6

THE ROLE OF SELECTIVE MORAL DISENGAGEMENT IN TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM

ALBERT BANDURA

Self-sanctions play a central role in the regulation of inhumane conduct. In the course of socialization, people adopt moral standards that serve as guides and deterrents for conduct. After personal control has developed, people regulate their actions by the sanctions they apply to themselves. They do things that give them self-satisfaction and a sense of self-worth. They refrain from behaving in ways that violate their moral standards because such behavior brings self-condemnation. Self-sanctions thus keep conduct in line with internal standards.

However, moral standards do not function as fixed internal regulators of conduct. Self-regulatory mechanisms do not operate unless they are acti-

vated, and there are many psychological processes by which control reactions can be disengaged from inhumane conduct (Bandura, 1986). Selective activation and disengagement of moral self-sanctions permit different types of conduct despite the same moral standards. Figure 6.1 shows the locus in the process of moral control at which moral self-censure can be disengaged from reprehensible conduct. The disengagement may center on redefining harmful conduct as honorable by moral justification, exonerating social comparison, and sanitizing language. It may focus on agency of action so that perpetrators can minimize their role in causing harm by diffusion and displacement of responsibility. It may involve minimizing or distorting the harm that flows from detrimental actions. The disengagement may include dehumanizing the victims and blaming them for bringing the suffering on themselves.

The way in which these moral disengagement practices operate in the perpetration of inhumanities is analyzed in detail in later sections of this chapter.

These psychosocial mechanisms of moral disengagement have been examined most extensively in the area of political and military violence. This limited focus tends to convey the impression that selective disengagement of moral self-sanctions occurs only under extraordinary circumstances. Quite the contrary. Such mechanisms operate in everyday situations in which decent people routinely perform activities that further their interests but have injurious effects on others. Self-exonerations are needed to eliminate self-prohibitions and self-censure. This chapter analyzes how the mechanisms of moral disengagement function in terrorist operations.

Terrorism is a strategy of violence designed to promote desired outcomes by instilling fear in the public at large (Bassiouni, 1981). Public intimidation is a key element that distinguishes terrorist violence from other forms of violence. Unlike the customary violence in which victims are personally targeted, in terrorism the victims are incidental to the terrorists' intended aims, and the violence is used mainly as a way to provoke social conditions designed to further broader aims.

Several features of terrorist acts give power to a few incidents to induce widespread public fear that vastly exceeds the objective threat. The first terrorizing feature is the unpredictability of who will be targeted and when or where a terrorist act will occur. The second feature is the gravity of terrorist acts that maim and kill. With the magnified lethality of the weapons technology, terrorists can now wreak destruction on a massive scale. A third feature of terrorist acts that render them so terrorizing is the sense of uncontrollability that they instill. The fourth feature that contributes to a sense of personal and societal vulnerability is the high centralization and interdependence of essential service systems in modern life. A single destructive act that knocks out communications, transportation, and power systems and damages safe water and food supplies can instantly frighten and harm
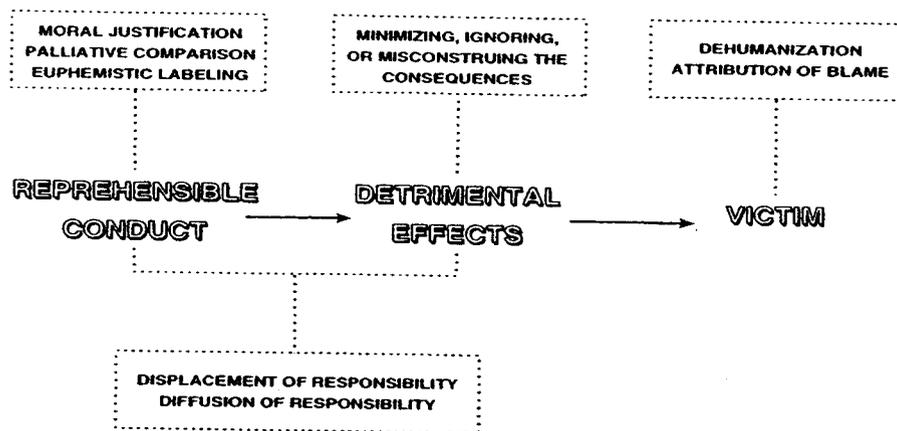
MORAL JUSTIFICATION
PALLIATIVE COMPARISON
EUPHEMISTIC LABELING

MINIMIZING, IGNORING,
OR MISCONSTRUING THE
CONSEQUENCES

DEHUMANIZATION
ATTRIBUTION OF BLAME

REPREHENSIBLE
CONDUCT   →   DETRIMENTAL
EFFECTS   →   VICTIM

DISPLACEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY
DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Figure 6.1. Mechanism through which moral self-sanctions are selectively activated and disengaged from detrimental behavior at different points in the self-regulatory process. From *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (p. 376), by A. Bandura, 1986, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. Copyright 1986 by Prentice Hall. Reprinted with permission.

vast numbers of people. The combination of unpredictability, gravity, vulnerable interdependence, and perceived self-inefficacy is especially intimidating and socially constraining (Bandura, 1990).

In coping with problems of terrorism, societies are faced with a dual task. The first is how to reduce terrorist acts; the second is how to combat the fear they arouse. Because the number of terrorist acts is small, the widespread public fear and the intrusive and costly security countermeasures pose the more serious problems. Utilitarian justifications can readily win the support of a frightened public for curtailment of civil liberties and violent counter-terrorist measures. A frightened and angered citizenry does not spend much time agonizing over the morality of lethal modes of self-defense.

The term *terrorism* is often applied to violent acts that dissident groups direct surreptitiously at officials of regimes to force social or political changes. So defined, terrorism becomes indistinguishable from straightforward political violence. Particularized threats are certainly intimidating to the martial and political figures who are personally targeted for assassination and create some apprehension over destabilizing societal effects. However, such threats do not necessarily terrify the general public as long as ordinary civilians are not targeted. As I show later, terrorist tactics relying on public intimidation can serve other purposes as well as serve as a political weapon.

From a psychological standpoint, third-party violence directed at innocent people is a much more horrific undertaking than political violence in which political figures are personally targeted. It is easier to get individuals who harbor strong grievances to kill hated political officials or to abduct

advisors and consular staffs of foreign nations that are alleged to support oppressive regimes. However, to cold-bloodedly slaughter innocent women and children in buses, department stores, and airports requires more powerful psychological machinations of moral disengagement. Intensive psychological training in moral disengagement is needed to create the capacity to kill innocent human beings as a way of toppling rulers or regimes or of accomplishing other political goals.

MORAL JUSTIFICATION

One set of disengagement practices operates on the construal of the behavior itself. People do not ordinarily engage in reprehensible conduct until they have justified to themselves the morality of their actions. In this process, destructive conduct is made personally and socially acceptable by portraying it as serving socially worthy and moral purposes. People then act on a moral imperative. Moral justification sanctifies violent means.

Radical shifts in destructive behavior through moral justification are most strikingly revealed in military conduct. People who have been socialized to deplore killing as morally condemnable can be rapidly transformed into skilled combatants, who may feel little compunction at and even a sense of pride in taking human life. Moral reconstrual of killing is dramatically illustrated in the case of Sergeant York, one of the phenomenal fighters in the history of modern warfare (Skeyhill, 1928). Because of his deep religious convictions, he registered as a conscientious objector, but his numerous appeals were denied. At camp, his battalion commander quoted chapter and verse from the Bible to persuade him that under appropriate conditions it was Christian to fight and kill. A marathon mountainside prayer finally convinced him that he could serve both God and country by becoming a dedicated fighter.

The conversion of socialized people into dedicated fighters is achieved not by altering their personality structures, aggressive drives, or moral standards. Rather, it is accomplished by cognitively redefining the morality of killing, so that it can be done free from self-censuring restraints. Through moral sanction of violent means, people see themselves as fighting ruthless oppressors who have an unquenchable appetite for conquest or as protecting their cherished values and way of life, preserving world peace, saving humanity from subjugation to an evil ideology, and honoring their country's international commitments.

Over the centuries, much destructive conduct has been perpetrated by ordinary, decent people in the name of righteous ideologies, religious principles, and nationalistic imperatives (Kramer, 1990; Rapoport & Alexander, 1982; Reich, 1990/1998). Throughout history countless people have suffered

at the hands of self-righteous crusaders bent on stamping out what they considered evil. Voltaire put it well when he said, "Those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities." Adversaries sanctify their militant actions but condemn those of their antagonists as barbarity masquerading under a mask of outrageous moral reasoning. Each side feels morally superior to the other. Acting on moral or ideological imperatives reflects a conscious offense mechanism, not an unconscious defense mechanism.

The politicization of religion has a long and bloody history. In holy terror, perpetrators twist theology and see themselves as doing God's will. In 1095, Pope Urban II launched the Crusades with the following impassioned moral proclamation: "I address those present, I proclaim it, to those absent, Christ commands it. For all those going thither, there will be remission of sins if they come to the end of this fettered life." He then dehumanized and beastialized the Muslim enemies: "What a disgrace if a race so despicable, degenerate, and enslaved by demons, should overcome a people endowed with faith in Almighty God and resplendent in the name of Christ! Let those who once fought against brothers and relatives now rightfully fight against the barbarians under the guidance of the Lord."

Islamic extremists mount their jihad, construed as self-defense against tyrannical, decadent infidels who seek to enslave the Muslim world. Bin Laden ennobled his global terrorism as serving a holy imperative (Borger, 2001; Ludlow, 2001): "We will continue this course because it is part of our religion and because Allah, praise and glory be to him, ordered us to carry out jihad so that the word of Allah may remain exalted to the heights." In the jihad they are carrying out Allah's will as a "religious duty." The prime agency for the holy terror is thus displaced to Allah. By attribution of blame, terrorist strikes are construed as morally justifiable defensive reactions to humiliation and atrocities perpetrated by atheistic forces. "We are only defending ourselves. This is defensive jihad." By advantageous comparison with the nuclear bombing of Japan, and the toll of the Iraqi sanctions on children, the jihad takes on an altruistic appearance: "When people at the ends of the earth, Japan, were killed by their hundreds of thousands, young and old, it was not considered a war crime, it is something that has justification. Millions of children in Iraq are something that has justification." Bin Laden beastialized the American enemy as "lowly people" perpetrating acts that "the most ravenous of animals would not descend to." Terrorism is sanitized as "the winds of faith [that] have come" to eradicate the "debauched" oppressors. His followers see themselves as holy warriors who gain a blessed eternal life through their martyrdom.

Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassin was similarly acting on a divine mandate, using the rabbinical pursuer's decree as moral justification. In his view, those who give over their people and land to the enemy must be killed. As he explained, the killing was meant to prevent transfer of land to Palestinian control: "Maybe physically, I acted alone but what pulled the

trigger was not only my finger but the finger of this whole nation which, for 2,000 years, yearned for this land and dreamed of it."[1]

Paul Hill, the Presbyterian minister, also justified the killing of a doctor and his elderly assistant outside the abortion clinic as carrying out God's will: "God's law positively requires us to defend helpless people. God has used people, who are willing to die for their cause to save human life. I'm willing to do that" (see Footnote 1).

Although moral cognitive restructuring can be easily used to support self-serving and destructive purposes, it can also serve militant action aimed at changing inhumane social conditions. By appealing to morality, social reformers are able to use coercive, and even violent, tactics to force social change. Vigorous disputes arise over the morality of aggressive action directed against institutional practices. Powerholders often resist, by forcible means if necessary, pressures to make needed social changes that jeopardize their own self-interests. Such tactics provoke social activism. Challengers consider their militant actions to be morally justifiable because they serve to eradicate harmful social practices. Powerholders condemn violent means as unjustified and unnecessary because nonviolent means exist to effect social change. They tend to view resorting to violence as an effort to coerce changes that lack popular support. Finally, they may argue that terrorist acts are condemnable because they violate civilized standards of conduct. Anarchy would flourish in a climate in which individuals considered violent tactics acceptable whenever they disliked particular social practices or policies.

Challengers refute such moral arguments by appealing to what they regard as a higher level of morality derived from communal concerns. They see their constituencies as comprising all people, both at home and abroad, who are victimized either directly or indirectly by injurious institutional practices. Challengers argue that, when many people benefit from a system that is deleterious to disfavored segments of the society, harmful social practices secure widespread public support. From the challengers' perspective, they are acting under a moral imperative to stop the maltreatment of people who have no way of modifying injurious social policies because they are either outside the system that victimizes them, or they lack the social power to effect changes from within by peaceable means. Their defendants regard militant action as the only recourse available to them.

Clearly, adversaries can easily marshal moral reasons for the use of aggressive actions for social control or for social change. When viewed from divergent perspectives, violent acts are different things to different people. In conflicts of power, one person's violence is another person's selfless benevolence. It is often proclaimed that one group's criminal terrorist activity

is another group's liberation movement fought by heroic freedom fighters. This is why moral appeals against violence usually fall on deaf ears.

MORAL JUSTIFICATIONS AND THE MASS MEDIA

The mass media, especially television, provide the best access to the public because of its strong drawing power. For this reason, television is increasingly used as the principal vehicle of social and moral justifications of goals and violent means. Struggles to legitimize and gain support for one's causes, and to discredit those of one's foes, are now waged more and more through the electronic media (Ball-Rokeach, 1972).

Terrorists try to exercise influence over targeted officials and nations through intimidation of the public and arousal of sympathy for the social and political causes they espouse. Without widespread publicity, terrorist acts can achieve neither of these effects. Terrorists, therefore, coerce access to the media to publicize their grievances to the international community. They use television as the main instrument for gaining sympathy and support for their plight by presenting themselves as risking their lives for the welfare of a victimized constituency whose legitimate grievances are ignored. The media, in turn, come under heavy fire from targeted officials who regard granting terrorists a worldwide forum as aiding terrorist causes. Security forces do not like media personnel tracking their conduct, broadcasting tactical information that terrorists can put to good use, and interposing themselves as intermediaries in risky negotiation situations. Social pressures mount to curtail media coverage of terrorist events, especially while they are in progress (Bassiouni, 1981).

ADVANTAGEOUS COMPARISON

How behavior is viewed is colored by what it is compared to. By exploiting the contrast principle, reprehensible acts can be made righteous. The more flagrant the contrasting inhumanities, the more likely it is that one's own destructive conduct would appear trifling or even benevolent. Thus, terrorists minimize their killings as the only defensive weapon they have to curb the widespread cruelties inflicted on their people under tyrannical regimes. In the eyes of their supporters, risky attacks directed at the apparatus of oppression are acts of selflessness and martyrdom. Those who are the objects of terrorist attacks, in turn, characterize their own retaliatory violence as trifling, or even laudable, by comparing it with the carnage and terror perpetrated by terrorists. In social conflicts, injurious behavior usually escalates, with each side lauding its own behavior but condemning that of its adversaries as heinous.

Advantageous comparisons also draw heavily on history to justify violence. Terrorists are quick to note that the French and Americans got their democracies through violent overthrow of oppressive rule, and the Jewish people got their homeland by paramilitary violence. Terrorists claim entitlement to the same tactics to rout those they regard as their oppressors. A former director of the CIA effectively deflected, by expedient comparison, embarrassing questions about the morality and legality of CIA-directed covert operations designed to overthrow an authoritarian regime. He explained that French covert operations and military supplies greatly aided the overthrow of oppressive British rule during the War of Independence, thereby creating the modern model of democracy for other subjugated people to emulate.

Social comparison is similarly used to show that the social labeling of acts as terrorism depends more on the ideological allegiances of the labelers than on the acts themselves. Airline hijackings were applauded as heroic deeds when East Europeans and Cubans initiated this practice, but condemned as terrorist acts when the airliners of Western nations and friendly countries were commandeered. The degree of psychopathology ascribed to hijackers varied depending on the direction of the rerouted flights. Moral condemnations of politically motivated terrorism are easily blunted by social comparison because, in international contests of power, it is hard to find nations that categorically condemn terrorism. Instead, they often back the perpetrators they like but condemn those they repudiate.

Violent countermeasures to deter terrorists from future assaults inevitably sacrifice innocent lives. Democratic societies face the fundamental moral dilemma of how to justify countermeasures that are taken to stop terrorists' atrocities without violating the values of their society in defense of those values (Carmichael, 1982). Because of many uncertain factors, the toll that counterterrorist assaults may take on innocent life is neither easily controllable nor accurately calculable in advance.

Moral justification of violent countermeasures by expedient comparison relies heavily on utilitarian principles. The task of making retaliatory violence morally acceptable from a utilitarian perspective is facilitated by two sets of judgments. First, nonviolent options are judged to be ineffective to achieve desired changes. This removes them from consideration. Second, utilitarian analyses affirm that one's injurious actions may prevent more human suffering than they cause. Curbing terrorism benefits humanity and the social order. Thus, on the assumption that fighting terror with terror will achieve a deterrent effect, it is argued that retaliatory assaults will reduce the total amount of human suffering.

As Carmichael (1982) noted, utilitarian justifications place few constraints on violent countermeasures because, in the utilitarian calculus, sacrificing the lives of some innocent persons can be greatly outweighed by halting terrorist massacres and the perpetual terrorizing of entire populations. However, the utilitarian calculus is quite slippery in specific applications.

Lethal countermeasures are readily justified in response to grave threats that inflict extensive human pain or that endanger the very survival of the society. However, the criterion of "grave threat," although fine in principle, is shifty in specific circumstances. Like most human judgments, gauging the gravity of threats involves some subjectivity. Moreover, violence is often used as a weapon against threats of lesser magnitude on the grounds that, if left unchecked, the threats may escalate to the point of extracting a heavy toll on human liberties and suffering. Gauging potential gravity involves even greater subjectivity and hence fallibility of judgment than does assessment of present danger. The future contains many uncertainties, and human judgment is subject to a lot of biases (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Assessment of gravity prescribes the choice of options, but choice of violent options often shapes evaluation of gravity itself. Thus, projected grave dangers to the society are commonly invoked in the moral justification of violent means to squelch present objections. The perturbing appearance of national impotence in the face of terrorist acts creates additional social pressures on targeted nations to strike back powerfully.

EUPHEMISTIC LANGUAGE

Language shapes the thought patterns on which people base many of their actions. Activities, therefore, can take on a markedly different character depending on what they are called. Euphemistic language is used widely to make harmful conduct respectable and to reduce personal responsibility for it (Lutz, 1987). Euphemizing can be an injurious weapon. People behave much more cruelly when assault actions are given a sanitized label than when they are called *aggression* (Diener, Dineen, Endresen, Beaman, & Fraser, 1975).

In an insightful analysis of the language of nonresponsibility, Gambino (1973) identified the different varieties of euphemisms. One form relies on sanitizing language. Through the power of sanitized language, even killing a human being loses much of its repugnancy. Soldiers "waste" people rather than kill them. What most people call bombs, the military calls "vertically deployed anti-personal devices." Bombing missions are described as "servicing the target," in the likeness of a public utility. The attacks become "clean, surgical strikes," arousing imagery of curative activities. The civilians the bombs kill are linguistically converted to "collateral damage." Many are victims of bombs that were "outside current accuracy requirements." Soldiers killed by misdirected missiles fired by their own forces are the tragic recipients of "friendly fire."

The agentless passive form serves as a linguistic device for creating the appearance that harmful acts are the work of nameless forces, rather than people (Bollinger, 1982). It is as though people are moved mechanically but are not really the agents of their own acts. Gambino further documented

how the specialized jargon of a legitimate enterprise can be misused to lend an aura of respectability to an illegitimate one. Deadly activities are framed as "game plans," and the perpetrators become "team players," a status calling for the qualities and behavior befitting the best sportsmen. The disinhibitory power of language can be boosted further by colorful metaphors that change the nature of destructive activities.

Cognitive restructuring of harmful conduct by moral justifications, sanitizing language, and expedient comparisons is the most effective set of psychological mechanisms for disengaging moral control. Investing harmful conduct with high moral purpose not only eliminates self-censure so destructive acts can be performed without personal distress and moral qualms. Sanctification engages self-approval in the service of destructive exploits. What was once morally condemnable becomes a source of self-valuation. Functionaries work hard to become proficient at them and take pride in their destructive accomplishments.

DISPLACEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Moral control operates most strongly when people acknowledge that they are contributors to harmful outcomes. The second set of disengagement practices operates by obscuring or minimizing the agentive role in the harm one causes. People will behave in ways they normally repudiate if a legitimate authority accepts responsibility for the effects of their conduct (Diener, 1977; Milgram, 1974). Under displaced responsibility, they view their actions as stemming from the dictates of authorities rather than from their own personal responsibility. Because they feel they are not the actual agent of their actions, they are spared self-condemning reactions.

In terrorism sponsored by states or governments in exile, functionaries view themselves as patriots fulfilling nationalistic duties rather than as freelancing criminals. Displacement of responsibility not only weakens moral restraints over one's own detrimental actions but diminishes social concern over the well-being of those mistreated by others (Tilker, 1970).

Self-exemption from gross inhumanities by displacement of responsibility is most gruesomely revealed in socially sanctioned mass executions. Nazi prison commandants and their staffs divested themselves of personal responsibility for their unprecedentedly inhumane acts (Andrus, 1969). They claimed they were simply carrying out orders. Self-exonerating obedience to horrific orders is similarly evident in military atrocities, such as the My Lai massacre (Kelman, 1973).

In an effort to deter institutionally sanctioned atrocities, the Nuremberg Accords declared that obedience to inhumane orders, even from the highest authorities, does not relieve subordinates of the responsibility for their actions. However, because victors are disinclined to try themselves as crimi-

nals, such decrees have limited deterrent effect without an international judiciary system empowered to impose penalties on victors and losers alike.

In psychological studies of disengagement of moral control by displacement of responsibility, authorities explicitly authorize injurious actions and hold themselves responsible for the harm caused by their followers (Milgram, 1974). However, the sanctioning of pernicious conduct in everyday life differs in two important ways from Milgram's authorizing system. Responsibility is rarely assumed that openly. Only obtuse authorities would leave themselves accusable of authorizing destructive acts. They usually invite and support harmful conduct in insidious ways by surreptitious sanctioning systems for personal and social reasons. Sanctioning by indirection shields them from social condemnation should things go awry. It also enables them to protect against loss of self-respect for authorizing human cruelty that leaves blood on their hands. Implicit agreements and insulating social arrangements are created that leave the higher echelons blameless.

Kramer (1990) described the great lengths to which Shiite clerics go to produce moral justifications for violent acts that breach Islamic law, such as suicidal bombings and hostage-taking. These efforts are designed not only to persuade themselves of the morality of their actions but also to preserve their integrity in the eyes of rival clerics and other nations. The Islamic religious code permits neither suicide nor the terrorizing of innocent people. On the one hand, the clerics justify such acts by invoking situational imperatives and utilitarian reasons, namely that tyrannical circumstances drive oppressed people to resort to unconventional means to route aggressors who wield massive destructive power. On the other hand, they reconstrue terrorist acts as conventional means in which dying in a suicidal bombing for a moral cause is no different than dying at the hands of an enemy soldier. Hostages typically get relabeled as spies. When the linguistic solution defies credibility, personal moral responsibility is disengaged by construing terrorist acts as dictated by their foe's tyranny. Because of the shaky moral logic and disputable reconstruals involved, clerics sanction terrorism by indirection, they vindicate successful ventures retrospectively, and they disclaim endorsements of terrorist operations beforehand.

Nation states sponsor terrorist operations through disguised, roundabout routes that make it difficult to pin the blame on them. Moreover, the intended purpose of sanctioned destructiveness is usually linguistically disguised so that neither issuers nor perpetrators regard the activity as censurable. When condemnable practices gain public attention, they are officially dismissed as only isolated incidents arising through misunderstanding of what, in fact, had been authorized. Efforts are made to limit the blame to subordinates, who are portrayed as misguided or overzealous.

A number of social factors affect the ease with which responsibility for one's actions can be passed to others. High justification and social consensus about the morality of an enterprise aid in the relinquishment of personal

control. The legitimacy of the authorizers is another important determinant. The higher the authorities, the more legitimacy, respect, and coercive power they command, the more willing are people to defer to them. Modeled disobedience, which challenges the legitimacy of the activities, if not the authorizers themselves, reduces the willingness of observers to carry out the actions called for by the orders of a superior (Meeus & Raaijmakers, 1986; Milgram, 1974; Powers & Geen, 1972). It is difficult to continue to disown personal agency in the face of evident harm that results directly from one's actions. People are, therefore, less willing to obey authoritarian orders to carry out injurious behavior when they see firsthand how they are hurting others (Milgram, 1974; Tilker, 1970).

Perpetration of inhumanities requires obedient functionaries. They do not cast off all responsibility for their behavior as if they were mindless extensions of others. If they disowned all responsibility, they would be quite unreliable, performing their duties only when commanded to do so. In situations involving obedience to authority, people carry out orders partly to honor the obligations they have undertaken (Mantell & Panzarella, 1976). In fact, they tend to be conscientious and self-directed in the performance of their duties. It requires a strong sense of responsibility to be a good functionary. One must, therefore, distinguish between two levels of responsibility: A strong sense of duty to one's superiors and accountability for the effects of one's actions. The best functionaries are those who honor their obligations to authorities but feel no personal responsibility for the harm they cause.

Displacement of responsibility also operates in situations in which hostages are taken. Terrorists warn officials of targeted nations that if they take retaliatory action they will be held accountable for the lives of the hostages. At different steps in negotiations for the hostages' release, terrorists continue to displace responsibility for the safety of hostages on the national officials they are fighting. If the captivity drags on, terrorists blame the suffering and injuries they inflict on their hostages on the officials for failing to make what they regard as warranted concessions to remedy social wrongs.

DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY

The deterrent power of self-sanctions is weakened when the link between detrimental conduct and its effects is obscured by diffusing responsibility. This is achieved in several ways. Responsibility can be diffused by division of labor. Most enterprises require the services of many people, each performing fragmentary jobs that, taken individually, seems harmless. The partial contribution is easily isolated from the eventual function, especially when participants exercise little personal judgment in carrying out a subfunction that is related by remote, complex links to the end result. After activities become routinized into programmed subfunctions, people shift their

attention from the meaning of what they are doing to the details of their job (Kelman, 1973).

Group decision making is another common bureaucratic practice that enables otherwise considerate people to behave inhumanely, because no single individual feels responsible for policies arrived at collectively. Where everyone is responsible, no one really feels responsible. Social organizations go to great lengths to devise sophisticated mechanisms for obscuring responsibility for decisions that may affect others adversely. Collective action, which provides anonymity, is still another diffusion expedient for weakening self-restraints. Any harm done by a group can always be attributed in large part to the behavior of other members. People act more cruelly under group responsibility than when they hold themselves personally accountable for their actions (Bandura, Underwood, & Fromson, 1975; Diener, 1977; Zimbardo, 1969).

DISREGARD OR DISTORTION OF HARMFUL CONSEQUENCES

To be able to perpetrate inhumanities requires more than absolving oneself of personal responsibility. Other ways of weakening moral self-sanctions operate by minimizing, disregarding, or distorting the effects of one's action. When people pursue activities that harm others, they avoid facing the harm they cause or minimize it. If minimization does not work, the evidence of harm can be discredited. As long as the harmful results of one's conduct are ignored, minimized, distorted, or disbelieved, there is little reason for self-censure.

It is easier to harm others when their suffering is not visible and when destructive actions are physically and temporally remote from their injurious effects. Our death technologies have become highly lethal and depersonalized. We are now in the era of faceless electronic warfare, in which mass destruction is delivered remotely with deadly accuracy by computer and laser controlled systems.

When people can see and hear the suffering they cause, vicariously aroused distress and self-censure serve as self-restrainers (Bandura, 1992). In studies of obedient aggression, people are less compliant to the injurious commands of authorities as the victims' pain becomes more evident and personalized (Milgram, 1974). Even a high sense of personal responsibility for the effects of one's actions is a weak restrainer of injurious conduct when aggressors do not see the harm they inflict on their victims (Tilker, 1970).

Most organizations involve hierarchical chains of command, in which superiors formulate plans and intermediaries transmit them to functionaries who then carry them out. The farther removed individuals are from the destructive end results, the weaker is the restraining power of injurious effects. Disengagement of moral control is easiest for the intermediaries in a hierar-

chical system—they neither bear responsibility for the decisions, nor do they carry them out or face the harm being inflicted (Kilham & Mann, 1974). In performing the transmitter role, they model dutiful behavior and further legitimize their superiors and their social policies and practices.

A Pulitzer Prize was awarded for a powerful photograph that captured the anguished cries of a little girl whose clothes were burned off by the napalm bombing of her village in Vietnam (Chong, 2000). This single humanization of inflicted destruction probably did more to turn the American public against the war than the countless reports filed by journalists. The military now bans cameras and journalists from battlefield areas to block disturbing images of death and destruction that can erode public support for resolving international dispute by military means. With the advent of satellite transmission, battles are now fought on the airwaves over "collateral damage" to shape public perceptions of military campaigns and debates about them. For example, in the escalating cycle of terrorism and military retaliation in the Middle East, the Arab news network, Al-Jazeera, airs graphic real-time images of death and destruction round-the-clock (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002). In the Iraq war, reporters were again allowed to accompany combat forces to present a different perspective from the one broadcast by Al Jazeera. Satellite television has thus become a strategic tool in the social management of moral disengagement at the locus of the human consequences of lethal means.

The aim of terrorists is to inflict widespread destruction. The moral dilemma for targeted nations is how to conduct counterterrorist operations that abide by just war standards. The magnitude of civilian casualties accompanying military campaigns is typically minimized by focusing mainly on "collateral damage" resulting directly from military strikes. When the counterstrikes destroy power, water, sanitation, and food distribution systems, they leave in their wake ill and malnourished populations who face a daily struggle to survive. High-tech bombardment may reduce the number of civilians killed, but it vastly increases the human toll when it destroys a nation's infrastructure.

ATTRIBUTION OF BLAME

Blaming one's adversaries or compelling circumstances for harmful acts is still another expedient that can serve self-exonerative purposes. In this process, people view themselves as faultless victims driven to extreme means by forcible provocation rather than acting on a deliberative decision. Conflictful transactions typically involve reciprocally escalative acts. One can select from the chain of events a defensive act by the adversary and portray it as the initiating provocation. Victims then get blamed for bringing suffering on themselves. Those who are victimized are not entirely faultless because, by their behavior, they contribute partly to their own plight. Victims can, therefore, be blamed for bringing suffering on themselves. By fixing

the blame on others or on circumstances, not only are one's own injurious actions made excusable, but one can even feel self-righteous in the process.

Victim blaming by ascription of responsibility figures prominently in attribution theory (Weiner, 1986). However, the mechanism by which blaming spawns inhumane conduct has received less attention. In social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), victim blaming functions as a means of disengaging moral self-sanctions that operate in concert with other means serving the same purpose.

Terrorist acts that take a heavy toll on civilian lives create special personal pressures to lay blame elsewhere. Irish Republican Army guerrillas planted a large bomb that killed and maimed many family members attending a war memorial ceremony in a town square in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland ("IRA 'Regrets' Bombing," 1987). The guerrillas promptly ascribed the blame for the civilian massacre to the British army for having detonated the bomb prematurely with an electronic scanning device. The government denounced the "pathetic attempt to transfer blame" because no scanning equipment was in use at the time.

Observers of victimization can be disinhibited in much the same way as perpetrators are by the tendency to infer culpability from misfortune. Seeing victims suffer maltreatment for which they are held partially responsible leads observers to derogate them (M. J. Lerner & Miller, 1978). The devaluation and indignation aroused by ascribed culpability, in turn, provides moral justification for even greater maltreatment. That attribution of blame can give rise to devaluation and moral justification illustrates how the various disengagement mechanisms are often interrelated and work together in weakening moral control.

Self-vindication is easily achievable by terrorists when legitimate grievances of maltreatment are willfully disregarded by powerholders so that terrorist activities are construed as acts of self-protection or desperation. Oppressive and inhumane social conditions and thwarted political efforts breed terrorists who often see foreign government complicity in their plight through support of the regime that they see as victimizing them. Those who become radicalized carry out terrorist acts against the regime as well as the implicated foreign nations. Violent countermeasures are readily resorted to in efforts to control terrorist activities when the social conditions breeding discontent and violent protest are firmly entrenched in political systems that obstruct legitimate efforts at change. It is much easier to attack violent protests than to change the sociopolitical conditions that fuel them. In such skirmishes, one person's victim is another person's victimizer.

DEHUMANIZATION

The final set of disengagement practices operates on the targets of violent acts. The strength of moral self-sanctions partly depends on how perpe-

trators view the people toward whom the violence is directed. To perceive another as human enhances empathetic reactions through a sense of common humanity (Bandura, 1992). The joys and suffering of similar persons are more vicariously arousing than are those of strangers or of those divested of human qualities. Personalizing the injurious effects experienced by others also makes their suffering much more salient. As a result, it is difficult to mistreat humanized persons without risking self-condemnation.

Self-censure for cruel conduct can be disengaged or blunted by stripping people of human qualities. Once dehumanized, they are no longer viewed as persons with feelings, hopes, and concerns but as subhuman forms. They are portrayed as mindless "savages," "gooks," "satanic fiends," and the like. Subhumans are regarded as insensitive to maltreatment and influenceable only by harsh methods. If dispossessing one's foes of humanness does not weaken self-censure, then the latter can be eliminated by attributing demonic or bestial qualities to them. They become "Satanic fiends," "degenerates," "vermin," or other bestial creatures. It is easier to brutalize victims, for example, when they are referred to as "worms" (Haritos-Fatouros, 2002).

"Evil" has become very much in vogue as the current form of demonization. It conjures up the image of an unfathomable pernicious force that ruthlessly drives evildoers. As previously noted, inhumanities are typically perpetrated by people who can be quite considerate and compassionate in other areas of their lives. They can even be ruthless and humane simultaneously toward different individuals. This selectivity of moral engagement is strikingly illustrated by Goeth, a Nazi labor commandant. While dictating a letter replete with empathy and compassion for his ailing father, he sees a captive on the grounds who he thinks is not working hard enough. He whips out his revolver and callously shoots the captive. The commandant is both overcome with compassion and is savagely cruel at the same time. By using a description in the guise of an explanation, ready attribution of violence to evil stifles analysis of the determinants governing inhumane conduct.

Studies of interpersonal aggression give vivid testimony to the disinhibitory power of dehumanization (Bandura et al., 1975). Dehumanized individuals are treated much more punitively than those who have been invested with human qualities. When punitiveness does not achieve results, this is taken as further evidence of the unworthiness of dehumanized persons, thus justifying even greater maltreatment. Dehumanization fosters different self-exonerative patterns of thought. People seldom condemn punitive conduct, and they create justifications for it when they are directing their aggression at persons who have been deprived of their humanness. By contrast, people strongly disapprove of punitive actions and rarely excuse them when they are directed at persons depicted in humanized terms.

Under certain conditions, the exercise of power changes the users in ways that are conducive to further dehumanization. This happens most often when persons in positions of authority have unconstrained coercive power

over others. Powerholders come to devalue those over whom they wield control (Kipnis, 1974). In a simulated prison experiment (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973), even college students, who had been randomly chosen to serve as either inmates or guards and who had been given relatively unrestrained power, began to treat their charges in degrading, tyrannical ways. Thus, role assignment that authorized use of coercive power overrode personal characteristics in promoting punitive conduct. Systematic tests of relative influences similarly show that aggressive modeling and normative pressures exert considerably greater power over aggressive conduct than do people's personal characteristics (Larsen, Coleman, Forbes, & Johnson, 1972).

The overall findings from research on the different mechanisms of moral disengagement corroborate the historical chronicle of human atrocities: Conducive social conditions rather than monstrous people are required to produce heinous deeds. Given appropriate social conditions, decent, ordinary people can be led to do extraordinarily cruel things.

As alluded to in previous analyses, moral disengagement involves social machinations, not just personal intrapsychic ones. In moral justification, for example, people may be misled by those they trust into believing that violent means prevent more harm than they cause. The benefits that are socially declared may be exaggerated or just pious rhetoric masking less honorable purposes. Cultural prejudices shape which human beings get grouped and dehumanized and the types of depraved attributes ascribed to them. Social systems are structured in ways that make it easy for functionaries to absolve themselves of responsibility for the effects of their actions. Communication systems can be institutionally managed in ways that keep people uninformed or misinformed about the harm caused by the collective action. In summary, moral disengagement is a product of the interplay of both personal and social maneuvers.

PROMOTION OF EMPATHIC HUMANENESS THROUGH MORAL ENGAGEMENT

Psychological research emphasizes how easy it is to bring out the worst in people through dehumanization and other means of self-exoneration. The sensational negative findings receive the greatest attention. Thus, for example, the aspect of Milgram's research on obedient aggression that is most widely cited is the evidence that good people can be talked into performing cruel deeds. However, to get people to carry out punitive acts, the overseer had to be physically present repeatedly ordered them to act cruelly as they voiced their concerns and objections and accepted responsibility for any harm caused. Orders to escalate punitiveness to more intense levels are largely ignored or subverted when remotely issued by verbal command. As Helm and Morelli (1979) noted, this is hardly an example of blind obedience triggered by an authoritative mandate. Moreover, what is rarely noted is the

equally striking evidence that most people steadfastly refuse to behave cruelly, even in response to strong authoritarian commands, if the situation is personalized by having them see the victim or requiring them to inflict pain directly rather than remotely.

The emphasis on obedient aggression is understandable considering the prevalence and severity of people's inhumanities toward one another. However, there is considerable theoretical and social significance in the power of humanization to counteract cruel conduct. Studies examining this process reveal that, even under conditions that weaken self-deterrents, it is difficult for individuals to behave cruelly toward others when they are humanized or even personalized a bit (Bandura et al., 1975).

Experimental research underscores the centrality of a sense of common humanity in the development of interpersonal empathy (Bandura, 1982). Seeing one's welfare as tied to the well-being of others arouses empathic reactions to their joys and sufferings. Conversely, competitive and discordant experiences, in which another's gain brings suffering to oneself, create counter-empathy. Similarly, people respond empathically to the emotional experiences of others simply depicted as in-group members, and counter-empathetically to those portrayed as out-group members, in the absence of having shared any experiences with them. If a sense of mutuality has been created, so that the joys and distresses of an out-group member foretell similar experiences for the observers, correlative outcomes transform disempathy to empathy. In the international strife sparked by the September 11th terrorist attack, both sides in the conflict trade heavily on polarizing rhetoric of "us" versus "them" with ascriptions of evil to each other (Mandel, 2002).

The exercise of moral agency has dual aspects, inhibitive and proactive (Bandura, 1999). The inhibitive form is manifested in the power to refrain from behaving inhumanely. The proactive form of morality is expressed in the power to behave humanely. In the latter form of morality, people do good things as well as refrain from doing bad things. The investment of common humanity at each locus of moral self-regulation tends to foster humaneness. In the exercise of proactive morality, people act in the name of humane principles even when social circumstances dictate expedient, transgressive, and detrimental conduct. They disavow the use of "worthy" social ends to justify destructive means. They are willing to sacrifice their well-being rather than accede to unjust social practices. They take personal responsibility for the consequences of their actions. They remain sensitive to the suffering of others. Finally, they see human commonalities rather than distance themselves from others or divest them of human qualities.

TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF HUMANIZATION

The transformative power of humanization is graphically illustrated in the midst of the military massacre in My Lai (Zganjar, 1998). An American

platoon, led by Lt. Calley, had massacred 500 Vietnamese women, children, and elderly men. Detailed analyses of the massacre in this village have documented how moral self-sanctions were disengaged from the brutal collective conduct (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989). A ceremony, 30 years in coming, was held at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial honoring extraordinary heroism of prosocial morality in the midst of this carnage. Thompson, a young helicopter pilot, swooped down over the village of My Lai on a search and destroy mission as the massacre was occurring. He spotted an injured girl, marked the spot with a smoke signal, and radioed for help. Much to his horror, he saw a soldier flip her over and spray her with a round of bullets. Upon seeing the human carnage in an irrigation ditch and soldiers firing into the bodies, he realized that he was in the midst of a massacre.

He was moved to moral action by the sight of a terrified woman with a baby in her arms and a frightened child clinging to her leg. He explained his sense of common humanity, "These people were looking at me for help and there is no way I could turn my back on them." He told a platoon officer to help him remove the remaining villagers. The officer replied, "The only help they'll get is a hand grenade." Thompson moved his helicopter in the line of fire and commanded his gunner to fire on his approaching countrymen if they tried to harm the family. He radioed the accompanying gunships for help, and together they airlifted the remaining dozen villagers to safety. He flew back to the irrigation ditch where they found and rescued a 2-year-old boy still clinging to his dead mother. Thompson described his empathetic human linkage: "I had a son at home about the same age."

The affirmation of common humanity can bring out the best in people. The transformative power of humanization is further illustrated in a daughter's mission of vengeance (Blumenfeld, 2002). Her father, a New York rabbi, was shot and wounded in Jerusalem by Omar, a Palestinian militant. Twelve years later she set out to gain revenge by forcing him to confront his victim's humanity. In the course of exchanging letters under a concealed identity with the jailed gunman, the parental victim, militant gunman, and filial avenger were humanized in the process. In a dramatic courtroom parole hearing, the daughter identified herself to Omar as she pleaded for his release from prison, vowing he would never hurt anyone again. He wrote to her father likening his daughter to "the mirror that made me see your face as a human person," which "deserved to be admired and respected." This is a case of hatred that breeds escalative cycles of violence turned into mutual compassion. At the national level, Nelson Mandela singularly displaced hatred of apartheid with reconciliation by affirming common humanity.

GRADUALISTIC MORAL DISENGAGEMENT

Disengagement practices do not instantly transform considerate persons into cruel ones who purposely set out to kill other human beings. Rather,

the change is achieved by gradual disengagement of self-censure. Terrorist behavior evolves through extensive training in moral disengagement rather than emerging full-blown at the outset. The path to terrorism can be shaped by fortuitous factors as well as by the conjoint influence of personal predilections and sociopolitical inducements (Bandura, 1982). Development of the capability to kill is usually achieved through an evolvement process, in which recruits may not recognize the transformation they are undergoing (Bandura, 1986; Franks & Powers, 1970; Haritos-Fatouros, 2002). The disinhibitory training is usually conducted within a communal milieu of intense interpersonal influences insulated from mainstream social life. The recruits become deeply immersed in the ideology and functional roles of the group. Initially, they are prompted to perform unpleasant acts that they can tolerate without much self-censure. Gradually, their discomfort and self-reproof are weakened to ever higher levels of ruthlessness through extensive performance and through extensive exposure to aggressive modeling by more experienced associates. The various disengagement practices form an integral part of the training for terrorism. Eventually, acts originally regarded as abhorrent can be performed callously. Inhumane practices become thoughtlessly routinized.

Escalative self-disinhibition is accelerated if violent courses of action are presented as serving a moral imperative, and the targeted people are divested of human qualities (Bandura et al., 1975). The training not only instills the moral rightness and importance of the cause for militant action; it also creates a sense of eliteness and provides the social rewards of solidarity and group esteem for excelling in terrorist exploits.

Sprinzak (1986, 1990) has shown that terrorists, whether on the political left or right, evolve gradually rather than setting out to become radicals. The process of radicalization involves a gradual disengagement of moral self-sanctions from violent conduct. It begins with prosocial efforts to change particular social policies and opposition to officials, who are intent on keeping things as they are. Embittering failures to accomplish social change and hostile confrontations with authorities and police lead to growing disillusionment and alienation from the whole system. Escalative battles culminate in terrorists' efforts to destroy the system and its dehumanized rulers.

MORAL DISENGAGEMENT IN THE MERCHANDISING OF DEATHLY WARES

The preceding analyses have been concerned mainly with how disengagement mechanisms are enlisted in the service of terrorist violence and in combating terrorism by violent means. These same mechanisms are also heavily enlisted by terrorist entrepreneurs, who supply militant states with the lethal tools to terrorize their own people or to equip the terrorist groups

they sponsor. Frank Terpil, who became a terrorist entrepreneur after he fell from grace at the CIA, provides vivid testimony to these psychological mechanisms (Thomas, 1982).

This deathly operation is especially informative because it reveals in stark detail that those who trade in human destruction do not do it alone. They depend heavily on the collective moral disengagement of a vast network of reputable citizens managing respectable enterprises. Terpil masked his death operations in the euphemisms of a legitimate business fulfilling "consumer needs" under the sanitized name Intercontinental Technology. To spare himself any self-censure for contributing to human atrocities, he actively avoided knowledge of the purposes to which his weapons would be put. "I don't ever want to know that," he said. When asked whether he was ever haunted by any thoughts of human suffering his deathly wares might cause, he explained that a weapons dealer cannot afford to think about human consequences. Banishing thoughts of injurious consequences frees one's actions from the restraints of conscience. "If I really thought about the consequences all the time, I certainly wouldn't have been in this business. You have to blank it off."

Probes for any signs of self-reproach only brought self-exonerative comparisons. When asked if he felt any qualms about supplying torture equipment to Idi Amin, Terpil replied with justification by advantageous comparison with employees' production of napalm at Dow Chemical. As he put it, "I'm sure that the people from Dow Chemical didn't think of the consequences of selling napalm. If they did, they wouldn't be working at the factory. I doubt very much if they'd feel any more responsible for the ultimate use than I did for my equipment." When pressed about the atrocities committed at Amin's torture chambers under the sanitized designation State Research Bureau, Terpil repeated his depersonalized view, "I do not get wrapped up emotionally with the country. I regard myself basically as neutral, and commercial." To give legitimacy to his "private practice," he claimed that he aided British and American covert operations abroad as well.

What began as a psychological analysis of the operator of a death industry ended unexpectedly in an international network of supporting legitimate enterprises run by upstanding conscientious people. The merchandising of terrorism is not accomplished by a few unsavory individuals. It requires a worldwide network of people, including reputable, high-level members of society, who contribute to the deathly enterprise by insulating fractionation of the operations and displacement and diffusion of responsibility. Some people manufacture the tools of destruction. Others amass the arsenals for legitimate sale. Others operate storage centers for them. Others procure export and import licenses to move the deathly wares among different countries. Others obtain spurious end-user certificates that get the weaponry to embargoed nations through circuitous routes. Still others ship the lethal wares. The cogs in this worldwide network include weapons manufacturers; former

government officials with political ties; ex-diplomatic, military, and intelligence officers who provide valuable diplomatic skills and contacts; weapons merchants and shippers operating legitimate businesses; money raisers to finance terrorist activities; and bankers laundering and moving money through legitimate financial systems. By fragmenting and dispersing subfunctions of the enterprise, the various contributors see themselves as decent, legitimate practitioners of their trade rather than as parties to deathly operations.

Even producers of the television program 60 Minutes contributed to Terpil's coffers ("CBS Reportedly Paid 2 Fugitives," 1983). Terpil skipped bail to a foreign sanctuary after he was caught selling assassination equipment to an undercover FBI agent. He was tried in absentia. The District Attorney confronted the lead reporter of the program about a payment of $12,000 to an intermediary for an interview with the fugitive, Terpil. The reporter pleaded innocence through various disengagement maneuvers.

MORAL JUSTIFICATION IN THE USE OF COUNTERTERRORIST MEASURES

A comprehensive analysis of terrorism must also address how targeted nations grapple with terrorist violence. Hostage taking is a common terrorist strategy for wielding control over governments. If nations make the release of hostages a dominant national concern, they place themselves in a highly manipulable position. Tightly concealed captivity thwarts rescue action. Heightened national attention along with an inability to free hostages independently conveys a sense of weakness and invests terrorists with considerable importance and coercive power to extract concessions. Overreactions in which nations render themselves hostage to a small band of terrorists inspires and invites further terrorist acts. Hostage taking is stripped of functional value if it is treated as a criminal act that gains terrorists neither coercive concessionary power nor significant media attention.

Extreme retaliatory attacks that cause widespread death and destruction may advance the political cause of terrorists by arousing a backlash of sympathy for innocent victims and moral condemnation of the brutal nature of the attacks. To fight terror with terror often creates a ready supply of recruits prepared to die for their cause, even by suicidal martyrdom. Brute means also provide new justification for violence that escalates terrorism rather than diminishes it. Indeed, some terrorist activities are designed precisely to gain worldwide support for their cause and to provoke curtailment of personal liberties and other domestic repressive measures that might breed public disaffection with the system. Extreme countermeasures can, thus, play into the hands of terrorists.

Efforts to reduce societal vulnerabilities with better counterterrorist technologies beget better terrorist tactics and devices. A security officer char-

acterized such escalating adaptations well when he remarked that, "For every 10-foot wall you erect, terrorists will build an 11-foot ladder." Technological advances are producing more sophisticated terrorizing devices that increase societal vulnerability.

Some nations pursue the policy that terrorist acts will be promptly answered with massive deathly retaliation, whatever the cost, on the grounds that this is the price one must pay to check terrorism. Opponents of such policies argue that retaliatory overkill only fuels greater terrorism by creating more terrorists and increasing public sympathy for the causes that drive them to terroristic violence. Vigorous debates are fought over whether massive retaliation curbs terrorism or breeds an escalative cycle of terror.

At the geopolitical level, nations increase their vulnerability to terrorism by foreign marriages of convenience that prop up oppressive regimes. These life conditions, which spawn enmity, wrath, and political instability, become the breeding ground for terrorism. In the short-term solutions, terrorists must be routed and made to bear the consequences for their destructive acts. Here the issue of concern is whether military force is used in accordance with just war principles or in vengeful ways that violate the society's moral standards. The long-term solutions require promoting social reforms that better the life conditions of people. A focus on fighting violence with violence while neglecting needed long-term remedies is likely to produce an escalative cycle of terror and retaliation.

The preceding discussion has centered mainly on how terrorists invoke moral standards to justify human atrocities and selectively disengage these standards in conducting terrorist activities. Terrorism and fighting it with military force involve two-sided moral disengagement. Moral justification is brought into play just as surely as selecting and executing counterterrorist campaigns. This poses more troublesome problems for democratic societies than for totalitarian ones. Totalitarian regimes have fewer constraints against using institutional power to control media coverage of terrorist events, to restrict human rights, to sacrifice individuals for the benefit of the state rather than make concessions to terrorists, and to combat terrorist threats with lethal means. Terrorists can wield greater power over nations that place high value on human life and personal liberties. This constrains the ways they can act.

The terrorist attacks by the al-Qaeda network on U.S. consulates and military installations abroad and the devastating strike on the U.S. homeland presented a grave national threat with reverberating domestic and international consequences. It shattered the sense of national invulnerability, crippled major sectors of the society with worldwide economic repercussions, heightened cultural clashes between secular modernists and religious fundamentalists within Islamic nations and against Western nations, reordered geopolitical debates and international alliances, and launched widespread retaliatory military campaigns abroad to root out terrorist sanctuaries. It was

a different order of terrorism conducted by a well-financed elusive enemy operating through a worldwide network aimed at fomenting a holy war between the Western world and the Islamic world. The terrorist strikes called for national protective countermeasures to deter further terrorist attacks.

Fighting terrorism with military force presents moral dilemmas on the execution of military means. Midway through a nationwide study on selective disengagement of moral agency in support of military force, the nation witnessed the demolition of the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon by the al-Qaeda network (McAlister, Bandura, Morrison, & Grussendorf, 2003). The terrorist strike raised the level of moral disengagement. The higher the moral disengagement, the stronger the public support for immediate retaliatory strikes against suspected terrorist sanctuaries abroad and for aerial bombardment of Iraq. Further research is needed to determine how the level of moral disengagement affects the form, scope, and intensity of countermeasures the public supports.

The just war principles of necessity, proportionality, discriminativeness, and humanity (Walzer, 1992) provide some guidelines for defensive military campaigns. They specify the just grounds for resort to military force and the form, scope, and intensity of military means that are morally defensible. Viewed from this framework, military counterstrikes are justified as the last resort after nonviolent means have been exhausted; the military campaign is limited to the level of force needed to eradicate the threat; and the counterstrikes are conducted in ways that minimize civilian casualties.

Just cause is a further principle of justifiability. A military intervention may fulfill the previously mentioned standards but be used for economic and strategic self-interest. The force must be used for a just cause rather than for vengeance, control of resources, or geopolitical advantage. Just causes can be undermined by brute means. Unilateral military intervention can also taint humanitarian intentions with geopolitical designs. The oft-ready transmutation of allies of convenience into foes and foes into allies of convenience creates skepticism about avowed just causes. By advantageous comparison, authoritarian regimes legitimize their own brutal practices against militant dissidents within their society by likening their brutality to the war on terrorism.

Morally calibrated countermeasures that involve restrained and discriminate use of military force help to gain and maintain domestic and international support. Cooperation with nation states is essential because uprooting terrorist threats must be pursued internationally. The aid of allies is even more critical for the tough and lengthy occupation and reconstruction programs required in the aftermath of war. Because of the geographic dispersion of the terrorist enemy, success requires a unified effort by countries to rid themselves of not only the terrorists in their midst but also of the ills within their societies that breed embittered and alienated populations. States must ameliorate these conditions largely by pushing for change from within. For-

eign unilateral interventions can readily convert, in the eyes of the Islamic world, an antiterrorism campaign into a holy intercultural war. Indeed, morally undisciplined force is likely to beget more embittered terrorists willing to die in defense of their values and way of life.

The mounting of a counterterrorist military campaign creates a moral suasion war through airwaves on the construal and justification of the interventions. M. B. Smith (2002) provides a thoughtful analysis of the metaphoric labeling of retaliatory countermeasures as "War on Terrorism." Actual wars involve battles between states that end with the emergence of a victor. In contrast, the al-Qaeda enemy is a decentralized, loosely interconnected network operating surreptitiously worldwide without clear boundaries and extending its reach by coordinating the activities of dispersed affiliates. It is a new type of global enemy that is mobile, has no fixed geographic boundaries, and cannot be eradicated by ousting a leader. Suicide terrorism as an act of martyrdom serves as one of its weapons that defies control. This creates a situation where an incomplete military end is likely because dismantling a terrorist operation in a particular locale does not eliminate the threat elsewhere. For example, with porous borders and proxy ground forces of suspect allegiance, the massive Afghanistan military campaign relocated rather than eradicated the core al-Qaeda leadership, that continues to operate as a resurgent terrorist force spreading terrorism worldwide against an expanded range of coalition foes. In addition to selecting targets of high symbolic and economic value, the broadened aim breeds fear internationally by hitting easily accessible targets that are neither predictable nor protectable. Given globally dispersed semi-autonomous terrorist cells with ample replacement recruits for captured or slain operatives, this is not a readily winnable war. Recurrent terrorist attacks heighten sociopolitical pressures to deploy electronic tracking systems for large-scale domestic and international surveillance.

War metaphors create a mindset for war that helps to mobilize patriotic public support for military initiatives. Gilovich (1981) documented the power of comparative framing of military operations in enlisting support for military means. For instance, in judging how the United States should respond to a totalitarian threat toward a small nation by another country, people advocated a more interventionist course of action when the international crisis was likened to Munich, representing political appeasement of Nazi Germany, than when it was likened to another Vietnam, representing a disastrous military entanglement. The U.S. National Security Advisor likened allied opposition to a United Nations authorization of the use of force against Iraq to the appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s (Bernstein & Weisman, 2003). The Prime Minister of Great Britain similarly equated the opponent in the UN Security Council with the Nazi appeasers of yesteryear. Confinement by no-flight zones, continuous aerial surveillance, and bombardment of defensive and communications facilities, and disallowance of oil revenues is hardly

appeasing treatment. Likening the terrorist threat to the so-called "axis of evil" to the axis powers of World War II provided further moral justification for military action. To bring the threat by comparative framing even closer to home, preemptive disarmament of Iraq was likened to the Cuban missile crisis.

The war metaphor also supported wartime restrictions on privacy rights and civil liberties. Justification by advantageous historical comparison vindicated the restrictions. The public was reminded that Lincoln did it during the Civil War, and Roosevelt did it during World War II. Under a high sense of personal vulnerability, concern for personal safety outweighs protection of privacy and civil liberties. Indeed, antiterrorism laws, granting the government broad domestic surveillance powers to access, scan, and profile information on personal activities without public oversight and accountability, received widespread public support.

One must distinguish between justification of self-defense by military force and justification of the military means used in the pursuit of the just cause. Routing al-Qaeda from their sanctuaries in Afghanistan was justifiable in terms of just war standards. It was achieved with remarkable swiftness by combining unrelenting aerial bombardment with Afghan warlords serving as the proxy army. Many of the international reactions, especially in Muslim societies, centered on the proportionality of force, the civilian toll, and the rightness of intention in the expansion of the war on terrorism to Iraq.

Drawing on historical contrast, the U.S. Defense Secretary acknowledged the inevitability of civilian causalities, but added, "We can take comfort in the knowledge that this war has seen fewer tragic losses of civilian life than perhaps any war in modern history" (Shanker, 2002). The military architect of the campaign downplayed reports of civilian casualties on the grounds that they are impossible to estimate reliably: "And so all of us have opted not to do that" (Coille, 2002). In the public view, precision-guided weapons spare innocents.

Televised scenes of Afghans celebrating the rout of the brutally tyrannical Taliban regime documented the humanitarian aspect of the military campaign. Civilian liberation from state terrorism with virtually no Allied casualties and seemingly minimal "collateral damage" persuaded even vocal critics of the use of lethal force that military means could serve as a humanitarian intervention. Some prominent liberalists became humanitarian hawks promoting the use of military power. Aerial bombardment together with proxy ground forces, which worked surprisingly well in Kosovo and speedily in Afghanistan, represent a model of warfare that the general public could support with few moral qualms. Ill-fitting metaphors can spawn military initiatives that beget continuing terrorism rather than restore public safety. Kosovo has become the operative metaphor for the times (Packer, 2002). Routing the autocratic regime from Kosovo in a finite military operation did not incite a

worldwide Serbian network to terrorize the United States and its Allies. By contrast, routing al-Qaeda from Afghanistan relocated much of the terrorist menace in an open-ended battle with Islamic extremists operating worldwide in the name of a holy war.

The sorrowful experience in Vietnam created low tolerance for a protracted war that piles up casualties and erodes public support. As a consequence, military doctrine now favors "overwhelming force" that gets the job done fast with minimal combat casualties. In Iraq, this doctrine took the form of a massive missile barrage to paralyze the enemy with "shock and awe." A devastating assault is hard to square with the discriminateness, proportionality, and casualty standards of morally justifiable war. Vigorous debates will be fought over the justness of the lethal means in the geopolitical war.

Satellite broadcast technology heightened the war of words and imagery regarding "collateral damage." Whereas the Western media were highlighting the humanitarian benefits of military force, Al-Jazeera satellite television was showing vividly the heavy civilian toll of the military campaign in Afghanistan along with constant images of carnage from the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Discriminate aerial bombardment requires reliable ground intelligence to spot the enemy. To spare Allied lives, the feuding Afghan warlords did the ground fighting and provided some of the ground intelligence. Reports of questionable reliability wreaked havoc on families bombed in villages and wiped out political rivals where tribal factions sought advantage in local power struggles.

Collateral damage extends beyond the direct impact of military strikes on civilians. Al-Jazeera expanded the meaning of *collateral damage* to the disastrous aftermath of the military campaign—a war-ravaged infrastructure and huge displaced populations in squalid refugee camps left to fend for themselves without the basic necessities of life. With Allied reluctance to commit security ground forces that would put their soldiers in harm's way, feuding warlords took control over their fiefdoms, some resumed the lucrative international heroin trade, and others even restored the medieval tyranny, especially toward women, that was so brutally practiced by the Taliban. Generous payments to the warlords, the allies of convenience, to fight the war and to hunt the al-Qaeda and the Taliban nourished a state of national anarchy.

The hunt for the elusive al-Qaeda got downgraded, and bin Laden was declared irrelevant in favor of a preemptive military campaign against Iraq. The metaphoric war on terrorism evolved into an actual one. The initial labeling of the war on terrorism as a "crusade" fought under the code name "Infinite Justice" suggesting, in Arabic translation, the trumping of God as the ultimate authority, inflamed Islamic fundamentalists. Leaders of the Christian Right poured fuel on the fire by characterizing the Prophet Muhammad as a terrorist and Palestinians as interlopers who must be stripped of control of the holy land, thus rekindling the religious crusade of yore.

Opponents of going to war with Iraq questioned the rightness of intention. Many critics worldwide voiced distrust and cynicism that the war on terrorism provided a pretext for promoting less pious agendas (Clymer, 2002). The rush to preventative war roused the undercurrent of indignation among alienated allies over how the United States uses its matchless power and sought to counterbalance it with threats to veto a war resolution. Critics warned that unilateral resort to awesome military power, embellished with grandiose visions, would make the world more liable to terrorism than safer from it. Bin Laden, who had been presumed dead, resurfaced on Al-Jazeera praising recent terrorist strikes, trumpeting the evil intentions of the poised infidel invaders, and calling Islamists worldwide to action to disable the enemy.

Saddam's regime was militarily boxed in by no-flight zones with continuous aerial surveillance by Allied warplanes and bombardment of defense and communication facilities. Some nations questioned the justification of the priority accorded to the threat and timing of a preemptive strike against Iraq that did not seem to pose much of a threat under the stringent containment. They viewed the planned invasion as a war of choice, not necessity. Critics of a military invasion and occupation argued that UN inspectors destroyed more weapons of mass destruction than did the Gulf war. The Military containment and deterrence had worked for over a decade. They prescribed a coercive, but nonviolent alternative, including an expanded and intensified inspection program backed up by an arms embargo, unfettered aerial surveillance, extensions of the no-flight zone nationwide, and multinational soldiers to guard inspected military installations and prevent rearmament (Walzer, 2003). They lobbied for forceful inspecting and dismantling weapons of mass destruction and their production facilities under the international charter and auspices rather than through armed invasion with its prolonged aftermath of uncertain scope and magnitude.

The utilitarian standard provided justification for armed intervention as a necessity even if it had to be done unilaterally. A preemptive strike would prevent a projected massive future threat to humanity. The public was reminded that Hussein was a monstrous despot who terrorized and gassed his own people and invaded a neighbor state. Containment was dubbed a failure and dismissed as an option, and the magnitude of the threat was amplified. Although militarily contained and apparently not tied to al-Qaeda, in defiance of UN resolutions, Hussein was a deceptive obstructionist to arms inspection and was producing chemical and biological weapons that he might pass on to organized or freelancing terrorists. Moreover, his efforts to create atomic weapons posed an even graver international threat. The utilitarian justification presented a stark contrast: Inflict small harm now preemptively or suffer massive human destruction by a nuclearly armed despot. The projected human threat was personalized and made to be immense and pervasive because a "dirty" nuclear bomb could be smuggled into any city and detonated. No one was safe any longer from a nuclear strike. The clear choice

in this humanitarian crisis: responsible preventive military offensive or international timidity. The President maintained that the military overthrow of Saddam's regime was morally obligatory to defend the American people against this grave threat. In the stark contrast of the dichotomous options and the rightness of the cause, moral considerations and potential international repercussions held low priority for a frightened populace.

The utilitarian benefits of a military campaign against Iraq were vigorously contested (Kaysen, Miller, Malin, Nordhaus, & Steinbruner, 2002). The U.S. administration depicted the outcomes in predominately positive terms—removal of a horrific regional threat of mass destruction, democratization of a despotic regime, and liberation of its terrorized people. Critics argued that the planned intervention was mischaracterized as a "preemptive" war that forestalled an imminent attack by an enemy, when, in fact, it was a "preventive" war to disarm and supplant a regime reined in and constrained militarily and by severe economic sanctions.

They voiced concern about a new doctrine of anticipatory military self-defense against a presumptive threat in future years. The critics (Kaysen et al., 2002) enumerated a host of potentially disastrous consequences of military intervention. It would inflame the Muslim world and only escalate international terrorism; derail the global efforts to eradicate the terrorism spawned by the al-Qaeda network and other Islamic terrorist groups; expand the ranks of ultraconservative Islamists and undermine the efforts of modernists and reformers working toward an Islamic pluralism; unleash ethnic warfare in the Mideast region; damage relationships and partnerships with allies; subvert international laws that protect the rights of nations and ensure the equitable application of the laws; undermine the nation's moral position as a force for good by violating its own values; and burden the nation with staggering long-term costs of warfare, occupation, peacekeeping, and national reconstruction.

The U.S. administration and their advisors countered the forecast of these sobering risky outcomes with a more optimistic consequential scenario. Saddam ruled by fear not loyalty, so an invasion would bring a quick end to his terrifying reign. Rejoicing of the liberated Iraqis would affirm the moral rightness of the military remedy. Rapid military success would turn detractors and private approvers into appreciative public supporters for the democratization not only of Iraq but of the entire region.

The Iraqi regime, depicted as an imminent and grave biochemical threat conspiring with terrorists and poised to unleash their weapons of mass destruction if attacked, was speedily routed as an enemy more in the likeness of rogue armed combatants than a mighty military machine. Geopolitical disputes arose over who should preside over the reconstruction of the nation and who should look for the chemical and biological weapons and nuclear facilities that were the main justification for the military invasion. Within this deeply fissured multireligious nation, the power vacuum was quickly filled

by exiles with political ambitions, ethnic separatists, and clerics jockeying for power to create an Islamic nation in opposition to a pluralistic secular one. The sociopolitical war presents more daunting challenges than did the military war.

Given the potential escalative chain of events, societies face the challenge of eliminating weapons of mass destruction in a morally defensible way. If terrorism is to be defeated, societies must address the life conditions that drive people to deadly terrorist missions. This is a daunting challenge not amenable to quick fixes. Islamic terrorists come mainly from populations living in an environment of poverty, political oppression, gross inequities, illiteracy, and a paucity of opportunities to improve their lives. More advantaged members who have been alienated and radicalized by embittering experiences in their efforts to promote the social changes they desire usually spearhead militant activism (Bandura, 1973; Sprinzak, 1990). In cultural milieus where suicide bombing is hailed as gaining blessed martyrdom, this mode of terrorism is institutionally embraced and socially applauded as divine retribution for the humiliation and suffering inflicted by the enemy (Lelyveld, 2001). Educational development provides the best means of escape from poverty and the promotion of national development. However, this institutional resource is squandered when educational systems are used more for indoctrination in reactionary theology than for cultivation of the talents needed to thrive in modern global society.

All too often, American foreign policy forges marriages of convenience with autocratic rulers who preside over their people with oppressive force to ensure self-preservation. These life conditions arouse the wrath of disaffected populations toward the United States and its allies for propping up the authoritarian regimes financially and militarily. The population is further inflamed by Islamic fundamentalists through the politicization of religion to rally support for terrorist operations against secularism and the supporters of the enemies of their medievalist strain of Islam. The scourge of terrorism presents a great humanitarian challenge on how to make it in people's self-interests to live together agreeably in a pluralistic society embedded in modernity and global interdependence. If the war on terrorism is to be won, it requires extensive enabling support of the moderate voices within these societies who have a progressive vision of how to integrate the benefits of modernization with humanist principles that uphold human rights, equality, and dignity.