The Future of Terrorism: Mass Hostage Taking in Russia and Mumbai

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Terrorism has a future; terrorism always has a future. The question is: can the application of terror morph into something inherently capable of distorting strategic countermeasures? The answer is probably yes, because a states' fundamental responsibility is to maintain sovereignty by protecting its population. The problem with this responsibility in relation to terrorism is that it is debilitating in terms of being predictable. Predictability is not a strategy; it is the absence of strategy.

The future of terrorism is to isolate instances where the state is compelled to act predictably. The best example of this type of terrorism is an approach that involves mass hostage taking in conjunction with the use of barricades. This is quite remarkable, because " . . . the idea of taking hostages and placing the responsibility for their fate into the hands of the opposing government was a highly effective tool . . . "[1] For the purposes of this article, a mass hostage taking incident occurs when between one hundred and two thousand people are held involuntarily under the threat of serious physical injury. Examples of mass hostage taking incidents will be restricted to those occurring in public buildings such as: schools, theaters, hospitals, and hotels. Similar incidents taking place on air planes, busses, or other modes of transportation will be considered outside the scope of inquiry.

Ostensibly, the concern about mass hostage taking is the trepidation associated with possibly observing the next major adaptation in the application of terrorism. It is unclear how long mass hostage taking can or will remain in a nascent stage. There is a perverse irony when a new type of terrorism is proven effective: it becomes the new applicable standard of normalcy. Incidentally, the introduction of suicide bombing stimulated both terrorist groups and state security services to adapt organizationally. It is important to realize that situations like this are truly transformative. Something is transformative if it simultaneously introduces anomie and adds complexity. The time has come now that there is a considerable disaggregation between organization size and capabilities. The idea that large groups or states will continue to dictate to smaller groups is on the verge of being passé. There is a certain feeling that, "Over the last few years, small groups' ability to conduct terrorism has shown radical improvements in productivity—their capacity to inflict economic, physical, and moral damage. These groups, motivated by everything from gang membership to religious extremism, have taken advantage of easy access to our global superinfrastructure, revenues from growing illicit commercial flows,

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[1] Adam Dolnik & Keith M. Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Hostage Crises with the New Terrorists*, 15

and ubiquitously available new technologies to cross the threshold necessary to become terrible threats."[2] New found power leads to an expanding horizon of possibilities. The current era is a time of unprecedented change. Many groups still view the application of terror as a useful approach. While political dissatisfaction seems largely endemic to the human condition: the thought that new sensational displays of violence might help reorder society is never entirely outmoded. The continued appeal is the notion (at least conceptually) that terrorism can become easier to apply, but harder to counter. Basically, the framework here is a type of schism that increasingly negates strategic prevention, but intentionally courts sanguinary pitched battles. In that respect, someone is always thinking about what comes next, and:

 "There are several reasons behind this trend. One is the terrorists' natural tendency to 'out-do' their previous attacks, stimulated by the perception that if the present level of violence has thus far failed to succeed in forcing a radical change in the status quo, the campaign needs to be intensified. Another reason is the fact that no matter how horrific a terrorist campaign might be, the intended audiences become desensitized to the current level of violence over time, forcing the terrorists to escalate further in order to maintain or heighten the atmosphere of panic and fear among the general population, and to stay in the spotlight. An escalation in terrorist violence is also sometimes stimulated by the actions of other organizations with which the given group competes for power or popularity. Another reason for the gradual escalation of overall terrorist violence over time has been the formation of new groups. Upon emergence, new violent organizations usually do not undergo the full step-by-step process of radicalization, but rather pick up at the level of violence where other organizations active in the same struggle have left off. Alternatively, many existing organizations can give birth to new formations through the process of splintering, which usually results in the new entity being more radical and more violent than the core group."[3]

Mass Hostage Taking

The reason to reevaluate the phenomena of mass hostage taking is that the inherent lack of a strategic response makes similar situations inevitable in the future. Having the capability to take several hundred or several thousand people hostage makes a very loud statement about the seriousness of a terrorist organization. It is important to realize that mass hostage taking is a new type of terrorism, but it is still a type of armed political theater preformed for the explicit purpose of influencing an audience. Essentially, the problem with mass hostage taking situations that involve barricades is that the standard responses from security forces are simply too dangerous. However, this is not to say that large scale hostage rescue is impossible (both German and Israeli forces are known for thwarting attacks on large commercial planes). The difficulty is that most of the strategic responses do not scale up to handle the myriad of tactical problems caused by mass hostage taking situation that involve barricades.

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[2] John Robb, *The Coming Urban Terror: Systems disruption, networked gangs, and bioweapons*
[3] Adam Dolnik & Keith M. Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Hostage Crises with the New Terrorists*, 12

Technology

In Mumbai, India, the importance of technology had never been so apparent until a series of coordinated assaults eventually turned into a mass hostage taking situation that lasted from November 26th until November 29th 2008. The crisis in Mumbai was exacerbated to a considerable degree by the terrorists' use of widely available technology. Additional details and implications about these attacks will be addressed in a later section. Unfortunately, the willingness to leverage seemingly banal technology signals a disturbing increase in capabilities and ingenuity. Counter-Terrorism expert John Robb explains how the Mumbai attackers leverage global infrastructure and technology to facilitate the attack:

➢ Boat navigation was by GPS for precision.
➢ Satellite phone, found onboard one of the vessels, for coordination en route.
➢ Constant use of cell phones for tactical communication.
➢ Blackberries for real-time tactical analysis of media coverage (which provided details on the status of forces arrayed against them). Also, an ability to check Web sites, including that of the police, for tactical data and global media coverage for strategic direction. This allowed them to route around attempts to sever their connectivity.
➢ E-mail and remailers for communication to the local media.[4]

It remains sufficiently challenging to project the influence for new application of technology in mass hostage taking situations. Objectively, the variety of technology available appears to only augment the terrorists' aspiration to develop capabilities that are archetypal situations where they can project power in a specific manor that must be dealt with in real-time. Almost every unique facet involved with mass hostage taking appears to be included in the process based on some potential for disrupting established strategic countermeasures. Without the advent of strategy, the state and its various security bureaucracies can be forced to respond to situations where they are at best on equal terms, or potentially, at a decided disadvantage against hostage takers. Clearly, the status quo is changing, but "In addition to shifting the traditional balance of power in the hostage takers' favor, the proliferation of communication technologies will probably also strongly influence the very process of negotiation itself. Firstly, the terrorists' immediate ability to consult with their leadership via mobile phone will deprive the negotiators of much of the influence they typically strive to gain by disrupting the hostage takers' chain of authority, thus forcing the perpetrators to make their own decisions in isolation from their leadership."[5]

If you where to engage in a simple word association experiment by asking someone to say the first thing that comes to mind when they think of hostage taking chances are the response would be something approximating negotiation. Negotiation is a legitimate strategy to defuse a hostage situation. The availability of communication technologies makes it possible to not only subvert the negotiation process, but to gain information dominance across a vast array of media formats and platforms. The entire premise of negotiation is based on the prospect of mutually advantageous compromise. The likelihood that the state has some asset the hostage takers actually need or want is remote. The importance of controlling communication was much more influential when " . . . terrorist hostage takers of the past had often gone on operations with

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[4] John Robb, *JOURNAL: Off the Shelf Leverage*
[5] Adam Dolnik & Keith M. Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Hostage Crises with the New Terrorists*, 17

minimal instructions from their leaders, and thus frequently found themselves in a position of having to make decisions on their own, today's technological reality that gives the terrorists immediate access to their superiors has radically altered the situation."[6] The new design and implementation of mass hostage taking has largely invalidated the edifice of negotiation. Without negotiations there are very few scalable methods available to the state capable of exerting pressure for coercive purposes. Essentially, in a hostage situation the state functions relatively predictably somewhat like a hammer or any other single purpose tool. As long as all hostage problems look like nails that want to be fixed by a hammer then the state can cope just fine. Conversely, if the hostage takers want a solution the state is either unwilling or incapable of providing the situation can reach its nadir rapidly. Interestingly, "Since the leaders-unlike the hostage takers-will not be confined to the location under a constant threat of immediate forceful resolution, the processes that form the baseline foundation of the contemporary practice of crisis negotiation will not take place, making the task of lowering the terrorists' expectations much more difficult. Further, the availability of surveillance technology that can potentially aid the terrorists in eavesdropping on communication channels used by the security forces will also introduce new challenges."[7] As was the case in Mumbai, the value of email and the Internet became readily apparent. There is an obvious structural problem with not being able to anticipate where the Internet will be used, if it will be used to gather information prior to an attack, coordinate an attack, disseminate information after an attack, or some combination.

In the future, the Internet (and its various applications and functions) might be the definitive example of problems associated with duel use technology. Duel use technology can do everything from the pedantic to enabling terrorists. The implications are profound as " . . . the global reach of the Internet will present the terrorists with an independent communication channel to the media and the outside world, which will allow them to present their own version of events along with documentary evidence, making censorship and media manipulation a much less effective or even counterproductive incident management tool than in the past. Moreover, in such a situation, providing access to the media as a minor concession used to initiate trades will also become a decreasingly important instrument in the negotiators' toolbox."[8] A peripheral goal of mass hostage taking is to establish an ability to leverage technology and global infrastructure that the state cannot conceivably respond to effectively.

Often the only remaining viable option is to initiate a rescue attempt by force. State security services can be at a decided disadvantage if they are forced to storm a building to rescue hostages. Such an attack is not a favored approach because it lacks the element of surprise. Also, the absence of surprise makes the process of building entry highly predictable. It is almost certain that in a mass hostage situation the hostage takers will be well prepared for an impending assault. Curiously, "Such measures will likely take the form of employment of large teams of hostage takers armed well enough to repel a possible raid, strategic positioning of snipers, use of surveillance technology and booby traps to monitor and obstruct possible entry points, and the deployment of potent explosive devices among the hostages to make any attempt to rescue them by force as costly in terms of loss of human life as possible."[9] Essentially, these defensive

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 16

positions are a series of fixed ambush points. Both sides in a hostage situation are aware that if conditions deteriorate quite a few people are going to die. If the theory behind these attacks is to create human carnage irrespective of the countermeasures used; then mass hostage taking is a frightening advancement in the application of terror. Mass hostage taking as a form of stylized terrorism clearly exhibits a number of disproportionate advantages for the hostage takers. Adam Dolnik and Keith M. Fitzgerald explain that, "In combination with the aforementioned greater readiness to die in the incident, and the overall decline in political sensitivity associated with killing innocents, this situation has essentially converted the barricade hostage scenario into a potential 'win-win' situation for the terrorists. If the hostage takers achieve their demands they win. If the government troops storm the location and the terrorists are killed in the shootout (along with many hostages) then the outcome of dying a martyr's death is also perceived as a victory."[10] The dynamic of almost certain death places a unique strain on the negotiating process to reach a resolution.

Chechen Mass Hostage Taking

Mass hostage taking is example of how the conflict between Russia and Chechnya was being pushed in new directions that no one ever expected. The following section will address three incidents involving Chechen separatists' as the hostage takers. The connected incidents comprise a trinity in terms of their discernable intensification and linear quality.

The formative incident occurred "On June 14, 1995, Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev personally led a 162 strong commando unit for 'Operation *Jihad'* in Russian territory in order to 'stop the war [in Chechnya] or die.'"[11] To provide some context, between 1994 and 1996 the Russian Republic of Chechnya was at war with Russia. Reasons given for the war vary, but then Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudaev is often cited for his attempts to gain autonomy for Chechnya, and for his permissive stance on criminal behavior. A brutal and sloppy Russian invasion created the proper conditions to inspire reprisals in the form of terrorism. As the attack began:

> " . . . Basayev's original target was the Mineralniye Vody Airport, where the group allegedly planned to seize an aircraft and fly it into the Kremlin in a 9-11 style operation. For his part, Basayev claimed the convoy was heading to Moscow. In any case, the convoy made it through no less than twenty-two checkpoints all the way up to the village of Praskaeva near the Russian town of Budyonnovsk, but reportedly having run out of bribe money, the group was arrested and brought to the police station in town. Once there, previously undiscovered fighters emerged from the trucks and with swift action seized a number of key buildings in the city, eventually retreating with some 2,500 hostages into a hospital. During the initial takeover as many as 41 people were killed a number that would reach no less than 130 dead and 415 injured by the end of the crisis five days later."[12]

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[10] Ibid., 24
[11] Ibid., 45
[12] Ibid.

The initial observation is the unexpected deviation from the original target. Without going into unnecessary details, Basayev's unit was robust enough in terms of capabilities and capacity to facilitate a change of targets. Secondly, the availability of a series of secondary targets shows the range of different places that can be selected for mass hostage taking attacks. Third, even though Russian police ultimately prevented Basayev's unit from reaching the Mineralniye Vody Airport: this strategic success had little impact on the unit's ability to perform at the operational or tactical level in relation to taking and killing hostages. While the attack was off to an inauspicious start:

> "On the next day events took an ugly tum, as the terrorists executed another five captives after their morning deadline for staging a press conference had repeatedly been ignored. In order to avoid further killings, the Russian authorities finally allowed a group of journalists to enter the hospital and hold a press conference inside. During the event, Basayev proclaimed: 'Your pilots killed my family-eleven people, including women and children. But we do not fight women and children. They will be killed by your own soldiers. Your imperial army.' This statement would turn out to be prophetic, as on the next day at 4:55 A.M., the Ministry of Interior (MVD) and Federal Security Service (FSB) troops indeed launched an armed operation in an attempt to free the hostages by force. Russian forces led by the elite Alpha commando unit assaulted the Chechen positions but were forced to retreat, partially due to the terrorists' use of hostages as human shields. The four-hour assault was not completely without success however, as eighty-six people were rescued while the terrorists were forced to retreat from the wings into the main building. Still, more than thirty hostages were killed by the rescuing troops, and the lives of the ones remaining inside came under a direct threat due to a fire that had erupted throughout the building."[13]

There are several curious factors about this incident that warrant further examination before moving on. The total of 2,500 hostages involved is truly astonishing. It is impossible to believe that Russian MVD or FSB troops came away with any meaningful lessons learned (worth synthesizing) that would help to significantly modify future response tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) for incidents of similar magnitude. However, "At the same time, it must be recognized that the terrorists apparently did not originally plan to take hostages in Budyonnovsk, which likely contributed to their eventual acceptance of a free passage offer."[14] We also know from this case that hostage rescue attempts done by force without the benefit of some strategic advantage seriously endanger the lives of hostages. Honestly, it is unclear what useful information can be extrapolated from this case in terms of forming guidelines or doctrine. There must be some amount of second guessing surrounding the decision to let Basayev leave considering the significant role he continued to play in the war with Russia until his death in 2006. Although, " . . . at this stage of the Chechen War, Basayev still tried to attract international support for his cause, which strongly influenced the strategy with which he approached the standoff. However, following the events of Kizlyar and the Moscow theatre hostage crisis, his approach to barricade incidents would assume an ominous escalatory trajectory leading directly

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[13] Ibid., 46
[14] Ibid., 48

to the tragic events of Beslan."[15] Finally, Basayev later entered politics, but his role in the Budyonnovsk attack was cited by Russia as a sign he could not be trusted.

The other two visceral examples of this type of attack perpetrated by Chechen fighters included: the October 2002 Moscow theater crisis and the September 2004 siege of Beslan School Number One. Initially, "On October 23, 2002, a group of 53 heavily armed Chechens seized the crowded Dubrovka theater in central Moscow during a performance of the Nord-Ost musical. The captors declared that unless Russia granted in-dependence to Chechnya and immediately withdrew its troops from the region, they would blow up the building with roughly 980 hostages inside. Although most of the hostages were saved when Russian spetsnaz forces stormed the theater on October 26, the rescue operation ended with the deaths of nearly 130 hostages, all but 2 of whom succumbed to the potent anesthetizing gas used by the rescuers."[16] Again, the new measures and countermeasures adopted during the on going conflict between Russia and Chechnya proved to have deadly consequences. The large scale tactical use of an anesthetic gas during a hostage rescue was unprecedented. The use of gas was an innovative attempt to maintain some semblance of a strategic advantage. Specific determinations about the exact nature of the anesthetic gas and its use bring up a lengthy series of concerns. Unfortunately, there seems to be considerable disagreement about what the gas actually was. Various sources concluded that the gas was likely an opiate derivative. Other sources where unable to make a determination because the gas did not fit the profile of any known opiate derivative anesthetic gas. Not being a chemist or anesthesiologist, this discrepancy is something that exists considerably beyond my understanding. Of course, the situation has proven to be nearly impossible to resolve and potentially irresolvable due to the unwillingness of Russia to provide details about the gas, and its origin. Serious questions linger about the application of gas in the Dubrovka theater. Specifically, was the gas itself and it use consistent with applicable norms regarding the use of chemical weapons?

Finally, looking carefully at the Beslan School siege, it is a continuation but also an improvement on the attack at the Dubrovka theater.   In terms of specific changes during the 2004 Beslan school siege, "The hostage-takers laid mines around the perimeter of the building and strung up powerful explosives all over the gymnasium so that they could blow it up instantaneously. Having learned from the October 2002 crisis, the terrorists broke the windows in the gymnasium to disperse any gas that might be pumped in, and they took numerous other steps, such as monitoring the School grounds constantly on all sides and sealing off the plumbing and ventilation systems, to ensure that they could not be overpowered by Russian security forces before detonating the munitions."[17] The improvement made between the 2002 and 2004 attacks indicates a linear development that might be expected from any capable professionals. Mass hostage taking is the type of attack appropriate for small groups because they can be incredibly responsive to rapid tactical and technological amelioration. The ability for small organizations to adapt and restructure themselves is a considerable advantage in these instances. Conversely, state security services are slower to adapt because they are essentially extensions of a centralized bureaucratic system. In essence, " . . . the increased ability to learn from past experiences of groups in other countries, as well as the ability to conduct more detailed casing and analysis of

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Mark Kramer, *The Perils of Counterinsurgency: Russia's War in Chechnya*, 50-51

[17] Ibid., 54

possible targets, will probably lead to the terrorists' greater preparation aimed at eliminating any possibility of a successful rescue operation."[18] To say that the Chechens increased their proficiency for mass hostage taking is certainly true. However, it is also true that they became considerably more depraved in terms of target selection and methodology. The willingness to export terror well outside the boarders of Chechnya was likely a necessary step to validate the unpredictable nature of this new threat to a wider audience. There is also something disturbing about the need for terrorism to continually grow in complexity. It is unclear what drives this desire to continually grow and improve this particular type of political violence. Theoretically, it is possible that the conflict between Russia and Chechnya was a constant impetus for a more creative application of violence: a laboratory of death so to speak. Our last example of the phenomena of mass hostage taking occurred, "On September 1, 2004, a group of heavily armed fighters stormed a school in the town of Beslan, taking some 1,150 children, teachers, and parents hostage and demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya. Two days later, in a chaotic and violent battle, 330 hostages and nearly all the pro-Chechen fighters were killed by explosives set by the hostage-takers and by gunfire from all sides. Radical Chechen field commander Shamil Basaev later claimed responsibility for the Beslan school assault."[19]

Mumbai

A series of coordinated terrorist attacks across the city of Mumbai in November 2008 demonstrated yet another dramatic increase in sophistication for attacks involving mass hostage taking. Bill Roggio notes, "Almost two days after terrorists attacked the Indian financial hub of Mumbai, the Indian military is still working to root out the remnants of the assault teams at two hotels and a Jewish center. More than 125 people, including six foreigners, have been killed and 327 more have been wounded. The number is expected to go up, as Indian commandos have recovered an additional 30 dead at the Taj Mahal hotel as fighting has resumed."[20] The list of adaptations and improvements used in the Mumbai attacks that require additional scrutiny is likely to include: an ability to disrupt infrastructure, a refined focus on soft targets, cultivation of terror and panic, effective use of various communication technologies, propaganda and media strategies, swarming, and buddy pairs. As noted previously, the use of various communication technologies to facilitate the attack is probably the most troubling development. The first time the world realizes that a terrorist organization has significantly greater or more refined capabilities is never a good day. During the assault, "Hundreds of people had been captive in the two hotels, many locking themselves in their rooms or trying to hide as the gunmen roamed the buildings . . . The gunmen were well-prepared, even carrying large bags of almonds to keep up their energy during the fight. Their main targets appeared to be Americans, Britons and Jews, though most of the dead seemed to be Indians and foreign tourists caught in the random gunfire"[21] The major difference between the Chechen cases and the case in Mumbai is that while they both involve mass hostage taking the attack in Mumbai was based much more on targets of opportunity rather than strict operational planning with the intent to take hostages.

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[18] Adam Dolnik & Keith M. Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Hostage Crises with the New Terrorists*, 16
[19] Stuart D. Goldman, *Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, 9
[20] Bill Roggio, *Analysis: Mumbai attack differs from past terror strikes*
[21] Ramola Talwar Badam, Indian commandos storm besieged Jewish center

The other noteworthy development during the Mumbai attack was the use of something called swarming:

> "The basic concept is that hitting several targets at once, even with just a few fighters at each site, can cause fits for elite counterterrorist forces that are often manpower-heavy, far away and organized to deal with only one crisis at a time. This approach certainly worked in Mumbai, India, last November, where five two-man teams of Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives held the city hostage for two days, killing 179 people. The Indian security forces, many of which had to be flown in from New Delhi, simply had little ability to strike back at more than one site at a time."[22] Swarming at its root is a type of biological intelligence. Very simple tasks can be controlled through simple interaction. Basically, swarming is what ants do; the problem with Mumbai was the process turned extraordinarily violent and proved difficult to stop. Incidentally, "That's how swarm intelligence works: simple creatures following simple rules, each one acting on local information. No ant sees the big picture. No ant tells any other ant what to do. Some ant species may go about this with more sophistication than others."[23]

This type of organization is an interesting departure from traditional hierarchical structure. The process of swarming allows for the just-in-time interjection of chaos at the local level: being incredibly responsive and opportunistic is clearly a desirable modus operandi. The potential damage this approach is capable of is obvious, but there should be additional related concern about further deterioration of viable strategic countermeasures. Shlok Vaidya of Naxalite Rage explains that:

> "Instead of depending on local assets to expand the assault team, the terrorists made use of command and control hubs, located inside the two hotels, to out maneuver the Indian security apparatus. Each phase of the operation, every tactical movement, every step was coordinated via Blackberry, computer, and satellite phone in real time. This served as a force multiplier: by acting in concert, they manipulated security force and media estimates of their capabilities, allowing them more time and space within to maneuver. When their ability to travel around the city was cutoff by police forces, these rooms also provided a ready location to fortify and sustain a siege."[24]

The Group Behind the Swarm

Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist and writer Steve Coll provided tremendous timely insight into the responsible terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Having spent time with the group recently, Coll is uniquely positioned to give an illuminating schematic of this mysterious Hezbollah like group:

> "The tactics employed by the attackers will be instantly recognizable to Indian investigators because they bear the signature of the more sophisticated groups operating in and from Kashmir, particularly the banned terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba and its

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[22] John Arquilla, *The Coming Swarm*
[23] Peter Miller, *Swarm Theory*
[24] Shlok Vaidya, *Mumbai Overrun: The Evolving Threat*

various splinters, allies, and ideological affiliates. In recent years, these Islamist networks have repeatedly engaged in what participants often refer to as 'fedayeen' attacks against Indian government targets. These attacks are suicidal, in the sense that the boys recruited to carry them out undertake reckless, gun-spraying penetrations of a type that make it very unlikely that they will emerge alive. Also, the assaults usually don't involve getaway plans or tactical exit strategies other than martyrdom. At the same time, these are not 'suicide attacks' in the sense that the attackers don't wire themselves up as human bombs. The guerrillas will penetrate a police station, government compound, or, as it seems in this case, softer targets such as hotels and a synagogue, fight for as long as they can and finally accept their fates at the hands of opposing security forces."[25]

The Strategic Response

John Arquilla of the Naval Postgraduate School probably has the best potential response in terms of dealing with mass hostage taking situation. He explains that, "We've actually had a good test case in Iraq over the past two years. Instead of responding to insurgent attacks by sending out large numbers of troops from distant operating bases, the military strategy is now based on hundreds of smaller outposts in which 40 or 50 American troops are permanently stationed and prepared to act swiftly against attackers. Indeed, their very presence in Iraqi communities is a big deterrent. It's small surprise that overall violence across Iraq has dropped by about 80 percent in that period."[26] Consistent with typical military guidance, the ability to dramatically increase speed and decrease response times could alleviate some of the pressure associated with mitigating mass hostage taking incidents.

Conclusion

The essence of mass hostage-taking is that any large gathering is a potential target. More importantly, mass hostage-taking is strategically sound because these attacks strike essentially indefensible targets utilizing sophisticated planning to significantly reduce the availability of appropriate operational and tactical countermeasures for state security services.

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[25] Steve Coll, *Decoding Mumbai*
[26] John Arquilla, *The Coming Swarm*

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