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“Psychiatric Evaluation of Suspected Terrorists”

**By: Ansar M. Haroun, Ph.D
(Superior Court of California, San Diego, CA)**

Terrorism is a scourge affecting many societies, and Muslims are perhaps the greatest victims of Terrorism. But who are these “Terrorists”? Are they defined by their religious beliefs, or by their actions, or their methods, or their motivations? Is there any psychological profile of the “terrorist”? Since the author is a forensic and military psychiatrist, who has evaluated many suspected “terrorists,” for both the Superior Court and the US Army, this paper presents the PEST (Psychiatric Evaluation of Suspected Terrorists), a psychiatric protocol which draws on recent research from the psychiatric, social science, and legal literature to explore the various risk factors that may contribute to the mind of the suspected terrorist. Hence, the following issues will be reviewed: epidemiological risk factors, biological theories of criminality, psychiatric analyses of violence, forensic analyses of excuse/justification, cognitive and social judgment of the terrorist, moral reasoning of the terrorist, and the terrorists’ culpability.