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The Role of the Media in the Propagation of the Terrorist Agenda

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ABSTRACT

The thesis of this paper is that jihadists are using terror as a propaganda weapon to create a high level of fear among the public around the world, a level above the actual threat. We believe the media and national leaders enhance the effectiveness of the jihadists' propaganda in the ways they present terror attacks. Previous research indicates that horrific events, whether created by humans or the result of nature, leave a lasting psychological impact on the victims. We show a psychological link by victims of the Mumbai attack seven years ago and the Paris attacks in November of 2015. We argue that the psychological impact may be caused when the cultural signifiers of terror result in a meaning abyss because most people do not have signifieds that readily link to brutal terrorists' signifiers. What Derrida described as the abyss occurs when acts of brutality create panic and chaos because most people do not know assign signifieds-- i.e., meanings-- to the brutality. Kenneth Burke critiqued Mein Kampf by explaining how Adolph Hitler had used god terms and evil terms to create ideological agreement with Hitler's concept that the Aryan race was being undermined by a Jewish conspiracy. We examine how the news media coverage of nine terrorist attacks invoked god terms and evil terms in their description of the terror created by the jihadists. Further, we looked for chaos terms, which are terms that describe such inhumane acts of terror that people do not have existing signifieds to translate those acts into meaning. Not only did we find that chaos terms in the news coverage, as well as the god terms and evil terms, but we also found chaos terms used by world leaders. We draw the conclusion that both the media and world leaders contribute to the propaganda impact of jihadists attacks by using chaos terms.

The Role of the Media in the Propagation of the Terrorist Agenda

The name, Attila the Hun, was synonymous with terror after he defeated a Roman army in 378 (Mark, 2014).¹ Genghis Khan and his hordes were the barbarians that conquered China by 1279.² No doubt, just the names of these two men made brave men quake and women fear for their children. Historian Joshua J. Mark could have been writing about both men in his reference to Attila: "This name was synonymous with terror among his enemies and the general populace of the territories that his armies swept through." In short, the propaganda value of creating terror in the minds of the enemy is a long and established method of warfare. In this paper, we argue that terrorist organizations in the 21st Century use terror as a propaganda weapon to create a sense of terror out of proportion to the reality of the threat.

Our contribution to this discussion is to conduct a Burkean analysis of media coverage in the immediate aftermath of nine major terrorist attacks. We expand on Kenneth Burke's analysis of propaganda from the invocation of god terms and devil terms. We evaluate news media coverage of terrorism events, including statements by world leaders, in terms of how they utilized god terms and devil terms, and our addition: chaos terms. Our work indicates that the news media contributes to the terror created by terrorist attacks by using words that connote evil and chaos. Our work suggests that changes in how the media discusses terrorism could impact public perception of how chaotic and how terrifying the attacks actually are.

We begin by explaining what we perceive of as a change in the nature of terrorism, beginning with an attack on Mumbai. We review the nature of propaganda and its historical goals and objectives. This sets up the argument that terrorist organizations are using terror in new ways to achieve different propaganda effects than those usually associated with state generated propaganda. We proceed with our discussion of how the electronic media covered those terrorists' attacks, enhancing the propaganda value to the jihadists.

Terrorism

For Americans, the potential threat of terrorism became a reality on September 11, 2001 when Al Qaeda flew passenger aircraft into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon

with a third crashing in *Pennsylvania*. However, terrorism was much more a reality in other places in the world. Just a few examples demonstrate the point. The Palestine Liberation Organization disrupted the Munich Olympics (1972) by attacking the Israeli team. Basque terrorists (ETA) attacked Spain from 1968 until 2010. The Irish Republican Army set off bombs in London for 25 years. The Red Brigades operated in Italy beginning in 1970; the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) continue a 30-year civil war in Turkey; the Tamils planted car bombs in the cities of Sri Lanka; the Red Army carried out assassinations in West Germany.

Some generalities are common among these terror organizations. The terrorists usually made their attacks on soft, symbolic targets, i.e., those not heavily secured or protected, but of propaganda value. The terrorists sought to escape with their lives. The terrorists killed some civilians, but often took hostages. These groups had a political agenda against a ruling power. The Tamils, PKK, IRA, ETA, and PLO sought a seat at a conference table to achieve their political goals. All of these groups wanted an independent homeland for their culture and people. The Red Army and Red Brigades attacked centers and individuals of the capitalistic power structure. Al Qaeda's attack on September 11 differed a bit from this pattern because all of the attackers committed suicide. Osama bin Laden, who planned the attack, called the U.S. "the head of the snake" that was keeping dictatorships in power in the Islamic World (Stern, 2003, 269). The death toll was important, but the attack on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Washington, D.C. proved that America and its symbols of capitalism and military power were vulnerable.

A different style of terrorism occurred in November, 2008. Jihadists attacked the Indian city of Mumbai, a city of 18 million people. Indian investigators would ultimately connect the terrorists to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a Pakistani Islamic terrorist organization with ties to bin Laden. Ten terrorists hit twelve locations in the city over a four-day period. The toll was 164 people killed and 308 wounded. Nine members of the organization were killed and one was captured. This attack was somewhat different from the attacks previously discussed. The attacks on a Jewish center and a hotel preferred by Westerners had some symbolic value, as did the Western and police victims, but the goal was to kill innocent people seen as collective enemies of the LeT. Other things that stood out were the

number of people killed, the fact that the attack lasted four days, and that multiple locations came under attack. This was a suicide attack with the goal of creating terror in Mumbai and India.

Mumbai was followed with other terrorists' attacks that seemed to be more motivated by their propaganda value than their political, military, or economic value. Boko Haram kidnapped 200 girls from a high school in Nigeria (April 14, 2014). Isis broadcasts the beheading of a journalist (August 19, 2014) and then Christian oil workers (February 16, 2015). A lone gunman killed a soldier and then attacked the Canadian Parliament (October 22, 2014). A high school in Pakistan was attacked by gunmen, killing 132 children (December 16, 2014). Gunmen killed members of the Charlie Hebdo satirical staff in Paris (January 7, 2015). Americans on a French train stopped a jihadist gunman, who could have killed passengers until he ran out of ammunition (August 21, 2015). We have not attempted to create a complete list of terrorists attacks, but each of these attacks were on soft targets where the nature of the attack sought to kill people for the shock value of the propaganda. Most of the attackers committed suicide or died in gun battles.

Propaganda

As the examples of Attila the Hun and Genghis Khan demonstrate, barbarism as a weapon of war is historical. In the 20th Century, the Nazis and the Gestapo were the very definitions of evil. The Empire of Japan was just below its Axis ally in the level of evil assigned by England, the U.S., and their allies. Japanese soldiers were presented as animals out to rape and kill any woman that they captured.³ Fear was a powerful psychological weapon for the enemies of the Nazis and imperial Japan. Kenneth Burke (1941) in his analysis of *Mein Kampf* sought to explain the persuasive methods used by its author, Adolf Hitler. Burke points out that Hitler sought to gain adherents to his cause by creating ideological agreement with his positions. Burke demonstrated how Hitler assigned god terms to the Aryan race and the Aryan culture. In doing so, Hitler created the ideological argument that Aryans were the superior race. Hitler assigned devil terms to the Jews, continued Burke. These terms painted a Jewish conspiracy to create world domination through destruction of the Aryan race and culture. Ideologically, Hitler and the Aryans were the good guys seeking to defend themselves against the bad Jewish conspiracy.

Ultimately, the Nazis used this ideology to morally justify the holocaust. Nazi propaganda during World War II added more enemies to the lists, but they continued to advocate up to the end of the war that the British and the Americans should join their cause against the Jews, and especially the barbaric communists of the Soviet Union.⁴ Hitler used propaganda and acts of unspeakable cruelty because he sought adherents to his cause to destroy evil.

These propaganda techniques of invoking an ideology of good versus evil were adopted by the Soviet Union and the United States as the end of World War II led to a cold war of propaganda attacks. The United States presented the Soviet Union as godless, anti-Christian, enemies of freedom, democracy, and capitalism. To the Soviet Union, the communists sought to protect the world from the exploitations of European and American colonizers and economic exploiters (Parry-Giles, 2000,118). While each side was very willing to assign unspeakable acts of evil to the other, both the Soviets and the Western powers presented themselves as the good in the world in hopes that the home fronts would support a high level of military spending and the unaligned people in the world would chose their sides. Periodically, the Soviet leaders and American presidents would negotiate outstanding issues (Nuclear weapons, 1961; Anti-ballistic missiles, 1972; Incidents at Sea, 1972; Prevention of Nuclear War, 1973; Underground nuclear testing, 1974; Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, 1987; Chemical Weapons, 1990; Strategy Arms Reduce, 1991 and 1993), which kept the conflict a cold war.

The beheadings, kidnappings, and body counts of Isis and other Islamic jihadists do not use these attacks to bring Christians or Americans or the French to the conference table for negotiations. They do not seek support from the populations they attack. They seek to terrorize their enemies into a state of mind of fear.

Part of evil is its secret penetration into the psyche of the individual and of the society, argues Estes (2003), especially the "innocent" and people who are unprepared (20). Evil occurs when one set of people withdraw the privilege of humanity from another group. "[W]hen mutual or unilateral humanity is lost or removed by the machinations of Evil, each group begins drawing literal, soulless pictures of the other," writes Estes (41). Trying to bring into harmony Western culture and Islamic culture is very difficult because the two world views are in conflict with each other, explains Hecker (2003). It is like living

in two versions of reality at the same time (128). Competing realities evolves into a basis for conflict. "...the psychological threat posed by competing worldviews and ideologies is necessary to generate sufficient amounts of rage and hatred to motivate ordinary citizens to put their lives on the line to do battle with an enemy," argues Pyszczynski, Solomon, and Greenberg (2010, 33) The existence of the threat from external enemies creates a sense of fear among those belonging to the out group, they explain. Stern (2003) believes terrorism is an outgrowth of a conflict of ideas and of economic power because some Islamic men believe that the world power structures are aligned against Islamic men. "Unless we understand the appeal of participating in extremist groups and the seduction of finding one's identity in oppositions to Other, we will not get far in our attempts to stop terrorism," Stern argues (283). The anger represented by groups like ISIS becomes fear and anger by people in Western countries when Westerners become victims of ISIS, write Stern and Berger (2015). The beheading of journalist James Foley by ISIS generated such fear in the West. "For many people around the world, the methodical, sadistic cruelty of the video was shocking and unbearable, provoking an entirely human desire to avenge Foley's death using any means necessary" (2). The anger in the West made the acts of terrorism effective propaganda, Stern and Berger explain. "ISIS is using beheadings as a form of marketing, manipulation, and recruitment, determined to bring the public display of savagery into our lives, trying to instill in us a state of terror." (3).

The Psychology of Terror

Applying the theories of linguists Ferdinand Sussure (Culler, 1986) and Jacques Derrida (1997) explain how wide spread terror could be created in a population. Sussure defined meaning as a product of the sign. The sign contains two elements: the signifier and the signified. Signifiers are the cultural artifact, such as languages, words, or symbols recognized by members of the culture. Signifieds are the memory invoked by the cultural signifier based on individual past experiences with the signifier. In addition, context plays a role in how any person applies signifieds in order to create meaning from a signifier in a given cultural context.

Applying these concepts to Cold War propaganda, one of the goals of propaganda was to teach individuals in the culture new signifiers or to invoke existing signifiers, but

teach members of the culture new or additional signifieds that are assigned to the signifiers by the producers of the message. The producers of propaganda seek to present signifiers in a context where they will invoke predictable memories and understandings among the targets of the propaganda for the purposes of gaining compliance through shared meaning between the creators and the receivers.

However, Derrida (1997, 163) notes that there are times when the relationship between the signifier and the signified breakdown. He calls this breakdown the abyss, which is the place where meaning fails when receivers do not have signifieds available to interpret signifiers. The abyss occurs, for example, when two people speak different languages to each other and neither is familiar with the other's language. The abyss can occur when a person encounters a new signifier without culture or context clues available to invoke existing signifieds; the abyss is a place of confusion, even chaos, fear and panic. The abyss is a perfect place for the propaganda of terror to reside.

Terrorists in the 21st Century are creating a type of propaganda that is so horrific that the actions are outside the scope of pre-existing signifiers known among the targeted audiences. The result is a sense of chaos and disorder because the target of the propaganda of violence does not know how to understand the violence in the immediate aftermath. The goal of propaganda of the abyss is not to teach people new signifiers and assign signifieds. The goal of propaganda of the abyss is to generate chaos and fear resulting from the search for meaning where culturally there are no words to express the horror.

Chaos is an on-going state of mind for people in India seven years after the attacks on Mumbai. The fear generated by the LeT remained measurable in India in 2015. A study by the Pew Research Center (2015) indicated that 61% of Indians feared LeT.⁵ After the Paris attack in 2015, many Indians expressed their fear on Twitter (*The Asian Age*, November 14, 2015). Another article in *The Asian Age* on the same day stated the residue of fear left behind by the Mumbai attack: "Even after the years have passed by it's not an easy situation to deal with," said one survivor from Mumbai. Chintan Sakariya, who witnessed the attack on Nariman House, said reading about the Paris attacks on Saturday morning had given him "goosebumps".

Many other studies found similar psychological fear among victims of terrorism or people who had experienced natural disasters (see Robins, Helzer, Croughan, Williams, & Spitzer, 1981; Weisaeth, 1985; McFarlane, 1988; Rubonis & Bickman, 1991; Ginexi, Weihs & Simmens, 1993; Grace, Green, Lindy & Leonard, 1993; Smith & North, 1993; North & Smith, 1994; North, 1995; North, Smith & Spitznagel, 1997; Epstein, Fullerton, & Ursano, 1998; DiGiovanni, 1999; North, Nixon & Shariat, 1999; Pfefferbaum, Nikon, Krug, Tavis, Moore, Brown, Pynoos & Gurwitch, 1999; Smith, Christiansen, Vincent & Hann, 1999; Wang, Gao, Shinfuku, Zhang, Zhao & Shben, 2000; Sprang, 2001; Baker, 2002; Coutu & Hyman, 2002; Schuster, Stein, Jaycox, Collins, Marshall, Elliott, Zhou, Kanouse, Norris, 2002; North & Pfefferbaum, 2002; Galea, Ahern, Resnick, Kilpatrick, Bucuvalas, Gold & Vlahov, 2002). These studies found psychological impacts resulting from airplane crashes to natural disasters, to September 11th, to the Oklahoma City bombings, to chemical and biological attacks. In studying September 11th impacts, Galea, Ahern, Resnick, Kilpatrick, Bucuvalas, Gold & Vlahov (2002) found that a greater degree of terror resulted in a higher level of psychological impact. From these studies it is not surprising that the terror and chaos resulting from the indiscriminate nature of the Mumbai attack led to social media in India lighting up after the 2015 attack on Paris, which had so many characteristics of the Mumbai attack.

In the United States terrorism and mass shootings compete with each other as the dominant source of fear. After the shootings at Sandy Hook School, the number of background checks for firearms purchases increased by seven million over the previous year.⁶ After a Muslim couple attacked a Christmas Party in San Bernardino in 2015, the sale of guns and ammunition spiked again nationwide after record sales for seven months.⁷ The fourteen deaths in San Bernardino increased the number of deaths in mass shootings in the U.S. to 355 for 2015.⁸ A Gallup poll early in December of 2015 indicated that half of the Americans polled were “somewhat” or “very worried” that someone in their family would be a victim of terrorism.⁹ In another poll, terrorism was among the most important issues to the American public.¹⁰ The reality seems to be in conflict with the degree of fear felt by Americans. In an American Muslim population of about 3.3 million, 64 people were identified by Homeland Security as people who were inspired to commit or plan acts of

terrorism by ISIS between January of 2014 and September of 2015.¹¹ In comparison, nearly 600,000 Americans died of cancer in 2015;¹² car accidents claim around 32,000 deaths annually in the U.S.¹³ People have much more to fear from red meat and drivers texting than from Muslim terrorists in the U.S.

Americans are not alone in their fear. One poll indicates that 71% of French people believe they are in a state of war.¹⁴ In Britain, 74% of people participating in a poll believe a terrorist attack will occur in England in 2016.¹⁵ In Germany, 60% of those polled believed that the influx of refugees was beyond the ability of the government to cope.¹⁶ A total of 76% of people polled in Australia fear another terrorist attack.¹⁷ The jihadists have created a world of people living in some state of fear.

The News

The news media around the world collect the jihadists' messages of fear and spread it to the fearful ones in the U.S., Europe, Australia, and India. Accordingly, how the news media talks about terrorism has a major impact on the propaganda efforts of the jihadists and the degree to which people evaluate the probability of an attack (Slone, 2000). The news media theoretically can enhance the jihadists' propaganda of fear by using evil terms to describe terror attacks and can increase the feelings that people cannot control events by minimizing the use of Burke's god terms. The sense of chaos can be accentuated by the media when news people use signifiers that do not have a clear cultural understanding, which creates the abyss because the signifiers lack signifieds that make sense out of the use of the signifiers. Accordingly, chaos terms are an important consideration in understanding the dynamics of interaction among jihadists, news outlets, and the public.

In our research, we evaluated the news media coverage of nine terrorists attacks: the Mumbai attack, beheadings of Christians in Libya, beheadings of journalists in Syria, the French train attack stopped by the passengers, the killings at a Pakistani high school, kidnapping of the 200 Nigerian girls, the attack on Canada's Parliament, the murders of the Charlie Hebdo staff, and the night life shootings in Paris. Each of these events represents an extraordinary attack on soft targets and included the deaths or victimization of people with no or little connection to politics, the military, or the government. The victims were just people living their lives.

We reviewed the first day of media coverage, as posted on their web sites, of Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, and Fox News. Al Jazeera America is part of the Al Jazeera news operation headquartered in Kuwait. We selected this news organization because of its ties to the Islamic world and it might have less of a Western bias. BBC is based in London, providing a European perspective. Plus, the BBC has a reputation of accurate, fair reporting.¹⁸ CNN and Fox News are two U.S. news agencies, which are usually associated with conflicting political perspectives. These four news outlets would provide a means to determine if coverage of terrorism tended to employ god terms, evil terms, and chaos terms as we speculated. Our results indicate that all four news agencies described terrorist events with god, evil, and chaos terms.

Burke (1969 a) describes god terms as deriving from "freedom". God is the "ancestral source" of the god terms (74). "...When a thing's intrinsic nature is defined as part of a universal whole, the reference here is to a context, hence extrinsic" (75). God terms describe ultimate goals associated with good for all people and the best of humanity. Burke later (1969 b) described "love", "patience", "delight" as god terms because they were transcendental (298). Evil terms to Burke (1969 b) also refer to motivation, but instead of an inherent reference back to God or the holy, the evil term invokes "the principle of the discord" (407). In its essence, the evil term represents the "heresy" spoken by the devil (407).

In our media analysis, god terms were a word, a set of words, or a phrase that indicated stability, safety, and maintenance of order. Evil terms were words that conveyed injury, death, or threat to other people; they indicate actions of inhumanity. Chaos terms occurred when evil was out of control and created a direct threat to humanity and social stability. Context was very important in determining the categorization of words. "Kill" would generally be an evil term, but "the police killed an attacker" would be a god term. "The terrorists randomly killed people in the crowd" would be a chaos term. The chart below shows that the media coverage of terrorist events includes god, evil, and chaos terms, but there were too many variables to control to develop a methodology that would permit analysis within events or among the media, or between terrorist attacks.

	god	evil	chaos
Mumbai			
12/27/2008			
CNN	41	37	23
Al Jereeza	5	24	27
BBC	17	19	23
Fox	41	57	27
Nigeria			
4/14/2014			
CNN	15	34	16
Al Jereeza	11	35	21
BBC	38	33	23
Fox	42	42	43
Syria			
8/19/2014			
CNN	22	28	29
Al Jereeza	30	24	18
BBC	33	18	22
Fox	25	24	4
Parliament			
10/22/2014			
CNN	20	37	20
Al Jereeza	25	24	26
BBC	35	33	19
Fox	49	78	33
Pakistan			
12/16/2014			
CNN	52	25	63
Al Jereeza	4	7	13
BBC	17	8	21
Fox--CNN	5	3	10
Hebdo			
1/7/2015			
CNN	50	55	26
photos	20	0	0
Al Jereeza	36	16	18
BBC	31	14	18
Fox	19	13	20

Libya			
2/16/2015			
CNN	13	45	13
Al Jereeza	15	32	6
BBC	30	57	20
Fox	39	91	30
French Train			
8/21/2015			
CNN	43	21	8
Al Jereeza	61	38	10
BBC	53	11	7
Fox	53	18	9
Paris			
11/13/2015			
CNN	30	52	21
photos	19	6	7
Al Jereeza	24	44	25
photos	6	7	2
BBC	9	31	68
photos	2	3	5
Fox	16	33	24

To explain our method of analysis, we will use the Nigerian kidnapping as an example of how god terms are employed by all news media sources in their early coverage. Al Jeeza used terms such as "free" and "promise," while BBC employed terms such as "hope." CNN opted to use the terms "girls" and "women," and Fox chose words such as "civilians" and "miracle." All of these are uplifting words with the exception of girls and women, which, in the context of the CNN story, represented innocence.

By contrast, the evil terms selected by these news agencies covering the kidnappings were far more damning than the god terms were glorification. For example, Al Jazeera 's article contained phrases such as: "abduction," "displaced," "forced," and "brutal killing." Al Jazeera was not alone in assigning harsh terms to the events that occurred in Nigeria. BBCs reports included terms like: "killed," "attacked," "raid" and "militants," while

CNN and FOX opted for words such as "brutalized," "pain and suffering," and "enslavement."

Chaos terms used to describe the kidnappings included "Dozens of gunmen stormed" (CNN), "waging a bloody campaign" (BBC), "rampaging gunmen" (BBC and Al Jeerza), and "draconian powers" (Fox). Such terms were short of specifics and long on describing a sense of chaos.

Based on all nine of the terrorism stories from all four sources, the media use of god terms in stories about terrorism bring out the humanity in the events and presents some sense of hope. When good people did great things in the face of imminent danger to save others, the story restores some sense of locus of control in the mist of situations that seem random and out of control. When the passengers stopped a terrorist on a high speed train, the stories played up the heroics. All four either used the god terms brave, bravery, or heroic.

After the Paris attacks, all four media outlets wrote stories in the immediate aftermath with many chaos terms (underlined). For example, Al Jazeera emphasized the uncertainty: "The perpetrators remain a mystery — their nationalities, their motives, even their exact number."¹⁹ The BBC ran witness statements that described chaos: "... people falling all over the place, people screaming and just clawing and running and pushing to get away."²⁰ Fox used the words of the terrorists to bring out the sense of chaos: "ISIS claimed responsibility for the attacks [evil term] on an encrypted messaging account, calling them "the first of the storm" and mocking France as a "capital of prostitution and obscenity." French President Francois Hollande provided the chaos for CNN: "unprecedented terrorist attacks" and "This is a horror."

By invoking god, evil, and chaos terms, the media presented these nine terrorist attacks as a conflict of god vs. evil and chaos. Our counting of the words used to create that conflict indicates that the media finds the good in terrorism events, but that the coverage strays from the facts and into the use of descriptive evil and chaos terms.

Political Leaders

Statements made by political leaders may also be enhancing the sense of fear among the public. U.S. President Barack Obama used chaos terms to describe the Paris attacks as an

"outrageous attempt to terrorize innocent civilians" (CNN). French President Francois Hollande (CNN) said: "terrorists [evil] capable of carrying out such atrocities [chaos term underlined] must know that they will face a France that is determined and united [god term]." Hollande used other chaos terms, according to CNN, to describe the Paris attacks: "unprecedented terrorist attacks" and "Faced with terror." However, Hollande also added more god terms: "We have to show compassion and solidarity and we also have to show unity and keep our cool. France must be strong and great," he said. Vladimir Putin described the Paris terrorism in evil terms: "inhumane killing," according to CNN. Senator Jim Munson of Canada used chaos terms to describe the attack on Parliament: "...people are quite shaken. This kind of terrorist attack did not seem possible" (Al Jazeera). Stephen Harper, then prime minister of Canada, used chaos terms after the attack on Parliament: "brutal and violent." However, he added god terms: "lead us to strengthen our resolve and redouble our efforts" (Fox). Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in an address to the nation of India described events in all chaos terms: "The well-planned and well-orchestrated attacks, probably with external linkages, were intended to create a sense of panic, by choosing high profile targets and indiscriminately killing foreigners" (Fox).

Conclusion

Political leaders and members of the media may be enhancing the propaganda value of terrorist attacks by using chaos terms and evil terms. Evil terms lead the public to assign evil signifieds to the media broadcasts and articles and to the words of political speakers. Of course, events are also likely to lead to evil associations for the public.

Chaos terms may be creating higher levels of fear and panic. Horror, terror, indiscriminate shooting, carnage, mass hysteria, and similar descriptions are difficult for the public to translate. How many people have watched people beheaded, or people with automatic weapons shoot indiscriminately into a crowd? These are the signifiers that fall into the abyss. Chaos terms work for jihadists because the signifieds have not previously been created.

We do not suggest censorship on the media or that political leaders minimize the attack. However, specific adjectives and adverbs can turn the chaos of mass murder into the evil concept of 130 dead, which is at least translatable. Generally, chaos terms can be left out of speeches or articles without changing the presentation of the facts. Perhaps, people would not have a sense of what the real chaos and panic was like during the

terrorist attack, but only citing the words of the victims could accurately portray that sense anyway.

Another factor that can minimize the value of the propaganda to the jihadists would be to invoke strong god terms. Prime Minister Singh used chaos terms to describe the Mumbai attack. French President Hollande began with chaos terms like atrocities, unprecedented, and horror, but he ended with god terms that signaled to the public--determined and united--that the chaos was over.

CNN placed 23 photographs on its web site after the Paris attacks. Seven of the photos showed chaos and six indicated a level of evil, but nineteen of the photos showed policemen were in the street and military men walked the sidewalks. The threat was over, stability had been restored, further terrorism would be met with force. After Charlie Hebdo, all 20 photos on the CNN web site demonstrated stability and control.

Jihadists want to make Westerners fear beyond comprehension. From the perspective of chaos, propaganda value increases if the violence, randomness, and chaos of their attacks increases fear in the minds of the public. Political leaders could counter that potential by leaving the chaos to the terrorists and using their speeches to create a sense of stability and humanity by relying on god terms. The media could report these speeches as a legitimate part of the news. The media could search out the heroes, which would provide a mechanism for invoking god terms. Details on the actions of the police, the military, and political leaders would create a sense of stability after a period of chaos. The news could limit coverage to the facts and let the facts speak to the evil and chaos. Facts are rarely going to invoke fear and panic in the same way chaos terms might because the public already understands those signifiers.

In short, jihadists want to push people into the abyss. The media and political leaders can push back with facts and the words of stability and humanity.

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