

# ***An International View of the Terrorism Threat***

**Dr David Cropley**

**Systems Engineering & Evaluation Centre,  
University of South Australia**



# *Who am I to ...*

- **Native Australian**
- **Lived:**
  - Canada, Germany, UK, Australia
- **Served in UK armed forces**
  - Served in Middle East (1988)
- **Try to give view of recent world events from a friendly, but non-US, viewpoint.**

# *Outline*

- **Is this a new problem?**
- **Is this a religious problem?**
- **Is this an American problem?**
- **What makes modern terrorists different?**

# *Is this a new problem?*

- **No!**
  - UK & IRA, Spain & ETA, Germany & RAF, France & AD, etc., etc., etc.
- **Concern that the scale of 9/11 will lead to conclude that the current situation is fundamentally different. I don't think it is.**
- **In 30 years IRA killed approx. the same number as were killed on 9/11**
- **So what? Study other examples, learn from them, then apply SE.**
- **Like “prior outputs” as input to SE Process**

# ***Is this a religious problem?***

- **No!**
- **Root causes?**
- **The role of the first world in third world countries?**

# ***Is this an American problem?***

- **No. Simply a dramatic escalation of a problem that has existed in modern form for 50+ years.**
- **Don't reinvent the wheel.**
- **“We are all at risk” (Dobson and Payne, 1986)**

# ***Modern Terrorists***

- **Availability of technology**
- **Range of opportunities available**
- **Media coverage**
  - **Sept 11: saturation coverage around the world for weeks.**
  - **The terrorist ‘marketing’ dollar goes a long way.**
- **How can we deny the terrorists the very thing they seek – publicity – in a free society?**

# ***Revitalisation Project***

- **If it is seen as a problem of “America only” then there is a danger that it will become a marginalised activity in INCOSE.**
- **Wide ownership needs to be fostered**

# *The Dilemma*

- **“Prosperity can only be for the free, freedom is the sure possession of those alone who have the courage to defend it.”  
(Pericles)**
- **Accept that others may hold different beliefs equally strongly and passionately, but feel powerless to bring about change, except through terrorism**

# Conclusions

- **Terrorism is an international problem**
- **Many developed nations have extensive experience of terrorism – don't reinvent the wheel**
- **It is a socio-technical problem**
- **It is a 'soft system' problem which will not be amendable to hard SE solutions**
- **The ultimate test case for a 'soft systems' approach (e.g. Checkland)?**

# *End Note*

- **“For a while, in [year], it did look as though destabilization of [country] was a possibility. Something close to panic was detectable in the government of [country]. Political life was interrupted. It was difficult for outsiders to comprehend the deep anxiety which struck [country] society. In [country] it was the choice of victims, the horror of the crimes...which brought such panic. The country was going through its worst post-war ordeal.”**

# *End Note*

- **Where?**
- **Germany.**
- **When?**
- **1977.**
- **Terrorism didn't succeed then and will not succeed now because the roots of democracy, freedom and order run too deep to be dislodged.**

# References

- **Wiseman, J. 1991. *The Urban Survival Handbook*. HarperCollins, UK.**
- **Dobson, C. and Payne, R. 1986. *War Without End*. Harrap Ltd. London.**