

Forum: Security Council
Issue: Question of Non-State Actors as a Danger to International Peace and Security
Student Officer: Haerin Kim
Position: President of Security Council

Introduction

The United Nations was founded shortly after the devastating Second World War (1939-1945) under an integral set of founding principles. Among the organisation's primary objectives outlined in the UN Charter is the maintenance of international peace and security, as addressed in Article 24. Through methods promoting collective security and sovereign equality the UN pursues the peaceful settlement of disputes and prevention of war between its member states. To achieve these aims, the Security Council has authorised the use of force in a multitude of occasions in the past to establish collective security in attempts to avoid international conflict.

In the modern era, under the influences of drastically changing political climates, threats to international peace and security is continuously escalating despite the actions taken, and resolutions submitted, by the Security Council. Traditionally, the United international system constituted of states and international organisations (IOs), where efforts to peace was settled between states. However, many conflicts today occur within states, which inevitably questions the role of non-state actors for acts of terrorism and transnational organised crime (TOC)—in response, strategies of modern-day peacekeeping and peacebuilding is unavoidably changing. An implementation of a UN Global-Counter Terrorism Strategy is essential. In response to the emergence of non-state actors prevalent in regions susceptible to terrorism, its viral consequences should be mitigated and eliminated through the international community's efforts to develop counter-terrorism strategies on a national, regional and international level.

Terrorist and TOC organisations can be driven by differing objectives, but they parallel in their approach to achieve respective aims: through infliction of brutality on societies. A major problem for the international community to address is terrorist organisations' ability to gather funding utilising transnational organised crime—such as drug trafficking—to generate revenue to afford their operations. TOC targets and cripple communities that are already vulnerable, which additionally strengthen corruption in government institutions, and establish foundation for criminal networks terrorist organisations can exploit. These networks form the grounds to criminal conduct posing threat to peace and security on an international scale, such as trafficking of illicit arms and harmful materials including chemical weapons or weapons of mass destruction.

Definition of Key Terms

Non-State Actors (NSA)

Individuals or organisations with powerful economic, political or social authority on national and at times international level, but are not associated to or allied to any particular country or state. *An organised political actor not directly connected to the state but pursuing aims that affect vital state interests* (Pearlman & Cunningham, 2011).

Terrorism

The systematic exercise of violence and intimidation against the law to create an atmosphere of terror and fright among civilians in order to achieve political objectives. Historically, methods of intimidation have been practiced by political groups with both leftist and rightist agendas, by religious groups, by revolutionaries, and by state establishments including the army, intelligence service and police.

Transnational Organised Crime (TOC)

Crimes planned and organised by groups, networks, or individuals across national borders. To fund their reign of terror, terrorist organisations regularly co-ordinate criminal activities including human trafficking, arms and drug trafficking, sex slavery and terrorism offences.

Collective Security

A system built upon a type of coalition between states in agreement not to employ aggression upon one another, and to unite to defend one another in case an attack occurs from one of the member states. It differs from strategies of collective defense, where alliances are formed by nations against those excluded from the assembly.

Sovereign Equality

One of the fundamental ground principle of international relations and legal conduct. It is the notion that the rights and entitlements of states to govern should not be dependent on area such as military power, geography, size of population, and economic conditions, but all states are equal under international law and co-operation. The concept is reinforced by the Article 2:1 of the UN Charter that “the organisation is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members.”

General Overview

Endeavors to Global Peace

Before the UN was founded, nations had already made collaboratively flawed attempts to achieve international peace—a purpose still seemingly unattainable in a globalised world still divided by polarised political ideologies and renunciation of fundamental human rights. In today’s world, the UN combats armed non-state groups and actors through operations to peacebuilding, but is continuously challenged by the logistical strains and conflict of interests.

Case Study I: League of Nations

The League of Nations (1920-1946) was instituted at the end of the First World War when the Covenant of the League of Nations as endorsed in the Paris Peace Conference came into effect. In 1918, when the War ended, it was referred to as *the Great War*, or *the War to End All Wars*, as it was the largest international conflict up to that point in history. The industrial and technological advances made in the previous century allowed an alarmingly competent system of mass slaughter. Humanity at that point had not foreseen the evolution of brutality with a greater drive of destruction to begin in a matter of 2 decades when the League of Nations failed to retain international peace and security.

There are multiple reasons for the failure of the League, and examining previous mistakes allow current day UN to reflect on its system. For instance, the absence of a chief global superpower with a large sphere of influence is often raised as one of the major reasons for League's failure. The United States, now one of the permanent five members of the security council, never officially joined the League. Although then-US president Woodrow Wilson was an avid advocate of the formation of a new world order, both the Treaty of Versailles and ratification of Covenant to League was declined by the Congress and the Senate, mainly due to isolationists who feared a decline in US authority.

With the absence of the US, an Executive Council of four permanent members and four non-permanent members formed. Like 54 other member states (point in which the League was the largest) the permanent members were obligated to respect territorial integrity and sovereignty of all others in efforts to maintain collective security, and reject the use of military intimidation to resolve international conflicts. The League was successful in some cases including their initiation of a settlement between Iraq and Turkey (1924) and arbitration of Colombia-Peru border disputes in early 1930's. However, it was unable to inhibit Germany's rearmament and enforce security measures to pressure Germany to restrain from initiating the Second World War, as countries could easily refuse to join or leave the League, thus they were not restricted to its responsibilities. To assess the similarities of the two, neither the League nor the UN were able to wholly achieve amity because of states' conflicts of interest, in particular the ones who are have substantial impact on global interests. Regrettably, the chief powers' influence persists under the UN Charter stating that any permanent member of the Security Council may veto collective action (article 27, paragraph 3). In both non-state organisations that oversee global interests of peacekeeping, an inevitable power disparity and priority in political interests had prevented its effective operation. The scheme of collective security continues to be criticised as being "naively unrealistic," because countries—especially the supposed superpowers—refrain from defending one another in conflicts, whether it be due to their individual economic, political, or social interests.

Case Study II: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

The NATO (1949-present) is a geopolitical organisation between 29 member states, some North American and others European, with its membership open to “any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.” The organisation operates under the principle of collective defense, where an attack against one or more of their member states will be countered by the whole organisation through diplomatic and crisis-management military means if necessary. Their views are largely in line with the UN, as stated in Article 1: “The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.” Their reluctance to use armed force unless in cases of justified urgency, is further expressed in Article 5, which agrees that collective self-defense efforts will only be carried out with agreement to Article 51 of the UN Charter.

If military operations are undertaken, any measures taken to mediate the violence will be directly reported to the Security Council. When the Security Council has agreed to a resolution and taken actions to peacekeeping, NATO operations will be dismissed. It is the responsibility of every Ally in the NATO to assist any other member of the Alliance under potential threat, whether it be preparation for defense, planning military action, or conducting military drills, as done during the Cold War. During the Cold War the NATO did not partake forceful measures, and Article 5 was only appealed for the first time since NATO’s creation in response to Al-Qaeda’s terrorist attack in New York, USA on September 11, 2001, which initiated NATO to join the war in Afghanistan. NATO member states collaboratively attempted to prevent further threats to Allied nations, through measures including Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean to reduce terrorist activity in the region. However, though the organisations’ crimes against humanity and inexcusable use of terror was a threat of a global scale, it has been historically evident that countries’ spending to fund joint operations has been perceptibly unequal.

Currently, members on the alliance’s eastern periphery are being questioned on their contributions to shared security, to ensure the organisation is sustainable as a military alliance rather than a disproportionately large US subsidy for its European allies. In May 2014, then-NATO head Anders Fogh Rasmussen publicly stated to the media “every ally is expected to play its part toward contributing to our shared security,” as he raised the concern of European allies becoming “free-riders.” Equal commitment to treaty obligations of defense spending was further addressed in the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw, with the new Donald Trump administration in the US

openly critical of their European allies' insufficient financial contributions, despite tensions from the Kremlin in the east, and the European Union (EU) continuously enduring internal watershed with the exit of the Great Britain, refugee crisis and bankruptcy of EU countries. Equal action and financial involvement for collective interests for the sake of shared peace is a global dilemma yet to be solved, with severe underfunding.

Violent Non-State Actors

Like NATO had previously taken action against Al-Qaeda in 2001, countries around the globe continue to combat other violent NSAs that pose threats to international security and legal enforcement. In many parts of the world, besides popularly known VNSAs such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Boko Haram receiving heavy media coverage, states are under siege from various other VNSAs. The general categories include warlords, militias, paramilitary forces, insurgencies, terrorist organisations, and criminal organisations/youth gangs.

Often, VNSAs' close affiliation with the illicit economy allows them to acquire capital to support their reign of terror. Their strategies to obtain funding differs depending on their organisational structure, use of violence, and relationship with state authorities. The organisational structure of VNSAs diverge—some groups are centralised while others function in a network of separate organisations with individual hierarchies and systems, with an organisational structure that is constantly changing and adapting to be best optimised for environments where they operate. While in many regions VNSAs and state authorities are enemies in a battle for sovereignty, but in other cases their relationship is defined by coexistence and sometimes cooperation. For instance, in Albania, Italy and regions formerly belonging to the Soviet Union, VNSAs threaten businesses, provide assistance to corrupt state officials laundering money, and continue activities destabilising state authority, with the neglect of politicians benefitting from criminal profit.

Warlords

Warlords massively influence the political hierarchies and economies of many African countries, Afghanistan and some countries throughout central Asia. Warlords are classically characterised by their firm stranglehold unchallenged by the state, as they have the ability to exercise their military command to use force against their enemies. They rule over specific territories using their private military forces, accepted as a valid leader (in absence of government powers) by the local population. Methods of coercion is typically imposed upon powerless citizens. As warlords prioritise own individual interests over collective interest, they are inexorably dictators pursuing authority and assets, without concerns for the population's wellbeing or security.

Warlords not only strive to establish themselves as the political leader or an autonomous state territory, but to stabilise their positions of power in their regions, they initiate the exploitation of

resources in respective territories to assert economic strength. For instance, there are “warlord mining economies in contemporary collapsed states, such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo,” not to mention warlord command of the opium economies in Burma through 1980s and 1990s and in modern Afghanistan. Warlords’ introduction of drugs introduces violence that spread to other regions, abused in order to “sustain illicit economic networks, to compete for control of trade routes, and to guarantee fulfillment of transaction contracts within the opium network.” However, even while engaging in activities against federal restrictions, warlords attempt to maintain a pragmatic relationship with the state, collaborating with the government to legitimise own position and closely regulate theirs. To elaborate on the case of Afghanistan, warlords supported state authorities to gain access to state buildings and “democratisation processes,” allowing them gain recognition as a major player in the local political system from only providing limited support to the central state. In effect, warlords are interested primarily in their personal interests over the public’s; the scope of their activities are narrow, limited to trading of property and arms in their localised power bases.

Militias

Militias are distinguished as organised armed forces residing and operating in regions of a weak, and frequently, failing state. Young males including child soldiers comprise militia membership, who are not always forcefully conscripted—for residents of destabilised territories torn in political and religious conflicts, the access to money, food, power and security are tempting incentives. Various ethnic, religious, tribal, clan and other communal groups are embodied by militias, in which their origins determine their uniting objectives. Members pledge loyalty to the organisation and its independent intentions rather than state institutions of their residence. In their territory of operation however, they are recognised as a legitimate power serving for the people in absence of adequate national, provincial, or local security institutions.

Militias’ prevail particularly in areas where tension between particular factions or religious groups and the state exist as a result of inadequate security from or hostile relationship with the state. Thus, militias serve a dual identity as both protectors and predators: in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, militias tortured an investigating journalist, but the favela citizens voiced opinions that security has in fact improved due to the militias’ presence. This duality can be examined in Iraq where militias, following the US invasion in March 2003, continue to play an integral role throughout the country. In Iraq, there are both long-standing militias (the Kurdish Peshmerga and the Badr organisation) as well as more recently formed militias such as the Madhi army.

Continuing insurgency and terrorism is held largely accountable for violence in Iraq, but in the southern provinces much of the violence has been caused by quarrels between the Fadhila (party of traditional elites), Badr organisation and the Mahdi army, due to their mutually keen interests in

oil reserves for purposes of legal trading and smuggling. The three groups compete for power in an economically imperative area, and conflict can erupt at any given moment as the groups all possess capacity and willingness to exercise violence in order to uphold and heighten its position. In a contest for domination and groups' personal gains the parties have openly shown aggression during intermittently occurring outbreaks of violence, where they "behave more like criminal gangs than political forces," marking the border of political and criminal activity increasingly indistinct.

Varying aims of militias demoralise efforts to law enforcement and only spread conflict, as well as the complex relationships of militias forming a "web of different security forces with allegiances to different factions or militias." Police units and security agencies belonging in separate militias have wrestled one another instead of restoring security. Presence of militias disrupt establishment of political neutrality and mitigating sectarian struggles.

Insurgencies

Insurgency is defined as an organised political struggle intended to overthrow a constituted government, and subsequently seize power through the use of subversion and armed conflict. In some cases, an insurgency may have a narrower objective, such as instituting an autonomous state within conventional ethnic or religious territorial boundaries, independent from the government; in other cases, an insurgency may aim to gain partial political concessions inaccessible without employing robust means. Insurgents control defined sets of territories where they demean existing state institutions' legitimacy, asserting themselves as a legitimate alternative. Insurgents can potentially develop into transnational organisations, especially with religious ideologies involved.

With different values and political identity to the government, insurgents seek methods to install their distinctive systems of governance, often imposed through terror tactics and agitation. Their fundamental political principles and aims can vary, ranging from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka pursuing independence founded upon national self-determination; Nepalese Maoist insurgents attempting to form a state following socialist or Maoist ideologies; the Taliban advocating imposing of Shariah law. In Iraq, the Sunni insurgency was both a struggle to remove the US presence (similar to Shia militias) and to ensure Sunni tribes were guaranteed an esteemed position of power in Iraq's new political order. However, although insurgents often advocate high principles, they rarely hesitate to resort to criminal and terrorist networks and tactics to advance their agenda, achieving their aims through whatever means necessary.

Insurgencies may form as an ideology-based movement, but insurgents easily spiral into criminal groups. For instance, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) at first launched a left-wing idealistic movement with the vision of social justice and equality against the narrow elite

ruling class. Originally FARC's activities were limited to the protection and taxation of coca farmers and drug traffickers, but some divisions have become severely entangled in businesses supplying cocaine to the Arellano Felix Organisation in Mexico, as well as the Costa organisation in Brazil, therefore building a transnational criminal network. With involvement in drug trade, the FARC grew into a threat to interstate security, collaborating with former right-wing paramilitaries. In Afghanistan, the hardline Islamic Taliban insurgency has proven itself a formidable enemy and threat to the Afghan government, surviving against US and its NATO allies launching a series of military offensives against the Taliban since 2014, attempting to minimise Taliban control in areas throughout north-west Pakistan. The Taliban's suicide bombings and other attacks to destabilise the country endures, driven by their new coalition structure consisting of different factions and militant groups. Their fractured structure involving cells or collections of individuals and militias to carry out armed attacks, exchange intelligence, trade weapons, or participate in cooperative training, strengthens the Taliban overall, and toughens the elimination of all insurgent elements.

Terrorist Organisations

Terrorist organisations habitually employ arbitrary violence against civilian targets to achieve political change, even when the targets of violence are not specifically connected to their varying origins or objectives. The four waves of modern day terrorism are identified as the following: anarchist, anti-colonial, left-wing and religious. All four gain a limited degree of legitimacy when they gain popular sympathy, allowing them to develop into insurgencies.

In the 21st century, terrorism has gained a notorious reputation and global recognition, following the al-Qaeda's attack on the Pentagon (US Department of Defense headquarters), as well as the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center on 11th of September 2001. Led by Osama bin Laden (assassinated in 2011), the al-Qaeda sought to replace previous governments across the Middle East with a religious-oriented administration that would advocate Shariah law. Terrorist organisations' sphere of influence extends far further than nationally-based warlords, militias and insurgencies; the global jihadist network, for instance, connects not only neighbouring countries but extremists across continents.

In Iraq, insurgents, terrorists, militias and criminal organisations coexist in a common opportunity space, in a symbiotic environment, all creating obstacles for the state to effectively govern. At the present moment, taking actions against non-state organisations including the Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram in Nigeria is of top priority for the Security Council. ISIS generates revenue from criminal activities including oil production and smuggling, taxes, kidnapping ransoms, sales of stolen artifacts, extortion, and control of crops. In the last few years, the IS has threatened international security in multiple occasions, launching terror attacks in megacities of international significance, including New York, London, Manchester, Barcelona, Stockholm, St Petersburg and

Paris; the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has also played a major role in the recent European migrant crisis as an aftermath of the civil war in Syria.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN assembles member states to collectively make counterterrorism efforts, supervising sixteen conventions all tackling different aspects of terrorist threats, such as terrorist financing, hijacking, acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and hostage kidnapping. In addition to conventions issued, the UN Security Council (UNSC) has passed binding resolutions, created the Counterterrorism Committee (CTC) with all 15 UNSC member states, and the CTC Executive Directorate (CTED). The CTC ensures member states are complying to and making best efforts to apply clauses of UNSC resolutions, and assists both technical and financial needs; the CTED's aim on the other hand is to ease application of UNSC resolutions through organising state assessments and coordinating financial aid.

- S/RES/2255 (2015) – Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, adopted on 17 Dec 2015
- S/RES/2250 (2015) – Maintenance of international peace and security, adopted on 9 Dec 2015
- S/RES/2322 (2016) – Fostering international judicial cooperation in countering terrorism, adopted 12 Dec 2016
- S/RES/2354 (2017) – Establishing a comprehensive international framework to counter-terrorism narratives, adopted on 24 May 2017
- S/RES/2370 (2017) – Preventing terrorist organisations acquiring weapons, adopted on 2 Aug 2017

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
11 th September 2001	Al-Qaeda attack on Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, New York, USA
28 th September 2001	The UN CTC established under UNSC resolution 1373
2015-2016	Over 2.5 million people apply for asylum in the European Union (EU) but over 2.3 million illegal crossings into EU's external borders are detected nonetheless
17 October 2017	ISIS loses control over its self-declared capital of Raqqa, Syria. Little resistance remains in the city after "major military operations had ended."

Possible Solutions

Having examined the reasons for the failures of League of Nations and problems of the NATO, it is apparent that global cooperation and mutual recognition of the grave nature of the issue is crucial. One way to encourage action through international cooperation is first acknowledging the importance and urgent need to advance a

counterterrorism agenda. A number of UN member states distinguish terrorism as less problematic compared to other issues, including HIV/AIDS or domestic crimes, while other member states such as the US rank terrorism as its highest priority. Many countries, particularly in Africa, have yet to make adequate efforts to comply to the UNSC resolution 1373, or reported to the CTC to receive assistance in implementing measures to combating VNSAs. Differences in perception and priority is an obstacle to agreeing on an effective, all-inclusive treaty that tackles non-state actors' threats holistically.

A fundamental foundation of VNSAs is their financial resources—to reduce non-state actors' powers and spheres of influence, efforts must be made to disrupt their fundraising. As non-state actors threatening international peace and security are regularly affiliated to criminal enterprises and political corruption, efforts must be made to identify and combat various criminal activities including drug trafficking, serving as VNSAs' funding mechanisms. Actions can be initiated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), particularly the Third Committee dealing with Social, Humanitarian and Cultural issues, including crime prevention, criminal justice and international drug control. Implementing the Conventions on Organised Crime and Conventions on Corruption is a necessity for all states, and further employing measures to promote transparency in governments and state institutions closely connected to VNSAs.

Bibliography

“CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT BY TRANSNATIONAL, NON-STATE ACTORS POSES MAJOR THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, THIRD COMMITTEE TOLD | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/press/en/2006/gashc3848.doc.htm.

“Security Council Adopts Resolution 2325 (2016), Calling for Framework to Keep Terrorists, Other Non-State Actors from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12628.doc.htm.

“THREAT POSED TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE BY UNCONTROLLED TRADE IN SMALL ARMS CANNOT BE OVEREMPHASIZED, SECURITY COUNCIL TOLD AS IT HOLDS DAY-LONG DEBATE ON ISSUE | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/press/en/2008/sc9316.doc.htm.

“United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.” *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html.

UN Documents for Terrorism: Security+Council+Resolutions, www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/search.php?IncludeBlogs=10&limit=15&tag=%22Security%2BCouncil%2BResolutions%22%2BAND%2B%22Terrorism%22&ctype=Terrorism&rtype=Security%2BCouncil%2BResolutions&cbtype=terrorism.

“Publication.” *Publication – Center for Security Studies | ETH Zurich*, www.ethz.ch/content/specialinterest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/93880.

“The Global Regime for Terrorism.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/report/global-regime-terrorism.

Reuters, Armin Rosen and. “NATO Is Now Facing 'the Biggest Security Challenges in a Generation' - and European Defense Spending Is Rebounding as a Result.” *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 28 Jan. 2016, www.businessinsider.com/r-fearful-of-russia-europes-defense-cuts-slow-nato-data-2016-1.

Curtis, Lisa. “Eight Essential Issues for the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw.” *The Heritage Foundation*, www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/eight-essential-issues-the-2016-nato-summit-warsaw.