Japan's Aum Shinrikyo, the Changing Nature of Terrorism, and the Post-Cold War Security Agenda*

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Events such as the Aum Shinrikyo's sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March 1994 have placed terrorism at the top of the post-Cold War security agenda and have caused policy makers to sense qualitative change and new dangers in the terrorist threat to industrialised societies. By examining the case of the Aum Shinrikyo and comparing it in detail with Japanese terrorism during the Cold War period, this article demonstrates that terrorism has indeed undergone qualitative change in the 1990s due to terrorism's enhanced non-specificity, expansion in destructive potential, greater erosion of the barriers between internal and external security, and ability to corrode the legitimacy of existing security institutions. The article then goes on to argue that Aum's characteristics as a terrorist phenomenon reflect the nature of the post-Cold War security agenda as a whole, and that the policy lesson of the Tokyo subway attack is that, in the 1990s, in order for security institutions to detect new security challenges early enough and to deal with them they need to discard Cold War mindsets and to sustain the process of internal reform.

Introduction: The Post-Cold War Security Agenda and Terrorism

The end of the Cold War has reduced the possibility of global conventional and nuclear war, but has given rise to a host of new and re-emergent sources of insecurity. Generally listed among these security problems are: environmental destruction; the shared management of key natural resources; economic dislocation; mass migration and refugees; nationalist, ethnic, and border conflicts; drugs and organised crime; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and terrorism. These diffuse problems may not compare in their immediate destructive potential to the cataclysm of nuclear war between superpowers, but it is clear that they are of global significance and constitute a new post-Cold War security agenda. The last of the problems identified above, terrorism, has been given added prominence recently by a series of headline-making attacks across the world. These include: the World Trade Centre bombing in 1993; the Oklahoma Federal Building and Paris bombings in 1995; the Dhahran airforce base and Atlanta Olympic bombings of 1996; the suspected but unproven terrorist destruction of TWA Flight 800 in the same year; the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) cult on 20 March 1995; and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement's (MRTA) seizure of the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima and the ensuing 127-day siege between 17 December 17 and 22 April 1997. In particular, the Tokyo attack has attracted attention because it marks the first attempt by a non-state actor to use on a major scale weapons of mass destruction,

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and has been seen as a portent of the future shape of terrorism, or what Walter Laqueur has termed 'post-modern terrorism'.[1]

These attacks have contributed to the re-entry of terrorism on to the mainstream international security agenda. The importance of the terrorist issue for the developed states has been demonstrated by the measures agreed at recent G7 summits for improved international cooperation against terrorism. For most states terrorism is not a new problem, and, despite the rash of incidents between 1995 and 1997, the evidence suggests that there has been no upsurge in the number of terrorist attacks in the 1990s.[2] However, the statements and actions of the G7 countries demonstrate a genuine concern that terrorism is a crucial post-Cold War threat to domestic and international security. The reason for this perhaps is that, irrespective of whether or not there has been a quantitative increase in terrorist incidents, there is a growing perception among the industrialised states—influenced especially by events such as the Tokyo subway attack—that there has been at least a qualitative change in the nature of terrorism, and that it has evolved to take on new and more dangerous characteristics.

Given the perceived importance of terrorism in the 1990s and the attention given to the Aum Shinrikyo as possibly representing the new course of the phenomenon, the aim of this article is by using the case of the Aum Shinrikyo to elucidate a number of ways in which terrorism has undergone qualitative change in the post-Cold War period, and the implications of this for terrorism and other issues that comprise the security agenda of developed nations. A comparison in the first part of the article between the activities of Japanese terrorist groups in the Cold War period and the as yet under-researched activities of the Aum Shinrikyo in 1990s will attempt to demonstrate that Japanese terrorism has shown qualitative change since the Cold War with regard to four characteristics:[3] the enhanced non-specificity of terrorist actors; the enhanced destructive capabilities of terrorist actors; the growing ability of terrorist actors to erode the traditional distinctions between internal and external security; and the increasing difficulties that are faced by the security institutions of states in adapting to and legitimising their position in response to the terrorist threat. The argument will then be made in the latter part of the article that the changing characteristics of Japanese terrorism are indicative of the changing nature of terrorism in other states, and so help to explain why terrorism has become such a central and pressing problem for the security planners of developed nations.

Finally, by making use of the case of the Aum Shinrikyo and findings about its post-Cold War characteristics, the conclusion to this article will attempt to show how this example of terrorism in Japan fits into and contributes to our understanding of the general

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1 W. Laqueur, 'Postmodern Terrorism', *Foreign Affairs*, 75, 5 (September/October 1996), pp. 24–27.

2 According to the US Department of State, the number of international terrorist incidents for the period 1977–1996 rose from 419 in 1977, to a high of 665 in 1987, and then fell back to the lowest figure of 296 in 1996. However, in terms of casualties by region between 1991 and 1996, the destructive effects of terrorism seem to have increased. In Asia the number of casualties rose from 150 in 1991, to 5,639 in 1995, to 1,407 in 1996; in Europe, from 56 in 1991, to 503 in 1996; in the Middle East, from 33 in 1991, to 837 in 1996; and in the USA from 0 in 1991, to 1,006 in 1993, and back to 0 in 1996. US Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism Report 1996, Appendix C: Statistical Review*, (Washington, 1996).

3 Despite the widespread attention that the Aum Shinrikyo has received since the Tokyo subway attack, there are few works in either English or Japanese that examine in detail the significance of Aum as a terrorist phenomenon, and most scholarly work has focused on the group's religious philosophy. The best journalistic accounts of Aum's terrorist activities in English are: D. E. Kaplan and A. Marshall, *The Cult at the End of the World: The Incredible Story of Aum* (Arrow Books, London, 1996); D. W. Brackett, *Holy Terror: Armageddon in Tokyo* (Weatherhill, New York, 1996). A good overview in Japanese of the activities and societal impact of Aum is provided in *Asahi Nenkan 1996* [Asahi Yearbook] (Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1996), pp. 193–225. The best scholarly account of Aum is provided in: I. Reader, *A Poisonous Cocktail? Aum Shinrikyo's Path to Violence* (NIAS Publications, Copenhagen, 1996).

complexities of the post-Cold War debate on security and the steps that policy makers need to take in order to resolve the security problems of the 1990s and beyond.

Japanese Terrorism during the Cold War

Although it is difficult to define objectively, a common and usable definition of terrorism is the use of violence beyond the norms and conventions established by a particular society (domestic, international, or otherwise) in order to instil a climate of fear, to publicise a cause and to coerce a wider target into submitting to the aims of the perpetrators of terror.[4] The type of violence employed by terrorists is often indiscriminate in nature and directed against non-combatants, but this is not to deny that they may ultimately have a more specific individual or collective target in mind. Paul Wilkinson provides a fivefold categorisation of terrorism including: nationalist terrorists, ideological terrorists, religious fanatics, single-issue fanatics, and state-sponsored international terrorism.[5] With regard to the first category, Japan, like other industrialised nations, is certainly no stranger to ideological political terrorism. Before and following the Second World War, right-wing groups have practised terror by the intimidation, and in some cases the assassination, of their opponents.[6] Kenneth Szymkowiak and Patricia Steinhoff have made clear that the right-wing terrorist threat has been diffuse and hard to categorise, with a wide range of actors, motivations and tactics.[7] However, if it is possible to generalise at all about the right wing, it can be argued that in the post-war period it has not been regarded by the Japanese authorities as the most serious terrorist threat to the state. Certainly, right-wing groups have been an important concern for the security authorities. All the bureaus of security police (Koan Keisatsu) have a section devoted to the supervision of rightist extremism, and in the 1960s and 1970s the police cracked down with new laws on right-wing groups following a series of politically motivated attacks.[8] However, right-wing extremism has been made less threatening for the Japanese state and its security institutions by its lack of mass support, and because of the association of many right-wing leaders with LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) politicians.

Instead, during the Cold War, the main terrorist threat was perceived by the Japanese authorities to be from the left wing and communism. For the security authorities this left-wing threat came to consist firstly of the North Korean minority in Japan and its umbrella organisation, the Chosensoren (General Association of Korean Residents in Japan); the fear during the Korean War was that the North Korean minority would try to foment communist revolution in Japan. But the second and most important left-wing threat were the radical groups (kageki-ha) that grew out of the factional splits of student movements involved in mass protests over social issues and the US–Japan security

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4 The US Department of State defines the term 'terrorism' as 'premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience' (US Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism Report 1996*, p. 3). For the problems of definition, see P. Wilkinson, 'Terrorism and Propaganda', in Y. Alexander and R. Latter, *Terrorism and the Media: Dilemmas for Government, Journalists and the Public* (Brassey's, New York, 1990), pp. 26–29.

5 P. Wilkinson, 'Trends in International Terrorism and the American Response', in L. Freedman, C. Hill, A. Roberts, R. J. Vincent, P. Wilkinson and P. Windsor, *Terrorism and International Order*, (Routledge, London, 1988), pp. 39–40.

6 For a history of right-wing groups in the post-war period up to 1960, see I. Morris, *Nationalism and the Right Wing in Japan: A Study of Post War Trends* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1960).

7 K. Szymkowiak and P. G. Steinhoff, 'Wrapping up in Something Long: Intimidation and Violence by Right-Wing Groups in Postwar Japan', in T. Bjorgo (ed.), *Terror From The Extreme Right* (Frank Cass, London, 1995), pp. 276–278.

8 P. J. Katzenstein and Y. Tsujinaka, *Defending the Japanese State: Structures, Norms and the Political Response to Terrorism and Violent Social Protest in the 1970's and 1980's* (East Asia Program Cornell University, Cornell, NY, 1991), p. 32.

relationship in the 1950s and 1960s. By the end of the 1960s, many of these groups had accepted the ideology of armed struggle based on a complex mix of Marxist–Leninist and Maoist principles, and by the 1970s several fully fledged terrorist groups had emerged.[9]

The most notable of these groups were the Chukaku-ha (Core Faction) and Kakumaru-ha (Revolutionary Marxist Faction), both formed in 1963 and later turning to terrorist tactics, and the Sekigun-ha (Red Army Faction), formed in 1969 with the original intent of pursuing an armed struggle. The Sekigun-ha's ideology of worldwide revolution meant that, while a large proportion of the members of the group remained in Japan, others moved abroad to continue the struggle against the Japanese state from international bases. In March 1970, one splinter group of the Sekigun-ha moved offshore by hijacking an airliner and forcing it to land in Pyongyang, North Korea, where the group was eventually given sanctuary. The Pyongyang hijack group's hopes of continuing its activities, however, were dashed by the North Korean regime, which has since prevented the group from pursuing any effective terrorist strategy. A second group of Sekigun-ha activists, realising the growing difficulties of operating inside Japan, established itself as the Arabu Sekigun (Arab Red Army) in the Lebanon in 1971. This group was later renamed the Nihon Sekigun (Japanese Red Army) and formed an alliance with the PFLP (People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine). The Nihon Sekigun has continued to operate until this day. Meanwhile, in December 1971, the remnants of the Sekigun-ha in Japan merged with another revolutionary organisation, the Keihin Ampo Kyoto, and formed the Rengo Sekigun (United Red Army). This group devoted itself to a campaign to acquire the training and weapons necessary for guerrilla warfare, but was effectively crushed by police action soon after coming into existence. This culminated in February 1972 with the sensational and nationally televised ten-day gun-battle siege between the police and Rengo Sekigun members at Asama Villa in the Japan Alps, which led to the deaths of two police officers and injuries to 23 others, and the discovery later on of the murder by the radical group of 14 of its own comrades at its secret training camp close by.

While many of their activities inside Japan have been frustrated by the security authorities, these groups have succeeded in committing major acts of terror. In addition to the Pyongyang hijack and the Asama siege, the Sekigun-ha carried out a number of attacks using pipe bombs; the Chukaku-ha succeeded in firebombing the LDP's headquarters in 1984; and small anarchist and unaffiliated groups carried out a series of 56 bombings against Japanese corporations between 1972 and 1979. The most devastating of the latter was the Higashi Ajia Hannichi Buso Sensen's (East Asian Anti-Japan Front) bomb attack against Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in August 1974, which claimed eight lives and injured another 376 people.[10]

But it is on the international front that Japanese terrorism made its greatest impact during the period of the Cold War. The Pyongyang hijacking group may have remained inactive in North Korea, but the Nihon Sekigun staged a number of attacks from its base in the Lebanon against Japanese and other targets abroad. The first and most notorious of the Nihon Sekigun's attacks took place in 1972 at Lod Airport, Tel Aviv, where three members of the group armed with assault rifles and grenades killed 26 passengers and wounded 70 others.[11] Nihon Sekigun members subsequently carried out hijackings of

9   For details of the birth, ideology and history of many of these radical groups, see N. Tashiro, *Kageki-ha Shudan no Riron to Jissen* [The Ideology and Practices of Radical Groups] (Tachibana Shobo, Tokyo, 1985), pp. 57–188.

10 The ideology of the radicals involved in the Higashi Ajia Hannichi Buso Sensen perhaps needs to be distinguished somewhat from that of other groups such as the Sekigun-ha. While the Higashi Ajia Hannichi Buso Sensen also opposed what it saw as Japanese imperialism, its proclaimed aim was to unite and struggle on behalf of minority groups in Japan such as the Ainu, Okinawans, Taiwanese and Koreans.

11 For an account of the Lod Airport incident and an insight into the ideology of the three Nihon Sekigun members involved, see P. G. Steinhoff, *Nihon Sekigun-ha: Sono Shakaigakuteki Monogatari* [Deadly Ideology: The Lod Massacre and the Rengo Sekigun Purge] (Kawade Shobo Shinsha, Tokyo, 1991), pp. 28–110; W. R. Farrell, *Blood and Rage: The Story of the Japanese Red Army*, (Lexington Books, Lexington, MA & Toronto, 1990), pp. 127–147.

Japanese airliners at Dhubai in 1973 and at Dacca in 1977; attacked an oil refinery in Singapore in 1974; and seized the Japanese embassy in Kuwait and the French embassy in The Hague in the same year, and then the US and Swedish consulates' offices in Kuala Lumpur in 1975. In the last two of these incidents the Nihon Sekigun extorted cash payments from the Japanese government and the release of radicals held prisoner in Japan and other countries. The group appears to have become active again in the mid-1980s, and is thought to have been responsible for the kidnapping of a Mitsui company executive in the Philippines in 1986, rocket attacks in Jakarta and Rome in 1986 and 1987, and a bomb explosion in Naples in 1988. Also in 1988 a member of the Nihon Sekigun, Yu Kikumura, was arrested in New Jersey after he was found to be carrying explosives—evidence, it is believed, of a plan by the group to extend its activities to the USA. But in recent years the Nihon Sekigun's activities have receded, a result of a combination of police pressure, diminishing numbers of personnel available to the group, and the destabilisation of the group's position in the Lebanon due to civil war and the changing tactics of the PFLP.[12]

This account of the extent and types of Japanese terrorism practised during the period of the Cold War makes clear that left-wing groups have always been regarded as a threat to the Japanese state, a threat made all the more apparent by the inability of the authorities to respond effectively against Nihon Sekigun activities outside Japan due to constitutional restrictions on the exercise of the state's military and police power overseas. However, further analysis reveals that this terrorist threat had four characteristics that made it more manageable for the Japanese security authorities, compared with later post-Cold War terrorism and the Aum Shinrikyo.

Specificity of Cold War Japanese Terrorist Actors

The very nature of terrorism, with its actors operating covertly and in small numbers, has always meant that for the security institutions of states the specificity of its threat has been low compared with the security problems generated by other state actors. For the Western powers during the Cold War period, the contrast was very great between the specificity of the threat posed by the conventionally and nuclear-armed state actors of the Soviet bloc and that of the non-state actors of nationalist and political terrorist groups. However, during the Cold War period the terrorist threat articulated by the security institutions of industrialised nations was still lent a degree of specificity due to the often deliberate self-association of terrorist groups with a particular political ideology, or, as in the case of state-sponsored terrorism, 'pariah nation'; this was identified as a threat to national or international norms of security.

An initial look at the case of Japan and the bewildering range of factional splits of its terrorist groups might suggest that it is hard to identify the specific nature and challenge of these groups to the Japanese state. But for those Japanese security institutions charged with protecting the state from these groups during the Cold War, as for institutions in other states, the threat and the terrorist actors were relatively clear. Despite the large number of radical groups, the security authorities could easily associate them with the cause of communist insurgency and the JCP (Japan Communist Party). A confidential 1971 publication by the Koanchosacho, or Public Security Investigation Agency (PSIA), one of the

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12 The Nihon Sekigun has suffered setbacks with the arrest of a number of its members in the Middle East and elsewhere. Following the initiation of the Arab–Israeli peace process, the PFLP seems to have withdrawn support for the Nihon Sekigun, leaving it to the mercy of the Lebanese authorities. In February 1997, five Nihon Sekigun members were arrested in Beirut. The leader of the Nihon Sekigun, Fusako Shigenobu, evaded arrest and was rumoured to be helping to train guerrillas in Colombia. *Japan Times*, (5 April 1997), p. 2. Another member of the group, Kazue Yoshimura, was arrested in Peru in May 1996 after using a false passport.

security police agencies charged with monitoring extremist groups, contains a revealing chart which confidently traces the lineage of more than 100 left-wing groups back to the JCP.[13] Moreover, the organisational priorities of the PSIA in dealing with the perceived communist threat are revealed by the fact that from 1952 until 1996 its first investigative bureau was concerned entirely with the JCP and radical and labour groups (Figure 1).

The specificity of the identity of the actors for the security authorities was also enhanced by the willingness of radical groups openly to profess revolutionary ideology and to designate themselves as revolutionaries. Japanese law gives the freedom for groups to discuss terrorist actions so long as they do not actively engage in them, and under these conditions groups such as the Sekigun-ha were able to hold public meetings to spread revolutionary propaganda, so marking themselves out as a clear enemy for society and the security authorities. As Steinhoff points out, this enabled the security authorities to engage in a 'labelling process', whereby, as a larger group that felt threatened by a smaller one, the authorities were able to ascribe a deviant identity to the group in question, and so legitimise their actions against it. The labelling process was made even more effective because of the willingness of the radical groups to accept the label and make it part of their identity.[14]

Limitations to the Destructive Capacity of Japanese Terrorism during the Cold War

During the Cold War, terrorist groups were often able to conduct effective campaigns of terror and to raise their destructive capacity in terms of organisation, training and weaponry, but it is clear that they were unable to rival the force that the security institutions of industrialised states could apply to contain the terrorist threat.[15] The case of Japan illustrates well the limited destructive capacity of Cold War terrorist actors. For, although Japanese terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s proved itself capable of mounting deadly and sophisticated operations such as the Lod Airport massacre and the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries bombing, the apparent destructive impact of this terrorism should be put in perspective by making a distinction between the levels of organisation, training and weaponry available to groups operating domestically inside Japan and those operating internationally and based in other countries.
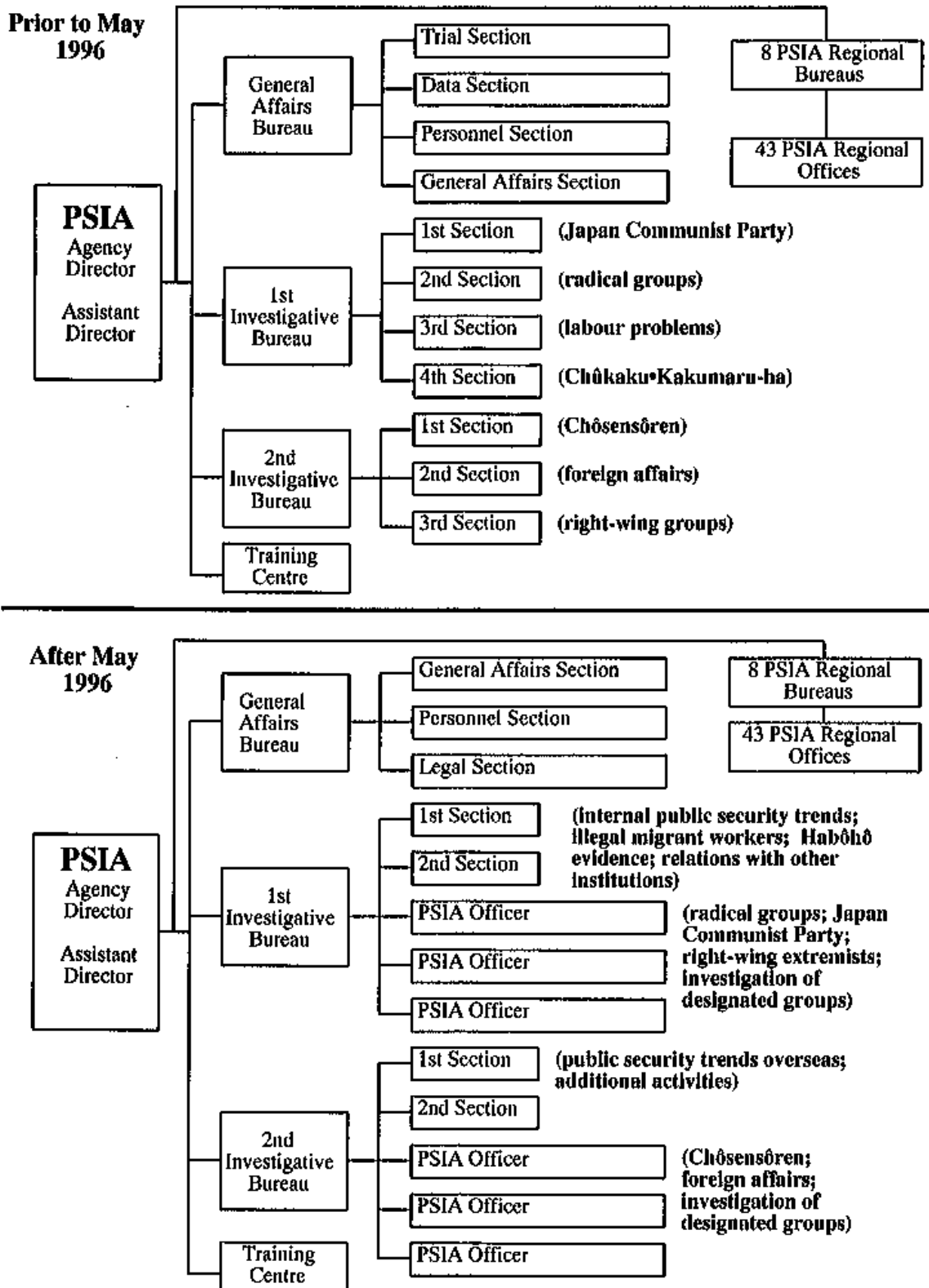
Another important study by Steinhoff has demonstrated the organisational skills of the Sekigun-ha in Japan before the suppression of the Rengo Sekigun in 1972. She notes that these groups reproduced the managerial style of Japanese corporations, with a vertical command structure that enabled the group to carry out robberies and bombings with precision. But at the same time, even though the group's organisational skills developed rapidly, the student background of many of its members was not always conducive to discipline and attempts to forge a true army structure. The murders of the 14 members of the Rengo Sekigun uncovered in the winter of 1972 can be explained as an ultimately failed attempt to convert recruits into effective guerrillas by the application of rigid discipline and spiritual training, or Tenko methods. It seems that the lessons of these failures were taken into account by the Nihon Sekigun-ha in Lebanon, which displayed greater and more

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13 Koanchosacho, *1970 nen Toso no Gaiyo* [Outline of the 1970 Struggle] (Koanchosacho, Tokyo, 1971), pp. 233–234.
14 P. G. Steinhoff, 'Student Conflict', in E. S. Krauss, T. P. Rohlen, and P. G. Steinhoff (eds), *Conflict in Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1984), p. 175.
15 P. Wilkinson, 'Terrorism: The International Dimensions', in W. Gutteridge (ed.), *Contemporary Terrorism* (Fact on File Publications, New York & Oxford, 1986), pp. 39–40.

PSIA organisational structure prior to and after reforms of May 1996
(bold writing in parentheses represents repsonsibilities of each section)

Prior to May 1996

General Affairs Bureau	Trial Section	
	Data Section	
	Personnel Section	
	General Affairs Section	

8 PSIA Regional Bureaus

43 PSIA Regional Offices

PSIA
Agency Director

Assistant Director

1st Investigative Bureau
- 1st Section **(Japan Communist Party)**
- 2nd Section **(radical groups)**
- 3rd Section **(labour problems)**
- 4th Section **(Chûkaku•Kakumaru-ha)**

2nd Investigative Bureau
- 1st Section **(Chôsensôren)**
- 2nd Section **(foreign affairs)**
- 3rd Section **(right-wing groups)**

Training Centre

After May 1996

PSIA
Agency Director

Assistant Director

General Affairs Bureau
- General Affairs Section
- Personnel Section
- Legal Section

8 PSIA Regional Bureaus

43 PSIA Regional Offices

1st Investigative Bureau
- 1st Section
- 2nd Section **(internal public security trends; illegal migrant workers; Habôhô evidence; relations with other institutions)**
- PSIA Officer
- PSIA Officer
- PSIA Officer **(radical groups; Japan Communist Party; right-wing extremists; investigation of designated groups)**

2nd Investigative Bureau
- 1st Section **(public security trends overseas; additional activities)**
- 2nd Section
- PSIA Officer
- PSIA Officer **(Chôsensôren; foreign affairs; investigation of designated groups)**
- PSIA Officer

Training Centre

Source: Based on Yû Miyaoka, *Kôanchôsachô no Bôsô*, pp. 67, 209.

Figure 1

practical discipline in its methods, enabling it to carry out sophisticated international operations.[16]

The Sekigun-ha in Japan had great difficulty in training for its proposed guerrilla war. Attempts to conduct a training camp at Daibotsutoge in the mountains close to Tokyo in November 1969 in preparation for a planned pipe bomb attack on the Prime Minister's residence ended in the arrest of a large number of the Sekigun-ha's members. The Rengo Sekigun was then forced to hold its training in even more difficult conditions in the Japan Alps during winter. By contrast, the Nihon Sekigun has had access to training with the PFLP in Lebanon and other international terrorist groups.

Obtaining weaponry was always a major problem for the Sekigun-ha in Japan. One innovation that the group made was the manufacture of pipe bombs in large numbers.[17] Firearms were in short supply, and the Rengo Sekigun was forced to acquire them by raiding gunshops. One robbery at Maoka in Tochigi Prefecture in February 1971 committed by the Keihin Ampo Kyoto yielded ten hunting rifles and 2,300 rounds of ammunition. As a result, the members of the Rengo Sekigun were comparatively well armed at the Asama siege. However, those members of the Sekigun-ha involved in the hijacking to Pyongyang were armed with only imitation samurai swords and pipe bombs. Again, the Nihon Sekigun has showed itself to be far better armed than its domestic counterparts, with access to automatic weapons, hand grenades, and other explosives.

The level of destruction that Japanese terrorism was capable of during the Cold War did therefore vary greatly between domestic and international forms. Terrorists operating in Japan tended to be more poorly armed, and hence posed a manageable physical threat to the state and its citizens. Those operating abroad were better armed and organised, and were able to embarrass the authorities with the types of acts that they could carry out. These attacks were made more threatening by the fact the Japanese state had no effective means of response, lacking as it did an anti-terrorist police or military unit that it could dispatch overseas. But regardless of the international or domestic sphere of the activity of the Japanese terrorists, none of them possessed weapons more powerful than those of the security authorities in Japan or elsewhere.

A further factor that needs to be considered in relation to destructive capacity is that the energies of the radical groups were often directed towards interfactional rivalries over ideology. Steinhoff points out that between 1968 and 1975, factional disputes accounted for the deaths of 44 factions members and injuries to 4,848 others.[18] In addition, the unproductive violence directed by one radical group towards another caused the murders of the 14 Rengo Sekigun members in 1971 and 1972. The inward-turning nature of much of the radical groups' violence served to further moderate the impact of the terrorist threat on the Japanese state. The irony of terrorism in Japan in the 1970s and 1980s is that, while right-wing groups can be said to have concentrated on political assassination and attacks on conservative leaders, the bulk of left-wing group supporters often concentrated their attention more on the elimination of each other than on toppling the state.

The Division between Internal and External Security

Terrorism has always had a strong international dimension, with many of the issues that generate terrorist movements cutting across national boundaries, and with its growth

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16 P. G. Steinhoff, 'Hijackers, Bombers, and Bank Robbers: Managerial Style in the Japanese Red Army', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 48, 4 (November 1989), pp. 734–735.
17 Yomiuri Shimbun Osaka Shakaibu, *Rengo Sekigun* [United Red Army] (Shio Shuppansha, Tokyo, 1972), pp. 184–201.
18 Steinhoff, 'Student Conflict', p. 182.

stimulated by the interdependency between states which allows for the greater international movement of terrorist personnel, funding, information and arms. But in the case of Japan, this international dimension during the Cold War was limited by the ability of its security institutions to maintain effectively a division between terrorist groups as internal and external security threats. It is clear that the Japanese security authorities were always conscious of potential links between internal and external security in the form of terrorism, and, as has been pointed out, the fear of radical and North Korean groups in Japan was driven by the belief that they were manifestations of a larger external communist threat. Nevertheless, though the fear of the potential for the invasion of Japan's internal security by external threats was always present, this was hardly ever realised during the Cold War.

Radical terrorist groups in Japan showed only a limited ability to operate both inside and outside the country. Groups that were based in Japan itself do not seem to have made effective international contacts, either due to a lack of knowledge of international conditions, as in the case of the Sekigun-ha, or, as in the case of the Chukaku-ha, because they deliberately confined their activities inside Japan. Hence, terrorist groups in Japan seem to have received little assistance in terms of funding or the supply of weaponry from outside. Those groups that did move offshore have managed to operate successfully in the international environment, as shown by the broad geographical range of the Nihon Sekigun's activities. But once they have moved offshore, terrorist groups have rarely been able to maintain links in Japan strong enough for them to mount campaigns in their homeland. The Nihon Sekigun has been able to recruit in Japan since the 1970s, and, along with members of the Pyongyang hijack group, its members have been able to slip in and out of Japan without the authorities' knowledge. But the activities of these groups do not seem to have extended beyond this, and the Nihon Sekigun, while waging an often effective war against Japanese citizens in a number of other countries, has not been able to operate in Japan itself. In part, this can be attributed to the simple fact that the Nihon Sekigun's ideology of worldwide revolution has meant that the group has consciously avoided activities in Japan. But at the same time, it can also be attributed to the effective methods of policing developed in response to the specific threat of radical groups, which forced the Nihon Sekigun out of Japan in the first place, and which allowed the Japanese state to maintain the Cold-War-style watertight division between internal and external security. This has led to the perhaps unfair accusation that Japan has exported its terrorist problem to other states. Unlike other key advances by Japanese organisations abroad, this is one instance where 're-export' to Japan has been prevented.

The Response of the Japanese State's Security Institutions to the Terrorist Threat during the Cold War

States, and particularly liberal democracies, have always been unsure about what method to use to counter terrorist threats, and have relied on a mix of patient police work and intelligence gathering, inducements to join the political process, and sometimes meeting violence with violence. But for states like Japan, one of the reasons that the terrorist threat has been manageable is that the institutions and methods for dealing with it have been relatively strong, have enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy and have been closely tailored to meet the specific nature of the threat. In Japan, the responsibility for counter-terrorism fell to the police as a clear matter of internal security with a generally limited capacity for destruction. In turn, the supervision of radical groups was distributed between the three institutions of the National Police Agency or Keisatsucho (NPA), prefectural police organisations and the Metropolitan Police Department of Tokyo or Keishicho (MPD). The NPA transmits instructions down from the Prime Minister's Office, and is seen as

responsible for the coordination of policing against terrorism. The NPA rarely investigates crimes, but does have its own security police bureau, and since 1988 a special anti-terrorist division to deal with the Nihon Sekigun in Japan and abroad. It can also act through the prefectural police and control of the regional riot police. The defence against radical groups, however, has been directed by the MPD, which is able to investigate crimes in prefectures outside its normal jurisdiction, and to call on a 3,000–5,000 man kidotai, or riot police force. Like the NPA, the MPD and the prefectural police have their respective security police bureaux. These function in secrecy, have expertise on the surveillance of subversive groups, and their total personnel numbers up to 10,000.[19] Moreover, within the police establishment as a whole these bureaux are politically dominant, and, in contrast to the criminal police, are believed to operate in close cooperation with each other under the leadership of the MPD.[20]

These institutions of internal security can also legally call on the Self Defence Forces (SDF)—the institution of external security—to assist in the preservation of domestic order. The Japanese state has long disguised its military as a police force, as in the SDF's original incarnation as the National Police Reserve in 1950. The SDF maintains a large presence close to Tokyo, including the elite First Airborne Brigade, ostensibly to defend the capital in time of war, but also, it is believed, to handle domestic unrest.[21] The Defence Agency also has some intelligence-gathering capacity that may be relevant to internal security, and in 1978 there were plans to create a special joint police–SDF anti-terrorist unit to protect selected Japanese diplomatic missions abroad.[22] In the end the plan was scrapped due to concern about the precedent it could set for the dispatch of the SDF overseas. In fact, the temptation to use the SDF for matters of internal security, even in situations such as the mass demonstrations of the Security Treaty Crisis of 1960, has been resisted. Furthermore, the political dominance of the police's human networks over the Defence Agency has ensured that, as Katzenstein notes, the 'Japanese military is no serious competitor for the police', and that the distinction between internal and external security institutions as well as the corresponding threats has been maintained.[23]

The result of this has been that most security institutions have been confident of their legitimacy and have been able to pursue effective policies to suppress terrorism internally. The natures of Japanese law and terrorism have meant that these methods have tended to rely on the intelligence-gathering approach, and the use of violence by the police against terrorist groups has been eschewed in favour of allowing the terrorists to incriminate themselves in the eyes of society by the extremeness of their own actions, so furthering the labelling process of radicals and the legitimisation of security institutions. The success of these methods in containing terrorism at home has also meant that the Japanese police has had a less pressing need for participation in the international policing of terrorism.

However, in addition to the framework of security institutions described above, there was one more institution engaged in the suppression of terrorism during the Cold War, which demonstrated that not all security institutions were totally confident of their legitimacy and that there has sometimes been conflict between them. The PSIA, mentioned earlier, was created in 1952 under the Ministry of Justice, and was charged solely with the implementation of the controversial Subversive Activities Prevention Law, or Haboho

19 Academic research on the security police in Japan is scant. The most complete work available so far is: T. Hironaka, *Keibikoan Keisatsu no Kenkyu* [Research on the Security Police] (Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1973).
20 Katzenstein, *Defending the Japanese State*, pp. 57, 60, 62–64.
21 J. Welfield, *An Empire in Eclipse: Japan in the Postwar American Alliance System* (Athlone Books, London, 1988), pp. 139, 355–356.
22 Katzenstein, *Defending the Japanese State*, pp. 73–75, 159.
23 Katzenstein, *Defending the Japanese State*, pp. 75.

(Habokatusdo Boshiho). The law was originally designed to target communism in Japan, and, if applied, the law would allow the compulsory dissolution of groups deemed to be engaged in the repetition of destructive and violent acts for political ends. The enactment of the law was strongly opposed on the grounds that it was unconstitutional, and a replica of the draconian Public Security Maintenance Law (Chian Ijiho) of the pre-war period.[24] The result is that the Haboho has been applied to the JCP and radical groups only eight times, and never with its full provisions. But even though for over 50 years the law was never implemented for its original purpose, the PSIA continued to maintain a large budget and staff to gather information on left-wing groups, and in particular the JCP. In its heyday, in 1973, the agency employed 2,019 staff and had a budget of ¥5,374 million. Other security police agencies seem to have long resented the PSIA's position: politicians and police combed to block an attempt in 1952 to give the PSIA powers of prosecution. Moreover, the PSIA attracted criticism for its continuing concentration on the monitoring of the JCP, even after the political party had in 1955 publicly abandoned its doctrine of violent revolution. Even during the Cold War, then, the PSIA was under pressure to justify its existence, and endured a 10% cut in its budget in 1984. The Haboho has also been an issue of contention between the police and the PSIA. The police appear to have opposed its implementation on the grounds that it would make the practical policing of extremist groups more difficult, simply forcing them further underground, where information gathering would become harder. But, though there were tensions within the security establishment over the role of the PSIA and the Haboho, as long as the Cold War and the communist threat continued, the PSIA was seen as a necessary institution.

This examination of Cold War Japanese terrorism has argued that it was characterised by relatively high specificity, a known and manageable capacity for destruction, the separation of internal from external issues of security, and the ability of the Japanese state to contain it by the use of standard operating procedures and well legitimised security institutions. However, as stated in the introduction, examination of the case of the Aum Shinrikyo will reveal how these characteristics have changed in the 1990s, and how terrorism has come to exhibit enhanced and more dangerous characteristics in the post-Cold War period.

The Case of the Aum Shinrikyo and Japanese Post-Cold War Terrorism

The Non-specificity of Aum as a Terrorist Threat

From the foundation of the Aum Shinrikyo in the late 1980s through to its disbandment as a religious organisation in October 1995, the followers of the cult and its leader Shoko Asahara were involved in a series of crimes, including the manufacture of illegal drugs, abduction, extortion and murder.[25] Aum's chief acts of terrorism were two poison gas sarin

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24 The Peace Maintenance Law of 1925 was enforced by the Tokko (Special Higher Police) under the control of the Justice Ministry and allowed the arrest of any person involved in a political or social movement believed to be opposed to the kokutai, or national polity, during the pre-war period. The law gave discretion to the police to disperse meetings and detain those suspected of 'thought crimes', and was directed primarily at the suppression of communism in Japan. The Occupation authorities abolished the law in 1945. For accounts of the Peace Maintenance Law and the Haboho, see L. W. Beer, *Freedom of Expression in Japan: A Comparative Study of Law, Politics, and Society* (Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1984), pp. 65–70, 190–193.

25 Shoko Asahara (real name Chizuo Matsumoto) has been charged with giving the orders for 17 different crimes. These include: the production of sarin; the Tokyo and Matsumoto attacks; one other assault with sarin on an individual; one murder and assault using VX gas; three cases of murder; the production of automatic rifles; the production of truth serum; and the production of LSD. The completion of his trial on all these counts is expected to take a number of years.

attacks at Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, in June 1994, and on the Tokyo subway in March 1995. The Matsumoto attack killed seven people and left 141 injured, while the Tokyo attack killed 11 and injured 3,796 others.

However, despite the disturbing nature of many of these crimes, it is perhaps fair to say that Aum was not viewed as a specific terrorist threat by Japan's security institutions until after the Matsumoto incident, and possibly not even until after the Tokyo attack. There has been much speculation in the Japanese press about the degree to which the security police were aware of and monitoring Aum's activities before the attacks in 1994 and 1995. Some observers have conjectured that the security police had taken an interest in Aum as a potential threat to political stability since February 1992, when Asahara stood unsuccessfully in elections for the Lower House of the Japanese Diet. Aum's connections with Russia and even possibly North Korea, it is argued, would also have aroused the concern of the security police sufficiently for them to send spies into Aum's organisation.[26]

Evidence for the presence of security police spies in Aum is seen in the kaibunsho ('mysterious letters') first sent to the Japanese media after the Matsumoto incident, and before Aum's association with the sarin attack and other crimes had been revealed. The first kaibunsho and many others accused Aum of responsibility for these crimes, and revealed a knowledge of them and the cult's organisation which it is felt could only have been gained by someone inside Aum itself, such as a disillusioned follower of Asahara or a security police spy. Those who view the latter as the identity of the author believe that the kaibunsho were deliberate leaks by the security police to discredit Aum by associating the cult with the crimes—again part of a labelling process. It is argued that the reasons that the security police could not make direct accusations against the cult were: firstly, that this would have entailed making public their own often illegal intelligence-gathering methods; and, secondly, that if the security police were known to have had some advanced warning of Aum's intentions, but did not act to stop the Matsumoto and Tokyo attacks, then this would present an image of the security police as either negligent or incompetent.[27]

Other commentators, though, are less certain of the security police's knowledge of Aum before the sarin attacks, and are wary of overestimating their abilities. They point out that the prime objective of most security police organisations before the advent of Aum was, as has been described, the surveillance of the JCP. Before April 1995, for instance, the PSIA had no organisational section or expertise to deal with religious groups, and official policy regarded them as outside the PSIA's field of responsibility (see Table 1).[28] Indeed, it is clear that the old Cold War mindset of the PSIA and the security police was not equipped to detect the types of new threat represented by Aum.

Hence, the attack of the Aum Shinrikyo on Matsumoto in 1994 was, it seems, entirely unexpected, and even at the time of the Tokyo attack in 1995 the perpetrator of the terrorist acts remained hard to identify immediately and with certainty. As the US Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations noted in 1995, Aum was simply not on the 'radar screens' of intelligence institutions in Japan or elsewhere before the Tokyo attack.[29] The Japanese

26 For examples of these types of arguments in journalistic sources, see T. Tachibana, 'Aum to Sarin Jiken no Fukai Yami: 3' [The Deep Mystery of Aum and the Sarin Incident], *Shukan Bunshun*, 37, 20 (25 May 1995), p. 191; S. Gendai, 'Koan Keisatsu wa Chikatetsu Sarin Jiken o Tomerareta Hazu da', [The Security Police Could Have Prevented the Sarin Subway Incident], *Shukan Gendai*, 38, 22 (15 June 1996), pp. 57–59.

27 T. Tachibana, 'Aum to Sarin Jiken no Fukai Yami: 2', *Shukan Bunshun*, 37, 19 (18 May 1995), p. 162.

28 T. Henshubu, *Kaibunsho: Aum Shinrikyo = Sarin Jiken* [Mystery Letters: The Sarin Incident Equals Aum] (Takarajimasha, Tokyo, 1995), p. 92; Y. Miyaoka, *Koanchosacho no Boso* [The Public Investigation Security Agency on the Rampage] (Gendai Shokan, Tokyo, 1996), pp. 22–24.

29 Prepared statement of J. F. Sopko and A. Edleman, in Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Global Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Case Study of the Aum Shinrikyo*, (Washington, October 1995), p. 10.

police also stressed the lack of forewarning about the terrorist threat of Aum when it acknowledged in the 1996 Police White Paper that:

> Previous policing methods were centred on information gathering and analysis concerned with organised crime groups and other groups engaged in violent and destructive activities. It has to be admitted that the system for gathering and assessing information on crime organisations such as religious groups was insufficient.[30]

After March 1995 the Japanese security authorities attempted to assign a firmer threat identity to the cult, and have largely succeeded, backed as they are by the overwhelming strength of public opinion. But in this labelling process there have been difficulties for the authorities. Unlike the radical groups of the Cold War era, Aum has refused to accept the label of a political and radical terrorist organisation, and instead has tried to adhere to its alternative identity as a religious group. Especially in the early stages after the Tokyo attack, and before the full extent of Aum's crimes became known, the security authorities were forced to fight on television and the internet a media battle with the cult as it continued to assert its innocence.[31] This has contributed to the non-specificity of the Aum threat, and may have forced the security authorities in conjunction with the media to push the labelling process forward by trying initially to associate Aum with other long-established and more apparent domestic and international threats to the state's security. Thus, speculation arose concerning links between members of the cult and the Chukaku-ha and Kakumaru-ha left-wing groups, and the possibility of the cult even having cooperated with North Korea in the latter's acquisition of technology for its nuclear programme.

To a large extent, the growing knowledge of Aum's crimes has settled for most of Japanese society the issue that the group is a terrorist threat, allowing the security authorities to move to suppress the cult. But the early difficulties that the security authorities—fixated as they were on Cold War radicalism—encountered in detecting and labelling the threat from Aum suggest that some forms of terrorism will become harder for states to identify and prevent in the future.

The New Destructive Capabilities of Aum's Terrorism

It is clear that in terms of ambition, if not always of execution, Aum has surpassed the Japanese radical groups of the 1970s in organisation, training, and access to weaponry, and in doing so has demonstrated possible future trends in the destructive capabilities of terrorist groups following the end of the Cold War. Like the radical groups of the 1970s, Aum displayed a chaotic tendency for inward violence against its own members, many of which were drawn from student elites. But, in contrast to the Rengo Sekigun, the cult's severe mind control methods seem to have succeeded in integrating and disciplining followers from both elite and more diverse social backgrounds, and in reinforcing a clear vertical structure of control. How far the cult's imitation of the Japanese government in setting up a series of internal ministries should be taken as an advantageous innovation is unclear, given that, like most Japanese organisational forms, they seem to have competed among themselves for jurisdictional influence.[32] However, the reorganisation of these ministries to continue the management of Aum following the arrest of its top leadership after the Tokyo

30 Keisatsuchohen, *Keisatsu Hakusho*, (Okurasho Insatsukyoku, Tokyo, 1996), p. 56 [Author's translation].

31 Sande Mainichi, 'Koan Keisatsu vs Aum: Daijohosen no Zenuchimaku' [Security Police Versus Aum: All the Inside Facts on the Great Information War], no. 409 (11 June 1995), pp. 34–35.

32 Aum's organisations included ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Health and Welfare, Finance, Construction, and a Defence Agency. For a list of these ministries, see M. Mochida, 'Aum Shinrikyo no Genjo' [The Current Condition of the Aum Shinrikyo], *Chian Foramu*, (December 1995), p. 21.

subway attack indicates that this organisational structure has given the cult a measure of resilience.

Aum also showed itself capable of running its own businesses and taking advantage of new advances in technology such as the internet for the communication of instructions to its members. The cult's manufacture and distribution of hallucinogenic drugs means that in many ways it resembled something akin to an organised crime group, and at its height the cult disposed of assets totalling around US$200 million. The large number of followers in the cult and the non-systematic nature of the planning of attacks meant that guerrilla training was carried out only by small groups and haphazardly. But the cult had greater access to training than previous terrorist groups in Japan, with the establishment of the 15 man 'commando unit' at the cult's base at the foot of Mount Fuji, and followers were able to receive instructions from members of the SDF recruited by the cult. The end of the Cold War also brought opportunities to train in post-Soviet Russia, and members of Aum are reported to have received a ten-day training course from the elite Russian Spetsnaz army unit in September 1994. All this is in marked contrast to the problems that the Sekigun-ha and Rengo Sekigun faced in finding sites to train.

Much of this organisation and training is novel to terrorist groups operating inside Japan, but not necessarily to other groups around the world. However, where Aum showed · its greatest innovation and a quantum leap over Japanese groups operating in Japan or abroad, or any other foreign terrorist group, was in the sphere of weaponry, both conventional and unconventional. The cult was able to steal weapons secrets from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in December 1994, and its 'Minister of Construction', Kiyohide Hayakawa, was alleged to have established connections with the intelligence community in Russia allowing him to obtain weapons technology and arms from there and other former Soviet republics. In 1994, Aum purchased a Mi-17 military-class transport helicopter in Azerbaijan and shipped it to Japan. Hayakawa's ambitions reportedly extended to trying to purchase from Russia four T-72 main battle tanks and a MiG-29 fighter aircraft.[33] But, whereas other terrorist groups in the past have been forced to procure arms mainly by theft or by supply from states and arms dealers, Aum also planned to mass-produce its own weapons. The cult succeeded in manufacturing the explosives TNT and RDX, and, using as a blueprint an AK-47 obtained in Russia, also intended to tool up its own plant to manufacture 1,000 assault rifles and 1 million rounds of ammunition. Before and during the Cold War, the Japanese state had always maintained extremely tight controls over the possession of firearms by its citizens, but Aum defeated these controls and proved that no state was immune to the acquisition by its terrorist groups of weapons from the former Soviet Union.

The acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction was the cult's main contribution to the advance in terrorist techniques and capabilities. In addition to the plan to stockpile 70 tons of sarin, the cult also produced large quantities of VX nerve gas and mustard gas blistering agents. Aum's experimentation with biological weapons was not entirely new for terrorists: the German Red Army Faction had attempted to produce some of the same toxins as Aum in 1980, and followers of the Rajneesh cult in Oregon contaminated food with salmonella in an attempt to influence local elections. But no terrorist group went as far as Aum in producing in quantity biological toxins such as botulinus toxin A, anthrax, the Ebola virus and Q fever. The ability to produce this range of biological weapons had previously been the preserve of the military forces of states. Aum also indicated a new level of terrorist aspiration with its desire to obtain nuclear technology and even a nuclear

33 AERA, 'Aum Kakubuso Keikaku no Koto Mukei' [Aum's Outrageous Nuclear Armaments Plan], *AERA*, (1–8 May 1995), pp. 14–15.

weapon from the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, Aum's distorted and apocalyptic philosophy of 'phowa', which justified killing as an act of religious salvation, meant that Asahara and the cult's members had few qualms about using weapons of mass destruction.

It is important to note that the ambitions of Aum did not always square with the cult's ability to use these weapons and to practise terror. The attempts to use biological weapons met with failure, and the helicopter, whilst serviceable, was never used. Elements of the Aum armaments plan were in the realm of fantasy, and, though the cult had the motivation and organisation, it is doubtful whether Aum's leadership ever had the focus to carry out a sustained campaign of terror. Nevertheless, the fact that Aum got so far in its armaments programme demonstrates the possibilities for terrorist action in the future. The end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union have presented new opportunities for terrorists to arms themselves for the first time with weapons to rival those of states.

Aum's Breaching of the Internal and External Security Divide

Before becoming implicated in the Tokyo subway attack, Aum's identity was that of a religious organisation, and thus it was given the freedom denied to other terrorist groups to operate outside Japan. But again Aum presaged new trends in Japanese terrorism· by breaking down the Cold War division between internal and external security. The Aum leadership was able to visit Russia to buy arms and established its own large organisation in Moscow. The cult opened offices and had followers in Bonn and New York, was able to test sarin gas in Australia and purchased a tea plantation in Sri Lanka. Members of Aum also visited Laos and were rumoured to have visited North Korea.

Not all of Aum's foreign ventures were as successful as in Russia, but the freedom of movement that the cult enjoyed is a clear consequence of the end of the Cold War, and of Japan's increased internationalisation. If left unchecked, Aum's international activities could have ended the separation of Japan's external and internal security problems, and are of significance to other states because they point to the possible emergence of fully internationalised terrorist groups with no particular territorial origin, posing further problems for traditional state-centred security policies.

The Effect of Aum's Terrorism upon Japanese Internal and External Security Institutions

The changing nature of the terrorist threat in Japan has impacted heavily upon the Japanese state's security institutions and counter-terrorist methods. The difficulties of dividing external issues of terrorism from internal ones have indicated the need for Japan to become more involved in international cooperation against terrorism. Hence, the Japanese government has been especially supportive of G7 measures against terrorism since 1994, including initiatives undertaken for greater international anti-terrorist cooperation following the Peruvian siege. Furthermore, the nature of the Aum Shinrikyo threat appears to have disrupted the settled institutions for handling terrorism and other security problems before the 1990's, and to have placed them under pressure to prove their flexibility and to re-establish their relevance and legitimacy in the post-Cold War period.

The PSIA, as noted previously, was already under pressure by the mid-1980s to prove the necessity of its role in countering communism during an era of renewed East–West cooperation. The collapse of the Soviet Union further undermined the PSIA's legitimacy, leaving it as an agency responsible for the application of a law that had never been applied fully even at the height of the Cold War, and responsible for the monitoring of a communist threat that ostensibly had ceased to exist. Demands for the restructuring of the agency as

part of the general trend in Japanese politics towards 'administrative reform' led to further personnel cuts, and a plan, devised before the advent of Aum as a major threat, to reorganise the agency's investigative bureaux to give less emphasis to the surveillance of the JCP (see Table 1).[34]

The crimes of Aum, however, seem to have been regarded by the PSIA as giving it a concrete opportunity to guarantee its survival. After hurried investigations, in May 1995 the PSIA decided to initiate the procedures to apply the Haboho to the Aum Shinrikyo. This has been seen as the PSIA's attempt to justify its own existence by finally being able to apply the law upon which its existence as an organisation is premised. The police again seem to have opposed the application of the Haboho on practical policing grounds, fearful that it would simply drive Aum further underground.[35] But, backed by around 70% of public opinion which wished to see the law applied as a forceful means to dispose of the Aum threat, the PSIA pushed ahead with the procedures, and the Public Security Commission, an extra-ministerial board of the Justice Ministry, was convened to deliberate on the application of the law. This took place in spite of concerns that it was difficult to prove that Aum fitted all the provisions of the law, and the ultimate fear of some was that if the Haboho was applied to Aum this would establish a precedent loosening restrictions on the law's implementation, and then allow the PSIA to use the law against other radical or civic groups.[36] One result of this might have been that the PSIA could have used the law in most instances to label groups as subversive, so preserving indefinitely its own legitimacy as a security institution. But the hopes of the PSIA for the application of the Haboho were frustrated with the decision of the Public Security Commission in February 1997 not to apply the law, on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence that Aum was capable of carrying out continued or repeated attacks in the future.[37]

The secrecy surrounding the PSIA's operations means that its exact motives for trying

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34 Personnel numbers at the PSIA fell from 1,810 in 1990 to 1,768 in 1995. Under the restructuring plan, the PSIA has retained sections to monitor the JCP and radical groups, but a new section has been createdthat is devoted exclusively to subversive domestic groups unrelated to those above. Also, reflecting the PSIA's attempt to show flexibility, extra sections were created to deal with foreign subversive activities and new problems such as illegal foreign workers. For details of these changes, see Miyaoka, *Koanchosacho no Boso*, pp. 71, 189.

35 *Asahi Shimbun*, (1 February 1997), p. 39.

36 O. Watanabe, 'Haboho wa Naze Dekita ka, Ikani Tsukawareyo to Shita ka' [Why was the Subversive Activities Prevention Law Created, How Have They Tried to Use It?], *Horitsu Jiho*, 68, 9 (September 1996), p. 15.

37 'Public Security Agency Comes under Fire: Effort against Aum Seen as Self Serving', *Japan Times*, (10 August 1996), p. 3. To apply the law the PSIA needed to prove essentially three conditions: that Aum acted as a group; that it acted for political reasons; and that it was likely to repeat the first two actions. The first of these conditions was relatively easy to demonstrate and was approved by the Public Security Commission. To some observers, the second condition seemed to be more problematic. The argument of the PSIA was that Aum was a threat to the democratic system and that Asahara's ambition was to create a theocratic dictatorship. Few would disagree that Aum by the use of sarin committed indiscriminate acts of terror that endangered public order, and that at times Asahara expressed political ambitions. But how far the use of sarin had a clear political motive is harder to establish. The Matsumoto attack was intended to kill judges who had been presiding over a case against Aum involving a land dispute, and the Tokyo subway attack, while targeted at government officials commuting to work in the Kasumigaseki area of the capital, was a desperate act to try to distract police from their investigations and imminent raids on Aum facilities. The political element is far less overt than, say, the actions of the Chukaku-ha, to which the Haboho was only partially applied. Nevertheless, the Public Security Commission also approved this condition. The third condition, though, was not approved by the Public Security Commission and was the one that ultimately frustrated the plans of the PSIA to apply the Haboho. The arrest of Aum's top leadership, the raiding of Aum facilities, and heavy police pressure on the remnants of the cult threw into question whether the group was capable of repeating its actions. Hence, while all wish to see the threat of Aum eliminated completely, a wide range of commentators including journalists and scholars, both before and after the decision was taken not to apply the Haboho, have expressed doubts about its use and constitutionality in this case. For a discussion of the legal difficulties of applying the Haboho, see T. Takimoto and M. Fukushima, *Haboho to Aum Shinrikyo, Iwanami Bukkuretto No. 398* [The Subversive Activities Prevention Law and Aum, Iwanami Booklet No. 398] (Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1996); T. Takimoto, S. Sataka and T. Uchifuji, 'Haboho ga Tekiyo Saretara Nani ga Okoru no ka?' [If the Subversive Activities Law is Applied What Will Happen?] *Sekai*, (October 1996), pp. 70–84.

to applying the Haboho can never be fully known, but the evidence suggests that its position was shaken by the end of the Cold War and it was utilising the changed terrorist threat for its own political purposes. In the end, though, the PSIA's plans seem to have backfired, with its failed attempt at the application of the law only leading to greater calls from policy makers on all sides for the agency to be reformed or abolished.[38]

It seems that one other institution affected by the end of the Cold War may have reacted to the new terrorist threat by attempting to involve itself in terrorist countermeasures as another way to demonstrate flexibility and legitimacy. As discussed earlier, the post-Cold War terrorist threat in Japan, as represented by the Aum Shinrikyo, has blurred the distinctions between internal and external security issues, and this has contributed to a blurring of the distinctions between the internal and external security institutions charged with guarding the Japanese state. It has already been mentioned that during the Cold War the Japanese SDF was initially disguised as a police force, but that it was firmly under the direction of the police in matters of internal security, and eventually never mobilised for this role. However, in the post-Cold War period and the case of Aum, there have been some indications that the military has trespassed into the traditional domain of the Japanese police's domestic security responsibilities.

The legacy of anti-militarism in Japan has meant that the Defence Agency and SDF have long searched for sources of legitimacy and a clear threat around which to build external security policy. During the Cold War, and despite the Defence Agency's profession of a defence policy designed to counter all possible rather than specific threats, the Soviet Union fulfilled the threat role. The end of the Cold War has deprived the Japanese military of this clear threat perception and engendered a search for new sources of legitimacy, such as engaging in tasks of 'international contribution' and peacekeeping. The SDF has also looked to consolidate its role in the management of natural disasters, an area in which it has generally received high public support compared with its more overt external military security role.[39]

The emergence of Aum and the particular type of threat that it posed may also have been seen by the Defence Agency as a means with which to rebuild the SDF's and its own legitimacy in the post-Cold War period. The SDF's expertise in chemical warfare gave it a function suited to countering new forms of terrorism as represented by Aum, and it was seen to have played an important role in the decontamination of the Tokyo subway.[40] In addition, as a precaution the SDF was placed on standby when police raided various Aum facilities. The perceived advantages for the Defence Agency of association with the counter-response to Aum are revealed by the revised Boei Taiko (National Defence

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38 After the decision was taken not to apply the Haboho, Shigeru Ito, the then chairman of the SDP's (Social Democratic Party) policy affairs research council, called for the abolition of the PSIA. Politicians from the LDP have also been critical of the PSIA and Haboho as anachronisms of the Cold War period. But in contrast to the SDP, certain sections of the LDP appeared to want to replace the PSIA with a new institution more attuned to contemporary terrorist threats and the Haboho with a new but easier to apply law. Although the existence of the PSIA came into question, it continues to insist that it has an important role in monitoring the activities of Aum; that it can fulfil an expanded role in gathering information from overseas sources; and that, even though the Haboho is hard to apply, its very existence serves as a deterrent to the violent activities of terrorist groups in Japan. Thus, in August 1997, the PSIA seems to have made another bid for renewed legitimacy by the production of a report stating that Aum was resurgent in terms of finance and personnel and had not abandoned its apocalyptic ideology, so demonstrating the need for continued supervision of its activities (*Mainichi Shimbun*, (27 August 1997), p. 23). The PSIA became part of the administrative reform review process in Japan in September 1997 but so far has managed to escape abolition. Brief descriptions of the arguments and counter-arguments about the future role of the PSIA and Haboho can be found in: *Asahi Shimbun*, (1 February 1997), p. 2; *Asahi Shimbun Yukan*, (14 February 1997), p. 2; *Asahi Shimbun*, (13 February 1997), p. 34.

39 G. D. Hook, *Militarization and Demilitarization in Contemporary Japan* (Routledge, London, 1996), pp. 112–113.

40 Details of the SDF's chemical weapons units and contribution to handling the subway attacks are included in: D. Ugaki, 'Sarin to Rikuji Kagaku Bogotai' [Sarin and the Ground Self Defence Forces Chemical Protection Unit], *Gunji Kenkyu*, 30, 6 (June 1995), pp. 28–37.

Programme Outline) of 1995, which lays out the force structure and defence role of the SDF. A newly inserted section on saigai haken (dispatch to national disasters) ranks equally the SDF's dispatch for terrorist incidents alongside that of the SDF's traditional involvement in the response to natural disasters.[41] This reference to terrorism can be interpreted as the SDF intruding on the responsibilities of the police, and making a bid for legitimacy by associating one task for which the SDF has usually been able to count on public support, the response to natural disasters, with another, terrorism, that has not been regarded as within its mandate in the past and has little connection to it. In addition, the events of the siege of the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru have persuaded some policy makers that the SDF could be given a greater counter-terrorism function. In May 1997, the then Chief Cabinet Secretary, Seiroku Kajiyama, was reported as stating that it might be necessary to re-examine some of the legal restraints on the SDF's overseas dispatch in order to enable it to cooperate with the police in combating terrorist activities overseas.

The SDF's intrusion into the arena of internal security and counter-terrorism is, however, likely to be resisted by other security institutions of the Japanese state anxious to protect their own jurisdictions and budgets. It is significant that the Japanese police has announced that it can avoid further reliance on the SDF in chemically related terrorist incidents by the acquisition of its own equipment to deal with them.[42] Furthermore, the image of the SDF in connection with the response to the Aum Shinrikyo's terrorism has been damaged by the revelation that the cult had infiltrated the military and acquired followers in the Ground SDF. Indeed, those recruited included members of the First Airborne Unit—the very unit charged with defending Tokyo. But what the case of the SDF, along with that of the PSIA, demonstrates is that the non-specific and no longer exclusively internal nature of the terrorist threat posed by Aum has created disruption among and eroded the legitimacy of the Japanese state's security institutions.

Implications of Aum Shinrikyo for Post-Cold War Terrorism

The previous sections have argued that Japanese terrorism after the Cold War can be seen to contrast with that during the Cold War in four broad areas: the enhanced non-specificity of actors; the unknown destructive effects of actors and threats; the breakdown in the division between internal and external issues of security; and the increasing difficulty of combating terrorism due to the corrosive effects that it has had upon the legitimacy of existing security institutions. It can also be argued that the case of the Aum Shinrikyo has implications for our understanding of terrorism in other industrialised nations in the post-Cold War period. Although the characteristics of Aum's terrorist threat may not be entirely new, and it may be reasonable to expect that such quasi-religious groups will have only a transitory existence with the passing of the new millennium, it is clear that Aum represents a qualitative change in terrorism, which has occurred in other states since the end of the Cold War.

Thus, while many terrorist threats continue to be linked to overt political issues and are thus easily identified by the security authorities, an element of enhanced non-specificity has begun to affect perceptions of terrorism in industrialised states besides Japan.[43] Aum has defied the traditional definitions of terrorism. Certainly the violence employed by the cult was indiscriminate and directed against non-combatants, but unlike other known forms of terrorism it was not immediately clear for what cause or end the violence was perpetrated, or who the violence was intended to influence. The apocalyptic ideology of Aum meant that

41 Asakumo Shimbunsha, *Boei Handobukku* [Defence Handbook] (Asakumo Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1996), p. 32.
42 Keisatsuchohen, *Keisatsu Hakusho*, p. 59.
43 W. Laqueur, 'Postmodern Terrorism', pp. 24–27.

in many ways the ultimate aim of the violence was simply the act of destruction itself, which breaks the usual link in definitions of terrorism between violence and the espousal of a cause. Even the category of religious fanaticism does not cover Aum's activities, as the terrorism practised by religious groups such as Islamic fundamentalists in the past has had a clear political aim. Moreover, despite the US State Department's official designation of Aum as a terrorist organisation since October 1997, it is doubtful whether Aum's hybrid apocalyptic terrorism fits adequately the State Department's standard definitions, or can be placed in the same category as that of the Nihon Sekigun, MRTA, Shining Path, Abu Nidal, HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement) and ETA (Euzkadi Ta Askatasuna).[4]

Consequently, what the Aum phenomenon indicates is that new, poorly defined, unexpected and *ad hoc* terrorist threats can now arise, which have no readily identifiable cause, and which the existing security institutions of states are unable to label and deal with. For example, the terrorist intentions and capabilities of right-wing extremist groups or individuals involved in the Oklahoma bombing seem to have escaped detection by the US authorities because the latter's organisational structures and mindset were not orientated to guard against the previously unknown quantity of a home-grown terrorist threat. The immediate response in some quarters after Oklahoma was to blame Muslim extremists, a demonstration that it is much easier for the USA to react to an already well-defined and designated foreign threat than to identify its own citizens as terrorists. In addition to the emergence of new and unpredictable threats, the USA also now seems to face threats for which no party is willing to claim responsibility, as in the Atlanta Olympics incident. Indeed, the suspicion that the Oklahoma and Atlanta incidents were the work of individuals with access to information about terrorist techniques suggests that in some instances the focus of terrorism may shift to this level and to the level of micro-groups which will be harder still for the authorities to detect. The characteristic of enhanced non-specificity outlined in the case of Aum can also, therefore, be observed in terrorist activities in other parts of the world, and this helps to explain why the leaders of the industrialised nations sense new dangers from terrorism.

This perception of threat is multiplied by the growing anxiety that terrorist groups may be reaching a new qualitative level in their destructive capabilities and ambitions. The case of Aum indicates that the long-held fear of security policy makers that terrorist groups could acquire access to weapons of mass destruction is now a reality.[44] The cult's activities demonstrate that in the post-Cold War period, and especially since the creation of an arms bazaar in Russia and the other former Soviet republics, terrorist groups with sufficient determination and money have opportunities to obtain weapons of mass destruction, and to supersede for the first time the force capabilities of the national security institutions charged with policing the terrorist threat. What is more, Aum's visions of Armageddon again confounded traditional conceptions of terrorism which saw groups as unlikely to use weapons of mass murder because this would be counterproductive and would only serve to mobilise public opinion against the terrorist cause. Aum may have been unusual in the ruthlessness of its apocalyptic ideology, which encouraged its members to obtain and employ any weapon—conventional or otherwise—to serve the group's ends. But certainly in recent years there does seem to have been a trend for even established groups such as the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and LTTE (Tigers Tamil of Eelam) to use ever more powerful explosives to attack mass civilian targets. Finally, although Aum used computers only to facilitate the coordination of its organisation and to gather information on weapons

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44 For an example of these types of fears about the use of weapons of mass destruction before the threat of the Aum Shinrikyo emerged, see R. Latter, *Terrorism in the 1990's: Wilton Park Papers 44*, (HMSO, London, 1991), pp. 17–19.

systems, its mastery of information technology and its recruitment of amateur computer hackers lend credence to the argument that groups or individuals in the future may make use of computers in order to create havoc in the financial and infrastructure systems of modern states, and so create a new form of 'cyber-terrorism'.[45]

The qualitative change in the terrorist threat embodied by Aum's breaking down of the boundaries between internal and external security can also be witnessed in the terrorist phenomena of other states. In the post-Cold War period, terrorist groups have shown themselves capable of conducting operations in states that previously were largely impervious to terrorism. One reason that the US government expresses such concern over terrorism in the mid-1990s is perhaps not that US citizens have suddenly become the targets for attack, for statistically US citizens have been a major target for terrorism abroad since the 1970s,[46] but that US citizens are now subject to attack in their own country; a demonstration that terrorism has spread to the US mainland since the Cold War and is no longer simply a problem of external security.

The corrosive effect of Aum's terrorism on the legitimacy of the security institutions of the Japanese state also explains some of the problems likely to be experienced by the security institutions of other states in dealing with the enhanced terrorist threat. In the post-Cold War period, states will continue to pursue a range of strategies to suppress terrorism, but, as in the case of Japan, their response will be complicated by competition between security institutions engaged in the search for legitimacy and budgets. Institutions long involved in anti-terrorist tasks will have to prove again their legitimacy in the face of newer terrorist threats, and institutions that in the past were not involved in this area will be drawn into it, either because they possess particular knowledge relevant to the new threat or because they are attracted by opportunities to secure new responsibilities and budgets. Hence, as states struggle to come to terms with the enhanced danger of terrorist threats like Aum that are less specific, more destructive and harder to categorise as internal or external security issues, so will there greater and often contested efforts by institutions such as the FSA (Federal Security Agency) in Russia, MI6 in the UK, and the FBI in the USA to acquire a new anti-terrorist role to replace that of Cold War-style intelligence gathering.

Conclusion

This article has examined the differences in Japanese terrorism in the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, as illustrated by the Aum Shinrikyo. Whether there has been a steady metamorphosis or rapid evolution, terrorism has undergone a qualitative change in the post-Cold War period which has intensified the perception of its threat to industrialised societies. In addition, it can be concluded that the problem of Aum not only informs us about the possible future shape of the terrorist threat, but also is a motif that highlights the intricacies of many of the other issues on the post-Cold War security agenda outlined in the introduction to this article.

The non-specificity of Aum as a terrorist security threat and actor illustrates well the problems for contemporary policy makers in identifying specific adversaries and threats upon which to articulate security policy. During the Cold War, the principal actors involved

45 J. Deutch, 'Terrorism: Think Again', *Foreign Policy*, no. 108 (Fall 1997), pp. 11–12.
46 Wilkinson produces figures to show that between 1968 and 1979, US citizens were the targets for over 40% of international terrorist attacks, and that in 1983, including the attack on the US Marine barracks in the Lebanon, 266 US citizens died in international terrorist incidents abroad. By contrast, between 1980 and 1985 only 17 people were killed in terrorist attacks within the territory of the United States. P. Wilkinson, 'Trends in International Terrorism', pp. 45–46. US State Department figures show virtually zero incidents of terrorism inside the USA for the years either side of the Oklahoma bombing (see note 2).

in security were states, and security issues revolved around disputes between them, usually rooted in well defined differences of ideology and competition for dominance of territorial space. In the post-Cold War period, specific threats and actors have remained, as shown by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War of 1990–1991. But although these types of threats continue to emerge and states persist as the chief actors in security, it is clear that states are now increasingly forced to interact and cope with a range of other non-state actors and non-state-centred issues, whether these are the Aum Shinrikyo, warring factions in Somalia, or narco-barons in South America. Aum's terrorism indicates that the post-Cold War security agenda will increasingly comprise problems in which the identities of actors and threats are indistinct, as in issues of ethnic conflict, or so indistinct as to be almost unidentifiable, as in the case of environmental damage.

The example of the Aum Shinrikyo also highlights the uncertainty of post-Cold War security planners about the destructive capabilities of the new security problems. Cold War conflict if ever realised would have posed a massive destructive threat due to the use of nuclear weapons. But that threat was tempered by the policy makers' exact knowledge of the effects of these fearsome weapons, and knowledge of the identity and capabilities of the enemy actors they faced. This enabled them to plan what they saw as an appropriate defence and to negotiate controls on the numbers and conditions of use of these weapons. In the post-Cold War period these certainties have been removed, and policy makers have less knowledge of both the actors they face and the range of their destructive capabilities. The Gulf War and the war in the Balkans in the 1990s have demonstrated the continuing superiority of the technology and force of US and NATO weapons. But these conflicts, along with that in Somalia, have also demonstrated the impotence and obsolescence of many of the weapons in the West's arsenal for dealing with post-Cold War problems, and that many of the actors involved in these conflicts are capable of rapidly gaining ground on states in the sophistication of their weaponry and destructive potential. The Medellin and Cali drug cartels, for instance, have in the past disposed of guerilla and terrorist forces more powerful than the Colombian state itself. In other recent cases, the exact destructive potential of security problems is completely unknown, the most notable example of this being environmental problems. Therefore, following the end of the Cold War, and as the case of the Aum Shinrikyo's terrorism testifies, policy makers are faced with the challenge of designing security measures to cope with not only non-specific agents of destruction, but also ones of unknown destructive power.

The breaking down of the barriers between internal and external security represented by the case of the Aum Shinrikyo symbolises another of the broad characteristics of the post-Cold War security agenda. Many of the security issues of the Cold War had a territorial focus, centred on territorial sovereign states, and often fought out and delimited along distinct borders. Clearly, the physical utility of territorial borders as security barriers was eroded during the Cold War by nuclear weapons and strategy which ignored physical restrictions and threatened and held hostage the entire populations of states. Despite this, borders retained a physical and psychological role as barriers to aggression, and the distinction between internal and external security remained largely intact. Following the end of the Cold War, even though the threat of nuclear war has receded, the distinction between internal and external security problems has become harder to maintain. Security issues such as environmental damage, refugee flows, and resource management tend to ignore borders in their effects and cannot be managed exclusively within the territorial domain of one state. For example, damage from global warming cannot be shut out by the borders of a state, and the environmental pollution in Southeast Asia in late 1997 resulting from forest fires in Indonesia has shown that the distinction between internal and external security can be meaningless. The Aum Shinrikyo's terrorism is, then, a powerful embodiment and reminder

of the argument put forward by John Chipman that states can no longer readily compartmentalise security into national, regional and international categories, and that domestic and international security have become intermeshed.[47]

As has been shown, the effect of the Aum Shinrikyo terrorist activities has been magnified by its impact upon the legitimacy of security institutions in Japan, and it is clear that this characteristic helps to explain the difficulties of other states in responding to other problems on the post-Cold War security agenda. The increasing non-specificity of threats and actors, the enhanced destructive capability of security threats, and the breakdown of distinctions between internal and external security have spelled an end to the conceptual clarity of the Cold War, and posed the same types of problems for the legitimacy of existing security institutions as Aum has for those of the Japanese state. The diffuse nature of security threats such as the Aum Shinrikyo indicates that many of the existing security institutions of states are unequipped to deal with the challenges of the post-Cold War period, and that most states will be forced to continue with a review of their security strategy and force structures. The wide range of possible threats to be met with only limited resources will mean increased competition as never before between security institutions to show their flexibility and relevance to the post-Cold War security agenda. Hence, regular militaries will have to learn anew the skills of peacekeeping and humanitarian relief, and agencies such as the CIA will have to concentrate on information gathering and analysis. In some instances the type of competition for legitimacy and budgets seen between the PSIA, police and SDF in Japan may create inertia and obstruct the ability of industrialised states to detect and handle new security threats. But in other instances the process of competition may produce streamlined security institutions more attuned to post-Cold War security issues.

To conclude, the key lesson of the case of the Aum Shinrikyo for security policy-planners in the 1990s is that, in order to cope with the new security agenda, states must pursue thoroughly the process of reviewing and restructuring their security institutions, and make them shake off their Cold War mindsets and threat perceptions. Failure to do so may lead to a recurrence of incidents such as the Aum Shinrikyo sarin gas attack, and to the inability of states to detect and counter sufficiently early the rise of other terrorist threats. The failure to respond to new terrorist and other threats will imperil the legitimacy not just of the security institutions of states, but also of the industrialised states themselves should they appear incapable of protecting their citizens from threat. All this suggests that states are right to fear a qualitative change in the nature of terrorism and should take careful note of the Aum Shinrikyo case.

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47 J. Chipman, 'The Future of Strategic Studies: Beyond Even Grand Strategy', *Survival: The IISS Quarterly*, (Spring 1992), pp. 112–113.