Trends. A Post-Postmodern Terrorism: Examples from Colombia and Spain

Editor
A basic concept of terrorism is that the true targets are living, physically unscathed, political leaders—not people who are killed or injured, property damaged or destroyed. The usual behavioral consequences of successful terrorism—after murder, destruction, wounding, damage, or their threats—are political decisions in the terrorist's favor—e.g., often formal recognition of the right to self-determination, new legislation/policy or legislative/policy modifications, granting or gaining of territory, informal or formal rights to various tangible assets.

Often enough the political decision appears unfavorable to the terrorist but results in the target's unwitting self-damage. For example, political leaders and their representatives engage in antiterrorist and counterterrorist measures that are illegal—and frequently immoral, and unethical. In essence the target of the terrorist—by becoming more like the latter—sows the seeds of it's own illegitimacy. By abiding less by principles that one is entrusted to protect, one finds that these very principles are being weakened and cheapened. There may come a time when there is little left of these principles—hence, the unwitting damage.

Such appears to have been the case in Colombia. Outgoing Colombian President Ernesto Samper has admitted that government agents were responsible for massacres and selective assassinations of at least 49 people between 1991 and 1993 in the name of fighting terrorism. So, too, in Spain, the Supreme Court sentenced a former Interior Minister and a Director of State Security to 10 years in prison for kidnapping in the name of fighting terrorism.