

Terrorism in International relations

It is popular to speak about the radical transformation of international relations' essence since the end of the Cold War. There is no conflict of superpowers anymore. The United States and Russia are not competing for influence in Europe, the Middle East, and Third World countries. However the new global threat of international terrorism took the place of superpower conflict as the main defining factor of global and regional politics all over the world.

Terrorism, however, is a very specific form of asymmetric violence that involves a combination of political motivation and a civilian/non-combatant target. One definition is that "terrorism is the deliberate systematic murder, maiming and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear in order to gain political ends."

Hence terrorism is generally understood as the use or threat of violence by non-state actors to influence citizens or governments in the pursuit of political or social change.

Accordingly to these definitions, terrorism includes not only hijacking of air planes or the random machine gunning of people in airports. The bombing of civilian population in cities by both side in the 2nd World War; the invasion of Germany by Allied troops; the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the arrest and torture of political prisoners- would also qualify as terrorism according to these definitions.

The French Resistance and the Polish Underground were also labelled terrorist by Germany in World War II, but others would certainly disagree, believing that resistance against Nazi occupation was a moral cause. In the post-sovereign globalized world the states remain as important agents of security.

In the modern age of terrorism there are four waves .

The 1st wave beginning at the end of the 19th centuries and was characterized by anarchism as a motive & assassination as a method, including the assassination of the Austrian Arch Duke Sarajevo in 1914; that sparked World War I. The 2nd wave was primarily a reaction to decolonization after WW I & WW II and involved groups fighting for national self-determination. The 3rd wave came in response to the criticism of the US in Vietnam & Israel in the Middle-East. This wave was more trans-national in character and air-line hijacking was the most popular method used. The 4th wave, beginning with the Iranian revolution in 1979 and growing.

Never before has acts of terror had inflicted so enormous casualties and destruction, so huge human, economic, political and moral damage But in a globalized world, these processes are becoming much more dangerous than ever before due to the possibility of nuclear, chemical, and biological terrorism.

In 1972, the General Assembly of the United Nations also started discussions on the cross-border threat of terrorism.

Today the shadow side of globalisation have given criminal and violent groups the ability to spread their message and widen their operations. Under these conditions we have seen the proliferation of transnational terrorist groups with globalised agendas whose operations involve many countries or have ramifications that transcend national borders.

Individuals join terrorist groups for a variety of personal and political reasons. They may join because most of their friends have, or for the feeling that membership of the organisation brings benefits. For example, the group Islamic State (also known as Daesh, ISIS and ISIL) seeks to establish a new theologically driven state in the Middle East and promises fighters from all over the world better living conditions and pay than they might achieve in their home countries. The ability to travel across borders more freely because of globalisation and the economic resources available to Islamic State in the form of oil make this possible. Individuals may also join a terrorist organisation because they strongly empathise and identify with the group even if they are not directly affected by the cause. Global online media can facilitate this identification by giving a cause a global appeal. It is important to note that what motivates individuals to join and remain in transnational terrorist organisations is not necessarily the same as the wider goals of those groups.

Terrorism hence is a 'communicative act', by which we mean it seeks to send a message that goes beyond the actual destruction caused to life and property. That message is to be heard by three groups of people. The first are civilians either local or globally who witness the events. The second are governments which are called upon to respond to the terrorist violence. Finally, the third are potential supporters who are attracted to join by the terrorist actions.

Transnational terrorist groups also focus on the location of attacks as much as, if not more than, who is attacked in order to generate a wide message. The importance of location is demonstrated by the attacks in Paris in 2015 by the Islamic State group. Paris is one of the most visited cities in the world. Boko Haram too targets villages across different countries' borders and punishes those who don't conform to their new laws, which are about 'everyday living' even as they claim allegiance to a wider global political cause. However, this is not to say these groups do not target individuals. Boko Haram kidnapped hundreds of Christian schoolgirls in Northern Nigeria. Schools are targets because they are seen to promote state agendas, and schoolgirls are targets because these groups wish girls to have an Islamic education that focuses exclusively on domestic responsibilities and learning the Quran.

The second feature of terrorism is that activities are sometimes designed to provoke states into action as well as generate fear in populations. Attacks are frequently symbolic in purpose and often have a high casualty rate for maximum shock value. It was inconceivable, for example, that the

United States would not respond to the 9/11 attacks or that France would not react to the Paris attacks. Here, attacks are designed to provoke states into doing something to prove they are protecting civilians.

Finally, the third reason for terrorist violence is to recruit members and reinforce loyalty and membership among existing supporters. Extremely violent or highly technical attacks demonstrate the capability and will of the group carrying out the attack and its overall support. We see support for Islamic State coming from citizens in nations of every region because their attacks are dramatic and spectacular, which raises the profile of the group and demonstrates their military mastery.

There are instances of state sponsored terrorism as well. Libya maintained camps within its borders capable of training 5000 men at a time. Several terrorist training camps were located in Syria in the 1980's. And Iran was suspected of sponsoring several Islamic groups responsible for several terrorist attacks in the 1980's and the 1990's. In addition the US has funnelled millions of dollars in support of such "non-governmental perpetrators of violence for political purpose" (terrorist) as the rebels in Afghanistan.

One disturbing result of this trend towards state supported terrorism is that terrorists acquire access to increasingly sophisticated military technology. Furthermore, since the arms industry is mostly held by private sectors, it causes the trans-nationalization of defence production and reduces the state control over these productions.

In particular, technologies have improved the capability of groups and cells in the following areas: coordination, security, mobility, and lethality. Technology as one engine of globalization has been a tool that terrorist groups have used to their advantage. Nevertheless, one of the challenges posed by globalization is that individual states can no longer control the movement of technology and information.

Terrorism hence is a global threat that needs to be addressed by the joint cooperation and coordination among various states of the world.