Question 1: Proposed Core Definitions

Based on our experience, we propose the following working definitions:

Terrorism is the act of intimidating through acts or threats of violence, for the purpose of achieving political, religious, or ethnic objectives. In other words, terrorism is a method of imposing one's will or demands through fear-mongering. Terrorism is not merely a single act, but the product of a process. This process begins with the creation of extreme divergence, leads to the generation of anger and the promotion of violence, and culminates in acts of violence—a process in which multiple actors play a role. Within this framework, any knowing role or participation in any of the stages of this process is considered a "terrorist act," and effective counter-terrorism is impossible without addressing all stages of this process.

Terrorist Organization is a group of individuals who systematically, in an organized and knowing manner, commit terrorist acts.

Violent Extremism is the adoption and promotion of ideologies that justify the use of violence as a primary method for achieving political, religious, or ideological goals.

Extremism is the rigid adherence to beliefs, ideologies, or positions that are in severe opposition to the accepted norms, values, or laws of a society. Extremists typically reject moderation, compromise, or pluralism, considering themselves the sole possessors of absolute "truth." Extremism can be the initial stage in the cycle of terrorism, a stage that can lead to hate speech and intimidation against a belief, individuals, or a government, and ultimately to the adoption of violent methods.

Question 2: Physical Conduct Elements (Actus Reus)

2.1 & 2.2: Scope of Harm and Endangerment

While intentionally causing death, serious personal injury, or hostage-taking are central and common elements, the definition should not be limited to these. Acts such as the destruction of critical infrastructure, cyber-terrorism causing widespread disruption, or the deliberate release of pathogens (even without immediate casualties) can be perpetrated with terrorist intent and must be included. Furthermore, a modern and comprehensive definition must recognize severe psychological or mental harm where no physical injury occurs, as creating collective trauma and fear is a primary objective of terrorism. A comprehensive definition should cover both realized outcomes (like death and injury) and the intent and potential to create a serious risk to life, public health, or safety.

2.3: Damage to Property

The destruction of public or private property can constitute a terrorist act if it is carried out with the intention of causing serious disruption to essential public services, creating major economic loss, and the result of such action is to terrorize a civilian population.

2.4 & 2.5: Critical Infrastructure and Electronic/Financial Systems

A robust definition of terrorism should explicitly include intentional attacks on defined critical infrastructure—committed with the intent to intimidate and cause widespread disruption. Similarly, the definition must encompass intentional acts against financial and electronic systems (critical cyber infrastructure). The threshold for inclusion should be the scale of impact and consequences, not merely the financial cost. These impacts must reach a level that seriously jeopardizes national security, the macro-economy, or public health and welfare. A cyber-attack should be considered terrorist in nature when, with the intent to terrorize and undermine a state, it creates consequences analogous to a classic physical terrorist attack—namely, a serious disruption of public order and safety.

Question 7: State Terrorism / State Involvement

In the definition of state terrorism, everything included in the definition of terrorism applies, with the stipulation that it encompasses cases where the perpetrator of terrorism, or its supporter and financial/logistical provider, is a foreign state. In reality, governments that use the capacity of terrorist groups to advance their own interests by providing political, financial, media, and logistical support are considered state sponsors of terrorism.