

Criminal or Terrorist?

The following are excerpts of questions that might be asked and comments about the distinction between the two.

The information is the result of a discussion conducted late March to early April 2010 among professionals in security, intelligence and law enforcement who are members of the LinkedIn Open Source Intelligence Gathering Group. The discussion involved about 10 of the group's 500+ members.

Group Moderator David Vine has selected a representative sampling of the discussion.

Self indoctrinated over the internet and claims affiliation with group and carries out an attack in the name of the group?

Political or religious agenda enforced upon the majority through acts of violence?

Manifesto, political goals and belief the people should die in order to promote political agenda?

"Terrorism (n), act of terrorism, terrorist act - the calculated use of violence (or the threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political or religious or ideological in nature; this is done through intimidation or coercion or instilling fear." ~wordnetweb.princeton.edu

Many organizations are on the fringe. How are they identified; Domestic Terrorists, Disruptive Groups, Street Gangs, Supremacist Groups, Hate Groups, etc. It's a fine line for law enforcement in a very grey area.

The act itself is NOT the defining characteristic - it is the reason for committing the act that defines it.

Violence associated with organised crime groups and drug cartels (including the Hells Angels) sometimes overlaps or is linked to the interests of terrorist groups. Ultimately it all depends on which definition of terrorism you use - and there are many of them.

Far too many acts are being labelled terrorism nowadays - it actually means that the effort to deal with real terrorist issues is being diluted and resources misdirected.

The Problem of the Lone-Wolf Terrorist: Why Mohammed Taheri-azar cannot be prosecuted for a terrorist offense, and why it matters...<http://tiny.cc/lonewold-LinkedIn>

18 U.S.C. § 2232b(g)(5) sensibly defines the predicate intention for a federal crime of terrorism as actions "calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government by intimidation or coercion, or to retaliate against government conduct." <http://tiny.cc/lonewolf>

Title 28--Judicial Administration, PART 23--CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS OPERATING POLICIES <http://tiny.cc/28-23>

To be honest I do not think the terrorist label matters a jot....

All the terrorism tag does is whip up the masses in to a frenzy of over reaction, irrationality and

inefficient spending.

Very very few terrorist acts are carried out randomly. They are conceived, planned, recce'd and executed with a degree of precision that is quite unnerving...

a clearly defined part of their strategy - not the impulsive act of a lunatic...

We should be very careful about introducing new laws which are emotionally charged and fragile in the face of the European Human Rights Act (on this side of the pond). Good old fashioned criminal charges leading to convictions and sentences of life with no parole seem pretty good to me. The death sentence is something that should be used very cautiously as many of the present generation of terrorists embrace the idea of dying for their cause...

In order to fairly and accurately classify an individual a "terrorist", be they a domestic or foreign terrorist, one need not look any further than the specific INTENT of the individual's actions.

Terrorism, by definition, is the application of psychological pressure (fear) resulting from the threat of or actual employment of indiscriminate violence by an individual or group of individuals in an attempt to achieve a political, ideological or religious goal(s).

Did the individual or group premeditate, conspire or perpetrate a violent act specifically in order to achieve a political, ideological or religious end? If the answer is yes and that individual is a native or legal citizen of the country in which the act of terrorism was perpetrated, that individual by act and definition is a "domestic terrorist".

To label a non-violent individual or group a "domestic terrorist" only on the basis of a particular political affiliation is dubious at best and a radical attempt at character assassination and political marginalization at worse....

the majority of U.S. citizens find it abhorrent to afford foreign terrorists and enemies of the state the same constitutional protections that we enjoy.

The police chief, it might be a self-serving criteria. Like, increasing my budget, grants to buy cool stuff because we have a terrorist problem in our neighborhood.

The "lone-wolf" does not belong to a structured group with a hierarchy and system of discipline, so he is even more dangerous than crips and bloods.

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