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The terrorism threat to the US and the US interest worldwide remains significant years after the 9/11 attacks. According to the counter terrorism center, terrorism incidences against the US homeland have reduced considerably in the last three years. (Court TV Crime Library) The primary threat has been and remains the Al Qaeda network, as well as other terrorism activities sanctioned by such countries as Cuba, North Korea, Syria and Iran.

The government through intelligence agencies has doubled efforts to increase the information on terrorism and terrorists. Additionally, there have been reviews of the existing techniques of profiling terrorists. This follows the fact that some of these techniques have failed in providing effective models of profiling terrorists.

Profiling models for terrorists consist of analyzing different persons and using the information gained to determine identities of potential terrorists or perpetrators of terrorism activities. Some of the technology used in the detection of terrorists is intrusive and violates the privacy issues (Turvey, Brent, 1998). Therefore, it has been difficult to distinguish between criminals and innocent people. Additionally, some state of the art technologies and profiling techniques are difficult to use by non-technical people.

HOW PROFILING TECHNIQUES SHOULD CHANGE

According to security experts the US as well as the world at large is at an increasing threat of terrorist attacks that are worse than the 9/11 attacks in terms of loss of life and property. There is increased innovation and sophistication in the operations in the modern terrorist. The destructive

potential of the weapons used today, has also increased significantly (Turvey, Brent, 1998). It is therefore imperative that some changes be implemented to ensure that the techniques are able to meet the threat of terrorism not only in the US but also elsewhere in the world where such a threat exists. Some of the recommended changes include:

- Professionals especially psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists have an ever increasing role in the practice of terrorists profiling. Through behavioral analysis, documentation, and skilled interviewing; as well as proactive questioning techniques, it is possible to sift persons with criminal motives from innocent citizens so that security personnel can further scrutinize them. (Court TV Crime Library) The FBI academy, behavioral science unit, is a step in the right direction.
- Developing analysis support systems that can separate terrorist activities from innocent activities.
- Raising awareness among the general public, so they can be able to take note of innocuous activities, which could be indicative of terrorist activities.
- The importance of new technology in the fight against terrorism cannot be over emphasized, especially development of systems that allows surveillance without violating on people's privacy.
- The progress that has been made to move beyond the guilty by association and model should be consolidated so as to eliminate or reduce errors associated with it.

- Due to the constant changes in terrorist behaviors and operations the profiling techniques need to be constantly changing, revised and research on different models should continue with greater tempo.
- Important security personnel such as airport, airline and sea port security managers, representatives from various embassies and consulates, security managers, police officers and finally the government personnel involved in critical infrastructure protection should be thoroughly trained so as to be attentive to strange behaviors that could be an indication of terrorism intents.

ROLE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

Due to the increased threat of terrorism in recent years and events such as the anthrax scare that followed the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC, the work of forensic psychologists became critical and more critical though is forensic techniques. This involves the application of both personality and criminal profiling theory towards the psycho-behavior profiling of terrorist and their leaders/commanders. Profiles of these types of figures would serve multiple purposes.

They would suggest how an individual is most likely to proceed on their terrorism endeavor, how they would respond to a particular action by the profiler's allies or how persistent the individual is at obtaining particular goals. For instance, Saddam Hussein and Bin Laden could have two contrasting traits in that Saddam is tyrant in nature while Laden is a highly rebellious character.

These profiles help the forensic psychologists to identify and track the terrorists to identify and track the terrorists together with their associates hence greatly impacting on the terrorism rate.

PROFILE OF A TYPICAL TERRORIST

Comparative and Theoretical Aspects.

- The typical terrorist is unmarried. Many terrorists are ready to die for the cause and they have no faith in the future. Many remain unmarried because they wish to avoid long-term commitments (Schneier, Bruce. 2004).
- Religious. Most terrorists are Muslims and although not all Muslims support terrorism, there is a strong historical link between Islamic and terrorism which cannot be overlooked.
- Considerably educated. The terrorist of today are most likely to be well educated, meticulous in their planning, and knowledgeable in the use of modern communication equipments and methods.
- Subscribes to radical and revolutionary ideologies. The man or woman who is ready to die for a cause is either a nationalist/patriot or a “psychopath” who more often than not has a poor family background and seeks recognition in a bad way. However the modern terrorist is really not mentally ill, but rather has been deeply brainwashed with very narrow “ideologies.”
- Could be male or female although there is a bias for male terrorists.

- The age of probable terrorist is twenties or early thirties.
- Family connections. A likely candidate could have family relations with people who have been involved in terrorism or those who sympathize with terrorist activities.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

- A modern day terrorist is ready to die and is not very interested in planning for an escape route.
- A terrorist is ready to forfeit concerns about personal security in order to break the barriers of defense that may exist.
- The goal of the terrorist is to make a statement that advances their cause and is mentally convinced they are doing not only the right thing but the “honorable” thing.

CONCLUSION

The threat of terrorism is very real today and governments all over the world should collaborate and work together to ensure they reduce their collective and individual vulnerability to terrorist activities. Measures should be put into place to protect the US homeland. However, it should be noted that all terrorist activities are difficult to eliminate; and profiling terrorist remains an uphill task for security experts and personnel. Research and regular review of and revisions of techniques should be made in the area of terrorist profiling, to ensure the techniques utilized are constantly up to date and able to keep up with the dynamics of modern terrorist operations.

References

Schneier, Bruce (2004). Behavioral Assessment Profiling. Retrieved on June 19, 2007

www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2004/11/profile_hinky.html

Turvey, Brent, (1998). Deductive Criminal Profiling: Comparing Applied Methodologies