Theoterrorism

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Paul Cliteur

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The central question

• To what extent is contemporary terrorism “religious” in nature?

• And why is it important to explore this?
What is “contemporary terrorism”? 

- 9/11 2001
- Contemporary terrorism is, according to the terrorists themselves, religious in nature
- It’s commanded by God
Osama Bin Laden (1957-2011)

Only religious? Of course not


• The religious is never completely separated from the political, the geopolitical, the moral
First attempt to explore this topic

- 2010: The monotheist dilemma
- For the monotheist there is always the “temptation” to devaluate this world to honor the next
Caveat

Of course:

1. Overwhelming majority of monotheist believers (Jews, Christians, Muslims) does not perpetrate terrorist attacks

2. It may be possible to construe biblical and koranic texts as messages of love and understanding
No relation between religion and violence

• Karen Armstrong (b. 1944)
• Religion is always good
• And when it seems to have violent dimension, this is not “really religious”, but “fundamentalist”
Nearly all terrorism experts and politicians support Armstrong

- Hillary Clinton
- Merica, Dan, “ISIS is neither Islamic nor a state, says Hillary Clinton”, CNN, October 7, 2014.
- When do we have a “state”? When is something “religious”? 
“Violent extremism”

- Barack Obama
Burgemeester van Amsterdam (daarvoor Den Haag)

- Jozias Van Aartsen
- Van Aartsen: “Gehamer op salafisme is vervuiling van het debat”
Causes of contemporary terrorism:

1. Terrorists feel oppressed or humiliated by military interventions in their part of the world
2. Terrorists are discriminated
3. Terrorists fight for the poor and needy in this world
4. Terrorists fight western arrogance
5. It’s “racism” to think otherwise
Noam Chomsky: the radical left

Denial of religious dimension 1

- “Violent extremism”
- Terrorists are spurred not by their own humiliation, but by watching the humiliation of people they associate with...
Denial of religious dimension 2

- 315 suicide terrorism attacks around the world from 1980 through 2003
- The U.S.-led war on terrorism is based on a faulty premise, i.e. that suicide terrorism is mainly a product of Islamic fundamentalism
Denial of religious dimension 3

“Il ne s’agit pas de la radicalization de l’islam, mais de l’islamisation de a radicalité.”
(Olivier Roy)

“Ils n’ont presque jamais un passé de piété et de pratique religieuse, au contraire.”
Premodern religion

• The separation of the religious and the political is a “modern” phenomenon

• The separation of Church/Mosque/Synagogue and State is unknown to pre-modern societies
One King, One Law, One Religion

un roi, une loi, une foi

- One King, One Law, One Religion (faith)

August 24th, 1572

St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre

From Paris the violence spread to other parts of France. Estimates of the death toll range from 10,000 – 70,000.
Blasphemy Law and lese majesty

- Lese majesty (crime that undermines the offender’s government, high treason, treason) is intimately connected with blasphemy (offending God)
What the terrorists **themselves** have to say

What moved me to do what I did was purely my faith. I was motivated by the law that commands me to cut off the head of anyone who insults Allah and his Prophet.

— Mohammed Bouyeri —
The only reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers. And this British soldier is one.... By Allah, we swear by the almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you until you leave us alone. So what if we want to live by the Sharia in Muslim lands? Why does that mean you must follow us and chase us and call us extremists and kill us? Adebolajo — Excerpted from a Daily Telegraph transcript
... Through many passages in the Koran we must fight them as they fight us...I apologise that women had to witness this today but in our lands women have to see the same. You people will never be safe. Remove your governments, they don’t care about you.
Adebolajo (continued)

... You think David Cameron is gonna get caught in the street when we start busting our guns? Do you think politicians are going to die? No, it's going to be the average guy, like you and your children. So get rid of them. Tell them to bring our troops back...leave our lands and you will live in peace.
Woolwich (South-East London)

- Extremist Michael Adebolajo, 31, has been branded “violent, unpredictable and a major danger to other prisoners.” (The Sun, 2017)
- Murdering Lee Rigby
Religious terrorism: a few examples

• 1995: Jigal Amir kills Jitzak Rabin (Israel)

• 2009: Scott Roeder kills George Tiller (abortion physician) (USA)

• 2004: Mohmmed Bouyeri kills Theo van Gogh (the Netherlands)
This religious terrorism is “theoterrorism”

• “Theo”, a conception of God, is a motivating factor for the terrorist mindset

• Terrorism is perpetrated as a result of some sort of “divine command”
The three terrorists: monotheist

- Jigal Amir killed Jitzak Rabin for what he saw as a religious cause: the defense of Judaism
- Scott Roeder killed George Tiller for what he saw as a religious cause: the defense of Christianity
- Mohammed Bouyeri killed Van Gogh for what he saw as the defense of Islam
Questions

• Can we simply ignore these testimonies by terrorists themselves?
• Can we say “We know better what your motives are than you yourself do?”
• And why is it important to have the right interpretation of the root causes of contemporary terrorism?
In the name of God: a terrorist attack every day

- In 2017, every day, somewhere in the world, there was a terrorist attack
- Chapter 4: “Verhofstadt’s diary”
- An attempt to highlight the “root causes” of terrorism
Motives of this enterprise

1. Is counterterrorism a success?

2. Is it important to be right about the causes of terrorism?
Ad 1. Is counterterrorism a success?

On the one hand:

• Yes, many terrorist attacks are foiled
• Yes, many terrorists are caught, brought to justice or killed in battle
• Yes, there are not so many terrorist attacks (in the Netherlands only one: the murder of Theo van Gogh)
This list can be expanded

- Yes, most people die, not because of terrorist attacks, but because of cancer
- Yes, in the long run terrorist attacks will abate (see ISIS)
The limitations of the success-story

• No, not a success, every day a terrorist attack
• No, not a success, the monopoly of violence by the state is thwarted
• No, not a success, our whole way of life has changed: no Mohammed cartoons in newspapers, security controls everywhere, political correctness on the rise (do not provoke the terrorists etc.)
Limits (continued)

• No, not a success, we had no terrorism to this extent in the previous century
• No, not a success, our politicians want us to get used to this new situation, but why should we? Why get used to their failure in realizing the most important task of the state: securing our life and limb on the territory of the state?
• Do not let you be fooled
Ad 2 Is it important to be right about the causes?

• Perhaps the failure of our politicians is due to their failure to put the right diagnosis of this phenomenon
• The “Armstrong-tradition” may be false
• We do not have the right cure, because we have failed to pose the right diagnosis
• Our politicians have failed, our terrorism experts have failed
• We have simply looked into the wrong direction
Two types of (theo)terrorist attacks

1. The type of attack that seems *random* (9/11, bus-, train-, metrostations, British Parliament)

2. The type of attack where the (theo)terrorist thinks there is room for *negotiation* (murder of Van Gogh or the French cartoonists)
The second type: discourage the people from using their rights

Molly Norris drew the original, poster-like cartoon on April 20, 2010, which declared May 20, 2010, to be the first annual "Everybody Draw Mohammed Day".

Go ghost
The effectiveness of theoterrorism

NOS 7 januari 2018

Now, three years later, the magazine is almost broke. Security costs. Nobody is Charlie anymore.
The death of Charb: in vain?

"Je n'ai pas peur des représailles. Je n'ai pas de gosses, pas de femme, pas de voiture, pas de crédit. Ça fait sûrement un peu pompeux, mais je préfère mourir debout que vivre à genoux."

Charb en 2012
Do we win or loose the battle for free speech?
The history of the conflict between terrorism and Free Speech
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes *freedom to change his religion or belief*, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)

Article 18

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
(Provisional) Conclusion

• The freedom to relinquish a religion (i.e. the freedom to apostatize) seems less protected
The Satanic Verses (1988)

- Fatwa in 1989
- Khomeini
- Clash of ideologies?
Khomeini’s judgment (fatwa)

In the name of Him, the Highest. There is only one God, to whom we shall return. I inform all zealous Muslims of the world that the author of the book entitled The Satanic Verses – which has been compiled, printed, and published in opposition to Islam, the Prophet, and the Qur’an – and all those involved in its publication who were aware of its content, are sentenced to death.
I call on all zealous Muslims to execute them quickly, wherever they may be found, so that no one else will dare to insult the Muslim sanctities. God willing, whoever is killed on this path is a martyr.

In addition, anyone who has access to the author of this book, but does not possess the power to execute him, should report him to the people so that he may be punished for his actions. May peace and the mercy of God and His blessings be with you.
Fatwa discussed in books on Rushdie
The Dutch prehistory 1

• Rudi Carrell’s *spoof* on Khomeini banned from Dutch television in 1987
The Dutch prehistory

- Death of a princess in 1980
- **Drama-documentary**, produced by ATV, believed to be based on the true story of Princess Masha’il who had been publicly executed for adultery.

- **Murdered** in 2004
Danish Cartoon Affair (2005)

• Kurt Westergaard
• Danish cartoon experiment
• Jyllands Posten invited 41 cartoonists to make cartoon
The Regensburg lecture or Regensburg address was delivered on 12 September 2006.

Pope quoted a passage about Islam made at the end of the 14th century by Manuel II Palaiologos, the Byzantine emperor.

- Wrote an article in *Le Figaro* in 2006
- Protesting against situation around Regensburg address of Pope
- Under police protection
Pastor Terry Jones (2010)

- Gained national and international attention in 2010 for his plan to burn Korans on the ninth anniversary of the September 11 attacks.
French Cartoon Affair (2015)

• January 2015
How to define this conflict?

- A Clash between racist provocation and decency?
- Or a Clash between the spirit of the First Amendment and theocratic dictatorship?
- But theocratic dictatorship by non-state actors
New limits to free speech?

• Limits for novels (Rushdie)?
• Provocations (Van Gogh)?
• Satire (Westergaard/Charbonnier)?
• Provocations (Jones)?
Solutions to this conflict

1. Present a realistic analysis of the nature of the conflict

2. Defend free speech by using it
Realistic analysis

What moved me to do what I did was purely my faith. I was motivated by the law that commands me to cut off the head of anyone who insults Allah and his Prophet.

—— Mohammed Bouyeri ——
Elements of theoterrorism

- Religion all-important
- Divine will commands execution of blasphemers
- Individual zealot has to act according to this
- Fear of death should not distract true believer (martyrdom)
- Religious legitimacy more important than secular legitimacy (theocracy vs democracy)
Dominant explanation after 2 November 2004 in Holland

Not religion is the basis of the problem but:
- polarization
- marginalization
- racism
- Enlightenment fundamentalism
- Western arrogance
- Provocating religious criticism
Murder of Theo van Gogh (2004)

- Murdered in 2004
- Thought that as the village idiot sharia law would not be applicable to him
Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived

Rudi Carrell

Theo van Gogh
Danish Cartoon Affair (2005)

- Kurt Westergaard
- Danish cartoon experiment
- Jyllands Posten invited 41 cartoonists to make cartoon
- Direct consequence of the murder of Van Gogh
Pope Benedict XVI in Regensburg (2006)

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• Wrote an article in *Le Figaro* in 2006
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First example Queen Beatrix in address during Christmas

On december 25, 2004

Extremism, in words and deeds, fissures society

“Extremisme, in woord en daad, splijt de gemeenschap.”
Queen Beatrix in 2006

Address during Christmas 2006 on principles of morals and civilization (two years later)

“Ze zijn het fundament van een samenleving die uitgaat van eerbied voor de medemens. Een recht om te beledigen bestaat dan ook niet.”
Second example, member of Cabinet L.J. Brinkhorst in 2006

“When I saw the film Submission, I thought: oh gosh, is this going to end well? You know what happens when you light a cigarette in an ammunition magazine. You may make such a film, but I thought it unwise. I find it totally understandable that this causes furor among Muslims. Pardon me, but who is naïve here?” Kleijwegt, Van Weezel, Het land van haat en nijd, p. 184.
Some questions

1. Was/is the Netherlands an ammunition magazine?
2. Who is responsible for this situation?
3. Does the state/government has a role here?
4. Can the state (cabinet) in all reasonableness require from citizens to abstain from exercising their civil rights?
5. Does not mr. Brinkhorst say we’re in a state of exception?
The implications of this view

The maintenance of the civil order, the security of the state, seems to shift from the shoulders of the state to that of the citizen.

But what happens with democracy when we really stop “smoking cigarettes”? Is this not ... submission?
Third example: Geert Mak

Mak, Geert, *Gedoemd tot kwetsbaarheid*, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam 2005 ("destined to be vulnerable").

- "traders in fear"
- *Ewige Jude-vergelijking*
Prize Prins Bernard Cultuurfonds 2017
The alternative
The influence on social policy

Conclusion of posing the right diagnosis

Posing the right diagnosis of the causes of terrorism is an essential precondition for having success in combating it;
Ad 2 Defend free speech by using it

“
The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

Edmund Burke
Defend your territory

We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.

— Winston Churchill —
Constitutional principles as state territory

No surrender
Thomas Couture: Les Romains dans la decadence
Our empire beyond the seas ...

We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.

(Winston Churchill)
Chahdortt Djavann

Comment lutter efficacement contre l’idéologie islamique

Grasset

Chahdortt Djavann
Bas les voiles!
Mina Ahadi

• Mina Ahadi (Persian: مینا احدي (born 1956) is an Iranian-Austrian political activist.
• opposed to faith-based laws and promotes citizenship rights and one secular law for all.
• founder of the German Central Council of Ex-Muslims.
Waleed al-Husseini

Waleed Al-Husseini is a Palestinian, essayist, writer and blogger. In October 2010, the Palestinian Authority arrested him for allegedly blaspheming against Islam on Facebook. His arrest garnered international attention.
Jeanette Bougrab

Jeannette Bougrab is a French lawyer and politician. She served as the junior minister for Youth and Community Life from 14 November 2010 to 10 May 2012 and is a member of the UMP party.
Cultural disease

Occidentofobie
Cultuurrelativisme
Loss of faith
Preoccupation with the dark pages European history
Racificatie
Nazificatie
Ibn Warraq

WHY THE WEST IS BEST
A Muslim Apostate’s Defense of Liberal Democracy

DEFENDING THE WEST
A Critique of Edward Said’s Orientalism
Nimrod - Churchill

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kx3W4F80L04
So far the termites have come

- Is Jihad niet de *reactie* op onze koloniale onderdrukking?
- Hebben we dit niet over ons zelf afgeroepen?
- Europees imperialisme
- De munitiemagazijn-theorie in internationaal verband
"How far the termites have spread, and how long and well they've dined."

Christopher Hitchens
National Security Strategy USA 2017

- Defeat Jihadist Terrorists
- “Jihadist terrorist organizations present the most dangerous terrorist threat to the Nation.” (p. 10 Ibid.)
Emmanuel Macron: terroriste islamiste

« Je veux répondre à la menace terroriste. Notre pays a été frappé dans sa chair ces dernières années. La bataille se fait à l’étranger. J’étais il y a quelques semaines aux côtés de nos soldats qui se battent pour nous défendre. Je veux que notre politique à l’étranger soit intraitable. Nous devons combattre ce terrorisme islamiste pour protéger nos enfants. »

– Emmanuel Macron, samedi 18 février 2017

#MacronToulon