**Introduction**

Topics to be covered include:

* Terrorism
* Transnational crime

Have you ever considered the non-traditional threats that increase the vulnerability of our national security? Terrorism is an obvious threat but it is considered a non-traditional threat since it has not been as widely used as traditional threats in the past. Historically terrorism has existed for centuries but it was not until the 1960s that it began to evolve into a security threat. Terrorists began hijacking airplanes for a number of reasons and one of the most significant events to result from terrorism and hijacking was 9/11. This specific event has shaped the direction the intelligence community has taken in order to secure our nation.

Another non-traditional threat to our nation’s security is trafficking in its various forms. Drug trafficking became a national issue in the 1980s following the influx of cocaine to keep up with the demand from users. This threat creates problem for security because our borders and economy, not to mention lives of citizens and foreigners, remain vulnerable. It is nearly impossible to police the expanse of our nation and traffickers take full advantage of this weakness.

Humans are regularly trafficked and this also poses a threat to our national security. There are considerable labor violations and crimes related to prostitution so that the group may financially benefit from this exploitation of others. Some victims are kidnapped, others traded, and some are even taken in lieu of payment of a family debt. This type of threat causes a burden on many different agencies in the United States.

**Terrorism**

***Terrorism***has existed in different forms for centuries. There is documented use during the First Century when the Zealots of Judea were employed as assassins of the Romans occupation forces. During these earlier times, assassinations were carried out by using simple daggers against those who collaborated with the Romans, including the Jewish people, because they could not remain devoted to the decrees of Judaism. The relevancy of the Zealots and Assassins today demonstrates their motivation, organization, and targeting of those who did not comply with their demands. Furthermore, they also show how psychology was used to gain compliance as well as the deep impact they had on history.

In order to distinguish terrorism from other types of threats, it is important to note that it is a political concept; it is about the pursuit, acquisition, and use of power to achieve political change. The threat or use of violence in order to achieve political gain is the goal of terrorists’ coercive intimidation of others. The acts that are carried out are planned, calculated, and systematic against the intended targets.

Modern international terrorism first occurred on July 22, 1968, when three Palestinian terrorists hijacked an Israeli El Al flight on its way from Rome to Tel Aviv (Hoffman 2006). While hijackings were not uncommon at that time, this was the first time one involved a political statement. The purpose of El Al hijacking was to exchange hostages for imprisoned Palestinian terrorists in Israel. Additionally, this particular airline, El Al, was symbolic because it represented Israel as part of the political statement. The Israeli government, having denounced the **Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)** and **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)**, was forced to communicate with the terrorists against their previous policy pronouncements. It was this event that drew mass media attention and worldwide recognition, giving way to the power that terrorists could hold when innocent civilian lives were at stake.

Following the El Al hijacking, terrorism continued to be shaped and terrorists were now moving across borders for the first time to carry out their attacks. More and more innocent civilian lives were threatened in order to attract attention by demonstrating their power against their avowed enemies (Hoffman 2006). They succeeded with their attempts to shock and create fear and panic. Advances in technology were used to their advantage since international commercial air travel was easily accessible as well as the ability for news stations to broadcast footage faster than ever before. They used the media to also recruit new members for their cause.

The PLO was also one of the first terrorist groups to accrue capital and wealth as their top priority within the organization. Through the promotion of their extensive and successful training camp, the PLO was able to finance their operations by offering training to other terrorist organizations (Hoffman 2006). This strengthened their cause and they gained relationships that could be relied on later when joint efforts were necessary. With Yassar Arafat at the helm (until his death in November of 2004), the PLO remained the ruling party in the West Bank and Gaza until the elections in January 2006.

Today’s terrorists have the advantage of technology and advanced weaponry to further their political, ideological, or religious agendas. One of the greatest problems the intelligence community faces today is determining when and where terrorists will strike next. Conflicting theories argue that the United States will be the next likely target while others assert that other allies of the United States will continue to be targets. Some propose that rural America rather than a large metropolitan city will be the next target to prove that no one is safe. We have witnessed a number of attacks in various cities globally in the past two decades that have resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, furthering the need to stay one step ahead of terrorists before they can strike again.

## The History of al Qaeda

The world first heard of ***al Qaeda*** in 1992 when they attacked the Gold Mohur hotel in Yemen where United States military troops were staying en route to Somalia. Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, they had gained international notoriety as the terrorists who attacked America on their own soil. The history of al Qaeda dates backs to the conflict from 1979-1989 between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, with young Muslims supporting the holy war against the invading Soviets. Osama bin Laden was in his early 20s when he joined this jihad and was well known for his ability to provide funding given his wealth. Bin Laden developed a prosperous network recruiting more young Muslins for the jihad. This successful organization of rebels received financial support from Saudi Arabia as well as the United States to fight against the Soviets.

Once the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, bin Laden and his associated decided to continue building the organization they built for future jihad (Hoffman 2006). Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian, was not in agreement with bin Laden on the organization’s objectives: Azzam wanted to continue fighting for a true Islamic government in Afghanistan while bin Laden wanted to prepare the “army” to fight worldwide. Bin Laden assumed leadership over al Qaeda when Azzam was killed in 1989. Following his exile from Saudia Arabia, the new headquarters for al Qaeda was based in Sudan where bin Laden began networking with other groups throughout the Middle East and Africa to begin his holy war against the West

The early to mid-1990s were the beginning of their fatwa against the United States following the military deployment to Somalia. The 1992 hotel bombing, the alleged downing of two Black Hawk helicopters in Somalia and failed World Trade Center bombing attempt in 1993 were claimed by al Qaeda. Sudan was pressured by international governments to exile bin Laden to his native Afghanistan and he faced trouble rebuilding his network (Hoffman 2006). It was not until 1998 when the merger with the Egyptian Islamist Jihad, led by Ayman al-Zawahri, that al Qaeda re-built its strength in international terrorism. With continued training, funding, and organization, bin Laden and al-Zawahri were able to fortify their troops, bombing the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998, and the *USS Cole* in Yemen during 2000. Less than one year later, the mastermind terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centers in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and the failed hijacking attempt of Flight 93 occurred, changing international intelligence and security from that point forward.

The United States invaded Afghanistan less than one month later with the intent of destroying al Qaeda and eradicating the Taliban since this group was sheltering bin Laden. For ten years bin Laden was able to evade capture and once his death was confirmed on May 2, 2011, this accomplishment and victory was purported to be the downfall of al Qaeda (Hoffman 2006). Without having a centralized command, al Qaeda was fractured and spread to various parts of the Middle East. It was then that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was able to lead the war between the Sunnis and Shi’ites, as well as be the leader that young men and women wanted to emulate; membership was no longer limited to Muslim-born individuals as we saw Americans also joining the cause. No longer did al Qaeda have control over the population through threats and coercion but rather had their support which is far harder to counter.

## Timeline of Terrorist Attacks

The following is a list of terrorist attacks that have occurred from 1995 to 1998. This provides a better overview of the different types of threats that we can be exposed to by terrorists. This list contains foreign and domestic terrorist attacks.

### March 1995

The Tokyo sarin nerve gas attack on the subway system, killing 12 and injuring over 3,700 others. It was purported that the same attempt would be used in the United States.

### April 1995

The act of domestic terrorism when the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed in Oklahoma City where 168 people died.

### November 1995

The assassination of the Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin was to be the first step in a mass murder campaign to disturb the peace process.

### February – March 1996

Hamas suicide bombers killed over 60 people during the national elections in Israel.

### April 1996

In Cairo, Egypt, 18 American tourists were killed outside their hotel by an Egyptian Islamic militant group using machine guns and grenades.

### June 1996

The bombing of the U.S. Air Force barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, resulted in 19 deaths.

### November 1997

The Islamic group Gamat al-Islamiya massacred 62 people at the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt.

### August 1998

Synchronized suicide attacks by al Qaeda on U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed more than 300 people and wounded over 5,000. These two attacks used suicide car and truck bombs as their weapons.

### December 1998

The Muslim extremist group Abu Sayyaf Group bombed a shopping mall in the Philippines, wounding 60 Christians.

As you can clearly see illustrated in these examples, there are different methods used in the attacks as well as different locations. People on vacation, shopping, at work, voting, or commuting have been killed or injured in terrorist attacks worldwide. The majority of these examples were based on religious extremism and as this list suggests, acts of violence are not limited to specific times or places.

## Characteristics of Terrorist Groups

Characteristics of terrorist groups depend on their purpose and motivations. Let’s take a closer look at the characteristics of religious terrorist groups.

### Religious Terrorist Group Characteristics

* Radically different value systems
* Modes of legitimizing and justifying cause
* Concepts of morality
* Worldwide secular views
* Violence is a sacramental duty in response to the theological demand
* Disregard for political, moral, or practical constraints
* Do not participate in indiscriminate killing on a massive scale because it is not aligned with their political goals
* Terrorist operations are “blessed” prior to execution

With globalization, erosion of traditional values, economic and political inequality, many nation-states have realized a future with different levels of uncertainty. Muslims, for example, seek to preserve their religious identity based on perceived threats from Western political, economic, and cultural influences. Along with these changes, Islamic terrorist groups often do not work together and in most cases, have fought against one another, with the exception of those groups who have forged relationships based on jihad against the Western infidels.

As discussed previously, terrorist groups have different motivations and targets but they all inflict fear through their threats. There are challenges in countering any type of terrorist group and studying their attacks can help us gain further insight into their inner workings. The intelligence community continues to monitor for threats and work towards protecting our safety and security. As you progress through these lessons, you will learn more how this all works together.

## Transnational Crime

Terrorism is not the only concern for national security as you will learn in this section. Transnational crime is a global problem and at times can destabilize certain countries as in Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Legitimate trade has been affected and damaged by trafficking. There is an extensive amount of transnational crime within the United States ranging from contraband sales of tobacco, drugs, weapons, and other items on the black market. We can add telemarketing scams (e.g., imposter IRS agents, etc.), securities fraud, and migrant smuggling to list of offenses that pose serious threats to national security. Many foreign crime groups operate within the United States borders (Eskridge 1998).

Easy access to international markets and technological advances has opened the doors for criminals to reap the rewards of the globalization of transnational crimes. Organized crime, drug and human trafficking pose critical threats to nation state and international security because of the methods used to generate revenue. The trafficking of human body parts, for example, threatens the lives of those who are identified as profitable organ donors. People have been killed simply because a major organ transplant was needed for a kingpin or leader in order to save his or her life.

Trafficking is an extremely serious security concern for the United States. One would not normally consider drug and human trafficking as a threat to national security but they are and we must continue to combat them. The increase in drug smuggling and human trafficking has been criminalized for decades and law enforcement continues to investigate those suspected of either. The intelligence community continues to monitor threats related to trafficking and responding accordingly.

**Drug Trafficking**

Drug trafficking was identified in 1986 by President Ronald Reagan as a security threat to the United States when National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) Number 21 was enacted. There was a significant increase in the amount of cocaine smuggled into the United States during the 1980s necessitating to increase security efforts against traffickers (Krahmann 2005).

Advancements in Transportation and Technology

Several decades ago traffickers faced limitations of transportation and technology in expanding their “businesses” but the advances in technology greatly improved communications and methods of travel. Now traffickers are able to reduce the time it takes to cross the borders and distribute their goods, benefitting the sellers, distributors, and customers. This type of security threat is not limited to drugs as we see other goods such as small computer parts and explosive components as well as humans being trafficked internationally.

Increased Threat

Transnational trafficking has led to the increase in the need for additional federal employees to combat this threat. Illicit drug crops, processing labs, and drug chains have been the targets of investigations and a top priority for policy efforts, resulting in the arrests of drug manufacturers and smugglers as well as shutting down labs and chains. While the number of manufacturers, smugglers, and mules has increased over the past two decades, they are easily replaced so it is critical to raid cartels in other nation states in order to shut down a cartel. Without the kingpin or head of a cartel, their hierarchy and organization suffers (Zabludoff 1998).

Relationship with Cartels

Drug trafficking groups begin a relationship with cartels for a number of reasons. Smaller groups take advantage of the existing networks that cartels have established because of the ability to increase revenue. Groups that have weaknesses are able to take advantage of the strengths that cartels offer with their better organization and hierarchy. Cartels are typically very skilled in smuggling and smaller groups will benefit from this experience. One final important reason that smaller groups join a cartel network is to benefit from established relationships and references for future sales (Krahmann 2005).

## Colombian Cartel Networks

In the early 1970s drug use was gaining popularity and frequency within the United States. Colombian drug cartels noticed this increase and they began to create the distribution networks necessary to meet the demands of Americans. At first, the amounts smuggled were smaller because of the expense and cocaine was a “rich” person’s choice of drug. Makeshift laboratories were constructed in Colombia where the raw materials purchased from Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia were refined into the final product. As time passed, the international need for more cocaine and other illicit drugs grew, trafficking expanded, and more cartels were formed (Krahmann 2005).

Let’s explore how cartels expanded their network, and the efforts made by the government to combat cartels.

The cartels began to expand their networks and established locations in Mexico, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Spain, the Netherlands, and the United States. These networks that were located away from the core group had several people working in small cells and they kept to themselves to avoid detection by law enforcement officials. Once the smaller location received a shipment it was then distributed to independent wholesalers for sale to the users. Employing small cells of individuals made it easy to shut down and relocate when necessary. They had limited communication with the cartel so if they were to be arrested they could provide basic information. The cartel did not come to their rescue.

Kingpins

Kingpins lead the cartels and employed trusted associated to oversee daily activities. Having hundreds or thousands of workers insulated the cartel kingpin from law enforcement since the lower level workers were the ones committing crimes regularly. Even though kingpins are regular targets of investigations it is challenging to capture them because of their personal security and skilled corruption of local law enforcement officials (Krahmann 2005).

 Kingpin Strategy

Known as the kingpin strategy, the United States Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) created a counter-narcotics program to combat drug trafficking efforts since they continued to pose serious threats against the United States. This strategy focused on the dismantling of drug cartels by using investigative and intelligence technology such as wiretapping and trapping and tracing devices. Since the purpose of the kingpin strategy was to neutralize the kingpins it would result in dismantling their financial and illegal operations in order to reduce the production and distribution of drugs (Albanese 2004).

Successful Efforts

The initial list of kingpins that were the targets of this strategy were the most notorious ones within the drug trafficking ring: Pablo Escobar, Helmer Buitrago Herrera, and Jose Santacruz Londono. The DEA worked in tandem with the Colombian National Police (CNP) by attacking the various cartel’s communications, transportation, and financial systems. Within the first two years of implementing this strategy, more than $210 million, aircraft, boats, cars, and trucks were seized along with the arrest of over 700 individuals in different nation states (Kenney 2005). Additionally, in Colombia alone, hundreds of cocaine manufacturing labs and illegal crops were destroyed as well as hundreds of traffickers being arrested. Following the deaths of incarcerated kingpins several years after implementing this strategy, the major drug trafficking networks were disrupted and the threats to the United States reduced (Krahmann 2005).

 New Threats Emerge

As a result of the demise of major drug cartels, smaller enterprises began appearing and resuming the drug smuggling into the United States. The majority of these specialized in one or two specific types of drugs. These new enterprises did not have the multi-level management as did the cartels so control was much tighter with lower numbers of participants. A new threat emerged when left wing guerrilla organizations and right wing paramilitary forces joined the world of drug trafficking.

**Human Trafficking**

You might be wondering just how human trafficking is a threat to national security. Most people consider human trafficking to be a form of prostitution but that assumption is flawed; it is so much more than sex crimes. Forced labor is another form of human trafficking that is detrimental to our nation state’s security. Forced laborers are relegated to work in restaurants, nail salons, factories, farms, peddling wares on the street, and working for drug traffickers. The media portrays human trafficking as mainly related to prostitution and the American public’s opinion have been shaped by this, however, the media does not share how human trafficking is a threat to our security.

Victims of Human Trafficking

International trafficking of humans is on the rise and remains a violation of human rights. People become victims of trafficking for a number of reasons – kidnapping, deceptive recruiting practices, promises of gainful and legitimate employment, and being sold or traded. For some, the risk of relocating without any knowledge about future conditions is greater than where they currently live. The victims of human trafficking find themselves as part of this modern-day slavery or white-slave trade concept but keep in mind that trafficking is greatly different from human smuggling. Human smuggling relates to assisting individuals with illegal border crossing and the relationship ends once they have arrived in the destination country.

Here are different examples of what happens once a person, regardless of age or gender, is trafficked:

* Forced marriage
* Sexual exploitation
* Forced labor (agriculture or sweatshops)
* Organ harvesting
* Domestic servitude
* Military service
* Pornography

Roles in Human Trafficking

You may be wondering how human trafficking is a non-traditional threat to our nation’s security at this point. It has become a threat because some individuals develop a close relationship with their group leader and the duties that must be carried out can bring injury or harm to others. They affect the United States economy with their illegal activities and exploitation of labor. People who are victims of trafficking may escape captivity and enter the criminal world in order to survive. Let’s take a closer look at the various roles in a human trafficking ring.

The ***leader*** – The majority of groups have an established leader. Those which do not have a leader associate and cooperate with groups when there is a need to make quick cash.

The ***recruiter*** – Recruiters are the individuals who find cheap labor and supply men, women, and children for prostitution.

The ***transporter***– This individual is tasked with the transfer of victims to their destination country.

The ***scouter***– There are people within communities who relay information pertaining to investigations to the leader or his/her associates.

The ***enforcer***– Enforcers are the individuals who safeguard the best interest of the group.

The ***document vendor*** – This person is tasked with creating false documents for the journey to the new country.

The ***corrupt public officials*** – These individuals have been bought by the group for their services to reduce complications with the transportation of trafficked individuals. These people commonly work for embassies, police forces, or consulates. They are paid to ignore the gross abuse and exploitation of others.

Combating Trafficking

The trafficking in persons and human organs is an extremely serious issue and highlights the fact that the human body has become another commodity exploited by individuals or organized crime groups. The introduction of a strong legal framework of trafficking in persons and human organs throughout the world and the upholding of this framework by a sensitized and determined law enforcement apparatus and the relevant governmental and nongovernmental organizations are needed. Very importantly, however, there is a huge need to reduce the economic differences between the poor and rich countries, which makes people either fall prey to individuals and groups who introduce them into exploitative working conditions, slavery, and prostitution or make them resort to desperate measures such as selling themselves or their body parts.

## Conclusion

This lesson is rich with information about two major types of non-traditional threats to our nation: terrorism and transnational crime. Terrorists have succeeded in planning and executing attacks against the United States on domestic soil and foreign interests. There have been more attempted and successful attacks on foreign soil than on domestic, with the events of 9/11 being the most significant terrorist attack in history. The intelligence community continues to monitor and assess threats as they are identified in order to protect Americans.

Transnational crime is the other major non-traditional threat that affects the United States. With an assortment of crimes under this umbrella, drug and human trafficking create the largest number of issues for national security. People from many different countries are the victims of trafficking whether they are forced to work in the drug industry or are exploited humans.