

Murder and Martyrdom

Suicide Terror in the Third Millennium

Julian Madsen

The cataclysmic attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon reawakened the world to the devastating effects of suicide terrorism.¹ Since the attacks on New York and Washington, such apparently random and fanatical acts of violence have swept the globe, from Rabat to Islamabad to Madrid. Today, Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk are synonymous with this deadly form of asymmetric warfare. Australia has not been immune either, with the Jakarta embassy bombing in September 2004. Since September 11 almost two dozen countries have been affected, the number of terrorist attacks doubling in less than a decade.² The number has

1. The most deadly suicide attack until then had been the two bombings against US and French army barracks in Lebanon on 23 October 1983, which killed 241 US marines and 58 French soldiers.
2. These include Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Chechnya, Croatia, Egypt, Estonia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uzbekistan and Yemen. Although to date suicide terrorism has not been employed on the British mainland, I have included

exploded from thirty-one in the 1980s to 104 in the 1990s to 153 in the period 2000 to August 2004. They have also increased in power and occurred in a broader range of locations. Moreover, suicide attacks have 'become the benchmark of commitment', affecting 'the whole world of terrorism because there is an imitative quality'.³

Rather than carrying out 'spectaculars' such as those against the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, terrorists and insurgents are increasingly employing suicide terror as a day-to-day tactic. The 'strategic logic', contends Robert Pape in his pioneering study of suicide terror, is that as a political act, suicide terror aims to coerce modern liberal democracies into making significant territorial concessions.⁴ This rationale appears to be much like that of all terror campaigns, suggesting that the perpetrators and organizers of these campaigns are neither irrational nor crazed.

Contrary to popular perception, suicide terrorism is neither a recent phenomenon nor is it necessarily a consequence of religious fervour. Similarly, the tendency to see suicide terrorism as something unique to Islam or the Middle East is wrong. Historically, suicide terror has been associated with a variety of religious, cultural and political affiliations. So whilst the majority of suicide attacks today are being carried out in the Middle East, this has not always been the case.

The use of suicide terror is the outcome of a 'rational', if grisly, crude cost-benefit analysis. Simply, and horrifically, it is the most efficient manner in which a terrorist organization can inflict maximum damage whilst incurring the least financial cost. In other words, suicide terrorism is brutally efficient, cheap and until recently has been easy to organize. Rather than the act of lone or crazy individuals, we see that suicide terrorism is a corporate effort, from the recruitment and training of the bomber, to intelligence gathering on the target and the dispatch of the bombers to their final destination. Also, it is impossible to divorce the actions of bombers from their environment, and in particular the violence and

the United Kingdom in this list because two Britons were amongst the perpetrators of a suicide bombing claimed by Hamas in Israel. There is also the recent incident in which the Colombian secret police, the DAS, arrested a guerrilla of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia who had allegedly been setting up a cell of suicide bombers. For details of this see <www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/>, accessed 18 March 2004.

3. B. Jenkins, terrorism expert with RAND, <www.nucnews.net/nucnews/2003nn/>, accessed 20 March 2004.
4. R. Pape, 'The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, no. 3, August 2003, pp. 143, 343–61.

helplessness that many have come to feel. The individual *shaheed* (Arabic for martyr) is driven by a combination of hatred, ideology, coercion and fear that is so often born out of disempowerment. Thus, suicide terrorism is a product of both individual and organizational factors. There is no single cause or explanation but rather a mix of circumstances that lead to its use, and this is reflected in the absence of any single suicide bomber profile.

Weapon of the Weak

Suicide attacks are undeniably the weapon of the weak. Whilst psychologically and physically punishing, they are clearly not something that a stronger or even equal party would consider. Why use an individual bomber who may at best kill dozens when you can use tanks or aeroplanes or nuclear weapons to kill thousands? Compared to the destructive capacity of modern weapons, the suicide bomb is a poor substitute. Yet, against a materially superior enemy, especially set in urban settings, it is brutally efficient, and may often be the only effective means of resistance. Supporting this, one militant explains: 'This is the strongest weapon we have against Israel ... we will continue with attacks despite Israel's military offensive and the world's condemnation against them. What do we have to lose?'.⁵

Highlighting this asymmetry, potential suicide bombers empower themselves in the face of powerlessness, achieving a balance of terror that would be otherwise unachievable. 'If our wives and children are not safe from Israeli tanks and rockets, theirs will not be safe from our human bombs', boasted one Palestinian militant.⁶ Similarly, the United States' crushing victory over Ba'athist forces in Iraq has been followed by a violent and sustained suicide terror campaign. The Israeli security/apartheid wall and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon's decision to evacuate the Gaza Strip in 2005 are all attributable to the lethality of the suicide terror campaign enacted by Palestinian militants. Following the fall of Baghdad, the resistance, facing insurmountable odds, withdrew to the urban centres of Falluja, Najaf and Kirkuk just as the Vietcong had withdrawn a generation earlier into the jungles of Vietnam to stage guerilla attacks.

5. M. Tierney, *The Herald*, Glasgow, 3 August 2002.

6. R. Hassan, 'Suicide Attacks: Life as a Weapon', *ISIM Newsletter*, 14 June 2004, pp. 8-9.

The History of Suicide Terror

Human history is replete with acts of martyrdom for political and religious causes. In the 1st century AD, the Zealots and Sicarii, two Jewish sects, attacked the Roman occupiers of Judea and their allies in public places with full knowledge that they would be killed themselves, probably on the spot. The Assassins, a cult active in modern Iran and Syria from the 11th to the 13th centuries killed their targets at close range and with few escape routes, seriously threatening the governments of several states.⁷

In the mid-18th century other groups carried out suicidal attacks against colonial rule in India, Indonesia and the Philippines. Later, towards the end of the 19th century, Russian anarchists attacked members and upholders of the Tsarist regime with explosives, killing themselves together with their victims.

In World War II, Japanese Kamikaze ('Divine Wind') pilots participated in suicide attacks against American ships in the Pacific. In the Battle of Okinawa (April 1945), for example, some 2000 Kamikaze pilots rammed fully fuelled planes into more than 300 ships. Some 5000 Americans were killed, alongside the 2000 Kamikaze, in the most costly naval battle in American history. Researchers of the Kamikaze point out that these individuals were not suicidal in the sense of being psychologically driven to harm themselves, but rather viewed self-sacrifice as the ultimate tool against a powerful enemy.

With the development of sophisticated explosives in the 20th century, the allure of suicide terrorism appeared to have waned. Yet, as counter-terrorism methods began to improve, terrorist methods began to evolve as well. By the end of the 1980s, suicide bombers had struck in Lebanon and Sri Lanka, and by the 1990s this included Israel, Turkey, Kenya, Tanzania and Croatia.

Hizbullah is believed to have been behind the devastating attacks against US and French forces in Lebanon in October 1983, which caused 300 deaths. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) seem to have emulated Hizbullah's tactics with even more brutality. The *New York Times* reported that up until 2002, LTTE had 'dispatched more suicide bombers than anyone in the world', including Hamas, with more than 220 suicide bombings attributed

7. D. Rapport, 'Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions', *American Political Science Review*, April 1984, p. 664.

to the organization.⁸ LTTE has directed its attacks primarily against high-ranking Sri Lankan and Indian political and military personnel. It is the only organization that has succeeded in killing two heads of state, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 and Sri Lankan President Prendesa in 1993.

In Turkey, the now defunct Marxist-Nationalist Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) carried out a total of fourteen suicide attacks against a range of targets. Its campaign started in June 1996 at a time when the organization was facing heavy military setbacks in the south-east of the country. Suicide attacks were seen as one way to tilt the playing field in its favour.

Since 2000, Chechens have carried out two dozen attacks, mainly against military installations and government compounds. A significant characteristic of this campaign has been the prevalence of women in the bombers' ranks. Here, the so-called Black Widows, whose family members have been killed by Russian forces, have carried out 70 per cent of all suicide attacks. Most recently, two Chechen women brought down two commercial airlines, killing eighty-nine people, an event suggesting Russia's own September 11.

In Iraq, a recent development has been the grizzly images of attacks on American and British troops filmed by their attackers. Indeed, Iraq is witnessing the most prolific suicide terror campaign in the modern era, sponsored by an amalgam of Iraqi nationalist and local and international jihadi groups.

Tactical Advantages of Suicide Terrorism

Suicide terrorism, or 'martyrdom operations' as it is referred to by Arab adherents, offers many tactical advantages over conventional terrorist methods. The first is heavy casualties. Suicide attacks result in many casualties and cause extensive damage. From 1980 to 2001, suicide attacks worldwide reportedly represented only 3 per cent of all terrorist attacks but accounted for 48 per cent of the total deaths due to terrorism.⁹ In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, attacks carried out between 2000 and 2002 caused about 44 per cent of all Israeli casualties, despite only representing 1 per cent of the total number of attacks during that period.¹⁰ Former Hamas leader

8. C. W. Dugger, 'After Ferocious Fighting, Sri Lanka Struggles with Peace', *The New York Times*, 8 April 2002.

9. Pape, p. 143.

Abd al-Aziz Rantisi of Hamas described the attacks as the most important 'strategic weapon' of the Palestinian resistance.¹¹

The second tactical advantage is media coverage. The perpetrating organization is able to capitalize on the widespread media coverage that attacks almost always attract. The fate of the bomber or martyr is part of the story, and the large number of victims, again ensures public attention. Since the gruesome effect of the violence is intended to be impressed upon an audience, the shocking nature of the attack is part of the calculation. The participation of women is even more shocking, having the added effect of tending to neutralize the brutality of the action, with the woman more likely to be cast as victim whose grievances must be addressed. Media coverage conveys an image of extreme discipline, dedication and skill on the part of the terrorists carrying out such audacious acts.¹² Conversely, this instils a feeling of fear and helplessness amongst the target population in the face of an apparently invisible and unstoppable enemy.

The third advantage is 'optimal efficiency'. From an operational perspective, suicide terrorism is appealing because the terrorist organization does not have to plan an escape route, which is often the most complicated part of an attack. At the same time the tactic is a guarantee that the attack will be carried out at the most appropriate time and place with regard to the terrorists' objectives. There is great risk of the group being exposed if an individual terrorist is apprehended. Following the Madrid atrocity, when Spanish police raided an apartment block to detain others in connection with the attacks, the four terrorists inside the building blew themselves up rather than be captured and be forced to assist police in their enquiries. Similarly, Tamil Tigers have traditionally carried a cyanide pill which they can swallow in the event of capture.

Another advantage, as mentioned already, is 'cost-effectiveness'. Suicide attacks are cheap, as the ingredients are widely available. At the same time they are more likely to inflict higher casualties than conventional methods. The average cost of a Hamas attack inside Israel is estimated to be \$150. In Bali, over two hundred tourists died at the hands of two bombers, whilst on September 11

10. A. Moghadam, 'Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 26, 2003, pp. 65-92.

11. Abd al-Aziz Rantisi on *Al Jazeera This Mornin'*, Al Jazeera, Doha, 20 May 2002.

12. M. Taarnby, *Profiling Islamic Suicide Terrorists*, Centre for Cultural Research, University of Aarhus, 27 November 2000, p. 8.

nearly three thousand people died at the hands of just nineteen hijackers. On top of that, an estimated \$US100 billion was wiped from US GDP, a feat unlikely to have been achieved by other means.¹³

Finally, suicide terror has benefits to the terrorist in terms of legitimacy and recruitment. The suicide death of a member may confer a sense of legitimacy on a terrorist organization. The message is one of courage, of there being 'no going back'. The group may glorify the act, promoting a culture of martyrdom that may include the production of posters, songs and flyers that seek to inspire others to join the organization. Indeed, even before the bomber has struck, he or she is in many ways a living martyr. The story of Murad is fairly typical. Before undertaking a martyrdom operation he wrote letters to his family and friends and was then photographed in heroic poses. In a video recording he announced why he had become a martyr. Merari explains: 'There is no return for him without really losing any self-respect, the respect of others, but also because his mental state is already focused on killing himself, on being dead'.¹⁴

This process of conditioning can be found in other groups. Typically, members of LTTE have their last meal with their leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. The Tamil Tigers have gone so far as to actually film some of the suicide attacks for recruitment and motivation purposes.¹⁵ Their pervasive use of martyrdom operations has shown that suicide terrorism is not a purely religious phenomenon and 'that under certain extreme political and psychological circumstances, secular volunteers are fully capable of martyrdom'.¹⁶

Amongst Palestinian children, there has been an increased tendency to idolize suicide bombers. A recent report stated that 25 per cent of Palestinian boys between the ages of twelve and seventeen wanted to become suicide bombers.¹⁷ Dr Eyad el Serraj, a psychiatrist in the Gaza Strip, claims that in the child's mind the life of a martyr is one of power and glory. 'Palestinian society glorifies the martyr. They are elevated to the levels of saints and

13. *The Age*, 4 June 2004.

14. 'Mind of the Suicide Bomber', <www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/05/23/60minutes/>, accessed 15 June 2004.

15. A. Waldman, 'Masters of Suicide Bombing: Tamil Guerrillas of Sri Lanka', *The New York Times*, 14 January 2003, A1.

16. E. Sprinzak, 'Rational Fanatics', *Foreign Policy*, no. 120. September–October 2000, p. 69.

17. A. Shahda, *Al Wasat*, no. 635, 29 March 2004, p. 4.

even prophets. Out of the hopelessness and the inhuman environment they live in, there is the promise that they will have a better life in heaven.¹⁸

Retaliation following a suicide bombing also benefits the terrorist organization as it is likely to increase people's sense of victimization, as well as encourage people to accept the organization's doctrines and policies more readily. This radicalization of opinion increases both 'supply and demand' for martyrdom operations. In many cases, Hamas and Islamic Jihad have actually recruited future suicide bombers at the charged processions of the funerals and public commemorations of martyrs.

Environmental Factors: Chechnya and Palestine

Understanding the rationale of the individual *shaheed* is as important as highlighting the organized nature of suicide terrorism and why it is chosen as a tactic. However, this is complicated given that the individual's motives and methods are as multifarious as their backgrounds: a desire for revenge, depression, a sense of sacrifice, and political activism, being just some of the potential triggers. Certainly, the conditions of life of the bombers as much as ideological or religious factors have to be examined.

The appalling conditions in Chechnya and the Occupied Territories continue to provide fertile recruiting grounds for terrorist organizations. Whilst the abysmal humanitarian and economic situations may not in themselves explain the unprecedented rise of suicide bombing, rampant hopelessness, misery and oppression associated with them does inculcate a culture of violence and martyrdom (especially against those perceived to have caused it). Despite this, many commentators divorce the actions of the *shaheed* from their environment, focusing instead on supposed psychological disorders or manipulation by others.¹⁹

The decade-old conflict in Chechnya has resulted in sustained and endemic violence, human rights abuses, criminality and poverty, with the capital, Grozny, razed. Amnesty International warns: 'The current level of destruction suggests that Grozny has been the target of indiscriminate, disproportionate bombardment

18. I. Prusher. 'As Life Looks Bleaker, Suicide Bombers get Younger', *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 March 2004.

19. K. Toolis. 'Dead Woman Walking', *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, 13-14 November 2004, pp. 26-33, <www.ict.org.il/articles/>.

by the Russian forces'.²⁰ The economic and sanitation infrastructures of the main towns, lifelines of the entire country, have been destroyed. The human toll is horrendous, with up to 200 000 dead, including 35 000 children.²¹

Local authorities have pointed to the existence of some forty-nine mass burial sites, many in close proximity to Russian military installations. Documents from the provisional Kremlin-backed Chechen authority report an average of 109 extra-judicial executions each month. In a disturbing new trend, Russian forces are blowing up the bodies of executed Chechens to eradicate signs of torture. Human Rights Watch has documented several cases, while Memorial, a Russian non-governmental human rights organization with offices in Chechnya, documented twenty of these cases in January and February 2003 alone.²²

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says that approximately 350 000 Chechens have been displaced, with many driven from their homes. Today, nearly half of Chechnya's pre-war population is either dead or displaced.²³ Those who remain are often subject to unspeakable atrocities. Human rights monitors report that more than 2750 Chechen non-combatants have disappeared in Russian *zatchitska* or 'cleansing' operations since the start of the war.

In the Occupied Territories, of the three million Palestinians living there, an estimated 70 per cent live below the poverty line of two dollars a day. USAID reports that more than 30 per cent of Palestinians depend upon food handouts from NGOs and 50 per cent of all Palestinians require external food assistance to help meet their minimum daily calorie intake.²⁴ Since September 2000, almost 3500 Palestinians have been killed (including over 600 children) and almost 30 000 maimed. Add to that the daily humiliation of the checkpoints, army incursions, assassination of Palestinian leaders, house demolitions, widespread destruction of civil infrastructure, blockaded towns and the reviled 'security wall' that has gobbled up large sections of Palestinian land, and the sense of rage is palpable. Support for suicide bombings is at a record high of 59 per cent.²⁵

20. See <www.amnesty.org/russia/>, accessed 15 September 2004.

21. See <www.jamestown.org/>, accessed 1 December 2004.

22. Human Rights Watch interview with Aleksandr Cherkassov, researcher for Memorial, Moscow, 2 April 2003.

23. See <www.peaceinchechnya.org/>, accessed 12 October 2004.

24. Report by US Agency for International Development, World Bank, August 2002.

25. See <www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/>, accessed 20 November 2004.

Israel's security fence, condemned by the International Court of Justice, is three times as long and twice as high as the Berlin Wall. In addition, the humiliation and harassment prevalent at the military checkpoints that divide Palestinian cities (over 160) often means that a fifteen-minute journey can become a three-hour one. The most recent incident of degradation involved an Israeli soldier forcing a young Palestinian man to play a 'sad' song on his violin for his troupe at the Beit Iba checkpoint near Nablus, mimicking the behaviour of Nazi concentration guards sixty years earlier.²⁶

Then there are the settlements built illegally by Israel on land confiscated from Palestinians within the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. These settlements are joined to each other and to Israel through 'by-pass' roads that are for the exclusive use of Israelis, built on privately owned Palestinian land confiscated by the Israeli government. Making matters worse, at least 28 000 Palestinians have been made homeless by Israel's punitive demolitions in what leading Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem says constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian law, and therefore a war crime.²⁷

Hopelessness, Rage and Revenge

With large numbers of men and boys detained by Russian forces, the Chechen conflict has become synonymous with female suicide bombers. Women have not been spared though, with an estimated three-quarters of women having lost relatives in the war. Eminent war correspondent Anna Politkovskaya insists that Chechen women need no motivation for becoming human bombs apart from their own grief and despair. She reports that many grief-stricken Chechen women are virtually pre-assembled suicide attack units, completely ready for the role of suicide bomber.²⁸ Following the Moscow siege, surviving hostages recounted that their female captors spoke of ruined lives and personal agony. Following the death of her brother and husband, one of the hostage-takers allegedly confided to her captive: 'I have nothing to lose, I have nobody left'.

Eyad Sarraj, director of the Gaza Community Health program, notes the power of loss of dignity and humiliation and the bomber's desire to restore honour to themselves and the

26. See <www.haaretz.com/hasen/>, accessed 1 December 2004.

27. See <www.btselem.org/>, accessed 1 November 2004.

28. A. Politkovskaya, 'Children of the War; the Intifada Has Come to Chechnya', *Newsweek*, 24 May 2004.

community. Those who are committing suicide bombings in this intifada are the children of the first intifada. As they grew up, 'their own identity merged with the national identity of humiliation and defeat, and they are avenging that defeat at both personal and national levels'.²⁹ An Islamic Jihad operative expounded this when he stated that the 'main objective is to satisfy God's will by undertaking Jihad'. The other was to regain Palestinians' 'stolen land and dignity'.³⁰

Other personal reasons for becoming a suicide bomber include being remembered as a hero and a martyr to the cause; impressing an audience and being eulogized in posters, songs and on the street. Thus there are social, cultural, religious and material rewards present in such a context. Sometimes this includes spiritual rewards in the afterlife, vast celebrity or social recognition for the bomber and their family.

Amongst Palestinian and Tamil communities, financial rewards for the individual and groups carrying out suicide attacks can be significant. A Saudi telethon reportedly raised more than \$100 million for the *al-Quds* (Jerusalem) intifada following a string of suicide attacks against the Israeli occupation. Payments and other benefits have also been given to individual families of dead Palestinian martyrs. Prior to the collapse of the Iraqi regime, Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist party paid between \$10,000 and \$25,000 to martyrs in the Occupied Territories, underscoring the institutionalization of suicide bombing.³¹ Similarly, the Tamil Tigers receive substantial funds from the 800 000 Tamils living abroad in Australia, Canada and Europe who have sent them as much as \$150 million annually.³² In Chechnya, whilst most female bombers volunteer, others are taken from their families for a fee of around \$1,500. Individuals can be paid \$10,000 to \$20,000 for each female suicide bomber recruited. Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely that people volunteer for martyrdom for pecuniary reasons alone.

Dead (Wo)men Walking

Increasingly, we have seen women being used for suicide missions. Nationalist groups such as the LTTE, the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party and the Kurdish PKK have employed women in suicide attacks. However, it was not until 2002 that the Islamic

29. 'Suicide Bombings: Dignity, Despair and the Need for Hope', interview with Eyad el Sarraj, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, no. 4, Summer 2002, p. 71.

30. C. Barr, 'A Suicide Bomber's World', *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 August 2001.

31. 'Palestinian Gets Saddam Funds', *BBC News*, 13 March 2003.

32. B. Hoffman, 'The Logic of Suicide Terrorism', *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2003, p. 61.

group Hamas first used a woman, a pragmatic decision in light of the effectiveness of Israeli security forces identifying male suicide bombers. The popularity of using women can be explained in terms of 'the gentle sex' attracting less suspicion than men. Similarly, there is reluctance in many societies to physically search women. In many cases women can hide explosives, appearing to be pregnant.

Women have participated in about 30 to 40 per cent of LTTE's overall suicide activities, with a female suicide bomber killing Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. In 1999 another bomber from LTTE's suicide brigade, the Black Tigers, blew herself up at an election rally wounding Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga and killing twenty-three others. About two-thirds of PKK attacks, eleven of fourteen, have been undertaken by women.³³

Female suicide bombers dominate the Russian Chechen conflict. Sixty-eight per cent of identified Chechen suicide bombers have been female. Chechen Black Widows were participants in the Moscow Theatre siege and the Beslan tragedy. This is in contrast to Palestine, where females make up only a very small minority (around 5 per cent) of attackers.

Some Israeli commentators have suggested that Palestinian women martyrs have been misfits, manipulated by men into carrying out attacks to repent for some alleged impropriety. Similarly, Russian critics claim that Chechen women have been 'sold' to terrorist organizations, drugged, and/or raped and blackmailed into carrying out these acts. Whilst there may have been some instances of this, there is no evidence to suggest it is widespread. Similarly, while some disturbed individuals do seem to have taken on the role of suicide bomber, their cases are exceptional, according to Eyad el Sarraj. One example was Raiyshi, a mother of two, who blew herself up in Gaza, who had been ostracized by her family and was depressed. However, as Scott Atran, an anthropologist of the University of Michigan has demonstrated, 'there is no psychological profile whatsoever for suicide terrorists'.³⁴

More recently, the United States has issued several security alerts fearing al Qaeda may be recruiting female suicide bombers to target the US mainland.³⁵ This reflects al Qaeda's efforts to evade

33. D. Ergil, 'Suicide Terrorism in Turkey: the Workers Party of Kurdistan', *Countering Suicide Terrorism*, International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya in co-operation with Anti-Defamation League, 2001.

34. See <www.interesting-people.org/archives/>, accessed 24 September 2004.

35. CBS News, 1 April 2004.

the prying eyes of intelligence agencies and comes after a Saudi-owned newspaper published an email from a woman claiming to be leader of the women mujahedeen of al-Qaeda. She described the women's role: 'besides martyr operations, our mission is to provide logistical support to the mujahedeen and intelligence on the hypocrites wanted by the mujahedeen'.

Conclusion

Terror groups will continue to carry out suicide attacks in the face of enemies that have vastly superior power. The challenge is to remove the conditions of conflict that foster such acts, as suicide terrorism is undeniably a political act. Peace talks between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tigers have seen the cessation of such attacks. However, events in the Middle East remain deeply worrying, with the region an arc of instability. In the absence of a settlement in either Iraq or Israel/Palestine, such violence is likely to continue unabated. In Palestine, there are signs that a two-state solution will remain an irrevocable demand. The hopeless conflict in Chechnya wears on with no end in sight. In Iraq, despite the recent national election, large swathes of land remain controlled by insurgents and a sense of Sunni disenfranchisement is at an all time high. Unless there is substantial and sustained engagement by the United States to deliver peace and justice, the blood-letting associated with these conflicts will continue to supply groups such as al-Qaeda with volunteers prepared for martyrdom.

A final thought. Increasingly, there is the prospect of children becoming involved in suicide terrorism on a global scale. Africa's child soldiers from Angola to Liberia gained prominence in the 1980s. Human Rights Watch claims at least ten children have carried out suicide attacks in Israel and the Occupied Territories since the eruption of the al Aqsa intifada. Most of the bombers have been sixteen and seventeen, and have come from secular and Islamist organizations alike. The most recent attack, carried out by sixteen-year-old Amer al-Fahr, killed three Israelis in November 2004, and followed the arrest of three teenage girls Morocco in a year earlier for allegedly planning a suicide attack.³⁶ The future may be grim indeed.

36. See <www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/>, accessed 8 November 2004.

Call for Conference Papers and Participation

**Consequences of the Changing
World Economy for Class
Relations, Ideology, and Culture**

Hanoi, Vietnam, 9–11 January 2006

Sponsored by the Ho Chi Minh National
Political Academy and the U.S. journal
NST: Nature, Society, and Thought

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This international conference will be embedded in a study tour 5–19 January 2006. The tour will offer unusual opportunities for encountering current Vietnamese life in many aspects and for learning about the socialist transformation of economic, political, and cultural conditions in several regions of Vietnam. Participants may take the study tour without attending the conference (visits, talks, and excursions will be planned for conference days).

Estimated cost per participant including airfare from U.S. cities is \$3200. Space is limited—\$200 refundable deposit will secure your place.

Conference attendees may submit a paper for presentation or take part in the discussions without giving a paper. Submissions: While longer papers will be considered for future publication, a presentation version not exceeding 1800 words should be sent by e-mail to marqu002@tc.umn.edu before 1 September 2005. Acceptance notifications will be sent as early as possible—no later than 1 October 2005.

Send deposit (payable to NST) or inquiries to:

NST, Univ. of Minnesota, 116 Church Street SE,
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0112, USA

612-922-7993; marqu002@tc.umn.edu

See <http://umn.edu/home/marqu002> for updates