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The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terror

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Educating Tomorrow's Warfighters Today





Suicide Terror Training Camp



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- What are the perceptions?
- What is the reality?
- What is suicide terror?
- Who does it?
- Why do they do it?
- What are the numbers?
- What are the trends?
- Who gets targeted?
- Why is it effective?
- What are the strategy / policy implications?

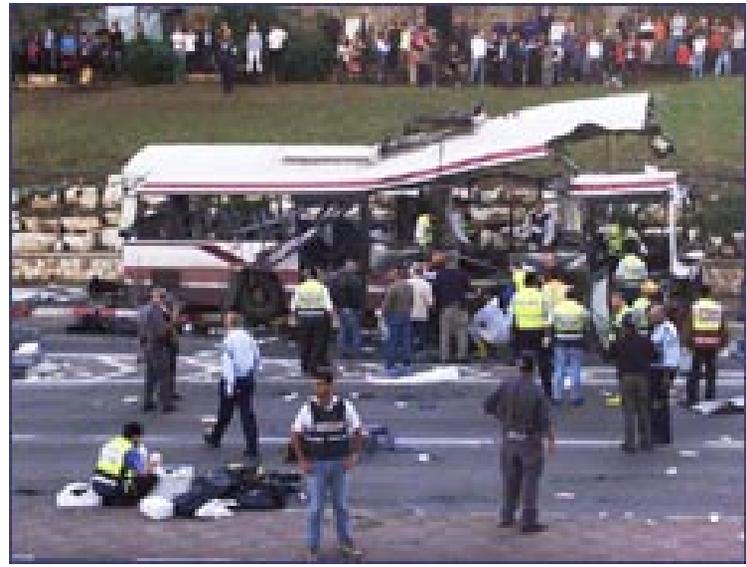




What Are The Perceptions?



- What is the profile of suicide terrorists?
- We generalize suicide terrorists to be:
 - Young
 - Single
 - Male
 - Uneducated
 - Religious fanatics
 - Likely Islamic Fundamentalists



I used to joke...

The nominal retirement age for your average martyr is about thirty



What Is The Reality?



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- The “profile” is wrong
- Terrorists are:
 - Preteen - mid-sixties
 - Both single and married with families
 - Both male and female
 - Both educated and uneducated
 - Not motivated by religious fanaticism
 - World’s leader in suicide terror are Hindu
 - Tamil Tigers who are conducting insurgency against Sri Lanka



168 Attacks

It's not what folks don't know that's the problem. It's that they know so much that ain't so -- that's the problem.



What Is Suicide Terror?



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- Basically a punishment strategy
- Similar to other punishment strategies
 - Airpower – Douhet / Harris
 - Economic sanctions
 - “...the hard hand of war.” – Sherman
 - “...more statesmanship than warfare.” -- Sherman
- Does two things:
 - Inflicts immediate punishment against target society
 - Threatens more punishment in the future
- Suicide sends a powerful message
 - Attacker could not be deterred
 - Allows for the act of martyrdom
 - Connects attacker to a broader community





Who Conducts Suicide Terror?



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- **Hamas**

- Palestinians' major Muslim fundamentalist movement
- Combines Palestinian nationalism with Islamic fundamentalism
- Main opposition to Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority
 - Hamas & PLO each have approximately 30% Palestinian support
- Determined foe of Israeli-Palestinian peace
- Shadow government with an extensive social service network

- **Palestinian Islamic Jihad**

- Islamic Jihad is a much smaller, less organized group of Islamist radicals with closer ties to Iran
- Unlike Hamas, no network of schools, clinics, or mosques -- **Focuses entirely on terrorism**
- Leadership lives in Syria
- February 2003 – Justice Department indicted Islamic Jihad leaders, including a Florida college professor—for conspiring to kill and wound people abroad and conspiring to fund a terrorist organization



Who Conducts Suicide Terror?



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- **Al Aqsa Martyr Brigades**

- A group of West Bank militias affiliated with Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat's al-Fatah faction and have been one of the driving forces behind the current Palestinian *intifada*
- Ideology
 - Rooted in Palestinian nationalism – **not political Islam**
- Initially vowed to target only Israeli soldiers and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip
 - Began a spree of terrorist attacks against civilians in Israeli cities in early 2002
 - Have killed more Israelis than any other terrorist organization since 2002
- Links to Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad & Hezbollah



Who Conducts Suicide Terror?



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- **Hezbollah**

- Lebanese group of Shiite militants sponsored by Iran
- Opposes the West, seeks to create a Muslim fundamentalist state modeled on Iran
- Organized after Israeli invasion of Lebanon -- bitter foe of Israel
- Operates in Europe, Africa and Americas
- Links to Al Qaeda for training and logistics

- **Chechen Separatists**

- Loosely organized groups, with semi-independent commanders
- Not all are terrorists, but those who practice political Islam
- Ties to Al Qaeda and other fundamentalist Islamic groups
- Fought with Taliban in OEF
- Zacarias Moussaoui, the "20th hijacker" was formerly a recruiter for al Qaeda backed rebels in Chechnya



Who Conducts Suicide Terror?



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- **Al Qaeda**

- An international terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden
- Seeks to rid Muslim countries of what it sees as the profane influence of the West and replace their governments with fundamentalist Islamic regimes
- Operates in Pakistan since collapse of Taliban
- Active cells in US, Western Europe, Albania, Uganda & elsewhere
- Links to at least eight other terrorist organizations, among them: Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Lashkir-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad (Kashmir), Abu Sayyaf Group (Malaysia & Philippines)

- **Ansar Al Islam**

- Ansar al-Islam is a Taliban-style radical Kurdish, Sunni Islamic group
- Located in the pseudo-autonomous Northern Iraq
- Strong ties to al-Qaeda
- The most radical group operating in the Iraqi Kurdistan region
- All recent Baghdad bombing linked to AAI



Who Conducts Suicide Terror?



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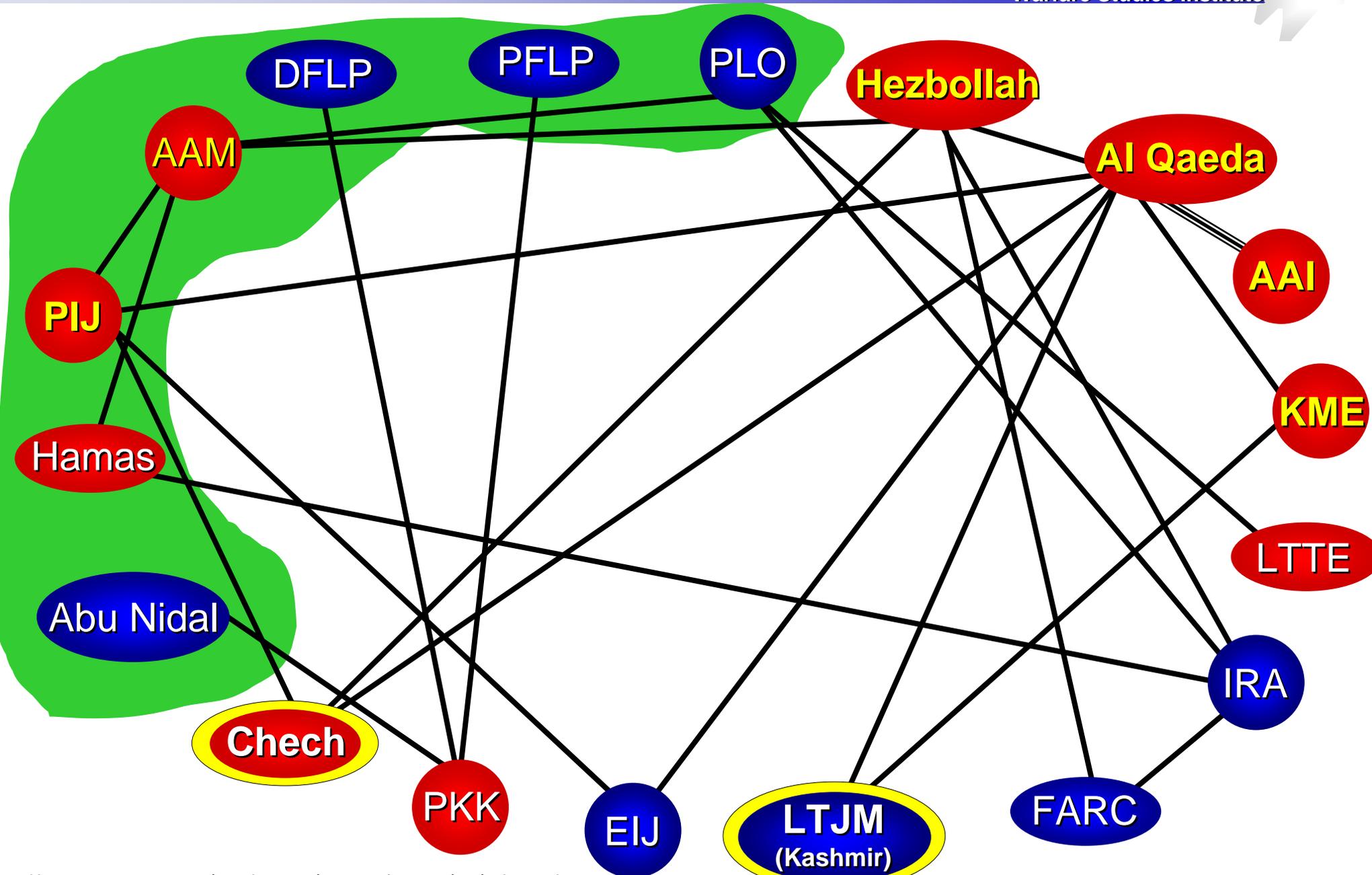
- **PKK – Kurdistan Workers Party**
 - A Marxist separatist group that seeks to create an independent Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey and parts of neighboring countries inhabited by Kurds
 - Operates in areas inhabited by Kurds and Syria
 - Links to Al Aqsa Martyr Brigades, and left wing Palestinian groups
 - Trained by Abu Nidal (Al Fatah splinter group) and other Palestinian groups in Iraq, Libya and Syria
 - Ideology conflicts with political Islamic groups and
 - Irredentist claims conflict with other groups such as Hezbollah
- **Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam (LTTE)**
 - Tamil Tigers are a separatist terrorist group that seeks an independent state in areas in Sri Lanka inhabited by ethnic Tamils
 - Secular nationalist Hindus in a majority Buddhist country
 - No known current links to other groups
 - Started training with PLO over 20 years ago
 - Innovations such as explosive jacket adopted by other groups



Are These Groups Linked?



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Why Suicide Terror?



- Perception -- seemingly irrational act
- From the perspective of a terrorist organization it's a strategy that is:
 - Well planned
 - Logical
 - Designed to achieve specific political objectives
- Suicide attacks have increased over the past two decades
- Why?



Because terrorists have learned they work!!!



What Are the Numbers?



- 1981 - 2002 -- **274** apparent cases of suicide terror
 - Does not include state sponsored terror campaigns
- Starts with Hezbollah in Lebanon
 - 1981 -- attack on Iraqi Embassy -- Beirut
 - 1983 -- killed 384 in six attacks
 - US Embassy -- Feb
 - 241 Marines at Beirut Airport -- Oct
 - Simultaneous attack on French
 - Cars, grenades and explosive belts
- Since 2001
 - Al Qaeda killed >3000 in NYC
 - Chechens
 - Kashmir
 - LTTE
 - Palestinians

} All conducted suicide missions





What Are the Numbers?



- Approximately 95% of the 274 attacks were part of well-organized, coherent campaigns by terrorist groups
- Why?
 - When terrorist leaders announced end of attacks they ceased
 - April 24, 2003 first attack on Israel since start of OIF
- 16 identifiable campaigns with 5 still ongoing
- Notable campaigns
 - Hezbollah v. Iraq, U.S. & France -- 6 attacks; 1983 - 1984
 - Hezbollah v. Israel -- 16 attacks; 1983 - 1985
 - Palestinians v. Israel -- 44 attacks; 1999 - present
 - Hamas / AAMB / IJ
 - Hezbollah
 - Al Qaeda v. the West – 28 attacks; 1999 - present
 - LTTE v. Sri Lanka -- **168** attacks; 1987 – present

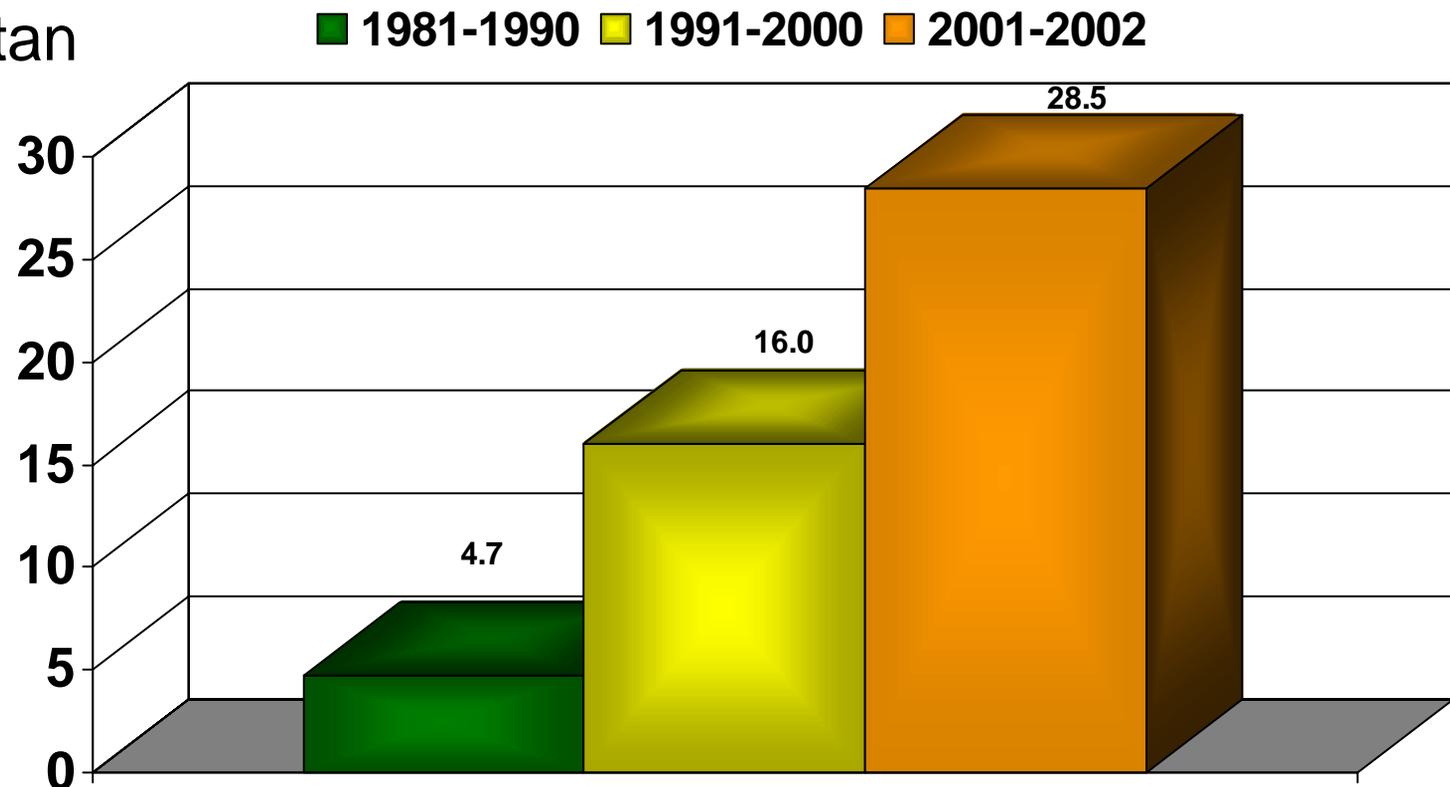
Prior to 9/11 Hezbollah responsible for almost all U.S. deaths from terror



What's The Trend?



- Of 57 attacks in 2001 - 2002:
 - 29 in Sri Lanka by Tamil Tigers (All in 2001)
 - 20 in Israel
 - 3 in Pakistan
 - 5 Misc



Annual Suicide Terror Rate (By Decade)



What's The Trend?



Instances of Suicide Terror 2003



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Date	#	Location	Group
16-Jun	1	Binyamina, Israel	IJ
11-Jun	1	Jerusalem	HA
8-Jun	3	Gaza	HA IJ AAM
17-May	1	Jerusalem	HA IJ
17-May	1	Grozny	Chechan
16-May	1	Hebron	HA IJ
16-May	10	Casablanca	AQ
15-May	1	Taiwan	Individual
14-May	1	Chechnya	Chechan
12-May	8	Riyadh	AQ
11-May	1	Karachi	AQ
3-May	1	Haifa	HA
30-Apr	1	Tel Aviv	HA
24-Apr	1	Kafr Sabn, Israel	HA
3-Apr	1	Gonya A, Israel	HE
31-Mar	1	Netanya, Israel	HA
30-Mar	1	Hebron	AAM
28-Mar	1	Hebron	AAM
22-Mar	1	Halabja, Iraq	AQ (AAI)
6-Mar	1	Tel Aviv	HA
5-Mar	1	Haifa	AAM
26-Feb	1	Salaimariah, Iraq	AQ (AAI)
5-Jan	1	Haifa	AAM
5-Jan	1	Jerusalem	AAM



What's The Trend?



Instances of Suicide Terror

2003

61

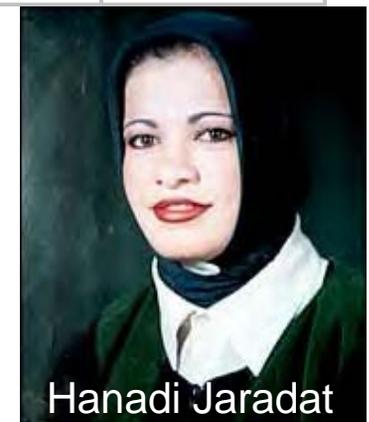
Suicides to Date



Baghdad -- 14 Oct 03

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Date	#	Location	Group
14-Oct	1	Baghdad	UNK -- AAI
12-Oct	1	Baghdad	AAI
9-Oct	1	Baghdad	AAI
5-Oct	1	Haifa	IJ
22-Sep	1	Baghdad	AAI
9-Sep	1	Irbil, Iraq	AAI
9-Sep	1	Tel Aviv	HA
9-Sep	1	Jerusalem	HA
29-Aug	1	Najaf, Iraq	AAI
19-Aug	1	Jerusalem	IJ
19-Aug	1	Baghdad	AAI
12-Aug	1	Ariel, Israel	IJ
12-Aug	1	Rosh Ha'ayin, Israel	Hamas
2-Aug	1	Vladikavkaz, RU	Chechan
27-Jul	1	Tsatsan-Yurt, CH	Chechan
8-Jul	1	Kafar Yavetz, Israel	IJ
5-Jul	2	Moscow	Chechan
4-Jul	1	Quetta, Pakistan	AAI



Hanadi Jaradat

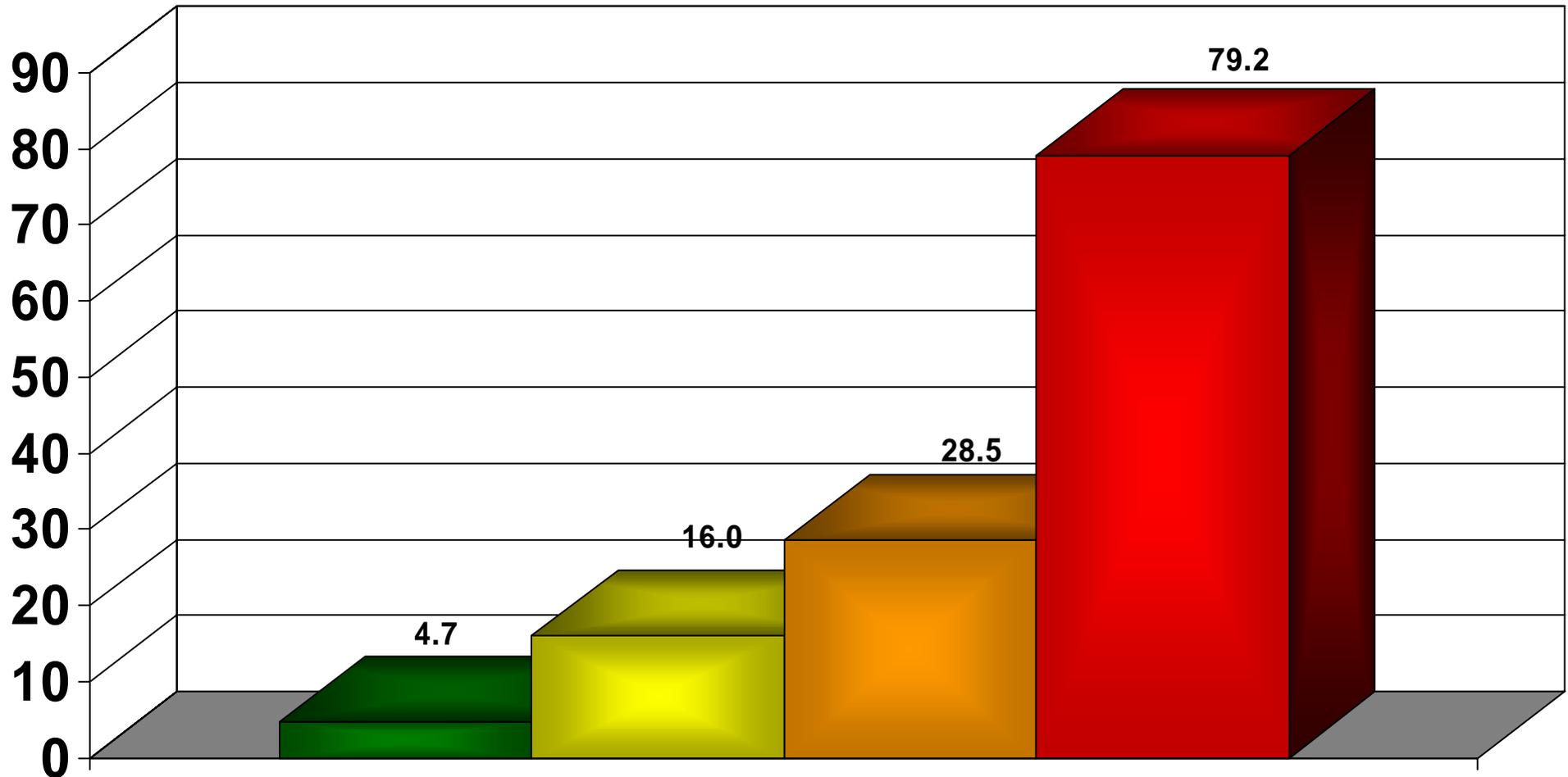


What's The Trend?



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■ 1981-1990 ■ 1991-2000 ■ 2001-2002 ■ 2003



Suicide Terror -- Annualized Rate (By Decade)

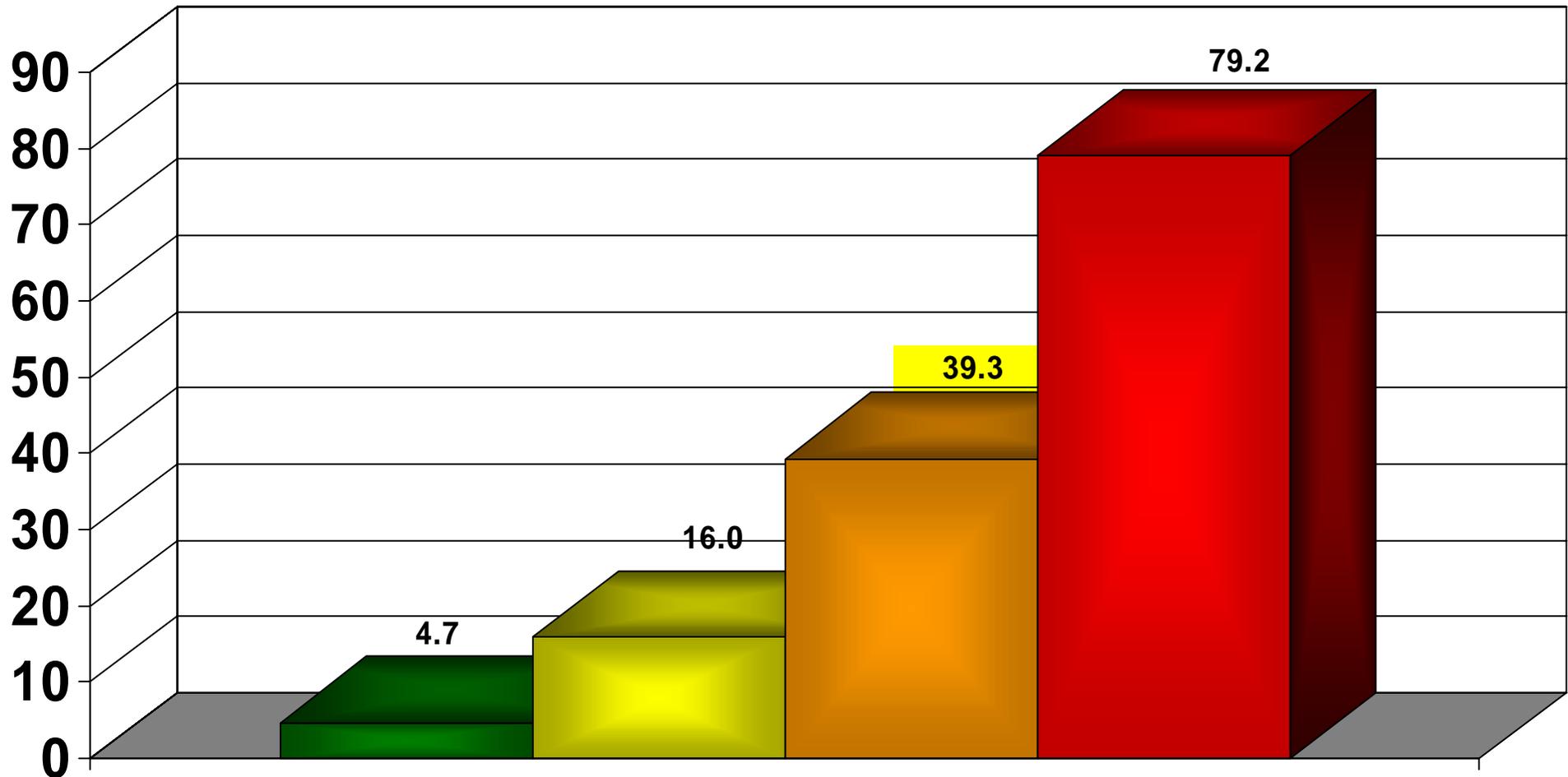


What's The Trend?



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Suicide Terror -- Annualized Rate (By Decade)

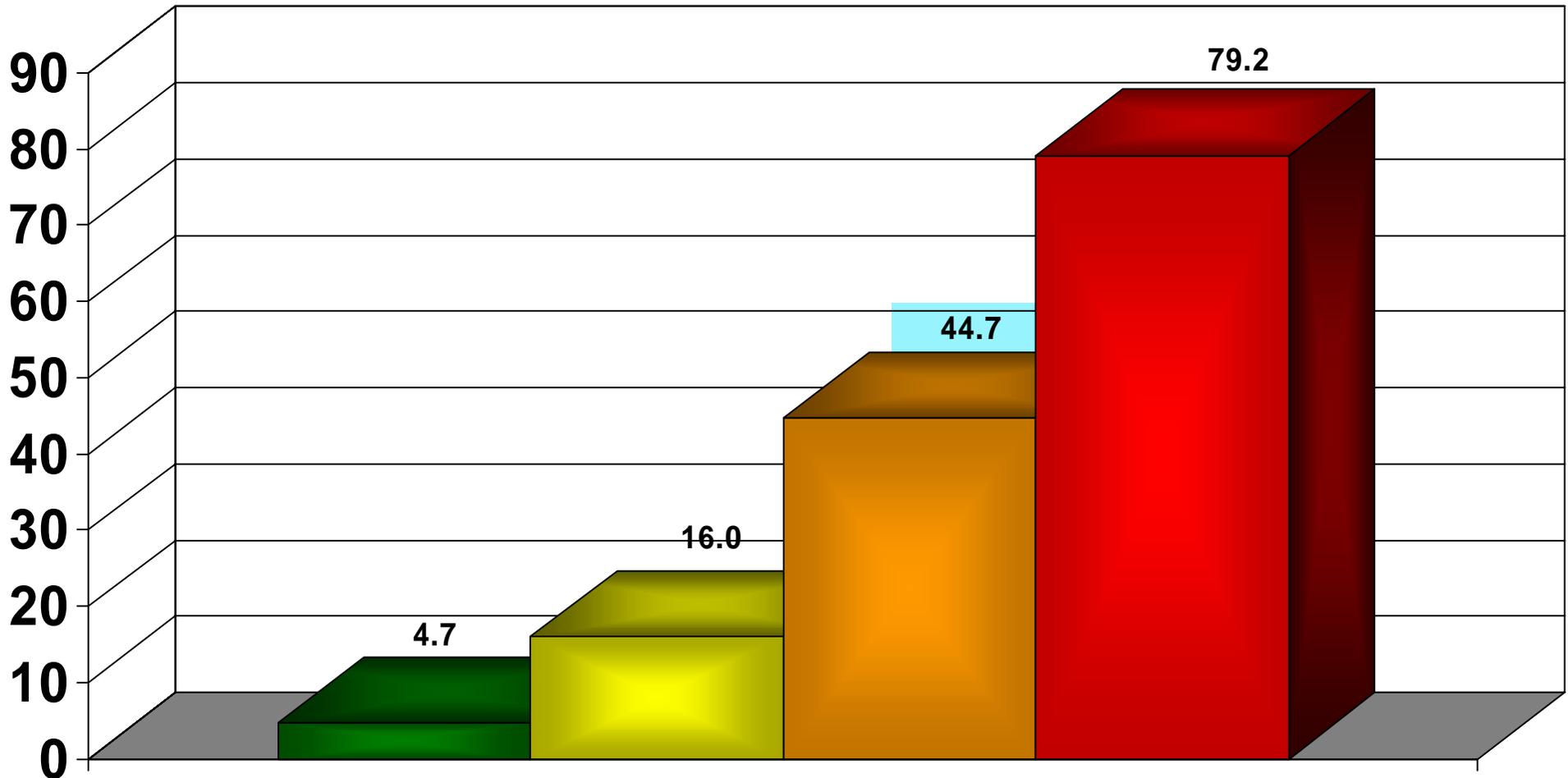


What's The Trend?



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■ 1981-1990 ■ 1991-2000 ■ 2001-2003 ■ 2003



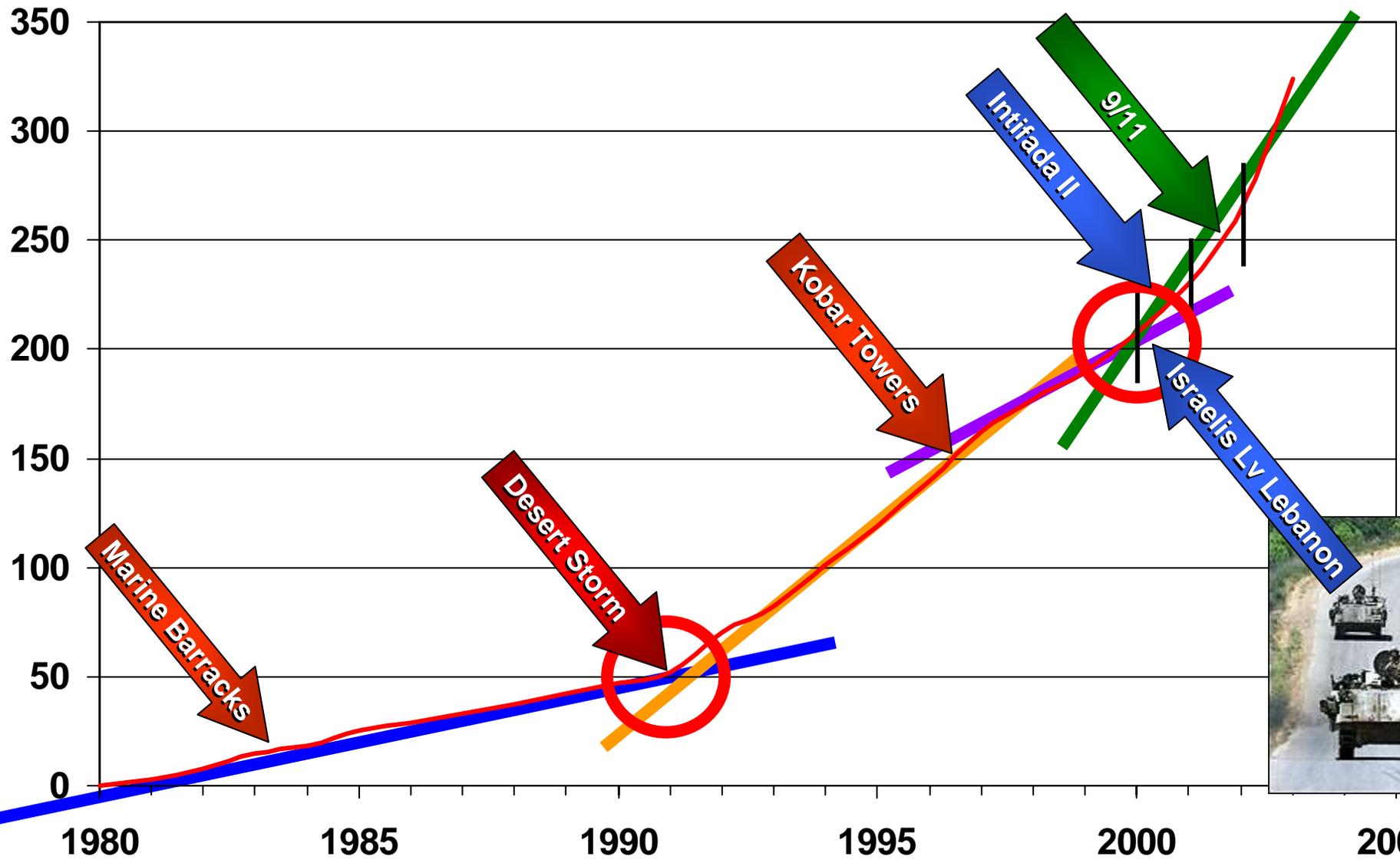
Suicide Terror -- Annualized Rate (By Decade)



What's The Trend?



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Why Do They Do It?



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Because terrorists have learned it works!!!

- Every campaign had territorial goals
 - Gain control of their perceived national homeland
 - Eject foreign military forces from that territory

Occupation may not be sufficient cause for suicide terrorism to occur, but...

Military presence does appear to be a necessary condition

Even Al Qaeda's goals for 9/11 included ridding Saudi Arabia of U.S. troops



Who Gets Targeted?



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- Almost every suicide campaign targeted democracies
 - Democracies especially vulnerable to coercive punishment
- Examples
 - Russia
 - Mujahadeen used guerrilla warfare against Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1980s
 - Chechen rebels employed suicide attacks against democratic Russia
 - Kurds
 - Repressed severely by Saddam Hussein -- far worse than by Turks
 - Used suicide attacks only against Turkey, who moved toward democracy in 1983





Why Is It Growing?



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- In 6 of the 11 campaigns that ended terrorists achieved at least partial political gains
- Target states
 - Fully or partially withdrew from territory
 - Began negotiations
 - Released a terrorist leader
- Represents 55% success rate
 - Other punishment strategies such as airpower or economic sanctions work no more 15% of the time
- Suicide campaigns have been successful against a variety of democratic governments -- even hawkish ones
 - Reagan Administration
 - Netanyahu



Succeeded despite military raids to kill or arrest terrorist leaders



Why Is It Growing?



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- Democratic leaders publicly confirmed suicide attacks pushed them to make concessions
- Example: **Israel accelerated withdrawal from Gaza**
 - Hamas began a series of suicide bombings
 - Response to Israel missing Oslo Accord withdrawal deadline
 - Hebron Massacre – 29 Palestinians killed and >150 wounded at hands of Israeli settler
 - Hamas suspended campaign seeing suicide attacks had the surprising effect of accelerating Israeli withdrawal



“The current situation creates endless possibilities for Hamas and others.”

-- PM Rabin, address to Knesset



Why Is It Growing?



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- Democratic leaders publicly confirmed suicide attacks pushed them to make concessions
- Example: **United States left Lebanon in 1983 because of suicide attacks**

“We couldn’t stay there and run the risk of another suicide attack on the Marines.”

-- Ronald Reagan, *An American Life*



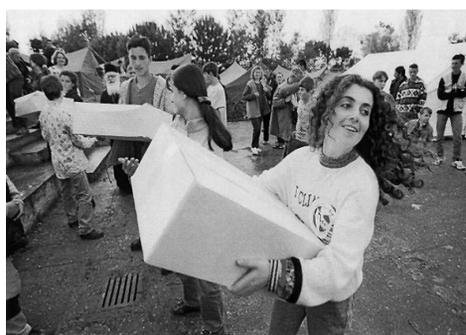


Why Are Suicide Attacks Effective?



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- Punishment strategies using airpower or economic sanctions are generally ineffective
- With standard military coercion stronger states pressure weaker states
 - Targets rarely submit because nationalist citizens are willing to endure relatively high costs
 - Target governments can minimize punishment
 - Air Defense
 - Social Programs
 - State coercion



The Strategic Logic Of Suicide Terror



Why Are Suicide Attacks Effective?



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- Suicide attacks work because they have a different structure
- With suicide terrorism model the *weaker acts as coercer* and the stronger actor is the target
- Key difference
 - Target of suicide campaign cannot easily adjust to minimize future damage





Suicide Terrorists' Gains Limited



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- Suicide attacks do not achieve goals central to security or wealth
 - Target can retaliate
- Even with a complete gain – US withdrawal from Lebanon – US had only humanitarian interest at stake
- Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985 troops remained in security buffer
- 1994 – 1995 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and West Bank
 - Settlements increased
 - IDF had no trouble going back when they thought necessary



Do We Need A New Strategy?



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Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks.

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Borders

Research &
Technology

**Threats &
Protection**

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with DHS

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Room

Secretary Ridge Participates in Council for Excellence in Government Town Hall in St. Louis

October 8 - Secretary Ridge participated today in the first in a series of town hall meetings with the Council for Excellence in Government (CEG). This first town hall took place in St. Louis, Missouri as a component of a critical new CEG initiative, Homeland Security from the Citizens' Perspective. The initiative is designed to connect citizens with business leaders, first responders, volunteer and civic organizations, members of academia, and government officials at the federal, state, and local level on the topic of homeland security. Secretary Ridge launched the new initiative with the CEG on September 16th in Washington, DC.

OTHER TOP STORIES



Be Prepared Stay Informed

Citizens

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Government

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READY.GOV
Don't be afraid...Be Ready



Do We Need A New Strategy?



This...



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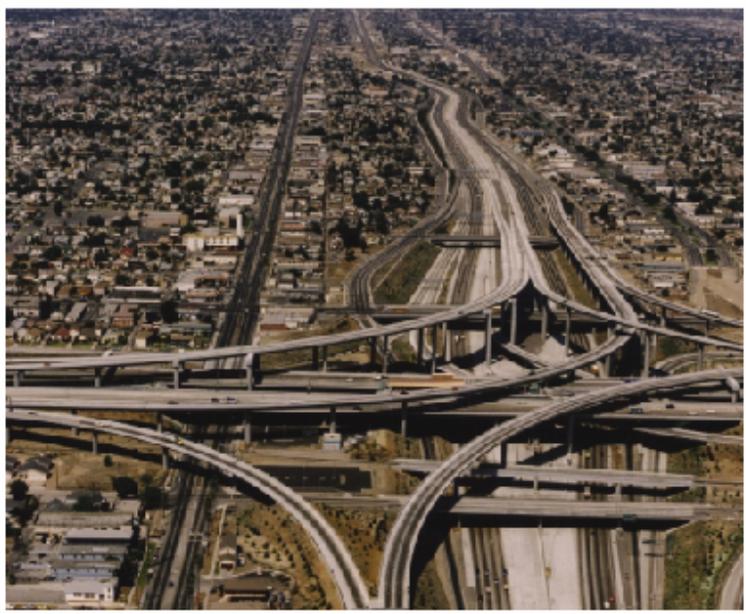
**is a response,
not a strategy**



Do We Need A New Strategy?



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Organizing for a Secure Homeland

The tactics of modern terrorists are unbounded by the traditional rules of warfare. Terrorists transform objects of daily life into weapons, visiting death and destruction on unsuspecting civilians. Defeating this enemy requires a focused and organized response.

American Federalism and Homeland Security
American democracy is rooted in the precepts of federalism—a system of government in which our state and local governments share power with federal institutions. The Tenth Amendment reserves to the states and to the people all power not specifically delegated to the federal government. Our structure of overlapping federal, state, and local governance—the United States has more than 87,000 different jurisdictions—provides unique opportunities and challenges. The opportunity

Defeating this enemy requires a focused and organized response.

Prevent -- 68

Initiative -- 12

Respond -- 98

Response -- 151



A New NSC 68



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- As a minimum we need to articulate
 - Background of the present conflict
 - Recurring periods of violence and war
 - Terrorists are animated by ideologies antithetical to our own
 - People of the world yearn for relief from the anxiety of arising from global terrorism
 - Issue involves fulfillment or destruction of civilization itself
 - Fundamental purpose of the United States
 - Assure the integrity of and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual
 - Three realities emerge as a consequence of this purpose
 - Determination to maintain essential elements of individual freedom
 - Determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper
 - Determination to fight if necessary to defend our way of life



A New NSC 68



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- Fundamental design of the terrorists
- Underlying conflict in the realm of ideas and values
 - Nature of the Conflict
 - Objectives
 - Means
- Terrorists' intentions and capabilities— actual and potential
- American intentions and capabilities— actual and potential
- Present risks
- Possible COAs
 - Continue current policies
 - Isolation
 - War
 - Build-up and use instruments of national / international power in concert with others who share like-minded objectives



Any Policy Lessons To Learn?



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- Neither military action nor concessions alone rarely work
- Government must deny terrorists the ability to inflict significant damage to targets
- Homeland Security – most underrepresented issue in current public debate
 - Homeland Security Administration – a bureaucratic creation
 - Created to show government “did something” after 9/11
 - Simply reorganized previously existing organizations
 - Added no new resources or ideas
 - No incentive pull within organization
 - Key components resourced from organizations that retain loyalty of personnel
 - Are the American people ready for a long, long campaign?



Any Policy Lessons To Learn?



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You can't be "kinda" committed

**Because there're no
"Al Kindas" on their side!!!**

And you should understand...

**Like or not, you're a target – so
you've already been drafted!!!**



Any Policy Lessons To Learn?



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Some of us still don't get it...

"There is a war going on in the Middle East, and members of Hamas are soldiers in that war."

-- Howard Dean, Presidential Candidate

10 Sep 2003



Even the European Union recognizes Hamas as a terrorist organization!!!



Any Policy Lessons To Learn?



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- Not an **anti**-terrorism effort
- **Pro Freedom, Prosperity & Safety campaign**
- Four pillars of Homeland Security
 - Preemption
 - Prevention
 - Recovery
 - Reconstitution





Suicide Terror



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- Almost all we “know” about suicide terrorism is wrong
- Terrorists organizations employ it because it works
- Suicide terror is normally part of an organized campaign
 - Similar to airpower or economic punishment strategies
 - Different in that the weaker attempts to coerce the stronger
 - Used almost exclusively on democratic nations
 - It's use has grown exponentially over the last two decades



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Key Question

If not all military occupations breed terrorism,
which ones do, and why?

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