

# An Overview of International Terrorism

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## **Abstract:**

The origin of terrorism can be traced to the French Revolution. International terrorism can be described as warfare without territory, waged without armies. Every terrorist act contains the use of violence, and deliberate targeting of non-combatants and must have a political goal. During the days of the cold war both the superpowers employed terrorism against each other to intercept the spread of their respective ideologies and influence. International terrorism exacerbated the blatant display of carnage when Osama Bin Laden-led terrorist group destroyed the World Trade Center on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. Religious fundamentalism, low rate of socio-economic development, exploitative trends of globalization, brutal repression of petty offenders by the security personnel, growth of separatist groups, and overall degradation of moral values and humanism among the citizens of the global world are responsible for the emergence and acceleration of terrorism. Almost all the countries of the world have come under the all-embracing influence of terrorism. Though the United Nations at the global level have adopted various Conventions to curb terrorism, they have not produced desired results on account of a lack of unanimity among the member states and big powers. Despite a ban on a country's territory to be used by terrorist groups, the terrorist groups are taking shelter and conducting training camps in the territory of a country at the indulgence of the ruling regime and when the opportunity comes, they kill innocent people and shatter the foundation of national symbol elsewhere.

**Keywords:** Violence, Political goal, Exacerbated, World Trade Center, Religious Fundamentalism, Training camps.

International terrorism: It is very difficult to define terrorism because a person or a group of persons may be terrorists to some people, on the one hand, again the same group may be freedom fighters to some other people. But in general, it has some political traits. Specifically, some political and socio-economic elements act behind individual terrorism. George Rosie while explaining the traits of terrorism said that it is very complex in nature and assumes a multidimensional form which sometimes makes people perplexed and numbed. Terrorist groups emerge, crumble, and even sometimes vanish, but within a very short period, they rejuvenate themselves and carry on their brutal activities. That is why common people lack an idea of their future course of action.

According to Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorist is fundamentally a violent intellectual, prepared to use force in the attainment of his goals". Though terrorism is identified as a crime against humanity yet the terrorists do not think it is so because they viewed terror as a political strategy. In fact, this political characteristic of terrorism has made them ordinary criminals. They think that national interactions cannot produce desired results which they think produce terror at a very rapid pace.

**Features of Terrorism:** (1) There is always conspiracy inherent within terrorism. The rank and file of the terrorist groups give blind obedience to their leaders. Trained members try to realize their planning or objectives in practice.

(2) The organizational structure of the traditional terrorist groups is pyramidal and hierarchical. At the top, there are some leaders whose main functions are to determine policies and make planning.

(3) They take the path of violence and launch attacks on their desired targets. Side by side they also inculcate fear in the minds of the people and terrorize public life. Not all terrorists are born out of the womb of a mother. Sometimes circumstances compel them to take up arms and become terrorists.

(4) Innumerable innocent people are the victims of terrorism. Through mass killing, they try to exert pressure on the government to fulfill their demands or seek to change government policies in their favor.

(5) Millions of people in the world are the victims of state and non-state-sponsored terrorism. Global terrorism has given birth to insecurities. Civil societies of different countries are receiving the severe blows of terrorism all the time. There are some active cadres and they are entrusted with the task of carrying out an onslaught. Through proper training, they become experts in making bombs, operating sophisticated weapons, kidnapping people, maintaining links, collecting data, etc.

The next strata of terrorist groups are widely expanded. In it, there are active supporters. They assume an important role in perpetual terrorist activities. If necessary, they supply data and information, sound high alerts and make necessary arrangements. The lowest stratum of terrorist organizations is flexible and separate. There are passive supporters in the lowest rung of the organization. They support the aim and objectives of the organization, help in spreading the ideologies of the group, and give financial assistance to the terrorist groups.

(6) Terrorist groups have easy access to poor, dissatisfied, deprived, and alienated youths of society. They make use of propaganda for extracting mass support and sympathy. There is an unholy alliance between terrorists and the underworld. The drug and weapons trade are having its links with terrorist groups in Asia. Terrorist groups are using mafias and underworld people for their own purposes. Underworld collects money from various sources like drugs, arms and weapons trade, trafficking in women, and helps terrorist groups to increase their funds. In this regard, the case of the abduction of the Khadim shoe company chief by Aftab Ansari may be cited as an example.

(7) At present global terrorism has assumed a very serious form. It has taken the help of the cyber world for spreading terrorism. It is well organized through many Jihadi websites. They collect funds, recruit cadres, determine and execute planning in practice, make necessary arrangements for the training of Jihadi personnel, and spread terrorist ideologies in a very scientific and systematic manner. So, it is called “e-Jihad”. Bruce Hoffman while discussing the role of fundamentalist terrorist groups using the Internet in spreading the ideologies of terrorism has commented that “For Al-Qaida, the Internet has become something of a virtual sanctuary, providing an effective, expeditious and anonymous means to carry on communications with its fighters, followers, sympathizers, and supporters worldwide, while continuing its campaign of psychological warfare”. Online magazine Sawtal-Jihad [voice of jihad] has played an important role in spreading jihadi ideologies. It is also effective in solving inner group conflicts.

(8) Another important feature of modern terrorism is that most of the terrorists are coming from mediocre families; they are educated and highly informative, and most of them are engineers and doctors. Terrorism is characterized by attacks on soft targets, that is mostly unarmed, innocent civilians-is one form of using violence to pressurize the opponent and thereby achieve a political goal.

(9) Whether the provisional Irish Republicans Army-seeking to remove British forces from Northern Ireland and unify Ireland, the Basque Fatherland and Liberty-seeking to create an independent homeland in Spain's Basque region, the Hezbollah-seeking to establish the Islamic Republic in Lebanon, the Hamas-seeking to establish an Islamic Palestinian State-all these have demonstrated the use of terrorism as essentially a political weapon with clear agenda and objectives against powerful ruling regimes. These are predominantly political and localized in nature.

New terrorism marks a shift from constitutional patterns. It is essentially global in nature, has strong and redolent [Islamist] religious and cultural connotations, is more innovative and destructive, and aims at punishing the adversaries for the policies they pursue or the values they stand for.

**Classification of Terrorism:** State-sponsored terrorism: State terrorism is also called state-nurtured terrorism. Sometimes one particular state cannot accept the political system of other countries and considers the existence and development of that state detrimental to the interest of its own. In this circumstance that state takes the help of terrorism intending to obliterate the valid legal framework or mechanism of other states. Since all the states are members of the international community and cannot initiate direct intrusion by military force shunning the obligation to strict adherence to international laws and for that reason use clandestine means to harm that state. To create terror within the state, terrorist organizations send spies trained in terrorist indoctrination with the help of connivance, and this way they attempt to upset the political stability of the country. Since its very inception, Pakistan has established itself as the arch-rival of India. The main objective of a significant part of the ruling class of Pakistan is to harm India and to materialize this objective Pakistan has an established institution viz. ISI. This organization by sending spies and trained terrorists organizes and conducts subversive activities within India to tear apart India. Though ISI is an autonomous organization to the outside world yet this body is run at the behest of the ruling regime in Pakistan.

In the intermediate period between the two World Wars western countries and America only to keep the Soviet Union at bay and to bring its development to a halt created terrorism within the Soviet Union. Even Germany took refuge in terrorism for establishing ethnic politics. Terrorists incited by the state secretly enter the territory of other countries and carry out their mission of carnage. For a long time, terrorists of Pakistan have been carrying out subversive activities within the territory of India. For conducting terrorist activities in India Pakistan is spending a huge amount of money from the state treasury. The conflict which is going on for a long time between Arabs and Israel is an example of state-sponsored terrorism. Both countries have used terror as a weapon for materializing political purposes.

(2) Another form of terrorism is cross-border terrorism. This terrorism is limited to two or more neighboring countries. This can be called state terrorism or state-sponsored terrorism. Again, state terrorism conducts its activities in a number of countries while cross-border terrorism confines its activities within two or more neighboring countries. Pakistan sends terrorist groups to India and they are very active in creating a disturbance inside India. Moreover, terrorist groups are trained in Bangladesh. Most of the border areas of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh are unprotected. Terrorist groups nurtured by Pakistan take advantage of this porous border area to infiltrate India and carry out their missions and when chased by military personnel they take shelter in Bangladesh and receive training from Jihadi groups in Bangladesh. In the rugged hilly terrain of Myanmar and Bangladesh terrorist groups are trained. In this way, cross-border terrorism is very active in the Indian subcontinent. But Pakistan does not accept this

fact. Due to political reasons, Pakistan does not want internal political stability in India, and for this reason, by perpetuating cross-border terrorism it conducts mischievous activities.

(3) International terrorism: At present international terrorism has gained popularity and is discernible in many countries. International terrorism is the main scourge of human civilization. There is no other country in the world that is not a victim of it. One remarkable aspect of international terrorism is that it cannot be insulated from religious fundamentalism. What is known today as international terrorism is born of religious fundamentalism. Some religious fundamentalist groups think that religion is at stake and as a result of this religious sanctity is in a precarious condition. Therefore, at any cost sanctity of religion is to be preserved and maintained. Religious fundamentalists have reached this conclusion after assessing religion from narrow grooves of thoughts and a conservative standpoint. The Next step is to proclaim jihad to protect the sanctity of religion by this type of fundamentalist leader. This jihad is targeted against other religious denominations, leaders, and even other states. As such Al-Qaeda thinks the presence of America in Arab countries or American policy concerning the Arab world is nothing but the desecration of Islam and out of this obsessive belief Al-Qaeda inflicted carnage on World Trade Center in America on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. Fundamentalist terrorist groups have an ingrained belief that their religion is exploited by powerful capitalist countries. There is no denying the fact that America is exploiting the oil resources of Arab countries and the cultural intrusion of America has proved to be deleterious to Islam religion. So, most terrorist groups consider capitalist countries of the world as the main enemy of Islam. Terrorist groups who keep faith in Islam conceive that for the sustenance of Islam and to make it sturdy they have to be more aggressive.

Beyond religion, international terrorism is also observed to be active. Do some terrorist organizations think why a particular state shall establish absolute supremacy over the rest of the world? There was bipolarity in the world as long as the erstwhile Soviet Union existed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world has now turned out to be unipolar. Some terrorist organizations seek to dislodge this unipolarity and this is the reason they carry out terrorist activities. Many are in favor of describing this type of terrorism as ideological terrorism. But this is not so. The main purpose of this type of terrorist group is to oppose American supremacy. Many countries in Asia and Africa have teemed with the existence of both terrorist groups and terrorism opposing America.

(4) Cyber terrorism: Recent technological advancement has multiplied the strength of terrorist groups. Cyber terrorism is the intentional use of computers, networks, and the public internet to cause widespread destruction and harm. Experienced cyber terrorists are very skilled in terms of hacking that can inflict massive damage on government systems, hospital records, confidential national defense, and security programs, and put the government authority under tremendous pressure. E-mail bombings, defacing websites, disrupting computer systems either by jamming or sending computer viruses, and credit card fraud are the most common threatening forms of cyber terrorism. Terrorist organizations are clandestinely using the internet, e-mails, and WhatsApp to conduct their activities, such as plan and conducting operations, passing on information and commands, recruiting, training, procuring logistical and financial support, and spreading their ideologies. Al-Qaeda a terrorist organization has successfully used the internet to communicate with sympathizers and even to recruit new members.

**Causes:** (1) After the end of World War II the powers and prestige of the erstwhile Soviet Union increased to a great extent. Though capitalist countries have firmly established their paramount supremacy yet the Soviet Union and its allied countries have considered that capitalism is crisis-ridden and its fall is imminent

and it is indispensable to unite the Socialist camp and to form guerrilla warfare groups in third-world countries based on Marxism-Leninism to give a terrible blow to capitalism. Keeping this in mind the Soviet Union has helped to establish terrorist groups in the most strategically significant parts of the world and has also trained and financed terrorist groups. To thwart this attempt by the Soviet Union, America has also proceeded to form and support terrorist groups. According to political experts, this is the main cause of rising terrorist activities in international society and politics.

(2) American government to crush anti-American sentiment and establish a government that will extend support to American interest in Latin America also supported terrorism in those Latin American countries. The more there was anti-American feeling in Latin America, the greater the support to terrorist groups by America in Latin American countries. In the 1960s America tremendously aided terrorism in Vietnam. Mass killings, incite to commit despicable terrorist acts, the establishment of the puppet government, blackmailing, and upheavals were inflicted at the behest of America. In this regard, the most lethal weapon of America was the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). America also adopted the same strategy in Nicaragua.

(3) International terrorism has assumed a repulsive form due to another reason. After the end of World War II, most of the Third World countries started to gain independence. As an outcome of this, imperialist countries have lost the opportunity to plunder the natural resources of Third World countries. This created a precarious situation for the development of imperialist countries. Intending to trap the remaining natural resources of the Third World countries, they have employed a subtle strategy of neo-colonialism. So, the imperialist powers have proceeded to establish their pet governments through means of terrorism by overthrowing valid civilian governments. An Unholy alliance between terrorism and organized crimes is another reason for the recent terrorist explosion. One type of terrorist group feeding with the ideology of terrorism takes the initiative of collecting funds because a huge amount of money is required for the purpose of fruition of revolution. In this circumstance, terrorist groups have an understanding with international criminals. International criminals are engaged in contraband of drugs, heroines, and marijuana and they make a good amount of profit. Terrorists have joined hands with international drug mafias in search of funds for carrying out terrorist activities.

LTTE, a terrorist group in Sri Lanka earn a good amount of money through trading in drugs, and psychotropic substance and use this money for separatist activities. Terrorist groups in Assam abducting tea estate managers demanded a huge amount of money and also use this money for subversive activities. Terrorists are also very active in Punjab. Chechnya is a state of the Russian Federation. Rebellions and terrorist groups in Chechnya are engaged in a protracted struggle for establishing a separate Chechen province. Not only in Chechnya, but terrorist activities in Punjab, Kashmir, and Ireland are the manifestations of the right to self-determination. Terrorist organizations in Ireland, Germany, Peru, Salvador, and Italy are firmly entrenched and are maintaining nexus with drug mafias.

(4) Lack of discipline and ideology among the youths, degradation in ideals and conscience, and rat race among the power mongers for the production of destructive weapons have provided a fillip to the surge of terrorist activities. The Youth of Third World countries is directionless. They are addicted to drugs. Youths who take drugs directly sponsor one bullet to a terrorist organization. The lack of moral precepts, tolerance, and values among politicians has brought the youth to the brink of terrorism. Politicians in order to cater to their political motives use terror and entrust this task of spreading terror to the youths. Due to the high rate of attrition among politicians, terrorism has raised its ugly head and has become very destructive.

(5) Terrorism has its socio-economic background. It has become the livelihood of many youths. Hired terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir take up weapons only to earn a small amount of money. For this reason, those terrorists who lay their arms down, get financial assistance from the government. There was a history of economic exploitation, deprivation, and social alienation behind the emergence of LTTE in Sri Lanka. Behind the Maoist movement in Nepal and the terrorist movement in the North-Eastern parts of India, there is a similar type of poverty, inequality, exploitation, and backwardness. Even there was a terrorist attack in Lebanon and the attackers were comparatively backward in all senses of the terms from the citizens of the mainstream of society.

(6) According to Professor D. Dasgupta, the root cause of terrorism can be found in “humiliation”. In our society, if some people are deprived or humiliated, they think that they are living outside the mainstream of society. Ultimately, this creates a congenial atmosphere of terrorism. Behind the emergence and expansion of international terrorism, there is also a similar type of emotion and feelings which after becoming associated with religious fundamentalism assumes a devastating form.

Role of the UN in combating terrorism: The first step of the UN in freeing the world from the noose of terrorism is the constitution of a Special Committee in 1972. But due to prevailing disagreements among the member countries over the nature of anti-terror activities, this Committee has failed to take any effective role. Another Convention of the UN was held in 1973 in New York City of USA. In this Convention, it was discussed. In 1976 Security Council of UNO formed a committee. Security Council has clearly stated about curbing terrorism. In forming this committee, West Germany took the special initiative. Despite the formation of this committee, its progress was slow due to a lack of unanimity and cooperation among all the parties present in the committee. In 1992 the Secretary-General of UNO placed a report before the General Assembly with the title “Agenda For Peace” in which he stated that terrorists have spread their emanating influence everywhere with the help of advanced science and technology and if a proper measure is not adopted then in near future terrorism shall engulf the entire world. He has also stated in the report that terrorism has given a severe blow to democratic structure, amicable relations amongst the various states, and world peace and security.

An important step in combating terrorism by the UN is the acceptance of a historic proposal adopted by the General Assembly. In that proposal, it was clearly stated “The General Assembly unequivocally condemned all acts of terrorism, as criminal and unjustifiable whenever and by whom so ever committed...” It was further stated in the proposal that member states shall supervise the work of containing terrorism and shall be active in the removal of international terrorism. In this regard, member states shall follow the following guidelines. (1) To refrain from giving financial assistance, encouragement, and abetment to all types of terrorist organizations. (2) No state shall allow its territory for use of terrorist activities, training camps, and fissiparous activities. Not to use the territory of a country for terrorist activities (3) To detain, take into custody, and inflict punishment on any offender connected with terrorism (4) To sign treaties between countries at the international level or regional level for subduing terrorism (5) To counter-terrorism at the international level, exchange of information and beefing up cooperation amongst the states of the international community. (6) Implement and apply international agreements concerning combating terrorism at the national level. (7) No state shall provide shelter to any person directly or indirectly connected with terrorism within its territorial jurisdiction and shall not give political asylum to any person related to terrorist activities. In the UN Millennium Summit of 2000 initiative was taken to curb and quell all types of terrorism. In the context of the World Trade Center

carnage on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, a special session of the UN was summoned and, in that session, the adoption of stern steps was taken to suppress terrorism.

**Concluding Observation:** From the preceding discussion, it is quite apparent that numerous initiatives have so far been adopted at the national and international levels to uproot terrorism. But there is debate concerning the fruition of these initiatives. Still now in many counties of the world, terrorism is pampered and terrorist activities are spreading their tentacles. Terrorism is an organized crime against humanism. When the state itself resorts to violence and terrorist tactics in combating terrorism then the situation becomes more complicated and grimmer. Sometimes big powers like America takes resort to violence to curb terrorism on the charge of human rights violations by a particular state. American conviction is that rogue states are responsible for nurturing and spreading terrorism in the world. Rogue states are those states of the Middle East and some communist countries where law and order systems have already collapsed, and lack of democracy and vibrant civil society provide sanctuary to the terrorist organizations in these countries. On this plea, America intervened in Iraq, which was a rogue state according to America. America had brought imputation against Saddam Hussein's regime for possession of mass destructive weapons and toppled Saddam Hussein's regime to capture oil resources. During the cold war days, both America and the erstwhile USSR pampered various terrorist organizations against each other. The main problem of combating terrorism is the lack of determination and propelling factor of motivated self-interest. Before the incursion on the World Trade Center America only provided lip service to India's demand for the obliteration of terrorist camps in Pakistan. After a terrorist attack on World Trade Center America was in a brown study over the destruction of terrorist camps and declared terrorism as the vilest act. To crush terrorism, international organizations like the UN shall be more vigilant and shall make all the countries impartial and sincere in combating terrorism. Moreover, burning issues of social life, such as poverty, unemployment, fundamentalism, and degradation of moral values are to be properly addressed as they provide a fillip to terrorism. The Solution to terrorism lies not in the bullet but in education and amelioration of alienated underprivileged sections from the mainstream of society.

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