

The Stroke of Terror: A Glance Into the Global Prospects of Terrorism

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Abstract

Terrorism, in no particular stance, shall be recognized as an act which solely aims to bring out death and destruction. There are various facets of terrorism and exposing civilians to humanitarian casualties mentioned above is the last resort approached by terrorists and especially in cases where the 'idea of terror', propagated by terrorist groups and organizations to create a sense of fear amongst the populace, fails to trigger the latter regarding the possible risks and destruction. As far as the fundamental idea regarding terrorism is concerned, the activity has undergone evolution over the period and thus it is difficult to land at any particular conclusion regarding the same. Regardless of any development throughout these years, the hidden crux to destroy material and spiritual well-being, remains the same. The paper deals with the ongoing terrorist crisis in distinct parts of the world.

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Tensions and complexities have only inclined with regard to the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan. Peace is uncertain in the valleys of Kashmir. Throughout the years Pakistan has sourced terrorist groups within its territories. Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) are some of the renowned terrorist groups which are granted asylum in Pakistan and are thus playing a decisive role in the prevailing tensions over the Kashmir issue. This is the reason as to why Pakistan is often accused of sponsoring state-based terrorism.

Terrorist activities are no sort of a new phenomenon. Ever since the end of bipolarity (the Cold War phase), the world has been witnessing an increase in the role of extra-territorial actors or non-state entities in the state system. Terrorism, being one of them, is bound to interfere or rather 'intervene' with the prospect of affecting the internal security of both the state and its citizens.

Terrorism gained a momentum in the post 1990s period when the United States Of America became a victim of suicidal bombings at Pentagon (Washington) and the Twin Towers in New York, on September 11, 2001 by the Global Jihadist group Al Qaeda. The event is recalled by the abbreviation '9/11' to

symbolise the tragic loss of lives and the boundless brutal acts of terrorism.

Al Qaeda, more than any title of an “organization” is an ideology. An ideology, aiming for a civilizational turnover. Global Jihadists are rigidly opposed to the spread of American values and what George Ritzer termed as McDonaldization of the world. The suicidal bombings in the World Trade Center, which led to the collapse of the iconic Twin Tower in New York on September 11th of 2001, was a gigantic international event, both in terms of drawing global attention and the unwavering heights of terrorism. This brutality was enough to shake the unipolar world dominated by the US. Samuel Huntington, in his famous work *Clash of Civilizations* (1996) has reflected the advent of the emergence of diverse ideological thoughts and cultures in the post 1990s period. In other words, it's much about tangled cultural dynamics which occurred in the global space.

Coincidentally, the term ‘terrorism’ itself became prominent in the post-cold war era.

One event which can perhaps (even partially) justify the above statement, is the Gulf War (1991). Though Gulf War is particularly regarding the joint action of US-led 49 countries against Iraq's annexation of Kuwait through execution of what was named as the Operation Desert Storm, my understanding of relating this event to the very idea of terrorism is to bring forth and analyzing the role of Saddam Hussain in secretly and cowardly developing nuclear arsenals in Iraq despite the warnings of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency).

Terrorism knows no bounds. It has become religious propaganda in the current scenario. The reason why Global occurrence of terrorism is known much by the stance of ‘Jihadist’ standpoint, is the very religious sentiment attached to the core idea of terrorism. Terrorists use this propaganda to justify their political ends.

In the terrorist propaganda, personal sentiments often take a dig at the political outlook, which is why it is further safe to say that violence is planned and politicised to attain the very aim by preaching and propagating terror amongst the masses.

Though there has been an enormous bunch of remarkable writings on terrorism, the very reason which motivates me to ink down my perceptions on this very issue is the bone-chilling and rather disheartening mass killing of 26 people in recent terror attack in what is cited as the ‘heart of Kashmir’, the Pahalgam Valley. It was a representation of neighbourhood atrocities, with religion at the peak of the sword. These victims, who, like any other amongst us, went as tourists with their families to the Pahalgam Valley. Little did they know a random day would turn into a nightmare for the lifetime. The victims were asked to recite Kalma. If they didn't, they were brutally shot by the gunmen and were dead on the spot. The visuals of that day are haunting to an extent that it somehow questions the very existence of secularism on the Indian land itself.

As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the Kashmir issue has been a bone for India to pick with in its dealing with Pakistan. The breathtakingly beautiful Kashmir has been the locus of escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. Sudden and immediate bombings and disturbances in the civilian areas and especially in those at the trigger point of persisting tensions have become a continuous trend with regard to terrorist activities. However, there is a fundamental distinction between the Indian and Pakistani approach towards terrorism. New Delhi does not support war. Islamabad has a dual standing on this aspect. In one stance, they propagate terrorism by funding and giving asylum to terrorist groups and organizations. On the contrary, Shahbaz Sharif (Pakistani Prime Minister at present) announces Pakistan's will to peacefully negotiate with the Indian government to end the flaming atrocities across the borders of both the countries. Is this a justifiable reciprocation of the loss of innocent lives at Pahalgam? Certainly the

question was answered on May 7th, 2025 through the execution of Operation Sindoor. All nine terrorist sites in the Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir were destroyed through this operation.

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The Modi Government has clearly replicated the theory that terror and talks can't go on together. This has been India's diplomatic stand for quite a while now. Pakistan initiated the first strike. Thus were the consequences for our dearest-enemy neighbour.

Not far away from us, the Taliban has gained power in Afghanistan. In August 2021, Kabul was seized under control by the Taliban rule, with the collapse of the former Afghani Government. Ever since the Taliban's takeover of the Afghani administration, the country has been prone to the worsening levels of humanitarian exploitation. The extremely unfortunate aspect of this is the complete eradication of young girls and women from the public and political domain. They are denied the right and access to education. The freedom of expression is suppressed in the Taliban-administered Afghanistan. There are pertaining doubts regarding the classification of Taliban as a terrorist group since it enjoys a de facto power over the country. In simple words, Afghanistan is ruled by this group. Nevertheless, the consequences and brutalities the Taliban rule brought in the region are no less than those caused by any terrorist organization in some part of the world. Also, the Taliban's rule has propagated a sense of terror amongst the Afghans and that their way of lives have been affected severely. According to a report published by the Amnesty International, women and girls in Afghanistan are prone to gender-based violence which involves rape and prostitution. In 2024, the brutal Taliban rule, imposed a so-called vice and virtue law, which banned the women and female groups to be heard and represented in the public domain without their male chaperones or maharam. The movement of women is restricted and this is the reason why many of them are now confined within the domains to their households.

Shia-Hazaras, the ethnic and religious minority in Afghanistan, are constantly targeted by the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (IS-KP). This group is frequently attacked by the IS-KP in their areas of worship, educational institutions and the Hazara-dominated residential areas.

As far as Human Rights are concerned, they are at the brink of being severely violated in Afghanistan. More than half of the Afghani population lives in conditions of extreme poverty, which is further deepened due to the terrible weather conditions and economic crisis in the country. Amnesty International reported that while 12 million people were trapped in food insecurity, an approximate of 2.9 million people were under the extreme hunger crisis. Children are the core victims of malnutrition. It has been four years since the Taliban took over Afghanistan and the socio-political dimensions of the country are weakening at a much greater pace.

This was the South Asian story of terrorism. In the Middle-East, and I am sure many of the readers are well-versed with the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict and the escalating repercussions. The contemporary rift (with historic expansive roots) takes us back to October 2023, when Hamas, a terrorist organization attacked Israel which killed an estimated 46,000 civilians and the number has been escalating since then. Hamas as an organization was against the creation of the state of Israel (1948) on what it considers to be a Palestinian land. Hamas is an offshoot of Muslim Brotherhood (1928) and the very name itself suggests

‘Islamic Revolution’. Since October 2023, there has been a constant brutal state of pertaining disturbances in the Gaza strip. Frequent bombings by both sides (Israel and Hamas) have become quite a normal phenomena in the Middle East. The brutality of the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza Strip and specially in Rafah (South Gaza) region knows no end.

The Hamas’ struggle to gain the regional identity solely as the land of the Palestinians can be sort of perceived as an idea rooting from a sense of ethnic sentiment. Nonetheless, to use terror as the tool to attain any political motive and that too at the cost of the loss of innocent lives is in no way justifiable. The present-day Gaza is an influx of humanitarian vulnerabilities of all kinds. War casualties in civilian areas is a constant phenomena of the Israel-Hamas conflict. Food insecurity is perhaps one of the key atrocities the region is now prone to. The US-Israeli led and administered World Central Kitchen is now out of stocks and supplies to sustain the suffering populace of the region. Air strikes by Israel on Gaza are now covering the headlines of international newspapers and journals across the world.

Last month, the then victorious powers (or victors) celebrated the 80th anniversary of their victory in World War II in Moscow. Military coups from some 89 countries marched around the iconic Red Square to commemorate the same. Diplomatic Representatives from across the world gathered in the Russian capital to cling glasses and witness this historic moment. It is a rather ironic stance that whilst Moscow hosts the memorial day, there’s just so much happening in its background with respect to its nature of dealing with the breadbasket neighbourhood of Ukraine.

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, since the latter was inclined towards joining the US-led NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) pact. Russia was opposed to this stance of Ukraine, which of course has roots in the ideological determinant and tensions between the former Soviet Republic and the United States Of America. Though, we cannot classify this as any form of terrorism, the repercussions are the same. There is absolutely no parameter to measure the unfortunate loss of lives and destruction of humanity caused by any evil practices, whether in the form of terrorism or any unethical political move.

Humanity dies when a terrorist kills an innocent tourist. It dies when a country invades a region. Certainly, the world has come a long way since the end of World War II. There have been developments of enormous kinds. Countries are gradually pacing towards development. The 21st Century has brought in a wave of technological advancements. And certainly, the developed economies like China, Russia and the US, are using this advancement to develop their military arsenals.

There has not been a third world war, due to the presence of diverse international organizations and bodies, which function as a conference table for nations to come together and frame policies regarding global agendas and issues. However, despite the present age of global governance, there are regions of the world which are exposed to humanitarian threats.

Terrorism is one of the core aspects of the prevailing unrest in the world today. Terrorism is a global threat. It does not respect boundaries and especially, when it has attained a universal character. The extremists who support the terrorist sentiments are aware of the casualties their acts lead to. And this is their weapon. They use terror to frighten communities and propel unjustified acts through committing crimes and violence. Therefore, while we celebrate eight decades of the allied victory, terrorism prevails and mass-murders, genocide and humanitarian crisis still exists.