

SUGGESTED READINGS

Title

Compiled by Name, Title

Date

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| NAADSN has invited various academic subject matter experts to suggest core readings on topics related to North American and Arctic Defence and Security.The internet is filled with perspectives and opinions. These lists are intended to help direct policy makers, practitioners, and academics to credible, open-access sources, available online, free of charge, that reflect leading-edge research and thinking. The compilers of each list have been asked to select readings that are accessibly written (i.e. they are not filled with excessive jargon), offer a diversity of viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking and debate.  |

**Example, Daniel L. Byman,** [**Who is a terrorist, actually?**](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/09/22/who-is-a-terrorist-actually/) ***Brookings Institution*, September 22, 2020.**

Daniel L. Byman engages with the question of *who is a terrorist?* Examination of this question, posed at a time of social polarization and skewed threat perceptions, helps to frame how we understand the terrorism label and contemporary threats nearly twenty years after 9/11. Not all violence is terrorism, but for many, the terrorism label is often a way to distinguish who is in the wrong. He engages with what “terrorism” means and how there is no real agreement on the definition or agreement, even among close allies, as to which groups are terrorists. Byman explains that serious terrorism definitions have several factors in common: 1) terrorism involves violence or the threat of it (he encourages maintaining a high bar when using the label), 2) terrorism is inherently political, 3) terrorism is perpetrated by non-state actors, 4) the purpose of the violence, is not only to hurt and destroy, but to convey a message. Some definitions use the criterion that targets are civilians or non-combatants, but this can get complicated if an attack is on military forces but outside of a war zone. Terrorism definitions are muddy and Byman goes on to apply these definitional criteria to individuals and groups, such as antifa, Black Lives Matter, and Kyle Rittenhouse. He concludes by discussing why the label matters beyond semantics and this is partly a question of demonization and agencies and authorities invoked to deal with threats. Abusing the label in a post-9/11 world makes overreaction more likely.

**Author Biography: Daniel L. Byman** is a Professor in Georgetown University’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service with a concurrent appointment with the Department of Government.