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17.586 Warlords, Terrorists, and Militias: Theorizing on Violent Non-State Actors  
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# Suicide Terrorism

## **Introduction:**

The readings discuss the phenomenon of suicide terrorism behavior from different angles and provide different analysis. They provide an understanding for the processes and aspects that leads to the development of suicide terrorism and the execution of the attacks. It further gives an overview about the mass-fatality CBRN attack and its pros and cons, and past involvement of terrorist groups with this kind of weapons. Finally , points out the importance of media and publicity to address suicide bombings and their role in international awareness.

## **Assaf Moghadam, “Palestinian Suicide Terrorism in the Second Intifada: Motivations and Organizational Aspects”**

Moghadam presents a two phase model to explain the process and factors underlying the development of Palestinian Suicide bombers. His analysis assumes that suicide terrorism is both an individual and organizational phenomena and they both are integral to each other. He applies this analysis to the case of suicide bombers that occurred in the Second Intifada, from Sep 2000 to June 2002.

He explains that for Palestinians who have the motive to perform such an attack they still need the organization to provide them with recourses, information and organizational capacity. His model is divided into two phases where the motivated recruiter is willing to die and kill and its called “ Motivational Phase” and when the organization indoctrinate and train him and that is the “Institutional Phase”

He further addresses the motives for suicide bombers. It could be a religious motive like the notion of Jihad and its rewards afterwards, the perception of the enemy as infidel, Islam versus Judaism from a radical Islamist point, and seeking Martyrdom. It also could be a personal motive, as dying as a Shaheed when God will forgive Marty’s sins. The family of the suicide bomber as well will benefit financially and socially after his death.

The determination to form a Palestinian identity on a Palestinian land is one of the nationalist motives as well as trying to stop the continuity of Israeli settlement and check points which cause frustration among the Palestinians. He finally illustrates that the harsh economic situation which causes living in an economic distress is an economic motive for suicide bomber who won’t hesitate to give revenge to those who are responsible for this economic distress.

He also highlights an important sociological aspect of suicide bombers which he calls “Luminal state between two life stages” which is a social problem that rises among youth where they are no longer children or independent. And this creates a problem in a society who is family oriented. This problem makes them an easy target for terrorist organizations especially in high populated towns where economic difficulties arise.

The organizational aspect of suicide bombers involves recruitment, training, and indoctrination, strategic planning... etc. the motives and goals for organizations according to Moghadam could be “official” or “operative” goals or both. The official goals are general; they would be the outline of the plan however the operative goals are concentrated toward the aim itself.

Finally, Moghadam gives an overview about the four Palestinian organizations – Hamas, PIJ, Fatah, Tanzim, and Al Aqsa Martyrs, and PFLP employing suicide terrorist. The recruitments depends on religious devotion, reliability and trustworthy. Selection

process starts in mosques, religious sessions, and university campus and on Israeli jails. The organization will record and peptalk to prevent the candidate from changing his mind at the last moment. They will make sure he will reach to the “point of no return”

### **Adam Dolnik, “Die and Let Die: Exploring Links between Suicide Terrorism and Terrorist Use of Chemical, Biological, radiological and Nuclear Weapons.”**

He addresses why suicide terrorism doesn’t make a mass casualty attack by a CBRN. Firstly, he highlights some issues like what is the suicide terrorist behavior, how does it start and how does it grow, if the terrorists dies willingly in their missions or if they are unaware of their death, if the terrorist killed himself or was a part of the killing act. All these points help to define the suicide operation nature.

He further gives an overview about the groups who uses CBRN and their tactical and motivational details. For example some groups use this way for the benefit to select the time, location and the exact circumstances of the attack like Hezbollah attack against American Embassy on October 1983. Additionally, it removes any trace of this mission; therefore, reduces the possibility of capture and interrogation. On the other hand he explains the negative influence of suicide bombings on its organization. For instance, the lack of understanding of “martyrdom operations by the Western society and the impact on the target population to become more radicalized and less willing to compromise. Religious terrorists for example seems to be unconcerned with public opinion, therefore they use it. He also points out the motives of suicide bombers mainly the phenomenon Istishad and its rewarding after death.

Finally Dolnik provides an analysis of possible suggestions of the findings for future CBRN weapons by non-state actors. They could be individual motivations as Shaheed motivations or group ones like motivations of political goals, Islamist ideology or separatist goals in combination with ethnic nationalism.

### **Mia Bloom “ Palestinian Suicide Bombing: Public Support, market Share and Outbidding**

Mia points out the importance of publicity to address suicide bombing attacks and their role in global awareness. She further explains why the Palestinian publicity encourages suicide missions against Israeli civilians and military recruits. The reading shows how the Palestinian violence is viewed as a type of terrorism, while Israeli attacks are perceived as an unwarranted force. Mia explains that in order for the Palestinians to be considered as non terrorist groups they should look for ways to resist without using violence means against Israeli civilians.

Additionally, she stresses the importance of a solid Palestinian authority to function properly toward peace and peace process. Because of continuing destruction and failure of political administrative the Palestinian authority was diminished and its role failed.

### **Questions for discussions**

- What instill individuals with the willingness to die and perform suicide attacks, especially in non religious societies?
- What are the ways and technique terrorist organization use to mold and shape individuals for terrorism attack, and how do they plan it.
- How do organizations choose their targets, depends on what basis and factors.

- What are the pros and cons for suicide bombings? And is it justifiable?
- What is the impact of social and economic conditions on suicide bombers?
- To what extent do suicide bombing succeed to achieve political and government shifts?
- How western media conveys terrorism and how the media of terrorist organizations convey terrorism and western.