

Counterterrorism Tactics: A Model of Cell Dynamics

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Agenda

- Theoretical Issues
- Purpose
- Case Study Method and Definitions
- Featured Case Studies
- Generalized Model
- Analysis of Cell Progression
- Conclusion
- Questions

Theoretical Issues

- Views terrorism at an organizational level
- Uses an open systems perspective
- Terrorist Organizations both draw from and influence their environments
- **Goal: Assist counterterrorism analysts to more optimally interrupt terrorist work processes**

(Thomas, Kiser and Casebeer, 2005)

Purpose

Drawing from organizational theory, particularly the command and control literature, and through synthesis of three case studies, this research posits a ***Generalized Model of Terrorist Attack Planning***. By extending this model into the counterterrorism domain, we consider how to more optimally detect terrorist attacks.

Case Study Method

- In each case study the cells act independently
- Any correlation or consistency that exists between groups can be treated as emerging patterns
 - conceive, plan, resource, and execute their operations suggests that social or environmental factors, not shared leadership, is primarily responsible for any discernible differences

(Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Jackson et al, 2005)

Definitions

- Terrorism

- *the unlawful use of force or violence committed by a group or individual against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives*

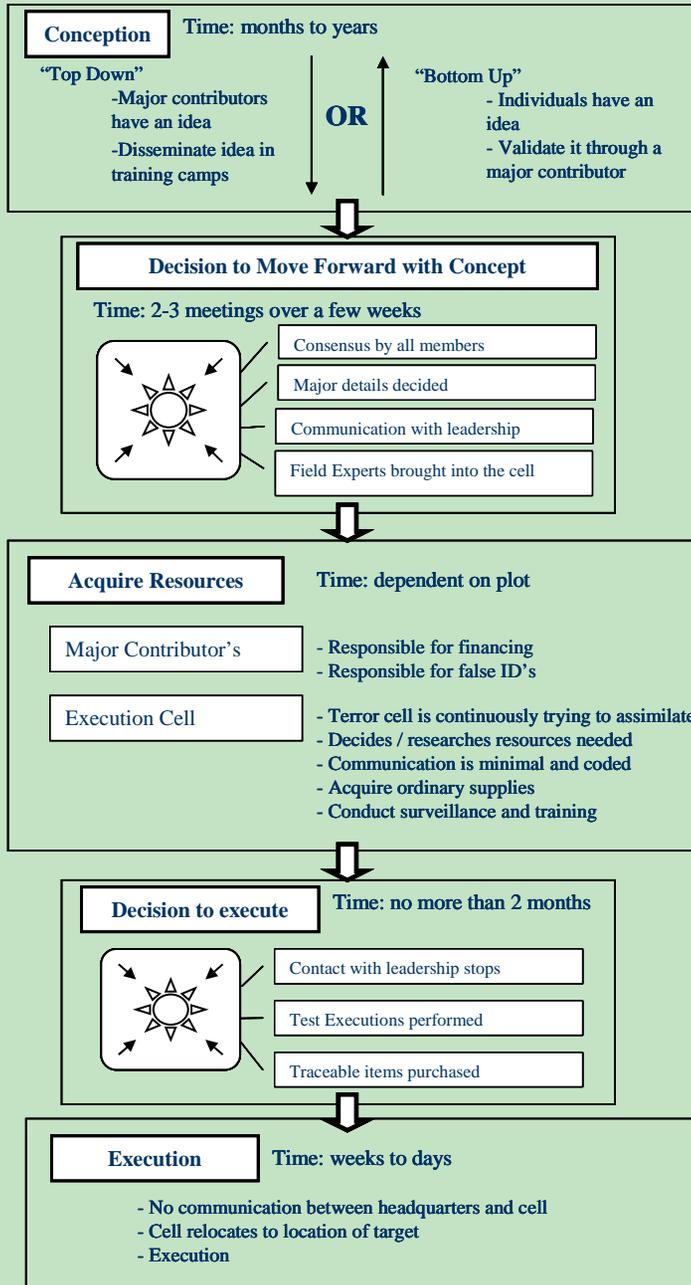
- Counterterrorism Specialist

- *any individual whose occupation is related in any way to executing counterterrorism measures, as defined in the above paragraph. This will include everyone from intelligence analysts all the way down to the street cop of a local township.*

Case Studies

- Millennial Bombing
- Brooklyn Bridge Plot
- Operation Bojinka or Manila Air

**Will use other terror plots as support*



Phase I: Plot Conception

PHASE I:

- Creating a Terrorist:
Analysis of the
Individual
- Origin of Terror Plots
- Characteristics of
Conception Phase

COUNTERTERRORISM APPLICABILITY

- Changes in recruitment
- Interrupting
Communication
Processes
- Studying the norms of
the Terrorist Group

Phase II: Decision to Move Forward with Concept

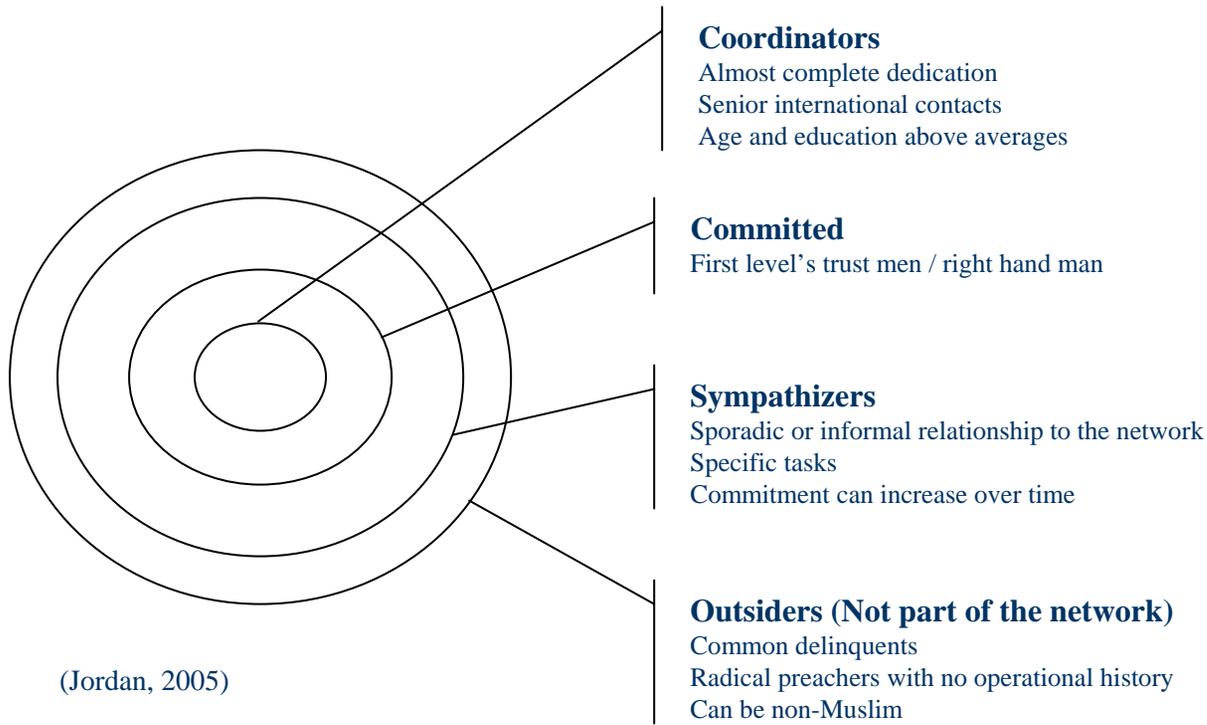
PHASE II:

- This phase does not last long
- Consists of a meeting or series of meetings
 - Meeting takes place in person
- Cell will bring in field experts
- Many reasons for progression:
 - Recent failed or successful terrorist attack
 - Charismatic Leader or Recruiter

COUNTERTERRORISM APPLICABILITY

- Single point of failure: discussions are being guided by the leader
- Links between crime rings and terror cells
- Still looking for changes in recruitment as the cell acquires field experts

Phase II: Decision to Move Forward with Concept



(Jordan, 2005)

Phase III: Acquire Resources

PHASE III:

- Initial Activities
- Transition in Communication and Leadership Style

COUNTERTERRORISM APPLICABILITY

- “Surveillance is where we usually detect terrorists”
- Thrive on fraudulent identification
- Cell will need to train for their specific plot

“Being aware of what is not in the environment that should be is as important as being aware of what is in the environment but is out of place” (Thomas, Kiser and Casebeer, 2005)

Phase III: Acquire Resources

Transition in Communication and Leadership Style



As the cell progresses towards execution

- Communication with leadership wanes
- Decisions are made within the cell
- The cell becomes more autonomous

Phase IV: Decision to Execute

PHASE IV:

- Like *Decision to Move Forward with Concept*
- Cell will acquire traceable items
- Will perform test executions

COUNTERTERRORISM APPLICABILITY

- Large escalation from previous phases – this is where accidents happen
- Smaller acts of violence
- Disappearance of dangerous chemicals or strange purchasing patterns

Phase V: Execution

PHASE V:

- The cell is fully autonomous
- Only methods of stopping its completion
 - Logistical failure by the cell
 - Plot execution is observed and stopped

COUNTERTERRORISM APPLICABILITY

- “You’ve got to go by behavior”
- Local Law Enforcement preparation

Conclusion: Reoccurring Themes

- Fraudulent Identification
- Transnational Mobility
- Surveying the target

Questions

“Where as once we would have caught a robber red-handed and that would have been enough to satisfy the legal case, we now have to stop and ask ourselves, who is this robber? ... Is he stealing to feed a drug habit? OK, who is he buying his drugs from? Or is he robbing to raise funds to buy guns for a gang? Which gang? Who are his associates? Or is he part of organized crime or something else? The aim is to drill down into crime to get a complete picture of the crime landscape in your community.”
(Block, 2007)