# State's Main Mistakes in Describing and Combating Terrorism

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### 1. Use of War Rhetoric and Methodology in Combating Terrorism

- Using the language of war in combating terrorism has been dramatically increased in the recent period.
- After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in particular, the Bush administration identified combating terrorism as a war, even a "global war"
- Not only in the US, but also in other countries, the term "war on terrorism" had often been used instead of "combating terrorism," to gain the public support so as to employ security forces and to mobilize people and other sources more effectively.
- In this way, war terminology has begun to be used more often today than the past.

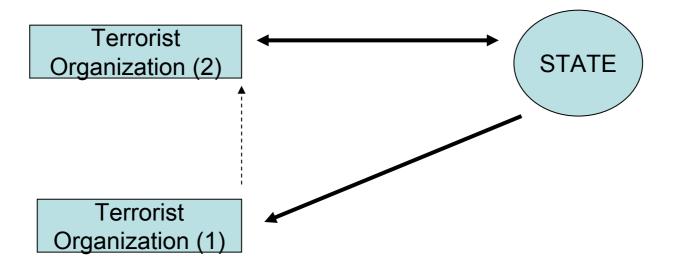




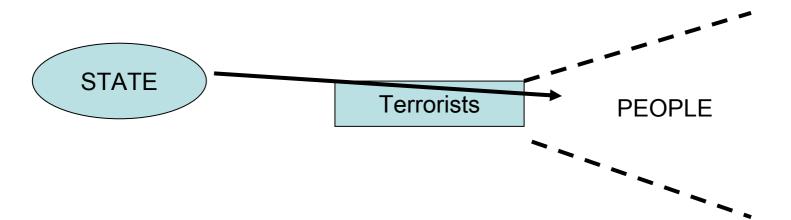
- There are radical differences between war and terrorism.
- In the same vein, combating a terrorist and combating an enemy during war are completely different from each other.
- If these distinctions are not recognized and are confused with each other, one may draw the wrong conclusions.

## Risk of legitimizing terrorism in Using of War Terminology

- The most important drawback of using war terminology while fighting terrorism is the risk of legitimizing terrorism.
- War is something that occurs between states. If one refers to combating terrorist as "war," it puts the terrorist organization on the same level as a state.



- Secondly, in the case that combating terrorism is reflected as a war, the victims of the terrorist attacks may think that the state does not separate the ordinary people from the terrorists, and aims to exploit and punish them as a main objective just because of their ethnic, religious, or other differences.
- This is absolutely what the terrorists want to achieve.



- Third, the terrorist organizations
   constantly claim and try to prove that they
   are not ordinary criminal offenders, and
   their actions against state security forces
   are not criminal acts.
- If states use war terminology instead of criminal terminology in combating terrorism, they remove terrorists from a criminal context and redefine them as a political enemy.

**Making Criminals Political** 

#### **Confusing Terror And War in Practice**

• The states make the mistake of confusing combating terrorism with war, **not only in terminology but also in practice.** If the state uses weapons such as **artillery**, **tanks**, **or jets to combat terrorism**, even if they do not use war terminology, these actions **create a war image**, *per se*.

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In this regard, deployment of the army to combat terrorism paves the way for the same serious problems. Since the army is not an institution formed to combat terrorism, it can only be successful if it fights against another standing army as they are. The army has been formed on the idea of total warfare and destruction of the enemy. In other words, the capacity of an army to distinguish between civil people and militants is very weak. Furthermore, the terrorists are embedded in society, which makes it very difficult to identify and separate them from the ordinary people, despite the army's special efforts to do so. Taking the army's 'total warfare' mentality into consideration, combating terrorists at the expense of damaging the whole society is a kind of self-destruction. This means that the terrorists achieved one of their main goals. The terrorists constantly irritate the state and the society like a mosquito: They plague one organ of the state and, when targeted, reappear in another one. If the state does not use the proper weapons, tools, and methods in combating terrorism, it begins to damage its political, economic, and social structure. To continue the metaphor, it is not possible to kill a mosquito by using cannons. It is necessary for the security forces to be as sensitive as a brain surgeon in dealing with terrorists embedded in society in order not to fall into the trap of terrorists.

- The basic aims of terrorists are to anger the state, disrupt its internal balance, and to provoke a knee-jerk response. In sum, terrorists attempt to bring the state down to their level.
- In so doing, the distinction between the state and the terrorist organization starts to erode in the eyes of the public, and then the state and terrorist organization seem as equal actors.
- The security should not ignore the basic fact that different from the terrorists the most significant feature of a state is that it is a legal and legitimate entity based on the rule of law.
- The terrorists try to undermine the abovementioned legitimacy of the state and its security forces. Most of the time, however, the states are not aware of this trap and concentrate on terrorists rather than terrorism. But, it is not possible to compete against terrorists in terms of bloodshed and savagery, since terrorists do not have any concerns such as legal responsibility, moral and ethic values, or any other principles; the state is fated to lose such a battle every single time, no matter the conditions. If the state starts such a competition with the terrorists, it will dramatically and unavoidably lose.

#### 2 - Labeling Every Problem as Terrorism

- One of the most significant mistakes of states in combating terrorism is to perceive and reflect every security problem as terrorism.
- In fact, terrorism is a specific crime and accordingly has specific conditions.
- In today's world, however, due to the increased consciousness about terrorism and its perception as a crime against humanity, many states try hard to obtain support by putting their own national security problems into the category of terrorism.

- In this regard, to occupy another state on the grounds of terrorism and then
  to declare enemies inside this country as "terrorists", using this as an
  excuse to legitimize its occupation and human rights violations; to reflect the
  political insurgencies in a particular region as a pure terrorist activity; and to
  label the disliked revolutionary acts as "terrorist acts" are frequently used
  examples.
- This is because when an act is identified as terror, it becomes more difficult to defend it.
- Besides, the state expects unconditional support from other states against the 'illegal' organizations they have dubbed terrorist, in return for giving support to them in the same vein.
- Following the 9/11 attacks, states have identified almost every ethnic and political riot, and even every security problem, as terrorism.
- It is possible to see a serious compromise between the states in that sense. For instance, the Chechnya movement has been labeled as a terrorist act and has almost disappeared nowadays, while before the 9/11 attacks, the US and the EU strongly criticized Russia for its human rights violations in Chechnya.

- Israel comes first in terms of the countries that try to mark basic security concerns as pure terrorism, which they could explain with different approaches besides terrorism.
- Both Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon sometimes use terror as a tool; however, these organizations do not only conduct terrorist acts, they have also a wide range of legitimate social and political activities. After all, these organizations recently have limited their terrorist acts, such as putting a bomb inside a car in a crowded street.
- In contrast, Israel reflects even its war against Hezbollah in 2006 as combating terrorism.
- If a state enters another country's territory and fights against a group that came into power via general elections, using military forces, there are terms to describe this other than combating terrorism.

 Additionally, it is controversial whether the rocket attacks from the southern side of Lebanon to Israel are terrorist acts or not. Certainly, it can not be an acceptable crime to launch a rocket where civilians are living, but it can be debated if it is terrorism or a war crime. It is true the low technology missiles cause tension in the Israeli side, yet the similar tension is being caused by the Israeli jets in the Gaza side. Gaza is not Israeli territories, and the Hamas Gaza power which is an elected and supported by people. Its method of 'missiles' cannot be accepted as a legitimate way of defense but we cannot solely name the Hamas war methods as terror.

### War against Terrorism?





- In the same vein, the recent Gaza attacks (Operation Cast Lead) were launched by Israel on behalf of "combating terrorism" although Hamas can not be identified merely as a terrorist organization: It is a political party that came into power in 2007 with the extensive support of people in the country via democratic elections, which was an unexampled experience for the Arab World.
- In other words, Hamas is one of the official representatives of the Palestinian people. In contrast, Israel is not a legal or legitimate power in the West Bank and Gaza; it is an occupying power according to any international document and the United Nations (UN).



#### War or Terrorism?

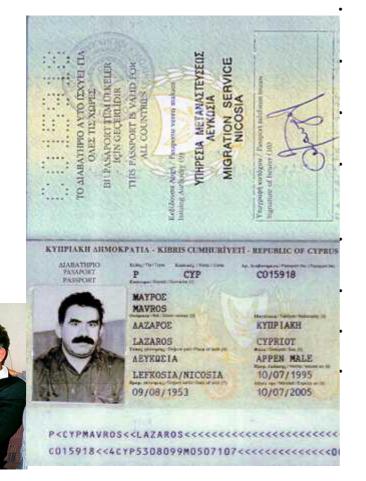
- Of course Israel has all the right to defend itself from the Palestinians and the Palestinians have all the right to defend themselves from Israeli attacks.
- It is clear that right or wrong, there has been a war between the two sides. While Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist, Israel similarly does not recognize Hamas.
- Under these conditions, it does not seem possible to explain the mutual attacks under the name of terrorism, but rather with 'war crimes' at most. For example, Israel killed approximately 400 children during the Gaza assault and 1400 people only at most one fourth of whom were Hamas militants. Obviously it is not possible to label Israel's attacks as terrorist attacks.
- In a similar vein, the Hamas' rocket attacks cannot be explained by solely the terrorism label. It should be apt to speak about war crimes here, not terrorism. But, this does not mean that we do not take into consideration that Hamas applies terrorist actions as a tool of implementing its policies and it has a group among its members which acts as a branch terrorist organization.

- It is especially necessary to state that
   Hamas had the reputation of being a
   terrorist organization before the general
   elections.
- However, Hamas is not alone in the sense that it uses terrorist acts as a tool and becomes closer to a terrorist state of mind in its actions; other states have also acted in a similar fashion.

#### Hamas is not Alone to see Terror as a Tool

- Abdullah Ocalan, head of the bloody PKK terrorist organization, for example was captured in the Nairobi (Kenya) Embassy of an EU member state.
- When he was captured he was carrying passport of one of the another EU member states.
- Ocalan before Russia and Africa visits went to two EU member countries and spent weeks in one of the leading EU member states in 1999.
- While he was in the EU territories no EU state legal authority brough a suit against Ocalan.





#### \* Ocalan's Odyssey

- In October 1998, Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the PKK, left his terror base in Syria after Turkey threatened to invade. He arrived in Italy the following month by way of Russia. What follows is an account of the rest of his saga as provided by Greek officials.
- November 12, 1998: Ocalan surrenders to police in Rome upon arrival, asking for political asylum, which he is ultimately denied. He leaves Italy on January 16.
   For the next two weeks, his whereabouts are unknown.
- January 29, 1999: Ocalan arrives in Athens, Greece, brought in on a Lear jet
  accompanied by retired Greek naval officer Andonis Naxakis. They tell airport VIP
  services the plane is carrying a Russian undersecretary. Greek intelligence
  services later realize it is Ocalan. He spends the night at the home of writer Voula
  Damianakou in Nea Makri, 12 miles from Athens.
  - January 30, 1999: Ocalan meets with intelligence director Dimitris Stavrakakis, who tells him he must leave the country. Ocalan spends the night in Naxakis' home near Athens.
  - January 31, 1999: Ocalan leaves on a Lear jet for Minsk, Belarus, where Kurdish associates say they will provide an aircraft to take him to the Netherlands. Belarus and the Netherlands refuse overflight permission to Ocalan's plane.
  - February 1, 1999: Ocalan's plane returns to Athens international airport before dawn but is diverted to the western island of Corfu in the afternoon for security reasons. Ocalan stays in a house provided by Greek officials.
  - February 2, 1999: The Greek foreign ministry flies Ocalan to Nairobi, Kenya, planning to house him in a Greek-owned home in the countryside. But Ocalan demands to stay in ambassador's residence in Nairobi. Greek authorities begin talks to have another African country grant Ocalan political asylum. South Africa apparently agrees to accept him.
  - February 12, 1999: Information indicates Ocalan must be removed from the Greek diplomatic premises. Greeks fear his location is widely known. Discussions begin to take him to a neighboring country or a Greek Orthodox Church in Kenya.
  - February 14, 1999: Kenyan security forces surround the Greek Embassy and ambassador's residence in Nairobi.
  - February 15, 1999: Ocalan disappears while on his way from the Greek ambassador's residence to the airport, where he was to fly to the Netherlands.
  - Feb 16, 1999: Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit announces Turkish forces have arrested Ocalan.

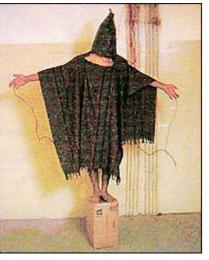
(Source: Associated Press, February 19,1999)

 Similarly, it is not correct for the US to label almost every event in Afghanistan and Iraq as a terrorist assault. When occupying a country, it is very natural to face strong resistance from the indigenous people who do not obey the rules of the game. Although they may act barbarically, it is not correct to label every attack causing mass destruction or exception to the rules as terrorism.

- At first sight, it can be seem as facilitating the state's operations, but in the long term to label everything as terrorism does not contribute to the security concerns of the US, Israel or any state.
- In contrast, it damages their strategy of combating terrorism.
- Labeling all actions as terrorism which are, in fact, more than terrorism, expanding the concept of terrorism, and then terrorist organizations have more materials to legitimize their terrorist actions.
- Moreover, when a state faces terrorist activities, it may become extremely difficult for them to convince other states to support them, which in turn undermines the international cooperation between states against terrorism.

- Worst of all, if a states convinces the others that it is fighting against terrorism, it may become prone to set aside the basic principles of international law.
- It may kill people just because they are labeled as terrorists.





- The states may overlook even the basic human rights principles under the disguise of fighting against terrorism.
- The American way of combating terrorism after 9/11 is full of these kinds of examples, like the torture and other abuses at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib prisons and CIA planes' 'torture flights'.
- Likewise, the rules which are strictly obeyed even in war times can be circumvented under the name of combating terrorism.
- The US jets bombed lots of people in civic meetings such as wedding ceremonies and mosques in Iraq and Afghanistan, and killed lots of women, children, and other civilians.
- In this regard, it should be remembered that the states like the US, Israel, and England apply different counterterrorism methods in other countries than in their own country.
- The silence of the rest of the world regarding these mistakes encourages those states who claim to fight against terrorism and creates a superficial impression of success in combating terrorism.
- But, the real situation is directly the opposite.

- On behalf of combating global terrorism, many mistakes have occurred, and thus the terror which has been produced by security forces in combating terrorism is bigger than the terror which was produced by terrorist organizations.
- It is possible to observe the same situation not only in the US's and its allies mistakes in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in the actions of many other states who claim to fight against terrorism.

## Efforts to prove the lack of any connection between economy and terror in post 9/11 world

- Some American, European and Israeli writers have been trying to prove that there is no relation between terror and the economy by examining the economic situations of religious terrorists.
- Furthermore they are emphasizing the irrelevancy between terror and other social problems by making reference to the terrorists' so-called high level of education and 'advance' background.
- The Bush Rule has focused on evil nature of terrorists instead of state responsibilities and social roots of terrorism.

## Terrorism is more complex than good and evil conflict

- It is hard to share those views. Besides not complying with the reality, those efforts may affect the struggle against terror in a negative way and give rise to the government's ignorance of its responsibilities.
- Governments should not only focus on terrorists. Statesmen should first question their own policies.
- If one does not regard the economic and social problems among the reasons of terror, it indirectly confirms that there are no state-based reasons and responsibilities of terror.
- Thus, the states' success against this threat begins to be evaluated by the number of terrorists killed. Yet, the struggle against terrorism can not succeed only through killing terrorists.
- As long as the terror-producing economic, social and political grounds continue, killing more terrorists will only serve to strengthen terrorism by creating more and more people with hate against the security forces and the State.

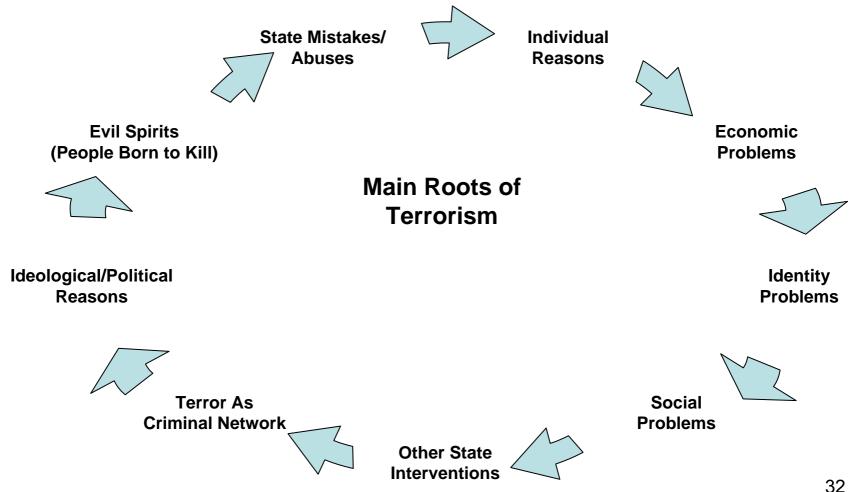
## Terrorism is more complex than good and evil conflict

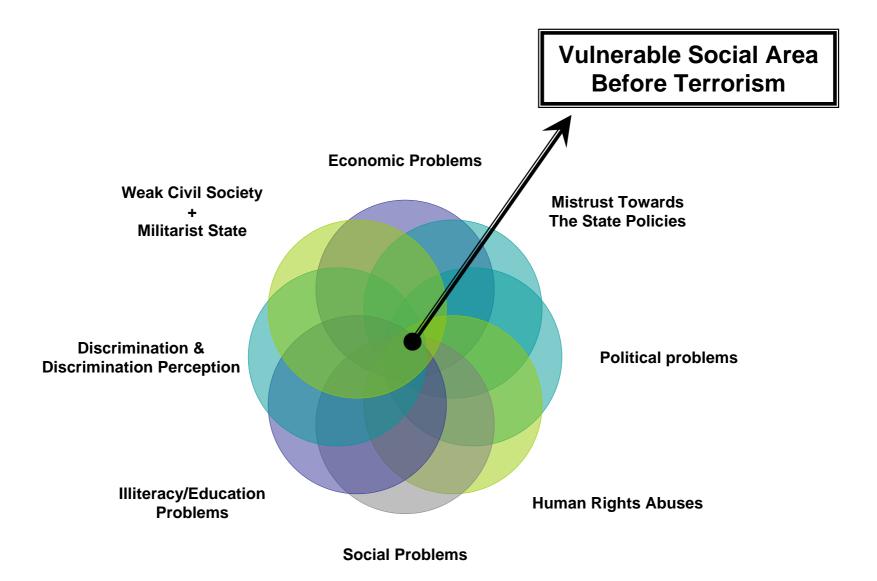
- The approaches ignoring the economic, social and political background of terrorism mostly emphasize on the "evil character" of terrorists and reveal the <u>struggle against terrorism as a</u> <u>conflict between good and evil</u> or as a black and white issue.
- However, the reality goes beyond this simplification and puts responsibility on both sides.

- Firstly, it is true that terror does not have to arise from the regions experiencing the worst economic conditions.
- The hopeless economic situations create various social and political problems, yet it does not necessarily lead to terrorism. Terrorism is one of the many ends for such economies.
- Also, we cannot define a specific income level for the emergence of terror; it is not possible to assert that terror emerges in the regions where the national income per person is below \$100 or \$1000.
- Besides, an economic situation that breeds terrorism in one country would not necessarily have the same effects in another country. Contrary to predictions, it is more difficult to embody the economic base of terror.

- Terrorist organizations may be established with ideological or individual motives yet the longstanding massive organizations cannot survive solely on these reasons.
- The exploitation of social discord and the state mistakes forms the basis for massive support to terrorists.
- The economic, social and political problems make a terrorist organization's survival possible for years.
- A terrorist organization may come into existence as a result of youths' or radicals' fantasies; however, <u>its</u> <u>survival particularly depends on the extent of its</u> <u>reaction to and its abuse abilities of these social,</u> <u>economic and political problems.</u>
- In this context, although terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, the PKK, ETA, and IRA sharply differ from each other, they all benefit from the similar problems. Failure to either solve those problems or impede their exploitation allows the terrorist organizations to survive or reappear in the society under another format or different names.

While couple of people's individual self-interests or madness may push them towards terrorism in some cases, yet, it is not realistic to explain the long-standing and massive acts of terrorism solely in terms of terrorists' "evil spirits."





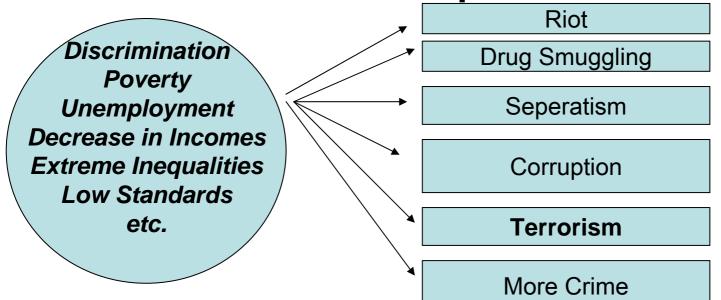
### An economic platform convenient for the formation of terror

- (1) relative poverty,
- (2) extreme inequalities regarding income distribution and spending and
- (3) living below a certain standard combine to propagate terrorism.
- If these three conditions come together, in other words,
  - if the people face with difficulties to meet their basic needs,
  - if there is such injustice in the income distribution that it causes feelings of resentment
  - if the people believe this disparity is a result of conscious discrimination by the state, then <u>there exists an economic</u> <u>platform convenient for the formation of terror.</u>

- Excessive decrease in incomes may also be counted among these conditions.
- While people more easily adapt to the increase in incomes, a decrease in incomes promotes the feelings such as unfairness and victimization and causes political and judicial problems like terrorism.
- Certainly, we do not support these arguments from a determinist approach.



- While the abovementioned conditions in any case will lead to social and political problems, they do not necessarily create terrorism.
- In other words, although the combined presence of these three conditions forms a base which enables terrorism, yet, there have to be additional conditions or factors in order for terrorism to develop.

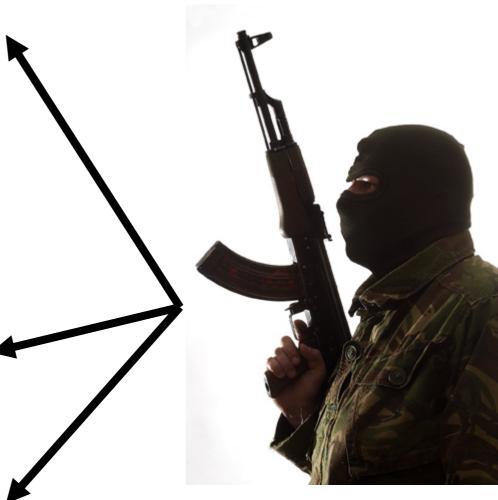


### Perception of discrimination

- One of the most important points which has to be taken into account is the <u>feeling of discrimination</u> or <u>victimization</u>. In other words, here we are referring to <u>relative poverty</u> and <u>injustice</u>.
- If people believe that they are being systematically discriminated against due to their ethnic roots, colour, political views, religions or sects, they become more volatile with an increased willingness to rebel.
- The terrorist organizations mostly aim to acquire individuals who are ready for insurgency against the system.
- The last stage involves contact between the organizations and individuals. If such a situation occurs, if terrorists can meet such a mass who perceive discrimination and ready to rebel, terrorism can spread widely and become a long-lasting problem.



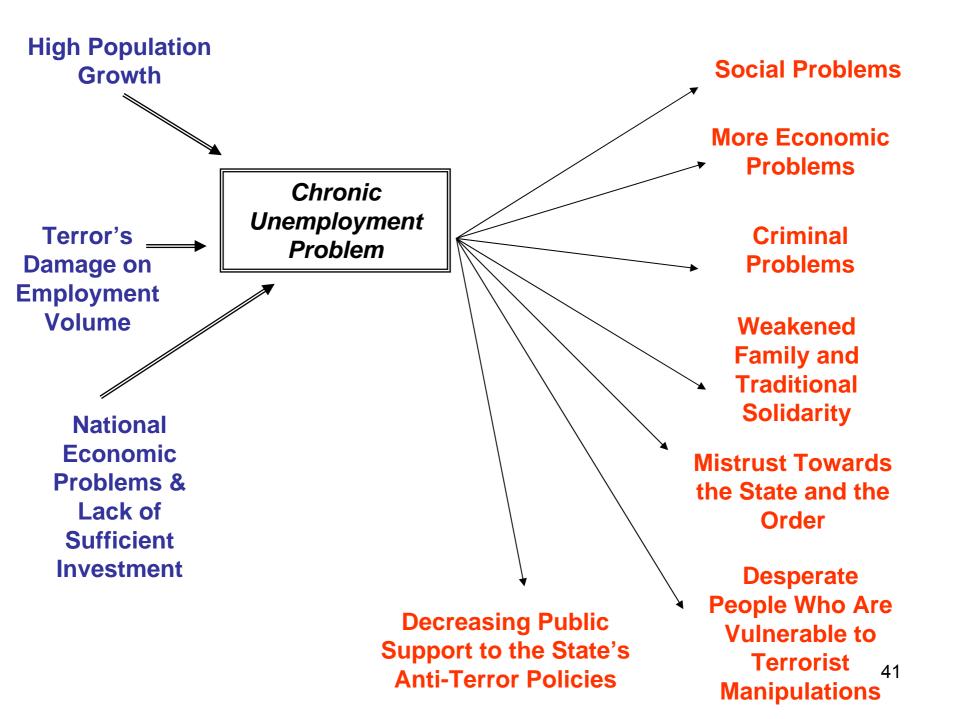
# A social and economic base which enables and strengthens terrorism



### Unemployment

- Unemployment is one of the most important economic problems regarding terrorism, especially in places where a traditional family structure is dominant and the husband bears the burden of generating the income for the entire family.
- The basic needs of the family cannot be met if the husband becomes unemployed. <u>If unemployment period lasts too long,</u> <u>hopelessness spreads around the society.</u>
- The worst occurs if the periods of unemployment coincide with the periods of terrorism as the economic growth is not able to keep up with the population growth.
- Especially in traditional societies such as in the South East
   Anatolian Region, even a fast-growing economy may not be able to
   catch up with the population growth rate as the families have 8-10
   children and the employment opportunities decline due to increasing
   terrorism.
- The unemployment rate in South East Anatolia is over 20 percent, twice the rate of other regions and in Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt, and Batman, the unemployment rate is around 35.9 percent.
- Moreover, it is also fair to say that the real unemployment rate in these provinces is much higher than the official figures, because there is a large group of people not recorded who have no hope in finding a job

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### Unemployment = Lose of Hope = Lose of Confidence for the Order and the State Policies

- Unemployment for a person also means individual hopelessness.
- If a person is unable to support his family and if the hope of finding a job is slim, it becomes very easy to manipulate him for crime organizations or terrorists.
- Hopelessness can cause further disappointment and resentment towards the government and the existing order.
- Furthermore, an unemployed person is the source of discomfort in families and communities.
- Another problem is that unemployment creates more unemployment. The sons of an unemployed father -in the terror-torn regions- are also likely to be unemployed. In large families especially, it is very difficult for a father to spend enough time with his children and transfer his skills to each one of them, spreading discomfort and creating tension in the family. As tensions damage relationships, the social structure will also be harmed, creating a suitable social base for terrorist activity and recruitment. Propaganda created by the terrorists will have a more significant effect on the community and as the children lose their successful, productive and skilled good citizen role models, they can easily be manipulated by the terrorist organizations.

### Migration

- Chronic and growing unemployment rates also mean migration to different regions or countries.
- People who are unable to find a job in their hometowns, start looking for different locations in which they might be able to find a job, frequently choosing to migrate to larger cities. But usually their destination points are not problem-free either, as most of the large cities also have a significant unemployment problem.
- Any available jobs generally tend to be in the notrecorded sector.
- Moreover migration brings further economic costs to families, as moving costs, higher accommodation costs, transportation costs and simply the costs associated with establishing a new life in a different city are substantial.



### Migrant Family Children

- Additionally, families are unlikely to find the social solidarity and traditional supports they could find in their villages or towns.
- In the city, even if the husband, wife or the children find jobs, then the problem of relative poverty causes more complex problems in the family.
- Though the families are generally able to earn more in the bigger cities than they did in their towns, they feel poorer in the cities than in the rural areas because of the relative poverty issue.
- Even if more family members work in the cities, they end up in the lowest end of the economic pyramid.



- Except for a few instances in which families become wealthy through legal means, most believe it is extremely unlikely to achieve such status through legal methods.
- Children, who get little or no education because they must work to contribute to their family, also assume their entire life will be dominated by poverty and injustice.

Furthermore, the disparity between the lifestyles of the rich and poor is highlighted by their proximity, and poor families often accuse the government and the order for failing to fight terrorism.

crimination.





- The transition from a traditional family to a modern family prompts citizens
  to seek their rights and rebel if necessary against the order and the
  government. Their understanding is that everyone is entitled to specific
  rights and if the government fails to provide them, they may use any
  method, legal or illegal to obtain those rights.
- In this manner, a social base is created for terrorism in the host bigger cities as well; however in comparison to the rural social base, the urban is more dangerous, because the masses in the cities tend to be more aggressive and more ambitious than their rural counterparts.
- Also the urban population is more tied to its identity. Families that resent their situation and the wealth of the surrounding city often pass the bitterness on to their children.
- The desire to earn more money easily and the unpreparedness against the difficulties of new life can push these young people towards crime networks making this environment perfectly suitable for terrorist recruitment.
- For example the slums of Istanbul are one of the major centers of terrorist recruitment for the terrorist organization PKK.
- People who no longer receive traditional support are also not capable of taking advantage of the social support system of the modern society and eventually become defenseless against the crime networks and terrorist organizations.

# How Does the Terrorist Exploit the Economic Problems?

### How Does the Terrorist Exploit the Economic Problems?

- Terrorists usually link the sources of economic problems to the state's conscious policies.
- According to this propaganda, the state punishes a specific group due to its religion, ethnic origin, or political view and intentionally deprives them of potential opportunities.

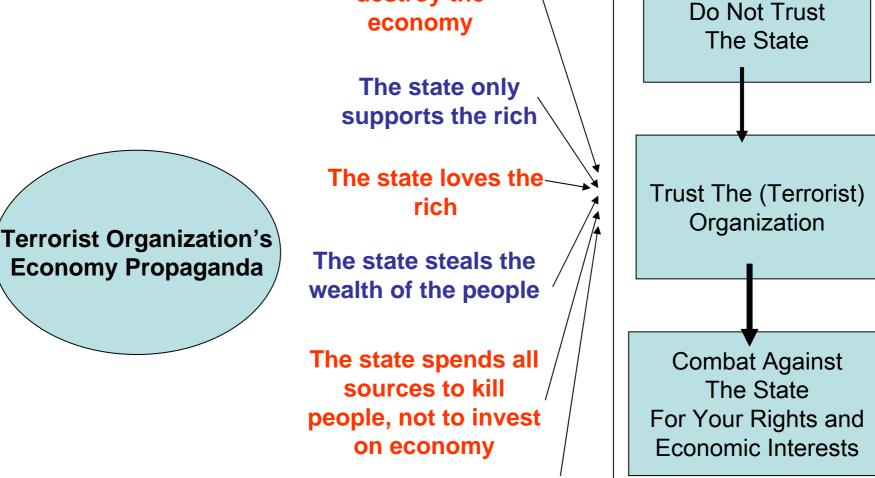
### How Does the Terrorist Exploit the Economic Problems?

#### In this context, the terrorist highlights 3 points:

- (1) The target group suffers from excessive economic problems and is the poorest group in the world.
- (2) The rest of the population lives in comfort and prosperity since they are not subject to the state's discriminatory policies.
- (3) The state is very rich and increases its prosperity with each passing day by exploiting the discriminated group.

The state's conscious policies destroy the economy

The Organization Makes
All Possible Efforts to
Meet Your Economic
Needs

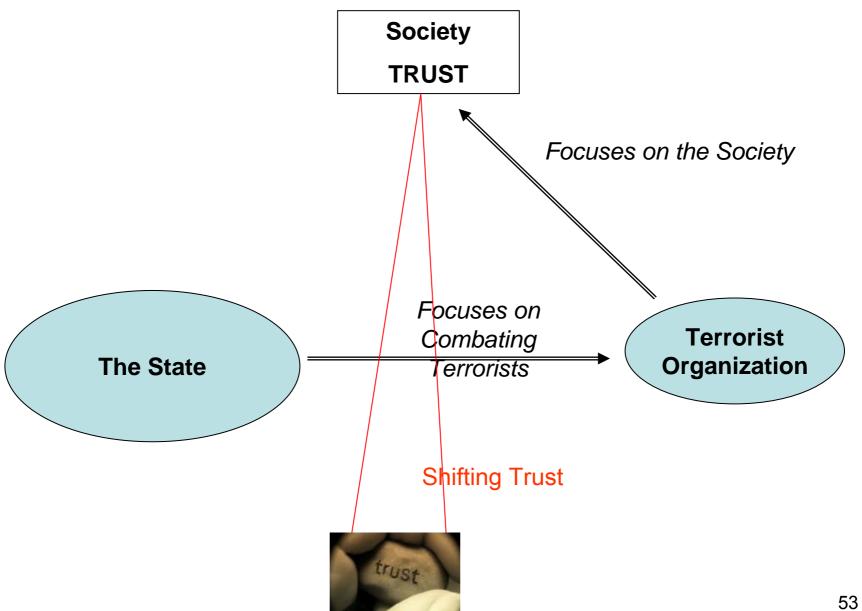


- This propaganda may change in time according to the organization or the circumstances of the day. Referred to as "negative propaganda" the organization's claims, which mostly rely on factitious and exaggerated examples, may attract more advocates as the economic situation declines.
- As separatist activities increase, the terrorist organization claims it is in fact defending the region.
- The economy does not recover from the terrorist acts, but in fact it becomes weaker. However, the organization has propaganda tools to explain this situation: it claims that the state consciously causes the conflict in that region in order to destroy it.
- The terrorist organization also conducts <u>aid activities</u> which are called "active/positive propaganda."
- It collects mandatory dues, referring to them as taxation, aiming to support its followers like a state. Before all else, it aims to provide the militants and their families with basic needs.
- The militants want to make sure that the organization is taking care of his/her family. By this way, their individual concerns diminish and their <u>loyalty to the terrorist organization</u> increases.
- Furthermore, the organization forms charitable institutions to provide for the families of slain terrorists, and organizes funerals for its members killed during armed conflicts against the state.

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- Furthermore, the terrorist organizations try to take apart the sympathizers or the neutral groups from the state through providing financial assistance.
- In most cases, it undertakes functions such as wedding organizations, circumcision celebrations and food and clothing aids, which normally fall under state's responsibilities.
- Thus, collecting militants will be easier as they have built trust between the terrorist organization and the community and damaged the community's trust in the state.
- The legitimacy of the organization will supersede the community's trust towards the state.



# How to Prevent Exploitation of Economic Problems by the Terrorists?

- Combating terrorism and combating terrorists are not the same thing.
- If there is no economic, political and ideological struggle against terrorism, killing more terrorist may strengthen terrorism instead of destroying it.

**Combating Terrorists** 

**Combating Terrorism** 

## How to Prevent Exploitation of Economic Problems by the Terrorists?

- Economic measures are not the only but one of the most vital measures to diminish the economic and social ground which enable and strengthen terrorism.
- States should first focus on the social, political and economic ground which the terrorists abuse instead of armed struggle because <u>the terrorist</u> <u>challenge is a political challenge more than</u> <u>an armed challenge.</u>