

Leaderless Resistance Comes of Age

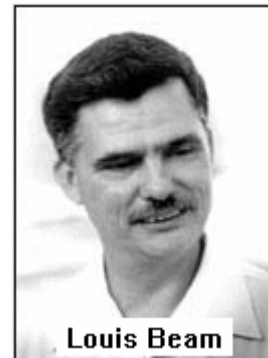
ISP-211 Final Paper — Simson L. Garfinkel

1 An Introduction to Leaderless Resistance

Most terrorist groups have a pyramid structure similar to a modern corporation: a leader (president), an inner circle of senior members (vice presidents), individuals who oversee tasks such as fundraising or bombing (product managers), and operatives (workers). Consider the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam:¹ LTTE is headed by Supreme Leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, has six formal divisions, and has an estimated annual budget of more than US\$100 million.² Some terror groups (e.g. IRA and Hezbollah) have worked so hard on strengthening their organization that they have largely evolved beyond terrorism—after all, violence is destabilizing, both to targets and to perpetrators. Even the relatively small Al Qaeda organization still has the trappings of a corporate structure, with a military, political, legal and finance committees working to further Al Qaeda’s goals.³

This paper explores a different kind of organizational structure, *Leaderless Resistance*, which has been used with success by white supremacists, anti-abortion and environmental activists, and animal rights groups. I will argue that Leaderless Resistance is ideally suited to many ideologies and that the problems inherent in classic Leaderless Resistance can be overcome through modern communications technology. Furthermore, movements that employ Leaderless Resistance are unlikely to have their violent tendencies moderated by the tendencies of organizations to self-perpetuate⁴, as has been the case with many traditional terrorist organizations.

“Leaderless Resistance” was popularized by the white supremacist Louis Beam⁵ to describe a technique for fighting an incumbent government using self-organizing clandestine cells. Beam attributed the term to Col. Ulius Loius Amoss,^{6, 7, 8} allegedly a US intelligence officer who was fearful that Communists were about to seize control of the US in the early 1960s. Beam argued that traditional liberation armies that employ pyramid-style organization are “extremely dangerous for the participants when it is utilized in a resistance movement against state tyranny:”⁹



Especially is this so in technologically advanced societies where electronic surveillance can often penetrate the structure revealing its chain of command. Experience has revealed over and over again that anti-state, political organizations utilizing this method of command and control are easy prey for government infiltration, entrapment, and destruction of the personnel involved. This has been seen repeatedly in the United States where pro-government infiltrators or agent provocateurs weasel their way into patriotic groups and destroy them from within.¹⁰

A more workable approach, said Beam, is to convince like-minded individuals to form independent cells that will commit acts of sabotage or terrorism without coordination from above, and while minimizing communication with other cells.

Today the term “Leaderless Resistance” is frequently used to describe any clandestine organization that employs cells,¹¹ but this is incorrect. It applies specifically to groups that employ cells and that lack bidirectional vertical command links.

Without some agenda-setting, the “resistance” advocated by Beam could easily devolve into random acts of anarchistic violence without any formal political objective. But agenda-setting could be performed by documents that were published and widely distributed that set forth particular targets and objectives. Or agenda setting could be performed by individuals in conjunction with terrorist activities: for example, messages claiming responsibility for events could include future demands or ideological goals. If there is limited horizontal communication between cells, decisions can arise organically within the cells and be passed along from cell-to-cell: decisions that are acceptable to the community will survive in this micro marketplace of ideas.

It has been suggested¹² that the leadership for a “Leaderless Resistance” movement could be an inspirational leader who selects broad categories of targets and political objectives, but who does not actually participate in the planning or execution of violent acts. In the U.S., inspirational leaders could claim that their writings and public statements are protected speech under the First Amendment. However, the ruling of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in the case of the “Nuremberg Files”^{13,14} suggests otherwise: if the statements of an inspirational leader constitute a “true threat,” that leader might be successfully sued for damages by victims or even charged with conspiracy by law enforcement agencies.

This paper argues that the combination of Internet search engines, free web sites, and a somewhat complacent free press can sustain, improve the effectiveness, and increase the violence of groups that employ Leaderless Resistance. In part, this is a result of the traditional “community forming” and “community strengthening” tendencies that have been attributed the Internet—the net makes it easy for special-interest groups to form and attract new members, without central coordination.

2 Case Studies in Leaderless Resistance

This section examines three groups employing Leaderless Resistance against US targets. The groups are on a continuum: the first is an animal rights group that has significant structure but which attempts to maintain some sort of plausible deniability or “arms length” relations with those engaged in direct action. The second is a federation of environmental activists that have been labeled as terrorists by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Lastly there are individuals who have engaged in acts of Islamic terrorism, even though they do not appear to be members of any terrorist organization.

2.1 Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC)

Activist groups can use Leaderless Resistance techniques as a way to disclaim responsibility for their actions. This appears to be the case with the activists who call themselves Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC).



Based in Worcestershire, England, SHAC was founded in 1999 “by a group of activists who had successfully closed down Consort kennels and Hillgrove cat farm.”¹⁵ SHAC has organized a “hard-hitting direct action campaign”¹⁶ Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), one of the world’s largest animal testing laboratories. The campaign appears to be primarily coordinated through electronic mail: SHAC has 5000 subscribers on its UK mailing list;¹⁷ various regional chapters have their own lists for local events. (The Boston mailing list has 326 subscribers.¹⁸) Table 1 lists some key SHAC victories.

SHAC maintains various websites at www.shac.net, www.shacusa.net, www.shacgermany.net, www.shacpt.net, www.huntingdonsucks.com, and other locations. The websites are heavily cross-linked with other extremist organizations, such as the Animal Liberation Front. Perhaps more importantly, the websites are easy to find using Internet search engines: an individual who learns about SHAC from an article in the *Boston Globe* or on CNN.COM would have no problem finding the organization’s multiple web presences.

With graphic photographs, well-written prose, and high production values, SHAC’s websites are powerful tools for recruitment and mobilization. The websites also both state and set SHAC’s agenda. For example, a page titled “SHAC Targets” lists the names of eight Huntingdon senior personnel underneath a bulls-eye. Accompanying the names is an typical business boilerplate from Huntingdon’s “July 10th business statement”—boilerplate that seems chilling in the context of the SHAC website:

"We believe our success will depend on the continued employment of our senior management team, especially Andrew Baker (Chairman and CEO) and Brian Cass (President and Managing Director). If one or more members of our senior management team were unable or unwilling to continue in their present positions, those persons could be difficult to replace and our business could be harmed."¹⁹

Linked from this page are pages for each member of the HLS management team, with that person’s photograph (in four cases), a biography, and a list of other companies with which the director is currently involved. SHAC invites its sympathizers to contact those related companies and “put pressure on [the director] to leave HLS.” Addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and other contact information is provided to facilitate.

Table 1 Chronology of successful SHAC activities against HLS

January 2000	Protesters obtain a list of the largest shareholders in HLS and leak the list to the press. Investors include the UK Labour Party pension fund, Phillips, and Drew of London, all of which sell their shares within two weeks. The price of HLS stock plummets. ²⁰
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March 2000	A group of protestors ²¹ sends letter to 1,700 of HLS shareholders, telling them that they may be targeted for protests. ²² Reportedly 250 shareholders sell immediately upon receiving the letter; one who doesn't, 70-year-old David Braybrook, has his house picketed by four protestors with placards a month later. ²³
March 2001	HLS is effectively delisted from world stock exchanges when the firm's two remaining market makers announce that they will no longer deal in the company's shares. ²⁴ The BBC calls this "a sign that investors are becoming increasingly wary of being associated with the controversial firm." ²⁵
April 2001	Private trading in HLS stock is all but halted after Charles Schwab Europe announced that it was "severing links" ²⁶ with the firm after a SHC protest against Schwab's offices in Birmingham.
July 2001	HLS was given a bank account by England's Department of Trade and Industry - a highly unusual move - after all of the firm's commercial bank accounts had been closed by bankers fearful of threats from SHAC activists. ²⁷
December 2002	UK government "agreed to provide insurance services to Huntingdon" after its sole insurance company, Marsh UK, ceased providing insurance services to Huntingdon. ²⁸ Marsh offices and employee homes had been targeted by SHAC activists.

In 2002 SHAC organized a harassment campaign against Huntingdon's insurance firm, Marsh & McLennan's. Harassment included vandalism of four greens and four holes at the Meadowbrook Golf Club, where Marsh former chairman Frank Tasco,²⁹ was scheduled to play golf;³⁰ smoke bomb and vandalism attacks against Marsh offices in Southampton³¹ and Seattle³²; and the "stalking" of a midlevel manager in Boston who was apparently unrelated to the Huntingdon account.³³ These actions occasionally resulted in arrest: in Boston, 12 protestors were indicted in October 2002 for allegedly threatening "to burn down the home" of the Marsh executive.³⁴ In the end, these attacks had their desired result: in December 2002, Marsh stopped offering insurance to HLS.³⁵

Protests are coordinated by messages posted on the various SHAC websites and in email messages sent to sympathizers naming the time and date of protests; one message invites members to "engage in phone blockades for these scum" by repeatedly calling a target company's telephone number.³⁶ At that end of that same message is the message, "Our Animal Liberation brothers and sisters need your support! Write to these political prisoners" with the names and addresses of individuals who have been imprisoned for various acts of violence.

SHAC portrays itself as a popular movement, not an organization. According to one spokesperson, "SHAC is more of a campaign than a group, so we do not have official members.... There are thousands working on the campaign across the country."³⁷

According to SHAC-USA's website:

Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty is comprised of above ground volunteers who spearhead an international, legal campaign to close Huntingdon Life Sciences. We operate within the boundaries of the law, but recognize, and support, those who choose to operate outside the confines of the legal system.

SHAC does not organize any such actions or have any knowledge of who is doing them or when they will happen, but encourage people to support direct action when it happens and those who may participate in it.³⁸

An individual responding to email sent to SHAC's website denies that the organization is terrorist: "Whilst the campaign against HLS is certainly very aggressive, I don't think that protests, civil disobedience and minor acts of property destruction are acts of terrorism. Terrorist organizations hijack planes and bomb buildings, they don't hold demonstrations."³⁹

In fact, political demonstrations have been a staple of many terrorist organizations, including the PLO, the IRA, and others.

2.2 Earth Liberation Front

According to its website, The Earth Liberation Front is "an international underground movement consisting of autonomous groups of people who carry out direct action according to the ELF guidelines."⁴⁰

Modeled after the Animal Liberation Front, the E.L.F. is structured in such a way as to maximize effectiveness. By operating in cells (small groups that consist of one to several people), the security of group members is maintained. Each cell is anonymous not only to the public but also to one another. This decentralized structure helps keep activists out of jail and free to continue conducting actions.



Every Night is Earth Night!

As the E.L.F. structure is non-hierarchical, individuals involved control their own activities. There is no centralized organization or leadership tying the anonymous cells together. Likewise, there is no official "membership". Individuals who choose to do actions under the banner of the E.L.F are driven only by their personal conscience or decisions taken by their cell while adhering to the stated guidelines.⁴¹

There are three ELF guidelines for staging an ELF action. First, the action must "inflict economic damage on those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment." Second, the action must educate the public. Third, the action must "take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and non-human."⁴²

At the present time, there is no recorded case of a person being injured or killed as the result of an ELF-claimed action. (This record may sound better than it actually is, since actions are only claimed after they occur. Presumably, if someone were accidentally killed in an action, that action would not be claimed.)

ELF was founded in the early 1990s as an offshoot from Earth First!⁴³ after Earth First! adopted a strategy of non-violence⁴⁴—demonstrating that attempts to moderate

Leaderless Resistance groups through infiltration and covert agenda setting are likely to be futile.

ELF is more accurately described as a *movement* or a *milieu*, rather than an organization or a formal group. Unlike SHAC, there appear to be no internal ELF communications, because there are no ELF demonstrations, events, or actions that require more than one or two people. ELF's website contains stirring admonishments for individuals to pick up arms and defend the environment through economic sabotage. ("It is up to each committed person to take responsibility for stopping the exploitation of the natural world. No longer can it be assumed that someone else is going to do it. If not you, who, if not now, when?"⁴⁵) The front page of the website contains news stories of successful "actions," such as the arson of a Pennsylvania auto dealership that specialized in low-mileage Sport Utility Vehicles.⁴⁶ Alongside these news items is a link to download ELF's 37-page guide, *Setting Fires With Electrical Timers*, a highly technical and accurate treatise on effective arson techniques, the construction of timers and igniters, and how to avoid getting caught. The guide repeatedly stresses techniques that can be used to avoid leaving DNA evidence.⁴⁷ With the guide, \$50 and a few spare weekends, it is likely that any suitably motivated individual could conduct a successful arson attack and not be caught.

The ELF website is hosted by EnviroLink Networks, a non-profit organization in Pittsburgh, PA, that hosts websites for many controversial animal rights and environmental organizations.^{48,49}

"We do not take any positions on environmental or animal rights issues, but we do advocate freedom of expression," reports an administrator at EnviroLink. "The content of all websites we host, including controversial content, is the responsibility of the maintainer of the website. We encourage visitors to these websites to submit their opinions to the owners of the websites themselves."⁵⁰ The administrator says that the website contributes to free speech and political discourse and will not be shut down unless EnviroLink is legally compelled to do so.

The registrant of the "earthliberationfront.com" domain is Darren Thurston⁵¹, a Canadian animal rights activist who spent five years under investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police after four pipe bombs were sent by mail to various far-right individuals across Canada.⁵² The registrant's address is a post office box; the phone number listed in the registration has been disconnected. Email messages sent to the listed email address were not answered.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation classifies ELF and ALF as examples of "special interest extremism" and states that they have "emerged as a serious terrorist threat" in recent years.⁵³ According to Congressional testimony, "The FBI estimates that ALF/ELF have committed approximately 600 criminal acts in the United States since 1996, resulting in damages in excess of 42 million dollars." In particular, ELF "claimed responsibility for the arson fires set at a Vail (Colorado) ski resort in October 1998, which caused 12 million dollars in damages."⁵⁴ Most recently, activists have been setting fire to Sport Utility Vehicle dealerships.⁵⁵

But what does it mean for a group that claims no members and has no formal structure to “claim[ed] responsibility” for an attack, and how does an avowedly terrorist organization maintain a web site, engage journalists in discussions, appear on panels, speak on National Public Radio⁵⁶, and even testify before Congress⁵⁷?

The ELF website purports to be run by the ELF Press Office. The Press Office also distributes statements received from people who claim to have engaged in ELF actions. At the bottom of each press release is this disclaimer:

The North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office is a legal, above-ground news service dedicated to exposing the political and social motives behind the covert direct actions of the underground Earth Liberation Front. The North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office receives anonymous communiqués from the ELF and distributes the message to the media and public.⁵⁸

The disclaimer on the website goes further:

The EarthLiberationFront.com website and the domain names earthliberationfront.com exists in the interest of free speech, freedom of information and public interest.

The information contained within EarthLiberationFront.com website and the domain names earthliberationfront.com is NOT intended to encourage anyone to do anything illegal.

EarthLiberationFront.com website and the domain names earthliberationfront.com provide all information for education and research purposes only.

The information, views and opinions contained within the information on EarthLiberationFront.com website and the domain names earthliberationfront.com are not those of the owner or the site host, neither are they necessarily those of the maintainer or the contributor.⁵⁹

In the past, the Press Office has been run by Leslie James Pickering⁶⁰; today the Press Office is represented by an anonymous spokesperson who communicates through an anonymous email service—“Encrypted email preferred.”⁶¹

The Earth First website is an example of “exhortation of the deed,” says Chip Berlet, director of Political Research Associates, which monitors antidemocratic and authoritarian movements and trends. “It is a framework for recruiting young men to do this kind of stuff,” says Berlet. “You come up with an exhortation of what a hero will do, and some [person] comes out and says, ‘I want to be a hero.’”⁶² As more people are exposed to the message, says Berlet, more people are likely to be convinced.

Even if the ELF website did not exist, ELF adherents could continue to communicate their actions to the public by sending messages directly to the media, or even anonymously posting messages in various public forums on the Internet. The US Supreme Court has held that the First Amendment guarantees a right to anonymous political discourse: it is hard to imagine that a court would not hold that communiqués issued by ELF activists are non-political.⁶³

2.3 Islamic Terrorism in the US

“Exhortation of the deed” could be a powerful tool for encouraging Islamic terrorism within the United States: all that is required is a steady stream of information to young Muslims telling them that they are under attack by US interests, leaders who advocate violent reprisals, and the ready availability of means with which to conduct terrorist acts. The result would likely be a string of apparent “hate crimes” or isolated acts of terrorism carried out by individuals or small groups against US targets for no apparent reason. That is, the perpetrators are inspired to commit acts of violence by what they read or see, rather than being recruited into a terrorist organization, receiving training, and finally receiving orders.



Propaganda is an important part of many terrorist organizations, and remains important today. When journalist Steven Emerson visited Abdullah Azzam’s⁶⁴ son Hudaifa Azzam in Pakistan in 1994, he noted “ten printing presses” that were part of Azzam’s “jihad organization.”⁶⁵ These days, electronic media have made printing presses largely superfluous.

A survey of recent attacks in the US shows that there are a significant number of incidents that match this description. (See Table 2)

Table 2 Islamic extremist terror attacks on American soil/American targets not obviously part of an organized terror campaign.

25 January 1992 Fairfax, VA	Mir Aimal Kasi shoots and kills CIA employees Frank Darling and Lansing Bennett outside agency headquarters. Three other employees are wounded. ⁶⁶
1 March 1994 Brooklyn, NY	Rashid Baz opens fire with automatic weapons on a bus filled with Jewish Yeshiva students on the Brooklyn Bridge, killing Ari Halberstam and leaving Nachum Sasonkin brain-damaged. Baz is convicted of second degree murder and 14 counts of attempted murder; his two accomplices are sentenced to 5 years probation. In December 2000 the US Department of Justice reclassifies the attack as an act of terrorism. ^{67,68}
25 February 1997 Manhattan, NY	Ali Hassan Abu Ali Kamal, 69, pulls a gun and fires on tourists on the 86 th floor observation deck of the Empire State Building, killing one and injuring six, before killing himself. Relatives in Gaza City say that Abu Kamal was “a conservative, not especially religious man;” the shooting was attributed to Ali Kamal’s loss of his life’s savings in a failed investment scheme. ⁶⁹
31 July 1997 Brooklyn, NY	Lafi Khalil and Ghazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer are arrested after Police raid their restaurant and seize five pipe bombs. Police allege that Khalil and Mezer had planned to detonate the bombs inside the New York City subway system; police say that Khalil had previously been arrested in Israel and was accused of being a member of a terrorist organization. ⁷⁰

<p>4 July 2002 Los Angeles, CA</p>	<p>Hesham Mohamed Hadayet, 41, attacks the El Al ticket counter at Los Angeles International Airport, killing two and wounding four others, before he is shot dead by airline security agents.⁷¹ Hadayet had no history of terrorism or affiliation with radical groups, although he had told US officials that he had been arrested and falsely accused of being a member of the Islamic Group by the government of Egypt when he entered the US in December 1992.⁷² US officials classify this attack as an act of terrorism by a lone gunman.⁷³</p>
<p>6 September 2002 Stuttgart, Germany</p>	<p>German officials arrest a 25-year-old American woman who is an employee at the supermarket at the American base in Heidelberg and her 23-year-old Turkish fiancée, saying that the pair planned to attack a US military base on the anniversary of the September 11th attack. Five pipe bombs and 280 pounds of chemical explosives are discovered in the pair's apartment.⁷⁴</p>

Clearly, some acts attributed to “lone gunmen” are actually the work of a larger organization. Rabbi Meir Kahane was assassinated on 5 November 1990 by El-Sayeed Nosair; although police thought that Nosair acted alone, 47 boxes of evidence seized at Nosair’s apartment indicated that he was part of an international terrorist movement that planned a range of attacks on US soil.⁷⁵ Nosair was arrested again in June 1993 for his participation in planning a “Day of Terror” with Sheikh Abdel Rahman.⁷⁶ Likewise, the bombers in the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center had access to apparently “unlimited funds;”⁷⁷ federal documents named 118 unindicted coconspirators in that attack.⁷⁸ But the existence of these cases does not contradict the thesis that a significant number of incidents do not appear to be centrally planned or coordinated.

3 Applying Network Analysis to Leaderless Resistance

After the attacks of 11 September 2001, *Network Analysis* was proposed by many commentators as a powerful tool for fighting terrorist networks. In network analysis, the goal is to reconstruct a “social network” – e.g., a graph where the nodes are humans and the edges are social contacts. Network analysis can be used to find points of vulnerability, such as highly-connected nodes called “hubs” that are critical for holding a network together.⁷⁹ Network analysis can also be used to identify nodes that were previously unknown.

Network Analysis was successfully used by French general Paul Aussaresses to break the Algerian resistance and end the insurgency’s bombing campaign between 1955 and 1957; mapping was accomplished through the use of informants and torture.^{80,81,82} *Link analysis*, a form of network analysis, was used successfully by both MI5 and the IRA against each other in the 1970s and 1980s. Link analysis was used to determine the identities of important individuals in the opposing organization; these individuals were then targeted for assassination, severing the links and disrupting the opposing network.⁸³

Sparrow notes that “removing one individual or a set of individuals from a network depends not only on their centrality, but also upon some notion of their uniqueness. The more unique, or unusual, their role the harder they will be to replace. The most valuable targets will be both central and difficult to replace.”⁸⁴

The United States Government is now embarking on a multi-year project called “Total Information Awareness” that will attempt, in part, to find such links for the purpose of detecting, classifying, and identifying foreign terrorists – “and thereby enable the US to take timely action to successfully preempt and defeat terrorist acts.”⁸⁵

Links between terrorists can only be found if they actually exist. Traditional terrorist organizations have many links: money, training, command, supplies, and recruitment.⁸⁶ Many of these links exist not for the commission of terrorist acts, but for the persistence of the organization itself.

Causes that employ Leaderless Resistance do not have these links because they are not organizations: they are ideologies. To survive these ideologies require a constant stream of new violent actions to hold the interest of the adherents, to create the impression of visible progress towards a goal, and to allow individuals to take part in actions vicariously before they have the initiative to engage in their own direct actions.

What the Internet brings to Leaderless Resistance is the possibility for cells (including cells of a single person) to share information and reinforce ideology without even knowing each other’s identity. Cells can simply publish anonymously on the web. Other cells can find those publications through the use of well-known websites (such as www.earthliberationfront.com) or, if those websites are shut down, through the use of search-engines.

A significant problem in mapping the Leaderless Resistance networks is that each participant need only engage in a single action of terrorism in his or her lifetime. Even if that individual comes to regret their action, the event’s persistence on web pages and in media reports still serves as a recruitment tool for new blood.

Since much communication and radicalization takes place through the Internet, it might be tempting to attempt to use the Internet to find the presumed communication links between current and future activists. But this approach is not likely to be fruitful.

The Internet contains a substantial amount of hate literature, radicalizing propaganda, and technically accurate bomb-making instructions. Even if it were legally permissible and technically possible to compile a list of names and identification numbers for each person who had downloaded every such document, it would be very difficult to determine precisely why those documents had been downloaded.

For example, activist William Meyer’s website, www.iiipublishing.com, contains a well-reasoned pamphlet⁸⁷ arguing nonviolence is a dead-end strategy for any movement seeking radical social change. “Almost every organization seeking radical change in the USA has been targeted by organizers for the nonviolence movement,”⁸⁸ writes Meyer:

Most social-change activists, including environmentalists, have little or no experience with inflicting violence on other people. Yet the Nonviolence activists target social change activists with their doctrine, rather than teaching it to those policemen, soldiers, politicians, and businessmen who do occasionally practice violence.⁸⁹

This document can be found by searching the Internet for “environmentalists and violence,” “nonviolence and federal building,” and even “McGovern for President and Earth First”⁹⁰—it isn’t possible to know why a person was looking for this document, what they were going to do with it, or what effect it has on their psyche. A person reading this document might be a potential terrorist, or they might be a journalist, an educator, a student writing a research paper, or even a “bot”⁹¹ downloading the page so that it can be indexed by a web search engine.

The same argument can be made about the ELF bomb-making handbook .

4 Recommendations

Terrorist events serve two purposes: direct action, and recruitment. News organizations covering the events (e.g., a story in the *New York Times*) expose fertile new minds to the doctrine. The new communications technologies make it possible for a movement to exist solely as an ideology, with no membership lists, no financial records, no direct communication between the operatives—and no "off" switch. There is no way to negotiate with such an ideology, no way to compromise.

Unlike conventional terrorist groups, there is no incentive for an ideology employing Leaderless Resistance to moderate or evolve beyond terrorism. Because there is no formal “group” with assets, interpersonal relationships, or other stabilizing factors, individuals who moderate simply leave the milieu; their writings and actions remain behind, recruiting new members. **Indeed, there could be significant lapses of time in which a group like ELF or ALF has no members: in the future, a one or two people could discover the writings, be inspired, and carry out their own act of terror “in the name of the ELF.”**

Today the US appears to be fighting Leaderless Resistance networks such as SHAC and ELF with an eradication strategy: the goal is to create very high penalties for individuals who participate in direct action. The danger of this approach is that the eradication effort itself may inadvertently serve to attract new recruits to a violent ideology by making the cause appear a just response to an unjust enemy. Consider this excerpt from a leftist magazine regarding the sentencing of one ELF activist:

In Eugene, Oregon ... the local newspaper ... reported that a man who killed a woman while driving drunk received a 10 year jail sentence. Six days later, the same newspaper reported that Jeffrey Leurs had been sentenced to 22 years and 8 months for causing arson damage to three SUVs. Even though the judge admitted that Leurs had taken precautions against harming people, Jeffrey, who is now 22, will spend as much time in Jail as he has already spent on earth.⁹²

It is unlikely that prosecutions and sentences that appear disproportionate will have a deterrent effect; they may have the reverse effect.

In the past, the US Congress has subpoenaed ELF spokesperson Craig Rosebraugh to testify before the Subcommittee on Forest and Forest Health.⁹³ This action generated significant backlash throughout the environmental and civil libertarian communities, and resulted in no information being revealed that was not already public. **No further subpoenas should be issued: they only serve to radicalize fence-sitters.**

It would be tempting to shut down the ELF website. **This course of action is not recommended.** The ELF website would reemerge outside the jurisdiction of the United States. Furthermore, ELF information is dozens of other websites across the Internet. **Leave the ELF websites where they are, and closely monitor them.**

However, **the individuals running the websites and e-mail networks clearly have special skills and motivations: they can be targeted for surveillance and arrest in the event that they are engaging in other illegal activities.**

Finally, activists for SHAC and ELF appear to pride themselves in executing targeted violence. **A public relations campaign emphasizing collateral damage of these events might have a strong deterrent effect.**

¹ Peter Chalk, "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) International Organization and Operations—a Preliminary Analysis," *Commentary No. 77* (17 March 2000)

² Jessica Stern, lecture on LTTE, ISP-211, Harvard University, 4 November 2002.

³ Rohan Gunaratna, lecture on Al Qaeda, ISP-211, Harvard University, 30 October 2002.

⁴ James Q. Wilson, *Political Organizations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 30-56, 195-214.

⁵ Background on beam can be found at the Anti-Defamation League's website "Louis Beam," Anti-Defamation League, cited 8 January 2003, URL:

http://www.adl.org/learn/Ext_US/beam.asp?xpicked=2&item=beam

⁶ Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, 12 (February 1992); URL:

<http://www.louisbeam.com/leaderless.htm> originally published as "Leaderless Resistance," *Inter-Klan Newsletter and Survival Alert*, May(?) 1983(?), p.12-13

⁷ Dalit Sena, "Leaderless Resistance – Foundation Stone of the Dalit Sena," cited 7 January 2003. URL: <http://www.dalitstan.org/sena/parivar/llessres.html>

⁸ "The Firebrand: Louis Beam, revolutionary leader, fire-breathing orator and racist strategist *par excellence*, could be facing his Waterloo," *Intelligence Report* 106 (Summer 2002), Southern Poverty Law Center. URL: <http://www.splcenter.org/cgi-bin/goframe.pl?refname=/intelligenceproject/ip-4v4.html>

⁹ Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *ibid*.

¹⁰ Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *ibid*.

¹¹ Chip Berlet, Political Research Associates, interview, 8 January 2003.

¹² Jessica Stern, lecture on Abortion Doctor Killers, ISP-211, Harvard University, 15 November 2002.

¹³ Gwendolyn Mariano, "Court cracks down on anti-abortion site," C|Net News.Com, 17 May 2002, URL: <http://news.com.com/2100-1023-917077.html>

¹⁴ Stan Morris, "The 'Nuremberg Files' Web Site: What Constitutes an Online Threat?" GigaLaw.com, cited 7 January 2003. URL: <http://www.gigalaw.com/articles/2000-all/morris-2000-02-all.html>

¹⁵ SHAC, "SHAC – Who We Are," cited 8 January 2003. URL: <http://www.shac.net/SHAC/who.html>

¹⁶ Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, "SHAC – History," cited 8 January 2003, URL: <http://www.shac.net/SHAC/history.html>

¹⁷ Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, "Re: Questions about SHAC," e-mail to author, 3 December 2002.

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