The Dual War on Terror
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Since September 11, 2001, terrorism has become a top issue on U.S. and Russian security agendas. The U.S.-led War on Terror has been broad, sustained, and controversial, and has proved to be a major point of diplomatic contention or cooperation. Russian solidarity with the War on Terror has been a widely touted success, prompting U.S. Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow to announce that “the United States and Russia have joined forces as never before.”¹ However, despite President Bush and President Putin’s rhetorical solidarity, Russia and the United States have taken divergent paths in the War on Terror, particularly with respect to Chechnya and Hezbollah.

In this paper I will argue that the United States and Russia are not fighting the same War on Terror. Instead, I will argue that Russia is primarily concerned with traditional forms of sub-state political terrorism caused by conflict in Chechnya while the United States is concerned with transnational, religiously-motivated terrorist groups like Hezbollah. This has lead to serious differences in U.S. and Russian policy toward Chechnya and Hezbollah, at the expense of both countries’ national security. U.S. and Russian policies must change to address both political and religious terrorism before the two types of terrorism converge, widening the conflict the U.S. currently faces and spreading a new threat to Russian soil.

I will present my argument in five sections. First, I argue that traditional terrorism is politically motivated, local, and strategically coercive, while new terrorism is religiously motivated, transnational, and catastrophically violent, leading it to occupy a new place in state

relations. Second, I argue that Chechen terrorism is a form of traditional political terrorism while Hezbollah’s terrorism is an example of new religious terrorism. Third, I present evidence that the United States is deeply concerned with fighting Hezbollah, but is more ambivalent toward conflict in Chechnya. Fourth, I argue that Russia takes the reverse position—it consciously subsidizes Hezbollah through its relationship with Iran and Syria and is deeply concerned with terrorism in Chechnya. Finally, I present evidence that Chechen tactics increasingly resemble those of Hezbollah, and that it is in U.S. and Russian interests to cooperate and confront both political and religious terrorism before old terrorist threats evolve into new dangers.

The New Terrorism

Since the end of the Cold War, the terrorist threat has evolved in three major ways: it is religiously motivated, transnational, and catastrophically violent. Combined, these factors have increased both the power and scope of terrorist groups, a change reflected in the scale and penetration of the 9/11 attacks. In this section, I examine the differences between traditional, political terrorism and new, religious terrorism. I then briefly examine how these differences have changed the relationship between states and terrorist groups.

New terrorism is religiously—not politically—motivated. Terrorism has typically been considered as a series of coordinated attacks used to rationally advance a specific political goal, especially territorial concessions. In contrast, new terrorism is concerned primarily with organizational survival, and is therefore likely to create new conflicts once old ones have been

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settled\textsuperscript{3}. The political support for traditional forms of terrorism cannot provide the broad justification needed for the long-term, multi-front wars that characterize today’s religious terrorists. As a result, new terrorist organizations have turned to fundamental Islam, replacing political justifications with ideological ones. By characterizing Western influence as a universal enemy, the new terrorism has “identified the only target that all Salafiyya submovements can claim equally as their own.”\textsuperscript{4} As a result, a rational/political-fundamental/religious divide now exists between traditional and new forms of terrorism.

New terrorism also differs from political terrorism because it is transnational—not local—in scope. The Islamic appeal of new terrorism has broadened terrorist groups’ bases of support, making it possible for terrorists to extend their influence across state lines. Improved communication technology, especially the Internet, has made the planning, preparation, and implementation of leaderless terror attacks a cheap and favored option\textsuperscript{5} and has made it easier for terrorist groups to hide and independently control their assets. With a broad base of constituents and a shift away from hierarchical organization, terrorist groups today can maintain indigenous cells across the globe. Additionally, ideologically aligned terrorists are likely to subcontract work to other terrorist organizations.\textsuperscript{6} In contrast, political terrorism remains primarily local in scope and focus because it is concerned with a specific, contained goal.

The third difference between traditional and new terrorism is characterized by an increase in violence. The greater reach and autonomy that new terrorism enjoys is especially dangerous

\textsuperscript{3} Jessica Stern, “The Protean Enemy,” \textit{Foreign Affairs} Vol. 82: (July/August 2003), p. 28.
\textsuperscript{5} Stern 34.
because its attacks are characterized by catastrophic—not coercive—violence. In the words of Russell Howard,

> Terrorists in past decades did not want large body counts because they wanted converts; they also wanted a seat at the table. Today’s terrorists are not particularly concerned about converts, and rather than wanting a seat at the table, ‘they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it.’

Aided by improvements in weapons communications technology, new terrorists now not only have the means for catastrophic attacks, but also the fanatical motivation. In contrast, political terrorism is coercively violent, aimed primarily at radicalizing moderates and winning concessions.

More religious, transnational, and violent, new terrorism has redefined the role of terrorism in state relations. Traditional terrorism has been local in scope, political in nature, and strategically violent, spawning terrorist groups that play a predictable and semi-satiable role as state enemies. States that face new terrorism, in contrast, now have less control over terrorist groups because political influence has waned with the rise of religion. New terrorism also remains less predictable because it has an evolving agenda that uses diverse tactics in diverse locations toward different political ends. Additionally, the non-hierarchical, cellular structure of new terrorism makes intelligence gathering more difficult and has made it hard or impossible to predict terrorist attacks based on an individual’s leadership tendencies.

**Different Threats: Chechnya versus Hezbollah**

Chechnya and Hezbollah both represent terrorist threats. However, in this section I argue that the threat posed by Chechen terrorists is fundamentally different from the threat posed by

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7 Ibid 76
8 Ibid 80
Hezbollah-sponsored terrorists; the conflict in Chechnya creates political terrorism, while Hezbollah is an example of new terrorism, a difference that is reflected in the scope and nature of each group’s attacks.

Chechen terrorism is local, strategically coercive, and politically motivated. Though Chechen attacks occur not only in Gronzy but also in Moscow, Nazran, Ingushetia, and Beslan, they have been limited to Russian targets. They have also been strategically coercive, consistently linked with demands for Russian troop withdrawals and Chechen autonomy. Hostage taking and other terrorist attacks first emerged during the 1994-1996 war in Chechnya as an attempt to “force the Russian government into negotiations,” eventually producing a 1996 cease-fire that validated the use of such techniques. Conflict has since re-erupted in Chechnya, catalyzed by explosions destroying five apartment blocks and killing over 300 civilians, as well as through accusations of Chechen involvement in Dagestan. The apartment blasts, while clearly catastrophic, have not been linked to Chechen terrorism. Additionally, Chechnya’s role in the Dagestan conflict, while seemingly transnational, appears to be quite limited. Russian and American journalists have also questioned the whether Russian security forces precipitated either conflict in order to justify military action against Chechnya. Since the rekindling of conflict in 1999, Chechen terrorist attacks have undeniably increased. However, in each case they are against Russian targets, are politically motivated, and are not calculated to cause catastrophic damage.

Two of the most prominent Chechen terror attacks have involved hostage taking, one at the Dubrovka Theater and one at Public School No. 1 in Beslan. The Dubrovka Theater attack, on October 23, 2002, involved Chechen rebels from the 29th Division of the Chechen Army, who

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10 Ibid 18-19
took 900 hostages during a performance of “Nord-Ost.” Rebels demanded that Russia pull its forces out of Chechnya within a week, sparking anti-war protests in Moscow. Over the course of the conflict, rebels released 200 women, children, and Muslims after being allowed access to journalists. The Dubrovka incident illustrates the political nature of Chechen terrorism—attackers gave explicit political demands about a local grievance. Additionally, though large in scale, the attack was not catastrophic—almost all casualties were caused by gas used by Russian Special Forces.

A second well-publicized attack, on September 1, 2004, occurred when Chechen separatists took an estimated 1200 children hostage at Beslan School No. 1. The hostage-takers submitted a list of demands including Russian troop withdrawal and Chechen independence. Tragedy struck when a bomb in the school gymnasium detonated, catalyzing a police raid, shootings, and mass confusion. As many as 500 people were killed, many of them children. Though a catastrophic loss, it is not clear that terrorists had catastrophic intent. Eyewitness accounts suggest that the bomb exploded accidentally, just hours before negotiations were to begin. Like the Dubrovka attack, the Beslan attack was also local and political in nature.

Other Chechen attacks have included suicide bombings in metro stations, fast food restaurants, concerts, and airplanes. In each case, casualties have been significant but not catastrophically unique, in the name of Chechen autonomy, and almost always committed by Chechens.

In contrast to the local, political, and coercive scope of Chechen terrorism, Hezbollah presents a threat that is transnational, religiously motivated, and catastrophically intentioned.

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Hezbollah, arguably the most sophisticated terrorist group in the world, has a strong presence in Syria, Lebanon, Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, along with terrorist cells on every continent. Hezbollah operates on Iran’s behalf to coordinate its activities with Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and cooperates with al Qaeda, sometimes lending radical Islamic groups skilled operatives. Hezbollah also provides “guerilla training, bomb-building expertise, propaganda, and tactical tips” to anti-Israeli groups. Fueling Hezbollah’s transnational reach is its socio-religious ideology, which is rooted in Shi’ite Islam committed to “death to America” and American imperialism, the destruction of Israel, and Islamic rule of Lebanon. Open-ended and shifting goals have allowed Hezbollah—Arabic for “Party of God”—to recruit fundamental Islamic jihadists who will fight with “an allegiance to a cause, not a state.” Hezbollah’s tactics also represent new terrorism, having evolved from politically motivated suicide bombings in Lebanon in the early 1980’s to include large-scale, symbolic bombings like the 1996 truck bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. While Hezbollah’s direct involvement in catastrophic terrorism is limited, it has become increasingly capable and willing to sponsor groups that do perform catastrophic terrorism—most notably al Qaeda—in the name of radical Islam.

Though it is difficult to determine the catastrophic intent of factious terrorist groups, it is abundantly clear that Chechen terrorists are working toward a concrete political goal while Hezbollah is motivated by a flexible religious ideology. As such, Chechen terrorism appears to

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14 Stern 32
16 Stern 32-33
17 Byman 59
18 Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah Secretary General, quoted in Byman 54
19 Howard 83
20 Byman 57
be a form of traditional political terrorism while Hezbollah’s terrorism appears to be new and religious.

*The U.S. War on Terror*

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center precipitated a major shift in the focus of U.S. national security, from state-level threats to terrorist ones. Without a significant traditional terrorist threat, the United States has defined its War on Terror as an attack on transnational, religiously-motivated terrorism, the terrorism that is most likely to have catastrophic consequences for the United States. As a result, the U.S. has been proactive in its diplomatic, economic, and military pressure on Hezbollah and its allies, but has moved slowly in addressing terrorism in Chechnya.

The United States has put notable diplomatic pressure on Hezbollah. In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President Bush singled out Hezbollah by name, citing it as a part of “a terrorist underworld.” Last month, Bush reiterated the stance, publicly stating that “we view Hezbollah as a terrorist organization,” a feeling echoed in the State Department on multiple occasions. As recently as April 6, 2005, Nicholas Burns, Undersecretary for Political Affairs, called on Europe to “speak up” about state support of Hezbollah’s terrorist activities. Hezbollah has also played a significant role in U.S. relations with Iran. In November 2004 Colin

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22 See, for example, the congressional testimony of John Bolton, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Statement for the House International Relations Committee, 16 November 2003.
23 Nicholas Burns, “A Trans-Atlantic Agenda for the Year Ahead,” available at state.gov, 6 April 2005.
Powell stated that before talking to Iran, the United States expected changes in behavior, citing “their obligation with respect to terrorism [and] support of organizations such as Hezbollah.”

The United States has also worked to economically disable Hezbollah. In 2001, a month after Secretary of State Colin Powell named Hezbollah a foreign terrorist organization, the State Department froze Hezbollah’s financial assets. In December 2004, the State Department placed the al-Manar global satellite television network on the Terror Exclusion List, threatening supporters of “Hezbollah TV” with denied access to or deportation from the United States.

The United States has yet to take overt military action against Hezbollah, and has signaled it may recognize Hezbollah’s role in Lebanese politics, provided the group abandons terrorism by “laying down arms and not threatening peace.” Whether the U.S. stance toward Hezbollah will soften further is unclear, but it is clear that the United States has considered using force against Hezbollah in the past. In November 2002, on a CNN “Late Edition” program, Democratic Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Bob Graham stated “against those international terrorists such as Hezbollah and Hamas, we need to be launching attacks on their headquarters and their training camps [sic].” More recently, in January 2004 Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was rumored to be considering military strikes against Hezbollah.

Though overt military action has not occurred, public and private military recommendations, as

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29 “USA Mulls Hizbullah Strikes,” Jane’s Intelligence Digest, 23 January 2004.
well as direct diplomatic and economic pressure against Hezbollah indicate that the United States
considers Hezbollah to be serious “type A” threat worth actively fighting.

In contrast, U.S. policy toward Chechen terrorism has been ambivalent. A Whitehouse
press release from May 2003 states “We resolutely condemn all terrorist acts and senseless
violence against civilians in Chechnya,” but adds “we continue to urge a political settlement of
the Chechnya conflict.”30 Such statements do little to accommodate the Russian position that the
Chechen war is a war against terrorism. Not only do they express sympathy for the Chechen
cause by condemning “senseless violence,” which many Chechens identify with Russian tactics,
they also recognize the Chechen conflict as legitimate. The State Department position, to “make
no concessions to terrorists and strike no deals,”31 implies that the United States does not see the
Chechen conflict as a primarily terrorist one.

The United States has maintained this stance even at the height of U.S.-Russian solidarity
in the fight against terror. Two weeks after the September 11 attacks, Whitehouse spokesman
Ari Fleischer, when asked if Chechen terrorists with links to al Qaeda would share the same fate
as the Taliban, answered, “No…what’s notable here is the President is reiterating that it’s
important to have a political solution to the situation in Chechnya.”32 The United States has also
granted asylum to Chechen separatists, citing the matter as a concern for U.S. immigration courts
and judges,33 despite its own suspect legal treatment of terror suspects. While the United States
has provided Russia with intelligence on Chechen terrorists and has frozen their accounts, it has

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30 “Statement on Terrorist Act in Chechnya,” Office of the Press Secretary, 13 May 2003.
31 U.S. Counterterrorism Policy, available at state.gov/s/ct/
33 Alexander Vershbow, “The United States Does Not Acknowledge the Legitimacy of the
remained diplomatically cautious about characterizing Chechen terrorism as a serious global threat, revealing its relatively low priority in U.S. foreign policy.

**The Russian War on Terror**

In sharp contrast to the U.S. position on Hezbollah and Chechnya, Russia has actively supported Iran and Syria, state sponsors of Hezbollah, and has gone to great military and economic lengths to crush Chechen terrorism.

Russian assistance to Syria and Iran has been well documented. Testimony given before the U.S. Senate contends that Russia provides Syria with the “supply, maintenance, and spare parts for all of its major weapons systems,” as well as “surface to air missiles, surface to surface missiles, tanks and armored personnel carriers, [and] small arms.”

President Putin approved the sale of SS-26 and SA-18 missiles to Syria as recently as January 2005, despite stiff international objections. Earlier this month, Russian Regional Development Minister Vladimir Yakovlev announced plans to grow Russo-Syrian trade by $1 billion, with the possible development of a new gas pipeline and oil processing plants in Syria. Economic discussions have also focused on forgiving Syria’s $3.6 billion debt to Russia and on the creation of an economic free trade zone. Russia has also regularly provided diplomatic support for Syria.

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36 “Moscow, Damascus to Restore Former Level of Cooperation,” Russian News and Information Agency Novosti, 4 April 2005.
38 “Russia, Syria Discuss Creation of Joint Ventures, Free Trade Zone,” ITAR-TASS, 2 April 2005.
despite U.S. pressure, most recently in the face of UN Resolution 1559.\textsuperscript{39} Russian also provides Iran military and diplomatic support. Moscow and Tehran signed a defense deal worth an estimated $7 billion in 2001\textsuperscript{40} and Russia continues to assist Iran with its Bushehr nuclear reactor, defending Iran from allegations that it is building a covert nuclear program.

Syria and Iran are both admitted state sponsors of Hezbollah. Iran provided the initial inspiration for Hezbollah, and continues to give it “organizational aid and ideological guidance,” as well as $100 million annually.\textsuperscript{41} Sponsoring Hezbollah allows Iran to indirectly sponsor terrorism against Israel, expand its influence in Middle Eastern politics, and gain favorable Arab press. Until recently, Syria supported Hezbollah by sheltering it in Lebanon. However, in the wake of strong international pressure following the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, Syria has been forced to withdraw its troops from the region. Syria and Iran have also been accused of sharing weapons with Hezbollah, including Russian SA-18 SAMs.

Russia’s active support for Iran and Syria is calculated. Five days after the 9/11 attacks, Aleksandr Bovin, Russia’s first ambassador to Israel, was quoted in the \textit{New York Times} as saying “We know Tehran supports the Hezbollah in Lebanon but our national interests don’t require any special relations with Iran because of this. Everything is relative in this life.”\textsuperscript{42} Such comments reveal that cultivating good relations with regional states is more important in Russian foreign policy than fighting transnational, religious terrorism. This is a stance that is antithetical

\textsuperscript{39} See, for example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Information and Press Department, "Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Talks with First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Syria Walid Muallem, Moscow, March 4, 2005"

\textsuperscript{40} “Syria’s Assad Still Plans to talk Missiles in Moscow,” The World Tribune Online, 13 January 2005.

\textsuperscript{41} Byman 61

\textsuperscript{42} Michael Wines, “Russia Takes Stand Against Terrorism, but Stance Wavers Quickly,” The \textit{New York Times}, Section 1, Page 20, Column 1, 16 September 2001.
to the U.S. position. Indeed, the Bush administration has consistently made U.S. relations contingent on a state’s position on terrorism.

Russia’s policy on terrorism in Chechnya also stands in sharp contrast to its policy on Hezbollah. In his Annual Address to the Federal Assembly in May 2004, President Putin announced that “despite [Chechen] acts of provocation…our policy on fighting terror remains unchanged and consistent. No one and nothing will stop Russia.” Putin has gone to great lengths to define the conflict in Chechnya as a war against a pressing terrorist threat. Putin has taken decisive military action against Chechnya since 1999, most recently with the “liquidation of the international terrorist…Asian Maskhadov.” In the past six years, the Russian military has destroyed most Grozny and much of Chechnya’s infrastructure, and has caused an estimated 55,000 civilian casualties. The Kremlin has made the Chechen conflict one of Russia’s top three national security priorities, on par with modernizing the army and facing “new threats.”

President Putin’s resolve is also reflected in his deep economic commitment to the Chechen conflict. Russia maintains 100,000 troops in Chechnya, leading the IMF to worry that military costs will undermine Russian finances. Economists also estimate that by November 2001 Russia had already spent $8 billion on the Chechen conflict. Russia’s diplomatic, military, and economic commitment to the war on Chechen terror will remain strong in the coming months. Actively pursuing Shamil Basayev, thought to be the driving force behind many of the most brutal Chechen terrorist attacks, will be a top priority. The death of Maskhadov, who represented a more moderate position on Chechen independence, has signaled the Kremlin’s hard-line commitment both against separatism and remaining Chechen terrorists.

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45 Lapidus 20-21
The Need for Cooperation

Since the launch of the War on Terror, Russia and the United States have repeatedly expressed solidarity. The National Security Strategy of the United States announces that “today the world’s great powers find ourselves on the same side.” Secretary of State Colin Powell claimed improvements in U.S.-Russian relations “had been accelerated by the events of September 11th,” and that the relationship “would get stronger with each passing day.” President Putin agreed, commenting, “today the world is building a broad international coalition against terrorism, and Russia is taking a full and responsible role.”

There is some tangible evidence of cooperation. A joint statement released by Bush and Putin agreed to “block access of terrorist organizations to financial resources, to enhance law enforcement tools to combat terrorism, and to strengthen procedures to stop the transit of terrorists” and destroy their communications and logistics networks. Both Russia and the United States have been active in the campaign in Afghanistan, both have signed the Proliferation Security Initiative, and both have shared intelligence.

However, as divergent stances on Hezbollah and Chechnya have demonstrated, cooperation beyond the diplomatic level has been limited. Russia and the United States each face different short term security threats, and each has defined their War on Terror accordingly. Yet, cooperation between the U.S. and Russia will become increasingly important in the long run as religious, transnational terrorist groups forage ties with political terrorists. Already the

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49 “Joint Statement on Counterterrorism by the President of the United States and the President of Russia,” Office of the Press Secretary 21 October 2001.
Chechen conflict has produced ties between Chechen rebels and members of al Qaeda—a development that occurred subsequent to the start of the Chechen terrorist movement. The transformation of contained political conflicts into transnational, religious ones is a security concern for both the United States and Russia: it will broaden the scope of the terrorist threat the United States already faces, and it will increasingly introduce a new, more dangerous and more resilient type of terrorism onto Russia soil.

It is in both U.S. and Russian interests to promote the other’s War on Terror. This includes increased U.S. assistance in targeting political terrorists in Chechnya, as well as new Islamic threats in the Northern Caucasus. The U.S. should also give Russia economic assistance that will aid its technology sector, easing its dependence on clients in Iran and Syria. For its part, Russia should take concrete steps to limit its military, economic, and diplomatic assistance to Iran and Syria. Russia should also pursue measures that will promote regional stability without increasing the resources available to Hezbollah, such as replacing arms sales and military credit with direct security assistance and non-fungible economic aid. Russia should also use its considerable influence over Syria and Iran to limit Hezbollah’s general access to military resources.

Action may create new enemies for the U.S. and Russia, but inaction carries greater risks. Russia and the United States must work together to fight today’s dual-level War on Terror before political and religious terrorism converge completely, forcing both countries to commit to a more deadly and more risky campaign than either currently wages. The United States and Russia have pledged to fight the War on Terror together. Now is the time to make good on that promise.