The Spectacle of Terrorism and the Global Village: The Role of Media in the Next Wave of Terrorism

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Disclaimer: This essay discusses themes and instances of violence.

When discussing the phenomenon of terrorism, it is difficult if not impossible to avoid the topic of media and the important role it plays. One of Al Qaeda's top commanders, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, said in the early 2000s that modern ideological conflict is primarily "taking place in the battlefield of the media" (Mirgani 108). Historically, it is traditional corporate media that has played a large part in reporting on and publicizing terrorist attacks. As Brigitte L. Nacos puts it, both terrorist groups and traditional media outlets benefit from the reporting of terrorist events—terrorist groups get the publicity and amplification of their message that they desire, and media outlets make money from sensational headlines detailing the tragedy of the attack—thus, a symbiotic relationship exists (1). Prior to the rise of digital media, this relationship was highly definitive of the ways terrorists used and interacted with media.

However, in the age of information when the internet and social media platforms are as influential as traditional media outlets, terrorist groups can utilize these readily available, relatively inexpensive, and effective means of modern communication. Digital media in particular has acted as a defining force of terrorism in recent years. Terrorists in many different groups worldwide have taken to the internet in order to spread their ideological messages, recruit new members, and connect with sympathizers from across the globe. Thus, digital media has globalized terrorism in unprecedented ways. Some terrorist organizations have even argued that digital terrorist action "is not different from the armed one. In fact, it might be more important if you consider the global dimensions of the internet. Whoever wins this war will become the strongest in the realm of information" (Weimann 773). Therefore, in order to understand terrorism as it exists in a digital era, it is pertinent that media itself is studied and understood.

This paper will argue that the concepts of the spectacle and the global village are key to understanding how media will shape and embed the next wave of terrorism. First, Guy Debord's theory of the spectacle will be examined in the context of modern terrorist activity on the internet, including a discussion on digital terrorism and the perpetuation of fear through images. Then, Marshall McLuhan's idea of the global village will be considered in connection with the behavior of terrorist groups online, emphasizing how the prevalence of digital media has allowed terrorism to become globalized and interconnected like never before. This analysis of the spectacle and the global village will highlight the importance of digital media to terrorist organizations today and going forward. Next, a counterargument addressing the question of technological determinism will be discussed, and a subsequent rebuttal will be offered.

While there is uncertainty regarding what exactly the next wave of terrorism will look like, David Rapoport asserts that the current fourth major wave of terrorism is defined by religious terrorism (Rapoport), and Jeffery Kaplan sees the next wave of terrorism being shaped by groups who retreat from globalization and embrace individualistic and nationalist values (Kaplan). However, the true characteristics of the next wave of terrorism remain to be seen. Analysis of terrorist use of social media and digital media forms like video, as well as the utilization of traditional forms of media like television, will illuminate the ways in which terrorists both create a spectacle and benefit from the global village. Together, the spectacle and the global village define how media will shape the next wave of terrorism.

The Spectacle of Terrorism

The concept of the spectacle is important to consider when discussing how media and terrorism interact both currently and in the future. Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) was the first text to postulate this theoretical concept of the spectacle, describing it as "[presenting] itself simultaneously as society itself, as a part of society, and as a *means of unification*…it is ostensibly the focal point of all vision and all consciousness. The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images" (2). Debord mostly viewed the spectacle within the context of a consumer culture defined by commodity and capitalism, with the spectacle as the model for the prevailing way of life through "all of its particular manifestations—news, propaganda, advertising entertainment" (3). Therefore, the spectacle has historically been closely tied to the concepts of illusion, pageantry, performance, and exhibition (Giroux 20).

Above all, the spectacle is about images that are mediated on a mass or societal scale that present themselves as the all-encompassing, dominant way of life and being. During Debord's time, this was made apparent through the prevalence of advertising and mass media in traditional forms like television and radio. With the rise of digital media, the spectacle now has the ability to be amplified in unprecedented ways. Henry A. Giroux takes the discussion on the spectacle to the next level by applying Debord's concept to terrorism specifically. Giroux argues that "the merging of the spectacle, terrorism, war, and politics (beginning with the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City) suggests something unique about the deadly power…of images in contemporary global culture" (19). For Giroux, the September 11th attacks mark a shift in the history of the spectacle. Specifically, the broadcasted

image of the planes crashing into the twin towers created a new type of spectacle—a spectacle of terrorism.

The result of this spectacle of terrorism is that "death and suffering are now inscribed in the order of politics and the power of the image such that the alliance between terror and security in the contemporary era cannot be understood outside of how the spectacle shapes and legitimates social relations" (Giroux 19). Similar to how Brian Jenkins says that terrorism itself is theatre (Jenkins 4), Giroux argues that the spectacle of terrorism politicizes and ultimately unifies people through theatrics of fear and shock (Giroux 22). This is exemplified by the September 11th attacks, which were themselves designed to be visible and spectacular, uniting their audience of Americans in fear, shock, and awe (Giroux 29). The September 11th attacks went on to spark the War on Terror, making the spectacle of terrorism a regular part of the news cycle. Thus, the spectacle of terrorism was integrated into the daily lives of Americans, leaving many of them "sleepless, [feeling] depressed, and [fearing] that they or their loved-ones could become the victims of future terrorism" (Nacos 6). These attacks represent a major turning point in how media was used to create a spectacle, which in turn created a shared social relation that Americans in particular experienced in their day-to-day lives. Therefore, the aftermath of the September 11th attacks demonstrates the power of creating a spectacle of terrorism.

Visibility, theatrics, and the spectacle have always been vital to terrorist groups and their measured success. While there are a myriad of terrorist groups with many different goals and messages, one trait unites all groups: the desire for maximum publicity (Hoffman 173). Before any forms of mass media existed, terrorists would have been able to vie for this publicity by choosing crowded places as targets, ensuring that large numbers of witnesses would spread

news of the attack by word of mouth (Nacos 1). With each technological innovation, terrorists

have been able to make themselves more and more visible, and with the rise of digital media

they have achieved a level of hypervisibility through a multilateral presence on numerous online

platforms that often catch the attention of traditional news media. In this sense, terrorism can

be seen as a violent act that is aimed specifically at attracting attention and, through the

attention and publicity it generates, attempts to communicate a message predetermined by the

terrorist group carrying out the act (Hoffman 173-74). This communication is a key part of

terrorism that has remained constant over centuries.

Therefore, terrorism is as much an act of communication as it is an act of violence.

Terrorists do not simply want the attention of the news media and global audiences, they also

want to communicate their causes and rationalize their use of violence as a last resort through

the portrayal of shocking and fearsome images—in other words, through the creation of the

spectacle. Terrorist attacks are "[exercises] in strategic communication or public

diplomacy…designed to inform and educate both friends and foes about the motives for terrorist

deeds. For this to happen the perpetrators of terrorism do not necessarily have to do the

explaining themselves, the media do it for them" (Nacos 7). At the heart of terrorist activity lies

communication and the desire to be seen and heard, which can only be achieved by creating a

spectacle of terrorism wherein images of violence shock and scare a global audience into paying

attention.

As Nacos emphasizes, terrorists often do not have to do this on their own—they can use

media as a mouthpiece or an extension of themselves to get their messages across to a

potentially global audience. This shock and fear that images of terrorist incidents instill in

audiences then creates societies that are constantly on edge and under threat of a terrorist

attack, thus expanding the spectacle of terrorism into a force that mediates everyday life

(Mirgani 117). For example, shortly after the September 11th attacks, the U.S. Congress passed

the Patriot Act, which was intended to "deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and

around the world…[and to] enhance law enforcement investigatory tools" (Burney 27). The

Patriot Act implemented heightened surveillance and counterterrorist measures such as those

detailed in Section 215 of the act, which permits the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to

"compile personal information about phone calls, video rentals, medical charts, and financial

records—as long as such information will protect the country against 'international terrorism or

clandestine intelligence activities'" (27). The passing of the Patriot Act demonstrates how the

September 11th attacks created a spectacle of terrorism, which in turn caused the U.S.

government to perceive a constant terrorist threat, resulting in widespread changes in policy and

practice.

Terrorist groups across the world and history have used the spectacle of terrorism to

create a shared social relation defined by fear. In 1984, the Irish Republican Army (IRA)

attempted to assassinate then prime minister Margaret Thatcher and her entire cabinet by

planting a bomb at the Grand Brighton Hotel in Brighton, England, where Thatcher and her

cabinet were staying (Bloom and Horgan 593). While Thatcher narrowly escaped the blast, the

attack ended up claiming 5 lives and injuring more than 30 people (CBC). Targeting the U.K.'s

prime minister and her entire cabinet represented the IRA's most daring attack yet. By

threatening the lives of the highest ranking members of the U.K.'s government, the IRA created a

spectacle which bound their British audience by shock and fear. After the attack, the news media

circulated photos of the decimated hotel, creating the shared social relation that Debord emphasizes, in which audiences are bound by images. The spectacle was further created by the IRA's statement released after the Brighton Hotel bombing, which stated that "today, we were unlucky. But remember, we only have to be lucky once—you have to be lucky always" (CBC). Through their threatening tone and implication of continued attacks, these words create the atmosphere that Giroux describes, wherein audiences—in this case, British politicians and the British public—become constantly on edge, worried that they or their loved ones could be the next ones subject to terrorist violence. Through these actions, the IRA successfully created the spectacle of terrorism.

On some level, terrorists themselves understand the spectacle of terrorism through their understanding of the power of creating fear. This is especially true in a digital media landscape, where terrorists do not necessarily need to commit an act of physical violence in order to be successful—all they need to do is create enough of a spectacle. Digital terrorism needs only to create the fear of an attack through "false and, sometimes, unverifiable threats" online (Mirgani 117). For example, on September 11, 2014, the Islamic State allegedly staged an attack on the Columbia Chemical Plant in the state of Louisiana in the United States, causing a large explosion that released toxic fumes into the air. Certain actions taken made residents of the area think that this attack was real: many residents received a series of text messages directing them to take shelter, and the hashtag #ColumbianChemicals on Twitter contained large amounts of eyewitness testimony of the attack. However, it turned out that this entire attack was a complete digital hoax—no such explosion took place. Rather, digital media was utilized to spread extensive disinformation in a terrorist campaign "designed to induce panic throughout the

United States and beyond" (117). The Islamic State, the group allegedly behind this act of digital

terrorism, went so far as to doctor screenshots from CNN, build fully functional clones of local

Louisiana news outlets' websites, and even create a Wikipedia page for the attack which cited a

fake YouTube video (117). Rather than carrying out a more costly and dangerous full-scale

terrorist operation, the group behind the attack fabricated an elaborate disinformation

campaign that in the end had similar effects to a real physically violent terrorist act, through

which panic and fear were successfully induced (117).

The fake Columbia Chemical Plant digital attack demonstrates that when it comes to

terrorist operations and attacks, the creation of a spectacle merely through the threat of

violence is as important—if not more important—than committing actual physical violence itself.

Users of digital media, whether they are "authorities, terrorists, the [news] media, or the public,

all take part in the creation of social realities, and this is especially facilitated through the

increasing infiltration of digital media…into public spaces and in everyday activities" (Mirgani

118). Here, Debord's idea of the spectacle as something that creates a shared social relation is

demonstrated. The group who fabricated the Columbia Chemical Plant attack did not have to

inflict physical violence in order to perpetuate the effects of the spectacle of terrorism. Solely

due to the creation of a spectacle by digital media, a group of people (in this case, residents of

Louisiana) lived in collective fear of this threat. The infamous ISIS beheading videos also

exemplify the powerful spectacle of terrorism that is created through digital media, where "in

combining a premodern form of punishment with the commandeering of a modern medium, the

decapitation videos have enabled insurgents in Iraq…to create a strategy for tapping into a

powerful source of collective fear" (Giroux 33). These examples show that terrorists need not always engage in physical violence in order to create the spectacle of terrorism.

The spectacle, and specifically the spectacle of terrorism, is an ever-present facet of modern terrorist activity. With the prevalence and influence of digital media and the internet still growing today, it is important to understand how the creation and cultivation of the spectacle shapes the choices that terrorist groups make. Before terrorism is violent, it is communicative and highly mediated. This is taken to a larger scale than ever before with the predominance of digital media, the internet, and social media platforms. It is clear that the idea of the spectacle of terrorism—a performance of violent and shocking images that shape a population through the instillation of constant fear—demonstrates how the future of terrorism is virtually inseparable from the future of media. Rather than performing a spectacle primarily for traditional news media, terrorism has shifted towards creating a digital spectacle that can reach larger and more global audiences than ever before. This shift creates a shared social relation between people that is defined by images and fear of being involved in terrorist violence. Terrorist use of digital media makes creating this social relation ever easier. The spectacle is a powerful tool that terrorists employ in the digital era and it is more easily projected via global information technology—something that Marshall McLuhan theorizes on through his concept of the global village.

The Global Village

The concept of the global village is also worth discussing in relation to media, terrorism, and the next wave of terrorism. Marshall McLuhan coined the term "global village" in his 1964

work *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* where he writes that "after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace" (8). McLuhan argues that through media technology our world becomes completely integrated and interconnected, where an event in one part of the world can be fully experienced by another area of the world simultaneously, similar to how an event might have been experienced when humans lived in early villages. He writes that "our specialist and fragmented civilization of center-margin structure is suddenly experiencing an instantaneous reassembling of all its mechanized bits into an organic whole. This is the new world of the global village" (139). At the time of McLuhan's theories in the 1960s, the massive digital technologies and media in existence today were not a factor. However, when considering the reach of today's digital media, the internet, and social media platforms, it is clear that McLuhan's global village has been fully realized: the world is more interconnected than ever before thanks to vast information technologies, and communication across the world's borders and oceans has never been easier.

Just as the realization of the global village through the rise of the internet and digital media has touched virtually every area of society, it has also had its impact on terrorism. At this point in time, all active terrorist groups have at least some form of presence on the internet (Mirgani 112). The global village has allowed terrorist groups to become globalized, "where terrorist groups and their activities become no longer confined to any one nation or region of the world, but ricochet from continent to continent. Terrorist organizations are using digital media…to [form] global networks, and to justify their causes through a variety of publicized messages" (Mirgani 108). Digital media and specifically social media platforms have allowed terrorists to recruit on a global level when previously their recruitment may have been confined

to their region of operation. Their messages have become amplified and accessible on a level that was previously impossible, and as the global village materialized, the internet has become a vital and indispensable tool for terrorist groups. The ability of terrorist groups "to communicate in real time via the internet, using a variety of compelling electronic media…has enabled terrorists to reach a potentially vast audience faster, more pervasively, and more effectively than ever before" (Hoffman 225-26). This capability speaks to the prevalence and utility of the digital global village for terrorists.

The rise of the internet and social media has also displaced traditional news media as the primary tool for terrorist groups to use in order to amplify their messages and gain publicity. Terrorist organizations "no longer have to court media networks, but publicize their own messages, resulting in the globalization of their ideologies and an increase in the quantity and quality of their cultural production" (Mirgani 109). This allows for terrorist groups to speak directly to their supporters, sympathizers, and potential recruits without the filter of mainstream news networks that may, in terrorists' view, distort the group's original message through their reporting. With the internet, terrorists can communicate their views and ideology on their terms and in their words, which is powerful when it is being amplified to a potentially global audience. This also means that "extremist ideology and terrorist practices are now no longer just shared with like-minded people who visit specific, clandestine websites, but are increasingly openly available in the public domain. By allowing the technology to do all the work, extremist messages posted to social networking sites reach audiences immediately, and are extremely easy to access and redistribute, exponentially multiplying their audience" (Mirgani 112).

Social media and the internet allowing terrorists to release and control their own messages has also meant that, at times, traditional mainstream media has to consult content produced by terrorist organizations in order to create headlines. In this case, "terrorists [are both] the sources and the reporters of terrifying news. The traditional media [are] left to report on terrorists' news productions" (Nacos 13). Remediation occurs when one medium is represented in another, which is what effectively happens when news outlets use terrorists' self-produced content in their reporting (Bolter and Grusin 5). Traditional news media are practically forced to remediate content produced directly by terrorists and posted online, demonstrating how digital media challenges the status of older forms of media which seek to constantly reaffirm their importance in the cultural media landscape (5). For example, in Pakistan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, terrorists posted videos online of decapitations and other violent acts (Nacos 13). The terrorists were both creating and reporting on these events, leaving the news media to themselves report on the news productions the terrorists created. Another example is found in the 2019 Christchurch attacks. When the far-right wing terrorist who carried out the attacks published a manifesto online, parts of it were then reported on and remediated by the news media (Hutchinson 20). In fact, many of the terrorist's online posts prior to the Christchurch attack suggest that the attack was "designed to gain maximum attention online, in part by baiting the [news] media" (Lorenz). Remediation of terrorist content by traditional news media outlets can have dangerous implications, as traditional news media may become reliant on remediating information from terrorist groups in order to produce stories.

As a result of the global village, terrorist groups no longer solely rely on traditional news media to amplify and communicate their messages for them, which grants them increased

power. However, traditional news media still rely on terrorist attacks and activity to boost their ratings. This presents a dangerous scenario, because news outlets' remediation of terrorist-produced content for their reporting can legitimize terrorist groups as genuine political actors, and by extension can legitimize their cause and ideology (Nacos 9). If this practice continues or increases in the future, the next wave of terrorism could be one where terrorists are able to self-legitimize on a global level with the help of the traditional news media. On the flipside, traditional news media may increasingly be seen as less legitimate if they continue to rely on the remediation of terrorist-produced content for stories.

Through digital media, terrorists have also been able to create their own quasi-global village through communicating with one another online. Terrorist groups "make maximum use of information and communication technologies to connect with each other, and with other international networks" (Mirgani 110). Contemporary terrorist groups are very interconnected and frequently attempt to create close ties with one another via the internet, and "smaller terrorist groups have pledged allegiance to more powerful ones, thereby creating an international network of similarly-minded organizations stretching all over the globe" (Mirgani 110). For example, al-Shabaab has pledged their allegiance to Al Qaeda, meanwhile Boko Haram, the Taliban, and Al Qaeda have all pledged allegiance to the Islamic State at one time or another (110). These groups whose activity may have previously been confined to their regions of operation now comprise a vast, expansive network that stretches across the Middle East and the rest of the world. In this sense, a global village exists on a smaller scale within terrorist networks, which benefits from the true global village that the internet and digital media have made possible.

 In addition, digital media and the global village creates conditions for radicalized individuals to find communities online that may validate them or encourage them to commit acts of violence. This was true in the case of the Australian terrorist who attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand and killed 51 people in 2019 (Hutchinson 19). The assailant of this attack had "expressed his solidarity with Australian far-right extremist groups online during far-right events", and post-attack investigations of the perpetrator "highlighted the various connections and relationships retained by the assailant within and outside Australia, online or otherwise" (Hutchinson 21-22). Due to this, the Christchurch attack "demonstrated the significance of virtual relationships and Internet-based partnerships based on contemporary white supremacy" (22). By providing radicalized or extremist individuals with the potential to connect with and become validated by online terrorist groups, the interconnectedness that the global village provides terrorists with may be dangerous, sometimes leading to physical acts of violence offline.

Marshall McLuhan's idea of the global village was remarkably prophetic for its time, and nearly 60 years after its publication the global village has come to fruition with the existence of digital media, the internet, and social media platforms. Today, the world is irrevocably interconnected due to the influence and widespread use of digital technology, and thus human beings are connected and can experience things at a global level. As a result of the rise of the global village, terrorist groups have taken to the internet and social media to spread their ideology, recruit new members from across the world, and both connect and network with one another. Terrorist organizations have thus become globalized in an unprecedented way, no longer confined to the region of their operation and no longer reliant on traditional news media

for publicity and international attention. With digital media and the global village, terrorist groups can create their own content and disseminate it on their own terms, with further reach than ever before. It is apparent that the global village and the rise of digital media have been a defining force in how terrorist groups operate in the twenty-first century, and as media continues to be innovated in the future, terrorist activity will only become more embedded in digital media. Digital media is a vital tool for terrorists today, and as time goes on it is likely that terrorist groups will only improve their proficiency in and utilization of social media platforms and information technology. Thus, in the next wave of terrorism, terrorist groups will likely be operating in an environment that is hypermediated and hyperconnected by the global village.

The Question of Technological Determinism

Some may argue that the idea that media shapes terrorism currently and in the future can be seen as a form of technological determinism. Technological determinism is a theory arguing that technology is what shapes all social and cultural relations, and that "changes in technology are the single most important basis of change in society" (Winner 65). Under a technological determinist argument in this sense, media technology would be seen as the sole force that shapes terrorist tactics, motivations, and the behavior of terrorist groups in general. This argument ignores any other forces that shape terrorism, such as political, social, or economic factors that may have an impact on the nature of terrorism and the behavior of terrorists. Additionally, this theory of technological determinism is seen largely as reductionist and fails to consider the complex relationship between humans and technology, where humans may also shape the technology of their time.

However, when it comes to terrorism, the argument that media will continue to shape and embed terrorism does not cross over into technological determinism. Communication has always been a key part of terrorism even before the introduction of technologies like print, television, and eventually digital media. As aforementioned, before terrorists had technologies to spread their messages and ideology, they often planned their attacks to be in crowded places so that eyewitnesses would spread news of the attack to their friends and families (Nacos 1). Throughout history, as technological innovations came to be, terrorists have shaped that media and co-opted it for their own use as much as that media has shaped terrorist tactics and communication. The prime example of this is the September 11th attacks, which changed the nature of reporting in American news media. Prior to the attacks on September 11th, American news media rarely reported on growing anti-American sentiments among Arab and Muslim people in the Middle East and other areas of the world, but "this changed after 9/11 in that the news media expanded their reporting from these regions. Instead of sticking to their typical episodic coverage of foreign news...there was suddenly far more contextual reporting that provided viewers, listeners, and readers with a better understanding of the Middle East and its peoples" (Nacos 7). It is true that reporting patterns of the American news media changed for the better as a direct result of a horrific, large-scale terrorist strike (7). The symbiotic relationship that exists between terrorism and media has meant that one cannot determine the other, but rather both benefit from and can shape one another. This is especially true with the prevalence of digital media today and within the contexts of the ideas of the spectacle and the global village, and it will continue to be true into the next wave of terrorism.

Conclusion

When discussing media and how it interacts with terrorism, it is key to understand the concepts of the spectacle and the global village in order to see how media will shape and embed the next wave of terrorism. The spectacle of terrorism as a performance of violent and shocking images that are designed to instill fear into its audience is an idea that terrorists seek to achieve through their use of media. By using media to achieve the spectacle, whether it is through use of traditional news media or digital and social media, terrorists seek to communicate their ideological message through shocking and scaring their audiences into paying attention. Additionally, the realization of the global village—a world that is completely interconnected via media technology, where people on opposite sides of the world can experience things simultaneously—means that terrorist organizations have become globalized and can reach global audiences at a heightened ability. The existence of a global village connected by the internet allows for terrorist groups to communicate their ideologies, recruit new members, and connect with one another in unprecedented ways. This has even allowed them to mediate themselves through the creation of their own content, forcing traditional news media to remediate content that terrorists are producing in order to generate headlines.

As a result of the evolving nature of terrorism and the role that media plays within it, it is extremely important for major internet, social media, and tech companies to regulate their platforms and work to eliminate violent speech and content that terrorists may be uploading to their platforms. In the United States, Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act protects social media companies like Facebook and Twitter from being held liable for content that users post on their sites (Siripurapu). This provision has allowed for media companies to effectively regulate themselves with minimal government intervention. The self-regulation of

media platforms has since been called into question, especially after the insurrection and acts of domestic terrorism at the U.S. Capitol in January of 2021, which were largely orchestrated via social media platforms (Siripurapu). However, no concrete regulations have come about yet (Siripurapu). Given this lack of current governmental regulation on these platforms, it is up to the companies themselves to ensure that terrorist groups are not using their sites to perpetuate their ideology or even plan attacks.

The government should also begin to see certain regulation of social media platforms where terrorist communication and activity can take place as a counterterrorist tactic. However, until regulation is passed at the governmental level, platforms like Facebook and Twitter need to be continuously vigilant in scanning their sites for terrorist rhetoric and violent content as terrorism moves into its next wave where media plays a key role. Recently, Twitter and Facebook have taken steps to flag posts containing disinformation on their sites, which is a step in the right direction in terms of alerting users that what they are viewing is false or possibly dangerous information that could be produced and circulated by terrorist groups.

It is difficult to know or predict what exactly the next wave of terrorism will look like. According to David Rapoport's work, the current fourth wave of terrorism beginning in the 1980s—a wave of religious terrorism—is still present today (Rapoport). Jeffery Kaplan believes that the next wave of terrorism could center on terrorist groups who retreat from globalization and take on individualistic or nationalist characteristics (Kaplan). Whatever the next wave may look like, it is clear that media will play a key role just as it has in past waves. This is especially true of digital media as "the revolution in terrorist communications that has rapidly unfolded within the past few years is certain to continue…as terrorist communications continue to change

and evolve, so will the nature of terrorism itself" (Hoffman 228). The global village will continue to make the world a hyperconnected place, and therefore terrorism will likely become increasingly hypermediated through highly saturated digital and online platforms where they will be able to perform the spectacle of terrorism at a heightened ability. Understanding the concepts of the spectacle and the global village will be necessary in order to be cognizant of how media and terrorism shape, change, and act as vital forces for one another during movement into the next wave of terrorism.

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