Terrorism as a Threat to International Peace: A Study on 9/11 Terrorism

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Abstract—This paper is a theory-oriented study that seeks to generalize the process through which terrorism leads to the disruption of international peace. For this, it scrutinizes 9/11 terrorism based on five analytical domains of threat—security disorder, political tensions, economic adversity, socio-ideological intolerance, and the fear and cost of counterterrorism—each of which is explored in light of specific indicators. By applying qualitative correlation method, the paper finds that terrorism immediately entails five distinct kinds of negative impacts that lead to both internal disorders caused by state weakness and global disorder caused by international tensions, which in consequence, causes international peace to be disrupted. Thus, in following inductive process, the findings of this paper help to make a general inference that terrorism is a threat to international peace.

Keywords—Domains, global disorder, internal disorder, international peace, terrorism, threat.

I. INTRODUCTION: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

A. Concept of Terrorism

TERRORISM can generally be defined as a violent act that follows the strategy of spreading fear among a targeted population so that the political goals of the perpetrators can be met. It is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. Terrorism is also characterized as an anxiety-inducing form of repeated violent action used by undercover person, group, community or governmental actors for political, criminal or idiosyncratic purposes, with the immediate targets of the violence not being the primary targets. The immediate human victims of violence are chosen randomly or selectively from a target population and serve as message generators [1]. In the following section, however, the operational definition of threat to international peace is introduced.

B. Threat to International Peace: Operational Definition

In robust and traditional understanding, the state of and the threat to international peace is determined by UN Security Council [2]. In order for specifying the analytical scope of this paper, an operational definition of the threat to international peace is given here based on five domains—each of which is analyzed in light of the specified indicators— which are mentioned in Table I.

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II. 9/11 TERRORISM: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

On the 11th September of 2001, 19 men hijacked four airliners. After hijacking the airline, the hijackers informed the travelers that they carried some bombs on-board and that if their demands were settled, they would spare the lives of the passengers and crew. The hijackers were the members of Al-Qaeda's Hamburg cell. They crashed two airliners into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Both buildings collapsed within two hours. The hijackers crashed third airliner into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. The 4th plane was destroyed in a crash near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The attacks killed a total of 2,977 people, including 19 hijackers. Saudi Arabians made up fifteen of the nineteen hijackers, with the others hailing from the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Lebanon [3].

TABLE I
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF 'THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE

SL	Domains	Indicators
1	Security Disorder	*Threat to individual lives and properties *Threat to psychological well-being *Global trajectory of terrorism
2	Political Tensions	*Threat to internal secular politics *Threat to Westphalia
3	Economic Adversity	*Micro-economic adversity *Macro-economic adversity
4	Socio-ideological Intolerance	*Out-group enmity *Impediments for coexistence
5	Fear and Cost of Counterterrorism	*Counterterrorism by legislative means * Counterterrorism by coercive means

III. TERRORISM AS A THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE

This section is allotted to analyze terrorism as a threat to international peace. For this, the section scrutinizes five distinct but significant domains—security disorder, political tensions, economic adversity, socio-ideological intolerance, and the fear and cost of counterterrorism—each of which is analyzed in such a manner that can reveal both internal disorder caused by state weakness and global disorder caused by international tensions.

A. Security Disorder

In the post-9/11 world, terrorism is considered to be a key security threat of the 21st century [4]. Such threat can be analyzed by several indicators like threat to individual lives and properties; threat to psychological well-being; and the global trajectory of 9/11 terrorists.

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Threat to Individual Lives and Properties

Terrorism threatens the private lives of people, leading to the extent of death which has been more increased in post-9/11 scenario. For instance, the GTI Report 2016 reveals that in 2000, there were nearly 2,000 deaths of private citizens from terrorist attacks. But the number of deaths has increased to over 12,500 in 2015, representing an increase of 550%. The report also shows that only in 2014, 93 countries of the world experienced terrorist attacks that killed 32,765 people [5]. The threat to individual lives can be more illustrated by the evidences given in Figs. 2 and 3.
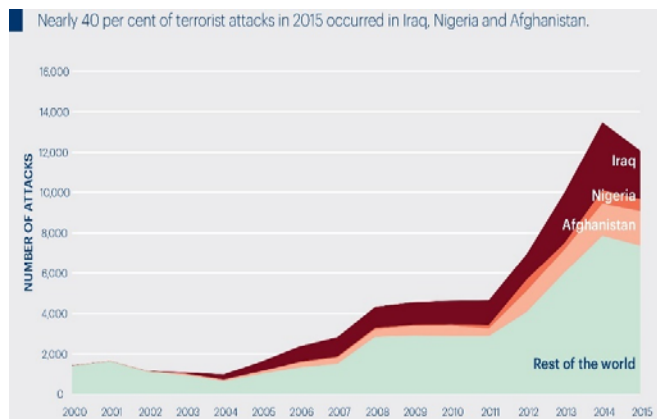

Fig. 1 Global Terrorist Attack, 2000-2015 [5, p.20]

Fig. 1 shows that there has been a remarkable increase in the occurrence of terrorist attack in post-9/11 world. All these terrorist attacks caused a great deal of individual deaths throughout the world, as shown in Fig. 2.
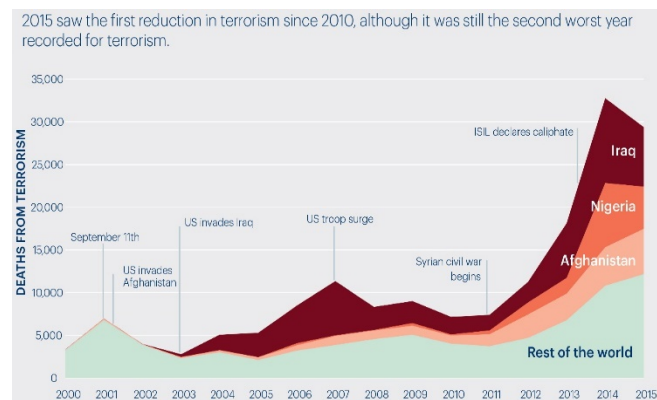

Fig. 2 Deaths from Terrorism, 2000-2015 [5, p.18]

Fig. 2 shows the alarming number of worldwide deaths caused by terrorist attacks. It also shows that in post-9/11 scenario, there has been a general increase in the number of deaths caused by terrorism. The most alarming fact is that most of the death-victims of terrorist attacks are innocent and private individuals which are shown in Fig. 3.

Fig. 3 shows that 43% of terrorist targets in 2015 was private citizens and property. Such evidences simply encourage to infer that terrorism causes significant threat to individual lives and properties. Apart from threat to lives and properties, terrorism also threatens a person's psychological well-being which is elaborated in the following section.
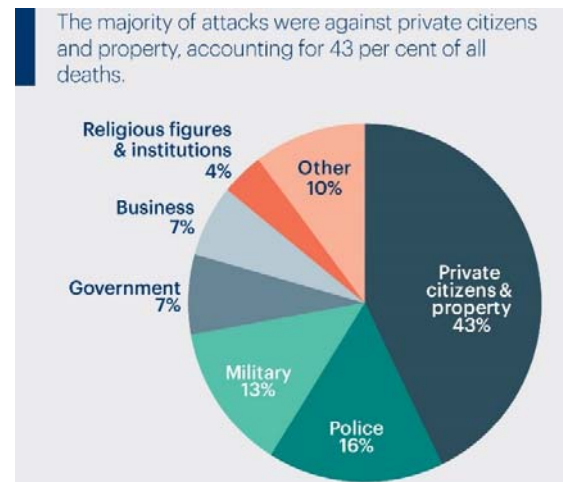

Fig. 3 Deaths by Target Type, 2015 [5, p.26]

Threat to Psychological Well-being

Terrorism instills profound fear and anxiety in the targeted population. Indeed, instilling anxiety and fear is mostly a part of the definition of the term 'terrorism' [6]. Such threat to psychological well-being, however, is a matter of high concerns for three reasons, which are as follows.

First, the attacks made by the terrorists are highly tangible, visible and shock-producing, as was the case with 9/11 incident [7]. Second, the new trends of threats are far more feared than the old ones. For Americans, for example, the threat of terrorism caused by 9/11 attack is both relatively new and thereby, highly visible. Citizens of the countries such as Israel, on the other hand, who have been living with frequent terrorist attacks and violence for a long time, are unlikely to feel nearly as anxious or fearful as the Americans. Third, terrorism is a malevolent threat—a threat directed against a person by the people who (intentionally) desire to inflict hurt. For instance, the infliction of intentional harm was the basic and driving force of 9/11 terrorism [8]. However, both these physical and psychological threats of terrorism adversely affect the peace-state of human society.

Global Trajectory of 9/11 Terrorists

The threat of international terrorism knows no boundaries. Al-Qaeda, as a 9/11 terrorist organization, projected its agents and individual members throughout the world. Fig. 4 illustrates the evidences.

Fig. 4 shows that Al-Qaeda and the consequent emergence of ISIL had a worldwide terrorist affiliation. For instance, Al-Shabaab, the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Abdullah Azzam Brigades and Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent etc. are some of the remarkable terrorist organizations affiliated with Al-Qa'ida. And such global trajectory of 9/11 terrorists is significantly threatening the peaceful conditions of the world.
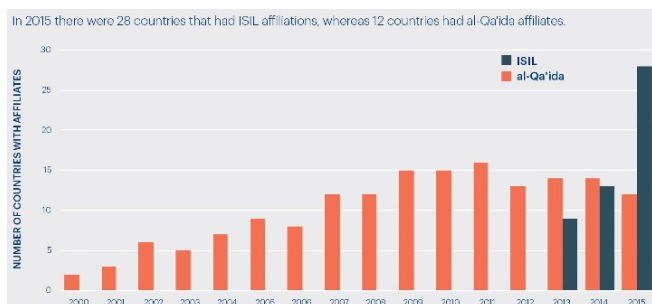
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Fig. 4 Number of Countries with Al-Qaeda or ISIL Affiliates, 2000-2015 [5, p.61]

B. Bifocal Political Tensions: Threat to Secularism and Westphalia

The political tension caused by the threat of 9/11 terrorism is bifocal in nature: on the one hand, it threatens internal secular politics, and on the other hand, it causes the breach of Westphalia.

Threat to Internal Secular Politics

Al-Qa'ida, as a religiously extremist terrorist organization, has the agenda to eradicate secular politics, particularly, from the Islamic world [9]. By doing so, it wants

- To establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremist groups;
- To overthrow regimes it deems 'non-Islamic' or particularly, secular; and
- To expel Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries—particularly, from the holy land of Saudi Arabia.

In pursuit of these goals, Al-Qa'ida expanded its capacity and network via building links with other Islamist groups, including Egypt's Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Jihad Movement (Eritrea), Al-Itihaad Al-Islamiya (Somalia), Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya (Egypt), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Harakat ul-Mujahidin (Pakistan) and so on. All these terrorist religious organizations are posing a significant threat to internal secular politics and political leaders of their respective countries [10].

Threat to Westphalia

Terrorism encourages counterterrorism which, in turn, causes the breach of the '*Peace of Westphalia*' by violating state sovereignty and autonomy. This occurs in several ways—international conventions, contracts, treaties and so many other enforcement mechanisms. Enforcement mechanisms applied by UN Security Council are particularly remarkable in this context—as it enjoys the authoritative power that once it has made a determination, this is conclusive and all member states must accept the Security Council's verdict, even if they do not share its opinion. [11]

Starting in 1963, however, sixteen international conventions have been negotiated under the UN's auspices. The 2005 Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism is the most recent. Some of these treaties, such as the 1999 Terrorist Financing Convention and the 2000 Terrorism Act, have nearly universal membership [12]. Also, UN adopted some resolutions like Resolution 1368 and Resolution 1373 of

2001, Resolution 1540 of 2004, Resolution 2178 of 2014 and so on. All these resolutions require the member states of UN to take legislative and regulatory steps to prevent terrorists and other non-state actors from committing terrorist activities. Under the new headline of "Countering Violent Extremism," (CVE), states are obliged to give necessary information about the terrorists. Similarly, an inter-agency "Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force" was established in 2005 to make sure that the implementation of counter-terrorism strategies would be aided by the combined efforts of a wide range of UN agencies. In addition, the UN Secretary-General issued a "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism" in December 2015, which imposed legally binding obligations on all UN member states to improve legislation, strengthen border controls, and increase international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, among other things. The Council also developed a support mechanism to monitor member state implementation of Resolution 1373, which was eventually enlarged and institutionalized. [13]

At the tactical and operational level, the AUMF empowered and authorized the then US President George W. Bush to apply all necessary and relevant forces against the nations, institutions, organizations, or individuals who, in his opinion, planned, designed, authorized, committed, and/or assisted the terrorist onfall of September 11, 2001, or harbored any such kind of organizations or individuals, in order to prevent further acts of national and international terrorism against their country—the United States. Besides, Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIL/ISIS in Syria and Iraq, 2014, Operation Enduring Freedom in Trans Sahara, 2013, Operation Enduring Freedom in HOA (Horn of Africa), Operation Enduring Freedom – The Philippines, 2002 etc. were also formed as an enforcement and monitoring mechanism. [5]

All these conventions, contracts, treaties and resolutions are highly likely to violate state sovereignty and autonomy signed by the Peace of Westphalia. And such violation of Westphalian model is also a mentionable source of threat to international peace.

C. Economic Adversity

Terrorism causes both micro and macro-economic adversity—on the one hand, it threatens national productivity and livelihoods; and on the other hand, it causes the macro-economy of a country, like GDP growth, to recess. Following discussion with Fig. 5 is the account of such arguments.

One of the most alarming threats terrorism poses is the causation of micro-economic adversity. For instance, between September 15, 2001 and March 30, 2002, almost 130,000 employees of US lost their jobs. The four-year Gross City Product (GCP) loss from the 9/11 attacks, according to the New York City Comptroller, is $82.8-$94.8 billion [14]. Tax revenue in New York City plummeted significantly after 9/11, according to a range of budget consultants' estimations. The exact amount of revenue lost, however, is yet unknown. In a press release issued on October 4, 2001, the New York City Comptroller, William C. Thompson, Jr., anticipated that as a

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result of the attacks, tax collections in FY2002 would be... $738 million less than they projected previously [14]. Terrorism also affects national productivity, at least, in the sense that resources that could have been used to enhance the productive capacity of the country are now being used for security [14]. The economic impacts of terrorism can be more illustrated by the Fig. 5.

Fig. 5 Economic Impact of Terrorism, 2000-2015 [5, p.64]

Fig. 5 highlights that the economic impact of 2001 is significantly higher than that of any year ranging from 2000 to 2012. It helps to infer that 9/11 terrorism brought an alarming adversity to the global economy. It also symbolizes the aggregate economic threat caused by terrorism—US$ 106 billion a year, in 2014.

The global economic impact of terrorism, however, reached US$89.6 billion in 2015. Besides, tourism's contribution to GDP is twice as less in countries with terrorist attacks—such as France and Tunisia—in comparison to countries with no terrorist attacks—such as Italy and Morocco. The economic resources devoted to peacekeeping and peace building represent only 2% of the economic impact of armed conflict and terrorism [5]. Since such economic adversity affects both national and international finance, it simply threatens the very existence of international peace.

D. Socio-Ideological Intolerance

One of the worst counter-productive results of terrorism is the creation of socio-ideological intolerance. This also happens in several ways—such as the creation of in-group sympathy and out-group enmity. It also disrupts the normal senses of trust and well-being in a community [15]. There is, however, evidence that the current counterterrorism procedures will only increase the enrichment of non-Muslim and the alienation of the Muslim community. The dehumanization and ostracizing of the Muslim community have already occurred in America, Britain, and Australia. In all these countries, it is primarily Muslims who are arrested, investigated, and detained on suspicion of terrorism; and such an anti-Muslim sentiment has resulted in hate-attacks against Muslim citizens. A European Union report found that anti-Muslim prejudice had increased dramatically across the continent, inflamed partly by the anti-Muslim attitude displayed in British media reports [16]. Such kind of socio-ideological intolerance is found at both top and bottom levels of a country.

The study of Wolfendale shows that in post-9/11 period, Muslim communities around the world—particularly, religiously pious Muslims—are neglected both by their respective societies and global communities, from due process of human treatment [15]. As a result, violent acts of terrorism and counterterrorism are being deployed targeting, particularly, the Muslim countries and communities. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Kabul), Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Islamabad), Republic of Iraq (Baghdad), Federal Republic of Somalia (Mogadishu), Philippines (Manila), Republic of Yemen (Sana'a), Syrian Arab Republic (Damascus), and Libya (Tripoli) are the remarkable examples of the victims of Westernized terrorism in the name of so-called Global War on Terror [15]. All these are happening, however, due to socio-ideological intolerance caused by, particularly, 9/11 terrorism.

E. Fear and Costs of Counterterrorism

Current counterterrorism measures pose the threat to international peace in several different ways which are depicted here in the light of Wolfendale's opinion.

First, the changes made in legislation and in practice in the name of counterterrorism are both wide-ranging and indefinite. In post-9/11 scenario, for instance, a global war on terror has been declared in such manner that has no definite range or timeframe. Besides, historical evidence shows that legislative changes made to fight terrorism—such as "Temporary" anti-terrorism laws passed in Northern Ireland (against the IRA) and Germany (against the Red Army Faction) during the 1970s—have never been repealed and given that there is no foreseeable end to the "War against Terrorism", there is little reason to think that the current legislative changes will be revoked [15]. Thus, it can be argued that once counterterrorism legislation is in place, it is very unlikely to be revoked or amended.

Second, counterterrorism measures almost inevitably result in innocent civilians being detained and even tortured indiscriminately. In reaction to 9/11 terrorism, for instance, Australia enacted new laws that permit Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) to detain people who are not suspected of any criminal activity but of merely possessing information that might be relevant to counterterrorism investigations. In Britain, the overwhelming majority of people arrested for suspected involvement with terrorism were Muslim, yet the majority of those actually convicted were non-Muslim. The victims of the Argentinean military dictatorship's "dirty war" against domestic terrorism numbered over 30,000. In the United States, there are hundreds of people who are being detained as security risks—some in solitary confinement—despite the fact that none of them have been charged with or convicted of any crimes. In Guantanamo Bay the nearly 600 prisoners include 80-year-old prisoners suffering from dementia [15]. The United States has never explained on a case-by-case basis why most of the prisoners were arrested. The study of Wolfendale also shows that even if one in 100,000 residents is terrorist, counterterrorism unit arrests at least 5,000 non-terrorists against a single terrorist. Such wrongful arrest is a likely consequence of counterterrorism procedures that focus on people's possible intentions and their group affiliations.

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Third, counterterrorism initiatives not only threaten the lives and physical wellbeing of many innocent people, but also basic democratic principles, such as the right to a fair trial and the right to privacy. In reaction to 9/11 terrorism, for instance, most of the countries enacted legislation that threatens security from the state itself—security from being investigated, detained, controlled, and placed under surveillance without one's knowledge [15]. On the other hand, the cost of counterterrorism is significantly higher than that of peacemaking and peace building. Fig. 6 provides the evidences.

The economic resources devoted to peacekeeping and peacebuilding represent two per cent of the economic impact of armed conflict and terrorism.

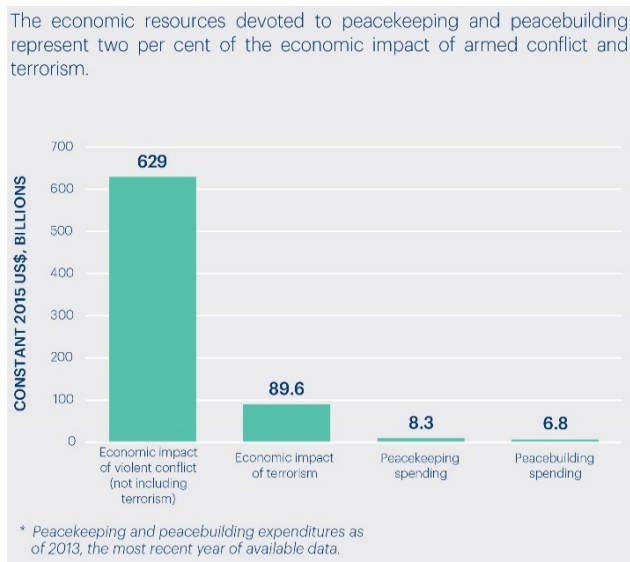*Peacekeeping and peacebuilding expenditures as of 2013, the most recent year of available data.*

Fig. 6 Economic Impact of Violent Conflict and Terrorism Compared to Peacekeeping and Peace building Spending, 2015 [5, p.68]

One of the most alarming facts is that, as shown in Fig. 6, most of the economy is spent in the fields of terrorism and violent conflict, while the expenditure in the fields of peacekeeping and peace building is remarkably poor. This helps to argue that if such a large amount of economy could be spent in the field of peace, rather than terrorism, the world would be much more peaceful than it remains today. However, the total numbers of innocent victims of current and past counterterrorism measures vastly outnumber the total victims of terrorist act itself. Some scholars argue that the killings of the WW-I and II are less effective than that of counterterrorism attack [5]. In short, current counterterrorism measures threaten individuals' lives, physical safety, and basal security as well as seriously endanger basic democratic principles and states' internal stability. This "collateral damage" of counterterrorism initiatives is also an alarming threat to international peace [5]. Building on such analysis, however, a general but inductive conclusion can be drawn which is illustrated in the following section.

IV. TERRORISM AND PEACE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In following inductive process based on the data analyzed in the previous sections, the paper is now concerned with generalizing the abovementioned phenomena.

Fig. 7 Terrorism as a Threat to International Peace: A Theoretical Framework

The inductive theoretical framework, offered in Fig. 7, generalizes the process through which terrorism leads to the disruption of international peace. Fig. 7 shows that terrorism immediately entails five distinct kinds of negative impacts—security disorder, political tensions, economic adversity, socio-ideological intolerance, and the fear and costs of counterterrorism. And these negative consequences include both intra-state disorder created by the weakness of respective country and global disorder entailed by inter-state tensions, causing world peace to be disrupted as a result. Thus, the process helps to generalize that terrorism can be regarded as a threat to international peace.

V. CONCLUSION: INFERENCE AND IMPLICATIONS

All the paper has done above is the clarification of some relevant concepts and the reach of the process through which terrorism threatens international peace. All the domains, analyzed above, are observed to be affected by terrorism and be responsible for the creation of state weakness and international tensions which, in turn, lead to both internal and global disorder, respectively. Thus, the paper has both theoretical and policy level implications: On the one hand, it reveals the process through which terrorism leads to the disruption of international peace; on the other hand, it identifies some of the basic domains and indicators, to which policy makers may turn their specific attention so that the adverse effects of terrorism can be eradicated, or at least, reduced to a greater extent.

Due to different kinds of constraints, however, the paper could not deal with the extent, to which every particular domain makes the influence. It also fails to elaborately deal with the process, through which state becomes weak and international system disturbed. This is exactly where further study on the topic can be started from.

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