



# Western Civilization from 1650 to the Present

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## TOPIC 15.2. THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Supplement to Chambers, *The Western Experience*, Chapter 30: The New Europe, pp. 1112-1161.

<p><b>HISTORY OF TERRORISM</b></p> <p><b>Ancient World:</b> Psychological Warfare, Banishment, Confiscation of Property, Execution</p> <p><b>Middle Ages:</b> Torture, Execution for Religious Heresy</p> <p><b>18<sup>th</sup> Century:</b> Reign of Terror in France</p> <p><b>19<sup>th</sup> Century:</b> KKK in US, Worldwide Assassinations of People in Power</p> <p><b>20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TERRORISM</b> <b>State Terrorism:</b> Political Movements, State Policy, Totalitarian Regimes</p> <p><b>Individual Terrorism:</b> Anti-Colonialism, Disputes Between National Groups, Religious Conflicts, Internal Conflicts</p>	<p>TERRORISM has been practiced throughout history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The ancient GREEK historian Xenophon (c. 431–c. 350 BC) wrote of the effectiveness of PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE against enemy populations.</li> <li>■ ROMAN emperors such as Tiberius (reigned AD 14–37) and Caligula (reigned AD 37–41) used BANISHMENT, CONFISCATION of property, and EXECUTION as means to discourage opposition to their rule.</li> <li>■ The SPANISH INQUISITION used arbitrary ARREST, TORTURE, and EXECUTION to punish what it viewed as RELIGIOUS HERESY.</li> <li>■ The use of terror was openly advocated by ROBESPIERRE as a means of encouraging revolutionary virtue during the FRENCH REVOLUTION, leading to the period of his political dominance called the Reign of Terror (1793–94).</li> <li>■ After the American Civil War (1861–65) defiant Southerners formed a terrorist organization called the KU KLUX KLAN to intimidate supporters of Reconstruction.</li> <li>■ In the latter half of the 19th century, terrorism was adopted by ADHERENTS OF ANARCHISM in WESTERN EUROPE, RUSSIA, AND THE UNITED STATES. They believed that the best way to effect revolutionary political and social change was to ASSASSINATE PERSONS IN POSITIONS OF POWER. From 1865 to 1905 a number of kings, presidents, prime ministers, and other government officials were killed by anarchists' guns or bombs.</li> </ul> <p>The 20th century witnessed great changes in the practice of terrorism. Terrorism became the hallmark of a number of POLITICAL MOVEMENTS stretching from the EXTREME RIGHT to the EXTREME LEFT of the political spectrum. Technological advances such as automatic weapons and compact, electrically detonated explosives gave terrorists a new mobility and lethality. Terrorism was adopted as virtually a STATE POLICY, though an unacknowledged one, by such TOTALITARIAN REGIMES as those of NAZI GERMANY under Adolf Hitler and the SOVIET UNION under Joseph Stalin. In these states ARREST, IMPRISONMENT, TORTURE, and EXECUTION were applied without legal guidance or restraints to create a climate of fear and to encourage adherence to the national ideology and the declared economic, social, and political goals of the state.</p> <p>Terrorism has most commonly become identified, however, with INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS attempting to destabilize or overthrow existing political institutions. Terrorism has been used by one or both sides in ANTI-COLONIAL CONFLICTS (Ireland and the United Kingdom, Algeria and France, Vietnam and France/United States), in DISPUTES BETWEEN DIFFERENT NATIONAL GROUPS over possession of a contested homeland (Palestinians and Israel), in CONFLICTS BETWEEN DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS (Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland), and in INTERNAL CONFLICTS between revolutionary forces and established governments (Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Iran, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Argentina).</p>
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<p><b><u>Public Impact:</u></b>  <b>Television Coverage, Innocent Victims, Violent Acts as Substitute for Legitimate Political Activities</b></p>	<p>Terrorism's public impact has been greatly magnified by the use of modern communications media. Any act of violence is certain to attract TELEVISION COVERAGE, which brings the event directly into millions of homes and EXPOSES VIEWERS TO THE TERRORISTS' DEMANDS, GRIEVANCES, OR POLITICAL GOALS. Modern terrorism differs from that of the past because its victims are frequently INNOCENT CIVILIANS who are picked at random or who merely happen into terrorist situations. Many groups of terrorists in Europe hark back to the anarchists of the 19th century in their isolation from the political mainstream and the unrealistic nature of their goals. Lacking a base of popular support, EXTREMISTS SUBSTITUTE VIOLENT ACTS FOR LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. Such acts include KIDNAPPINGS, ASSASSINATIONS, SKYJACKINGS, BOMBINGS, and HIJACKINGS.</p>
<p><b>VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST                  Palestinian Liberation Organization</b></p>	<p>By the 1960s, the killing of civilians to sow fear and secure political gains was rampant. But Western terrorism paled next to THE VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. For years, Yasser Arafat's PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION unabashedly murdered civilians amid some of the world's most shocking deeds.</p> <p>The constituent groups of Arafat's PLO pioneered HIJACKING and HOSTAGE-TAKING to win global recognition for their statehood demands. The 1972 MURDER of eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics and the 1985 killing of the wheelchair-bound American Leon Klinghoffer during the commandeering of the <i>Achille Lauro</i> remained etched in public memory. Nonetheless, they helped highlight Palestinian grievances.</p>
<p><b>Islamic Fundamentalism</b></p>	<p>Like such contemporaneous groups as South Africa's African National Congress, the PLO's goals were political, not religious. Courting world opinion, they realized that if you live by the car bomb, you die by the car bomb; terrorism could alienate the very people whose respect its perpetrators sought. Indeed, Arafat, Nelson Mandela and others had to distance themselves from terror to prove they could lead new governments. As the PLO's terrorism abated, ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM swept the Middle East. Starting in 1979 – the year of the Israel-Egypt peace agreement, the Iranian revolution, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan – Mideast terrorists began hailing from overtly religious groups: Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Algeria's Islamic Armed Group.</p>
<p><b><u>Target: US</u></b></p>	<p>Espousing a warped vision most Muslims emphatically reject, many believed the UNITED STATES to be the SYMBOL OF SATANIC WESTERN VALUES. Inevitably, some, such as the Saudi exile Osama bin Laden, made the U.S. their actual target.</p> <p>Unlike the violence of the 1960s and '70s, the ATTACKS ON THE U.S. ARE NOT SECULAR OR MARXIST. Unlike the nationalist terror of the IRA or the FLN, they aren't aimed to achieve a negotiated political settlement. They are neither part of a war of rebellion, nor a form of left-wing anarchism, nor a barbarous exercise of state power.</p> <p>This new terrorism springs from an unswerving conviction that TO DESTROY AMERICA IS TO DO GOD'S WORK. Since it doesn't play to world opinion, world opinion cannot act as a brake upon it. And since it failed to destroy America, we should expect it will strike again.</p>
<p><b>ONLINE RESOURCES</b></p>	<p>For more information on this topic, explore one or more of the following online resources:</p> <p><a href="#">The Changing Faces of Terrorism</a>: Discusses the origins and various forms of terrorism with special emphasis on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.</p> <p><a href="#">UN Action Against Terrorism</a>: Extensive resources on anti-terrorist activities.</p>

**DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS**

Drawing on the resources you have had an opportunity to explore (textbook, course documents, online resources, library resources), answer one or more of the following questions:

**How has terrorism evolved through the years?**

**How does today's brand of terrorism differ from previous forms?**

**Why is the United States the target for terrorists? Why is it so difficult to combat?**