



## Chapter 2

# The Nature of Terrorism

The events surrounding the attacks against the World Trade Center (February 26, 1993 and September 11, 2001) and the Pentagon (September 11, 2001) generated enormous interest in terrorist activities. The global society and, in particular, North America realized how vulnerable they are to the subversive activities of small groups of determined people. President George W. Bush's announcement of launching the "War on Terror" was an answer to these fears. The steady rebroadcasting of these events terrified most of us to the degree that we now want to find answers to the following questions: Why did this happen? What can we do to keep ourselves safe? What is the future impact of terrorism on our lives?

In this chapter we will present our point of view on this phenomenon. We believe that in understanding the motifs that drive modern-day terrorists, we can help our civilization deal with these types of threats.

This knowledge is also important for IT managers. They are managing not only the technical facilities and IT staff of their respective organizations, but they are also facilitating the links between organizations. They need to be vigilant and detect any symptoms of discontent or other activities that may indicate the possibility of potential terrorist acts. What is even more important is that they understand that terrorist groups use IT to support their activities. Global communications facilitate the coordination of distributed independent groups, as well as other activities.

Every normal human being is against terrorism. But it is impossible to find at present an example of a terrorist attack that would not be supported by a significant group of people. There are substantial parts of the population in several countries for whom Osama bin Laden is a very positive hero, while in other parts of the world, he is considered an outcast. The authors of this text are not free to have our own preferences. Despite this, in the following analysis of terrorist activities, we have made a substantial effort to put aside our own associations (religious, ethnic, and ethical) and concentrate on formulating an answer to the most important question: What are the roots of terrorist activities at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Very few can deny that this unprecedented wave of terrorist activities spanning the whole globe is targeting mainly products and people of what can be described as the Western Civilization.

## **Definition of Terrorism**

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Throughout this book, we present key definitions at the beginning of each chapter to facilitate a shared understanding of perspective. As usual, we start this chapter with the definition of terrorism, followed by our analysis and opinions on its root causes.

One of the best definitions of terrorism is the one contained in Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f(d):

*The term “terrorism” means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.*

Even this definition has some deficiency. It assumes that terrorist activities are the products of some organizations and their representatives. This may not be necessarily true. There are known cases of individuals acting alone who were engaged in terrorist-influencing activities. The best example of this is Theodore Kaczynski, the infamous Unabomber. He acted alone in the design, manufacture, and delivery via U.S. mail of explosive packages to organizations and individuals he decided to attack. Such an approach to creating terror must be included in this legal definition. What we believe is that the core of terrorism is the creation of terror. *Terror* can be thought of as:

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