat to the UK,” speech 9 November 2006, London.

violence elsewhere such as the 2005 Bali bombings, terrorist acts against tourists in Egypt and extremism in the UK.<sup>59</sup>

This growing threat, caused by disunity of effort, has been fueled by support from other non state extremist actors across the world such as AQ linked networks. Increased activity can be seen not only by the number of foreign fighters entering and undertaking violent acts in Iraq but also by terrorist acts and rhetoric abroad. This has been acknowledged by senior HMG figures such as the Director General of the British Security Service (MI5) when she spoke of the current terrorism threat to the UK saying, “What we see at the extreme end of the spectrum are resilient networks, some directed from al Qaeda, some more loosely inspired by it.”<sup>60</sup> Non governmental organizations such as Amnesty International have also stated that the war on terror has made the world a more dangerous place.<sup>61</sup>

In characterizing the struggle against terrorism as a war, the US has given credibility, status and perhaps legitimacy to the opposition. This has bolstered their cause instead of detracting from it and further increased the threat. This idea in turn has other consequences such as encouraging the belief in the UK that extremist elements have a right to use terrorism as a tactic for achieving their goals. Therefore, perceived legitimacy has given the enemy added motivation and empowerment which will more than likely increase the threat.

Both have manifested themselves in the UK and US through growing support to extremist behavior and organizations which has been seen in a number of large demonstrations. As a result, levels of the domestic terrorism threats in the UK and US have also risen. In the UK this threat has risen dramatically; an assessment by the UK Security Service (MI5) promulgated

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<sup>59</sup> Australian Attorney General. Letter to the Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. (Canberra: 10 August 2006).

<sup>60</sup> The Director General British Security Service. “The International Terrorist Threat to the UK,” speech 9 November 2006, London.

<sup>61</sup> Amnesty International. *Amnesty International Annual Report* (New York: 2003) 2.

regularly by the Director General and her staff confirms this rise.<sup>62</sup> The UK Home Secretary Doctor John Reid reinforced the notion of a rising threat when he announced in December 2006 that the police were aware of at least 30 terrorist plots in the UK. He added that the chance of an attack over the 2006 Christmas period remained 'highly likely'.<sup>63</sup> Thankfully, terrorist violence did not occur, but the threat remained.

In summary, there are many implications of the lack of unity of effort due to differences in concepts, definitions and approaches to terrorism. These implications can be seen not only between the UK and US but also among the coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq and wider global community. They have also been seen to transcend the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The major implications which impact and exacerbate this disunity include wasted resources, which are already under substantial pressure, and opposition to the different means of combating terrorism from a growing element of the world's population. When combined these have led to other implications, through the production of considerable friction, which has created a longer struggle exploited by the opposition leading to an increasing threat from terrorism.

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<sup>62</sup> The Director General British Security Service. "The International Terrorist Threat to the UK," speech 9 November 2006, London.

<sup>63</sup> Dr John Reid. UK Home Office. 11 December 2006.

## **SECTION 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Differences in UK and US concepts, definitions and approaches to countering terrorism have disrupted their unity of effort with detrimental effects. To support this conclusion UK and US concepts and definitions of terrorism were reviewed before evidence was examined demonstrating a lack of unity of effort. Implications of the disunity were then highlighted. The issue is that unity of effort is a long recognized military principle of war by both HMG and USG without which there is unlikely to be success. It is therefore regarded as a necessary part of coalition activity to prevent and defeat the preeminent global terrorism threat. However, it has found to be lacking with detrimental effects.

Terrorism is not only an age old issue which has threatened peace and stability across the globe for centuries, but it is now viewed as the pre eminent global threat by the UK, US and many other nation states. However, the current struggle against it does not appear to be going well particularly in the two main military theaters Afghanistan and Iraq where levels of violence and instability currently remain particularly high. A primary reason for this is the difference in UK and US concepts, definitions of and, therefore, approaches to dealing with terrorism. Essentially, UK and US ends, means and ways regarding terrorism are different.

UK and US concepts of terrorism are based on a number of themes derived from their societal constituents. Some are common to other countries and some are unique. The UK's concept has 3 major unique themes. These are first, the view that terrorism is not a new phenomena but an old one that frequently occurs and will continue to do so. Second, the UK acknowledges that the threat has and is constantly changing and this change takes time to understand, adjust to and deal with; something that is not easy. Third, the UK takes the view that the current terrorist threat is aimed at its own population and the main threat emanates from

within the UK population with substantial outside links. The main implication from these themes is the UK belief that terrorism is a criminal matter that should be dealt with by the law rather than by war. In contrast, the US concept of terrorism has 4 unique themes. First, there is the view by the majority of the US population that terrorism was not a major issue prior to 9/11 due to the perception that there were relatively few domestic terrorism events prior to 9/11. Second, there is the feeling that there is only a small US domestic terrorism threat. Third, there is the understanding that terrorism really began for the US, after it directly affected the US in an unprecedented way on 9/11. Finally and most importantly there is the concept that the US views terrorism as an act of war which should be dealt with by war in order to defeat it and punish those responsible.

National definitions of terrorism and the approaches to dealing with terrorism are partially built around these concepts. Essentially, the UK and US have varying definitions in line. This is in line with much of the remainder of the world community, an indication of which is the lack of consensus in the United Nations. In sum the differences in the definitions between the UK and US do not appear irreconcilable where they exist. In both governments there seem to be either few or multiple definitions and there is some confusion over which one or ones are meant to be used. The major issue appears to be in their interpretation and application. This is closely linked to the national concepts and this leads directly to the lack of unity of effort through different ends, means and ways.

There is sufficient evidence, though some of it remains obscure and difficult to link, to demonstrate that there is a lack of unity of effort not only within the UK and within the US, but also most importantly between the two countries in their struggle against terrorism. This evidence is manifested at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The key is that it is linked causally to the different approaches or ways that the UK and US have of achieving their ends. The US uses war to tackle terrorism and sees itself at war whereas the UK sees terrorism as a criminal matter and approaches it as such. There are many implications which stem from the disunity created by

these different approaches although like the evidence and the wicked nature of the problem they are sometimes obscure and difficult to link directly. The implications are also linked to many other influencing factors and in some cases direct links are difficult to determine. The difficulty of understanding the subject is added to by the necessary secrecy shrouding much of it which can appear to de-link some of the causes and effects.

However, what is clear from the sum of the evidence is that there is disunity and it is detrimental to the UK and US effort to tackle global terrorism together. What is also clear is that for there to be success, in whatever form it takes in this struggle, which looks set to continue and perhaps become more difficult in the future, is that unity of effort will be key to it. Therefore there needs to be changes to achieve better unity. In order to achieve these changes a number of recommendations perhaps need actioning.

## **Recommendations**

As a result of this work and in order to try and achieve greater unity of effort between the UK and US in their struggle against global terrorism, there are a number of recommendations for further work. First, engage in further domestic and trans-Atlantic discourse to achieve a greater understanding and perhaps consensus on a concept of terrorism. Second, try and produce a single globally accepted definition of terrorism. Third, attend to divergent areas and play to existing strengths in the struggle. Fourth, seek to better synchronize approaches to terrorism.

For the US and UK to gain greater unity in the struggle against terrorism, they must achieve a greater understanding of each others perspectives of the issue and try to develop a common understanding and concept of terrorism. In order to do this, there needs to be greater discourse and agreement between HMG and USG. However, before the two countries can reach consensus, each must conduct further domestic discourse that leads to greater national understanding and ideally national consensus, voiced by their governments. The issue will be in ensuring that the matter is properly debated and the parameters of the concept do not become so

wide as to achieve nothing. Once the US and UK reach greater understanding and perhaps consensus, and maybe even before, the concept can be presented to other countries with the goal of achieving universal agreement on the definitions and concepts of terrorism.

Whether or not consensus on a concept is reached, the challenge of trying to achieve a commonly achieved definition should still be undertaken. In doing this, there will not only likely be a better common understanding of the subject but also an improvement in unity of effort in the struggle against terrorism with beneficial effects. The NATO definition perhaps provides a starting point from which to start discussions.

In addition, better unity and therefore effectiveness in the struggle against terrorism can be achieved, by attending to divergent areas and playing to UK and US strengths in the struggle. Common consensus on a concept, definition and approach to terrorism can only add to this and further improve unity of effort. Divergent areas, which the opposition can take advantage of, can be mitigated by greater cooperation and coordination. For example, the UK can assist the US with lessons gained from the UK history of dealing with terrorism, and the US can assist the UK with the technology it has applied in its struggle against terrorism. Internally too divergent areas need to be corrected such as the lack of a UK counter terrorism lead and budget and the US lack of interagency cooperation. Strengths should also be played to thereby increasing the standing of the effort.

In addition, the UK and US can be more unified in their efforts and therefore more successful in their struggle against terrorism through a better synchronized approach to terrorism. If there is agreement then synchronization will be likely to produce better unity of effort. However, if there is not consensus then synchronization will also help produce a better result but to a lesser degree. This better synchronized approach should also be exported to other countries engaged in the struggle, in whatever form, against terrorism. Synchronization needs to be better not just between the governments, but also within them and at all levels of effort from the strategic to the tactical. This can be achieved internally in number of ways such as through

greater interagency coordination and a more comprehensive approach. It can also be achieved externally in a number of ways for example, through improved mechanisms to increase information sharing and use of common operating procedures between the two countries and other coalition partners. Suspects could also be commonly dealt with through apparatus such as the ICC which prosecutes among others Balkans war criminals at The Hague. Success in this area has been achieved in the past and continues today in other areas.

Terrorism as a global threat is here to stay, and defeating terrorism requires a unified global response. A starting point is for governments to develop a coherent internal definition for terrorism. Once internal concepts and definitions are clarified, countries can ensure international agreement. As close allies HMG and USG should begin the discourse in order to establish better unity of effort in the fight against global terrorism.



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