Dr. Pape described the data base he established on suicide terrorism
- Introduced in “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” article in American Political Science Review (2003)
- First database covered 1980-2001
- With more support from DoD’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and others expanded to 2003
- Has been updated for Iraq through 2005
- Surprising that it had not been done before by academics or governments

Such a data base project is needed to better understand the phenomenon of suicide terrorism and provide help in reacting to it
- General thinking connects suicide terrorism to radical Islam
- Not totally true
- Result: bad domestic and international policy decisions
- Began project by defining suicide terrorism: Attacker kills self to kill others outside of government authorization
- Original database included 315 completed attacks carried out by 462 individuals

Dr. Pape now directs the Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism
- Collects information on suicide terrorism from around the world
- Uses a wide variety of native language and regional sources
  - Includes media and publications by terrorist groups
  - Collectors overseas even buying from black market in Cairo
  - All open source material but some hard to obtain
  - Materials include “yearbooks” published to glorify suicide terrorists
    - May tell much about backgrounds
    - Provide pictures and names
- Normally use two sources of information for every fact
- Data kept in spreadsheets and 3-ring binders
What The Data Shows

About the Overall Numbers
- Terrorism in general had been moving in downward direction
  - In 1987 there were 666 attacks
  - In 2001 there were 348
- But suicide terrorism was climbing rapidly:
  - Averaged only about 3 attacks per year in 1980s
  - Reached 50 attacks per year in 2002-2003
- One problem with understanding the 9/11 situation was not seeing this variation
  - Terrorism overall was down
  - Suicide terrorism was already up to 25 attacks per year

About the Attackers
- Most suicide attacks performed by Tamil Tigers (LTTE) – mostly Hindus
- Only 70% of attacks in Islamic countries were religious in nature
  - 30% were from political entities such as the PKK in Turkey
- First person to use an explosive belt was LTTE woman bearing flowers who assassinated Rajiv Gandhi
- Bottom line: Islamic fundamentalism is not driving suicide terrorism

Three Levels of Logic in Suicide Terrorism
- Strategic: why it makes sense for terrorist organizations to use suicide attacks
- Social: why suicide attacks gain mass support
- Individual: what motives drive individuals to do carry out suicide attacks

All levels important because suicide terrorism is used by non-state actors who believe they have no other means to compel a state or local society or individuals to support the operations.
- Dying to Win covers all three issues
- Seminar will concentrate on the strategic and individual levels

Major concepts developed from the data base study:
- What almost all attacks have in common: Desire to coerce a democratic state to remove its troops from the homeland or highly prized territory of the attackers
- While religion is rarely a root cause, it is used for inspiring recruits for the cause

Three General Patterns In The Data
1. Timing – attacks usually take place in clusters that resemble campaigns
   a. Not random as usually thought – would not be in clusters if done only by crazy individual efforts
   b. Data shows 18 campaigns during 1980-2003 with 5 still on-going
2. Territory control – major or primary cause in all attacks since 1980
   a. Desire to get foreign troops out of an area attackers highly prize
   b. Occupation by foreign troops may not be a sufficient condition, but military presence appears to be a necessary condition
3. Target selection – suicide attacks used only against states that would be most vulnerable to them, usually democracies
   • PKK used suicide attacks in Turkey but not in Iraq where their treatment was worse
   • PKK recognized that Saddam would care little about loosing even hundreds of civilians

Al Qaeda efforts fit these patterns
   • Now widely recognized that a major goal has been to force the US out of the Arabian Peninsula,
   • Can see that they use this concept to recruit suicide terrorists
   • Data base and book documented all 71 Al Qaeda suicide attackers from 1995 to 2004
     o Have the names and nationality details of 67
     o Most from Saudi Arabia where US has had troops since 1990
     o None come from Iran despite its large Islamic Fundamentalist population
     o While cannot say there is no transnational support can say that US troops in the region provide a great mobilization appeal
   • 1990 was a watershed year for US deployments to the Persian Gulf region
     o There had been many advisors but not troops
   • Result: Al Qaeda suicide terrorists are ten times more likely to come from a Sunni country with US combat presence than one without US forces

Major implications: US military policy was probable pivotal factor leading to 9/11
   • US should not blame itself for this
   • Nothing US troops have done in Mid East justifies actions on 9/11
   • Bottom line: Transnational Islamic fundamentalism only matters somewhat
   • Implication:
     o If Al Qaeda’s transnational support ended, it would still be a threat to the US
     o If they could no longer recruit based on reactions to US military presence in Sunni countries, the transnational network could become only a very small threat and could collapse
   • US has been trying to reduce its footprint in the Middle East but it is still there

In Iraq not all suicide attackers of US troops are local Sunnis
   • Only about two-thirds with one-third trans-nationals
   • This still provides a strong incentive to reduce that number
The London Bombing Attacks
- Al Qaeda group immediately claimed the attack said it was because of UK operations in Iraq
- One bomber captured in Italy said it was about Iraq
- In his martyr video the bomber from Leeds claimed the London attacks would be about Iraq
- British government in 2004 surveyed 1.6 million Muslims in the UK
  - 8-13% thought that more such attacks were called for
  - The reason was Iraq
- Implication:
  - If Al Qaeda’s transnational support ended, it would still be a threat to the US
  - If Al Qaeda could no longer recruit based on reactions to US military presence in Sunni Muslim countries, the transnational network would be a very small threat and might collapse

Al Qaeda Strategic Logic since 9/11
- London, other suicide bombings show how Al Qaeda strategy has been evolving
  - Trying to strip away military allies from the US
  - 17 attacks killed nearly 700 people, more attacks/victims than all before 9/11 combined
  - Victims are consistently British, German, Italian, French, Australian – those who fought with the US in some Mid-East activity
- Obvious that Al Qaeda is stronger now than before 9/11 despite anti-terror efforts
- Evidence of strategy also found in 42-page document found in Norway
  - States that after Iraq, members should not seek to attack the US homeland
  - Discusses whether to hit Spain, particularly Madrid immediately before its elections in 2003 to try to influence the government there
  - There were also indications that the UK would be hit

Al Qaeda has largely finished this line of attack against US allies
- Can look at Osama bin Laden’s statements with hindsight
- His logic and language is much like the Norwegian document
  - Suggested hitting capitals which they did
- Now may be ready to change focus and attack more US-related targets

Iraq before the 2003 invasion had no suicide attacks
- Now doubling the numbers each year
- Insurgents are following fairly typical pattern
  - They focus on capital city to show that government can’t even provide security there
  - 75-85% of attacks have been against government-related targets
    - Suggests clear goal – prevent establishment of a government related to the US
    - Attackers want to dissuade anyone from working with US
There are many reasons for the insurgency but all sides agree on dislike of US presence in Iraq
  - Zarqawi’s 2004 letter to bin Laden stated plans to focus on security forces and other agents because they are “eyes, ears, and hands” for US

Demographics of Suicide Bombers
  - Information about suicide bombers in Iraq is not yet clear
    - Only 10-20% have been tracked for demographic information
    - This is normal for early years of a conflict – most data becomes available years later
    - Indications are that bombers are mostly from Sunnis in Iraq or from nearby countries such as Kuwait
    - If this were a real transnational action, there would be more bombers from further away

Pape’s data base information has collected some information on all 462 suicide attackers from the period 1980-2003
  - Basic information such as names, gender, ideological affiliation and age is available in about 70 to 80% of the cases
  - More socio-economic data has been collected about Arab attackers
    - 232 Arabs from Lebanon, Palestine, and Al Qaeda are counted
    - Data on education level and income levels is available on about one-third of that total
  - Data gives fresh perspective about these situations
    - General opinion was that attackers were poor and uneducated
    - Women attackers were thought to be unlikely in fundamentalist attacks
    - Both concepts turned out to be wrong
  - Age is important
    - Most men tend to be 19-23 yrs old
    - Women tend to be older than male attackers
    - Reasons are unclear but one theory has been declining marriage prospects for mature women in traditional societies
  - Ideology may be the most important element
    - Attackers tend to be significantly more secular than originally assumed
    - Communists and socialists far outnumber religious attackers
    - A little less than 50% were secular, not religious attacks
  - Education level for Arab attackers is higher than would be expected
    - Education level actually higher than in the general local population
    - Over half have post-secondary education
  - Social class for Arabs is more likely to be working or middle class
    - Not lower class as usually assumed
    - Many quit jobs to prepare for the attacks so appeared unemployed
    - Most have not been known to be violent before the attacks
Most would have had productive lives had they not chosen to kill selves

Comparison of a group of religious versus secular attackers shows no statistically significant differences

**Policy Implications from Database Findings**

- Continuing to try to change Muslim society in the Middle East with US troops is likely to increase the likelihood of suicide attacks
  - This does not mean that the US should cut and run from Iraq
  - Must recognize that Iraq is not Viet-Nam as US does have vital oil interests in the Mid East
- Al Qaeda should be the top priority for the US, not Iraq or North Korea
- In Iraq, the US should show the local government how to operate and then let them build their own society
- Main problem as the US draws down is the risk of civil war
  - US should take actions to avoid that situation
  - Could have a Bosnia-like situation
    - US/NATO formed buffers among the 3 separate enemies
    - Probably need at least a Baghdad and Kirkuk regional government
      - Not a country-wide government
      - Especially as we draw down forces
- US should return to its off-shore balancing act of the 1990s
  - In the 1980s had no troops in Arabian Peninsula
    - There were carriers patrolling the seas and aircraft overhead
    - Bases without troops were established
      - Built to be ready for a possible Soviet invasion
      - So bases were ready to be used against Saddam instead
  - This strategy could be used for decades
  - US should work with China on these issues because of their own interests in the region
  - Need to avoid appearance of an oil hegemony – lost site of this in more recent years

**QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION**

Democracies cannot be inoculated against suicide terrorism

- Suicide terrorism is a demand-driven phenomena
- Attackers are usually not members of the groups very long before an attack

Infrastructures are required to support suicide terrorism and can be broken

- Needed for recruiting and supplies
- Any terrorist in your gunsites, should be shot but is only a short term solution
- If Osama bin Laden were eliminated we would be marginally better off
  - Would mean loss of his excellent strategic thinking ability
  - Using a heavy offensive force against him, however, would generate more suicide terrorists
Afghanistan had few suicide attacks despite large number of US troops

- Only 2 in the original database
- However, there may have been a dozen since the database launched
- Now even Uzbekistan has had an attack on a US base

Language of martyrdom used by our side for our warriors, too

- The logic of martyrdom is for a community to glorify those who have done marvelous deeds for the sake of the community
- Communities create martyrs, they are not self-created

Walk-in volunteers are likely to stop coming if troops are no longer there

- Leaders might have other strategic reasons for using suicide terrorist
- Will not have the basic cause for why most recruits join

Iraq’s in-fighting is beginning to resemble that of Lebanon

- Sub-groups are proliferating now
- Started with Iraq as a single entity but now at least three major belligerent factions

Attackers may have many reasons for their actions

- One Iraqi woman went to Jordan to attack but was caught
- She stated that she did so because three of her brothers had been killed in the fighting in Iraq
- Implication: Not just a bunch of religious fanatics carrying out suicide attacks

Iranians have not become recruits for Al Qaeda suicide bombers

- Partially due to differences between Salafi and Shiite religious strains
- Very little has been done on Salafis before a 2004 Rand study
- Dying to Win has an appendix that describes Salafi demographics, concepts
- Al Qaeda and Salafis would tend not to agree enough with each other to work together

Chapter 7 of the Dying to Win book describes secondary motives of attackers

- Disgust with own governments was another motive for about 1/3 of suicide terrorists
- Many are angry that the US is supporting that repressive government

Purpose of suicide attacks is not so much to die as to kill

- Selection of attackers comes from a readily available group
  - Select those with the best nerves to be able to kill
- Groups do not look like cults (a leader with 40 or so faithful followers)
  - Instead evolved from ordinary guerilla efforts
  - May have carried out normal attacks for years before turning to suicide
  - Basically, they were looking for bigger bang for their buck
    - Suggests a late move in the campaign
- Perhaps a weapon of last resort

Social Logic of Suicide Terrorism
- Often need a lot of community support for suicide attackers
- If nothing else, need high level of verbal support for motives of the attackers
  - Usually little debate about the motive, but some about suicide
  - 95% of the Saudis say they want the US out of the region
- Hamas won in Palestinian election because
  - It was seen as less corrupt and
  - More effective at getting Israel out of the occupied territories

Religious Differences
- Animosities enhanced when religions of local community and occupation forces differ
- Can use religion to make distinction between locals and occupiers that much more distinct
- Bin Laden purposely painted forces as having a Crusader agenda
- In the data base 8 of 9 major cases involved religious differences
  - Each side says the other is fighting for religious reasons
  - Helps in the recruiting effort

Motivations
- We know a lot about Japan’s Kamikaze pilots from World War II
  - Letters and interviews
- Many worried about their last moment
  - Feared instinct for self-preservation would make them waver at the last moment
  - Feared that would pull them off their targets
  - Tried to find ways to bind themselves to their aircraft controls

Other Recruitment Patterns
- See patterns of friends going together for suicide attacks
  - A group doing something together enhances cohesiveness
- Not seeing much evidence that attackers are being coerced into suicide
  - If that happened, would be well-know in the community

Attacks in Iraq (suicide bombings, beheadings) often resemble gang violence and thuggery
- Letter from al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi available on the DNI website
  - Basic point: America is leaving
  - Sunni community won’t let you continue bombings, beheadings after US leaves
  - You may want a civil war with Shia to pull down Jordan’s government but
    - You won’t be able
    - You’ll be killed
  - Lays out his understanding of the strategy of suicide terrorism
• Shows that al-Zarqawi is being treated as a hot-head by Al Qaeda

Suicide terrorism grew in the 1980s because of Reagan’s decisions in Lebanon
• US withdrawal after the Beirut Marine barracks attack gave courage to all other potential users of suicide terror attacks
• US should still withdraw troops from Iraq
  o This would not be our only concession
  o US has a pattern of standing tough at first but then backing out of situation
• Such a pull out would cause problems for future invasions
  o Questionable whether it would diminish threat to the homeland
  o Likely to increase the risk of the next 9/11
• Big question: What would it do to US values?
  o What if there is another reason that the US would want to invade a Muslim country in the future?

What could be done in Iraq and the Mid-East in general:
• Station troops off shore
• Depend heavily on air power and naval ships
• Use ground troops only as a catalyst
  o Without troops around they would have less reason to turn to suicide
  o Go back to the concept of building bases in preparation for future activity
    ▪ As was done in the 1980s when bases were designed to support anti-Soviet activity
    ▪ Instead bases were available for the first Gulf War

Al Qaeda is a movement so killing bin Laden would create a problem for them
• Would only help us on the margins
• The quality of his strategic documents would be missed by Al Qaeda
  o US would be better off without him
  o He has been an above average opponent – at least competent compared to Saddam and other tyrants of the 1990s

Withdrawing from Iraq should make a drop in suicide terrorism, but not to zero
• Suicide attacks in Israel dropped 90% after their pull back
  o Israelis did follow some of Dr. Pape’s suggestions in an earlier journal article
    ▪ Build a big fence
    ▪ Unilaterally pull out of some areas
  o Result: Hezbollah dropped suicide attacks and became a political party
    ▪ Took a decade for this to happen in Lebanon
    ▪ Happening to Hamas now
• Overall the movement won’t abandon the goal of setting up an Islamic caliphate

But won’t have a good way to recruit adequate numbers of suicide attackers