

Forum: General Assembly 1

Issue: Measure to combat terrorism in relation to religious extremists

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Introduction

According to the Global Terrorism Index, the main driver of terrorism in recent years is due to religious extremism. The meaning of terrorism varies on many factors, but according to The Huffington Post, “a crime that is used as strategy or tactic in order to convey fear or terror” is the universally accepted definition. Unlike most crimes whose motives are often self-centered, the reason for terrorism is justified by excuses, such as, but not limited to political and religious reasons. Meanwhile, the term religious extremism is both subjective and self-explanatory: the fanatic belief in a political and/or religious cause, especially one who resorts to extreme actions such as, but not limited to martyrdom, the act of ending one’s own life to prove, stress, or defend a cause, which is an example of terrorism. However, religious extremism in terms of terrorism is not always caused by religious beliefs, rather through a motivation of selfish desires. The religious aspect of religious extremism is often nothing more than an excuse to justify their horrendous acts of violence. With religion as an excuse, terrorist organizations bear striking resemblances to religious cults. Cults can be defined as groups with extreme movements often portrayed in charismatic leaders while exploiting and subjecting new members to their doctrine. Many cults prey on the insecurities and desires of potential initiates, promising them solutions and answers to recruit them in order to siphon off their money or services. Terrorist organizations are no different, presenting a perverted image of a god. With this mindset, the perverted image of god serves as their justification for mass acts of destruction and violence. Eventually, believers in such corrupt religions become addicted to their own opinions and proceed to shun any and all other beliefs that challenge or oppose their own. At this point, the believer has become an extremist: one who is unwilling to accept opinions that deviate from their own, and one who is willing to prove their opinion to any extent. These actions can range from martyrdom, assassinations, massacres, and other acts of terrorism. An

example of the effects of terrorism is the September 11th attacks on the United States. Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization, coordinated four hijackings of planes, resulting in at least \$10 billion in infrastructure and property damage, the death of 2,996 civilians, the injury of at least 6,000 citizens, the partial destruction of the Pentagon (the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense), and the complete destruction of the World Trade Center complex in New York. The mobilization of religious extremists in terrorist organizations can prove to be ruinous to nations, which witnessed and bore the physical attacks of terrorism, and families who feel the pain of loss when they lose their relatives, parents, or even children. Without a sedative to this slowly growing political threat, there is no telling how immense the threat of terrorism will turn out.

Definition of Key Terms

Religious Extremism

Religious extremism describes the radical devotion to a certain religion, and the shunning and ignorance of other viewpoints, leading to extreme measures such as terrorism in order to prove the righteousness of one's own. This type of belief is similar to how a cult functions: there is little tolerance for internal misconduct (within religious organizations) or external scrutiny, recruiters often exploit new recruits in order to gain financial or political power, and the need for a charismatic leader and/or nominal figure, such as a god.

Terrorism

Terrorism describes a tactic involving the use of violence and other harmful means to induce widespread terror and fear. The terror and chaos that ensues help terrorist organizations reach a political and/or religious goal. In addition, terrorism can be a means psychological warfare, inducing fear through means such as psychological torture. Terrorism is also associated with religious extremism. With radicals desperate to prove that their beliefs are the best, they often resort to means of fear and terror to spread messages. Terrorist organizations such but not limited to the Islamic State (ISIS) practice terrorism in order to reach these goals. In the Islamic State's case, the organization seeks to resurrect caliphates, empires under Muslim rule, or in its barest, Islamic expansionism.

Radicalization

Radicalization refers to the process of causing individuals to adopt extreme positions and viewpoints on certain matters. In the circumstance of religious extremism in terrorism, radicalization describes the process of which an individual becomes indoctrinated by a religion-based terrorist organization to believe that acts of terrorism are justified by religious reasons.

General Overview

History of terrorism and fear as a means of communication

The usage of fear as an incentive is evident all throughout history, with examples such but not limited to decimation in Ancient Rome, the Great Terror in the Russian Revolution, and the Holocaust in World War II. The actual term “terrorism” came from the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution (1789-1799), where countless death sentences were ordered by the Maximilien de Robespierre, an important government figure. Though this is a form of state terrorism, acts of terrorism committed by a state against their own subjects, it is important to note that fear was a tool accepted, condoned, and used at the time.

Terrorism in the modern day

As the ages passed, terrorists began to adopt new means of fearmongering. But as terrorist organizations developed, the security and means to defend against terrorists developed as well. Sanctions and protective measures such as stricter policies related to arms-dealing and x-ray scans prevent terrorists from easily accessing public locations and wreaking wanton havoc on innocent bystanders. However, nowadays, terrorists simply need a means of communication. Communication is of paramount importance in terms of fear. According to Prager University, a terrorist commander summarized, “it is more effective in spreading fear to kill one man in front of a camera than killing one hundred in secrecy.” Without an audience to feel fear, there is no point of terrorism. Similarly, if no media outlets were to report on a terrorist attack, nobody would be aware of its occurrence, impact, or culprit. By razing structures with explosives, orchestrating shootings with firearms, or even detonating dirty bombs, terrorist organizations can inflict death, chaos, fear, and pain among a nation and its citizens.

Modern terrorism has greatly affected citizens and nations physically, mentally, and emotionally. For instance, the September 11th attacks on the United States led to the death of nearly 3,000 innocents and the injury of over 6,000 more. Additionally, the attacks led to over \$10 billion in infrastructure and property damage, the partial destruction of the Pentagon (the United States Department of Defense's headquarters), and the complete destruction of the World Trade Center complex. Such attacks were committed by Al-Qaeda, a Sunni Islamic terrorist organization, with means of condemning the support of Israel, sanctions imposed against Iraq, and US military in Saudi Arabia.

Means of recruitment

The reason why terrorist organizations, such as the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS), are growing to become more and more of a threat is because of the rate at which they are recruiting new members. Their means of recruitment, the usage of social media, appeal to their target audience, which happen to be individuals that are internally conflicted, victims of social alienation, or suffering personal/professional loss. Another benefit of terrorist organizations using social media is the appeal to adolescents, which as of our generation, are heavily technologically oriented. In addition, adolescence is a time where teenagers develop cognitive abilities which are emotion-based. This leaves them highly susceptible to external influence such as terrorist organizations.

Terrorist organizations

A terrorist organization is a group that actively uses terrorism as a technique to bring attention and assistance in religious and/or political endeavors. The Global Terrorism Database found that almost 75% of terrorist organizations before 1997 lasted one year, and the average lifespan of a terrorist organization between 1970 to 2008 was fourteen. It is important to note that terrorism is rising, but also that terrorism is temporary. Terrorist organizations end for a variety of reasons. A common reason why terrorist organizations end is because they become a political party. An example of this is the Kosovo Liberation Army (1993-1999), a group which was once viewed as a terrorist organization, that became the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). Currently, the KPC works closely with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an association with the goal of safeguarding nations by political and military means. However, even if a terrorist organization is recognized as a political party, this does not ensure that the acts of terrorism will end. Another reason why terrorist organizations end is due to the

recruiting of military intelligence, or spies. These spies take down terrorist organizations from the inside by smuggling information and/or taking down or arresting leaders. Though nations and organizations are doing the best that they can to compromise or fight with these terrorist organizations, they still stand at large and remain as a threat to a nation and its people.

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and numerous other countries. The group was founded by Sunni Islamists Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and several other Arabs. They have orchestrated terrorist attacks such as the bombing of U.S. embassy buildings in 1988, the hijacking of planes on September 11th, 2001, bombing of a tourist district in Bali, 2002, and countless other acts of terrorism. The September 11th attacks led to the United States launching the Global War on Terrorism, a figurative revelation that prompted an international military campaign against terrorism. Such attacks are also the primary reason why airport security has been excessively strict.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, ISIL, Islamic State)

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United Nations and several individual countries. The group was founded by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as a subdivision of Al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime. ISIS has orchestrated terrorist attacks such as the shooting of innocents in a museum of Brussels, May 2014, the bombing of innocents in Paris, November 2015, and the slaughter of pedestrians with a van in Barcelona, August 2017. Currently, the Iraqi army is fighting ISIS to regain control over Iraq, which was previously partially occupied by ISIS.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

On September 12th, 2001, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1368, a resolution which condemned the September 11th terrorist attacks. The resolution expresses a need for justice against the attackers, organizers, and sponsors of such attackers. Later in the year on November 12th, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted

resolution 1377, involving declarations that pertained to the elimination of international terrorism.

Resolution 1373 previously that year called for the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), a subsidiary body of the United Nations Security Council. Following resolutions 1535 (2004), 1624 (2005), and 2178 (2014), the CTC had established the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) in order to facilitate and promote member states' implementation of previous resolutions, including the previously mentioned resolution 1368 and 1377. The CTC has improved legal and institutional abilities to counter terrorism while taking steps towards the criminalization of financing terrorism, the suppression of safe havens for terrorists, cooperation with governments in the investigation and detection towards involved in terrorist organizations, the distribution of knowledge regarding terrorist groups, and several more.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1988	Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization, is established by Sunni Islamists Osama bin Ladin, Abdullah Azzam, and several other Arabs.
September 11 th , 2001	The September 11 th attacks devastate many major cities in the United States of America.
September 12 th , 2001	The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopts resolution 1368, condemning the September 11 th attacks.
September 28 th , 2001	The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopts resolution 1373, calling for the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).
November 12 th , 2001	The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopts resolution 1377, regarding the issues of international terrorism and the intensification of its eradication.
August 17 th , 2017	ISIS claims responsibility for the Barcelona attack, which involves a bus plowing through a busy street and claiming 13 lives and injuring 130 others.

Possible Solutions

Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of citizens in many nations. Without adequate measures expended to deal with it, there is no telling how powerful terrorist organizations may

grow. One potential solution for taking care of terrorist organizations falls back to diplomacy and the recognition of terrorist groups as political parties. Over 40% of terrorist organizations disband this way, with the example of the Hezbollah, a terrorist organization of Shiite Islamic extremists, being recognized by the Lebanese Parliament. Through diplomatic communication and drafting of conventions or resolutions, a terrorist organization's radical religious stance can be recognized as a political party. In such diplomatic communication sessions, important points to discuss would be the negotiation of the goals of such organizations, means to prevent innocent deaths, and means to acknowledge an organization as a political party. Such agreements or negotiation can be settled through UNO/NGO involvement or the construction of a new UNO as a means to set debating grounds.

Another solution relies heavily on the education of religious extremists. Religious extremists feel justified for their actions by claiming that they are in the name of a twisted image of God. Through proper education of the religion that they believe in, extremists will realize that their image of god deviates other's, and consequently realize that their once justified actions are now immoral and atrocious without any form of justification through god. This kind of education can be designed and provided through the aid of NGOs and UNOs, as well as potentially being implemented in of school curriculum, and more. An option is to create a UNO designated towards solving the issue of religious misinterpretations through means such as seminars discussing individual's mindsets and ideals towards such religions. However, one must keep the safety of instructors and counselors in mind in such educational institutions. Additionally, much of the recruitment for terrorist organizations is through social media. Advertisements and public service announcements through social media can be effective to hindering the process of radicalization.

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