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'BATTLING CATASTROPHIC TERRORISM: UNCOVERING NOVEL APPROACH'

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ABSTRACT

There has been a long history for terror attacks, but international efforts to repress it aren't long enough. Today nations all over the world are attempting to find solutions to terrorism because it has become a menace which gives the privilege to decide all essential matters in the hands of the enemy. Governments pursuing legal measures to tackle terrorism and western powers using warfare to do so have but proved an ineffective solution. Traditional methods of merely condemning terrorist groups, legislating to thwart the inflow of funds to these organisations, and more importantly, the US-led warfare on Middle East nations to combat terrorism have not only proved inadequate but has also resulted in the large scale killing of innocent civilians. Political instability to needs to be sorted to eradicate terrorism. Large scale murder of innocents can never be justified in the name of tackling terrorism. The so-called terrorists cannot survive without an adequate supply of weapons. 'Where do they get these arms?' is an important question to be deliberated when discussing terrorism. Therefore, a more intensive study of the prevailing international legal norms on combating terrorism and effective solutions to extremist violence is absolutely necessary.

This paper includes:

- An elusive understanding of the prevalence of terrorism and evaluates its causes.
- The need to step out from the conventional solutions to terrorism that is inadequate.
- Proposals to the International Community at large to deal with terrorism at its very roots.

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"OUR MISSION YOUR SUCCESS"

1. INTRODUCTION

Two types of conflicts constantly take place in the world from time immemorial: The incessant competition for consolidation of power and resources and the struggle for justice. However, the perceptions of different people about conflicts are contrasting.

“One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” is a popular saying. As a matter of fact, either of these two issues can be seen in the demands of the terror groups. All times have indeed seen violent movements against tyrant rules and have been labelled terrorist by the latter. Indian freedom fighters were called anti-nationals by the British. The case of Palestine is also another example of a just freedom struggle being labelled as terrorist by the State of Israel.

Another significant issue to be deliberated upon while discussing terrorism is the means used by the terror groups. Resort to violence is universally seen, and of course, it is not an acceptable one. While governments possess a plethora of means to suppress such groups, the latter having no access to such means are left with the only option of bargaining by creating terror among the people.

The issue of terrorism must be addressed with a proper understanding of this basic concept. The varying definitions of terrorism reflect different perceptions. Politics behind the nomenclature is yet another aspect of terrorism. Terrorism, which is rooted in socio-political and economic reasons, must be addressed accordingly and be eliminated by eradicating the causes. The success or failure of terrorism is something we decide. Terrorist activities will succeed if we allow our thoughts to be captured by these groups, and then react excessively to our uncertainties. So from an individual’s part, we have to act cool and balanced for terrorism to fail.

2. DEFINING TERRORISM

The definition of terrorism will have an effect on communication and response to the issue and so have consequences for society and politics. Still, an apt universal description seems impractical because different bodies, organisations and government agencies have distinct definitions to fit in their personal agendas and requirements.

Walter Laqueur states “terrorism is the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective by targeting innocent people”. According to Tore Bjorgo, "terrorism is a set of methods of combat rather than an identifiable ideology or movement and involves premeditated use of violence against (primarily) non-combatants in order to achieve a psychological effect of fear on others than the immediate targets." The U.S. State Department explains terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”.¹

2.1. Changing Definitions of Terrorism

International groups labelled ‘terrorist’ are friends and enemies to world powers. So, ‘Who and what is real terrorism?’ must be defined. Is terrorism the state-sponsored violence by world powers

¹ *Definition of Terrorism – Social and Political Effects*, JMVH DDT and Silent Spring Fifty years after Comments, <https://jmvh.org/article/definitionof-terrorism-social-and-political-effects/>.

like America and Israel or resistance to that so-called 'War on terror'? The term 'terrorism' came to be used only towards the beginning of the 21st century. Communalism, extremism, fundamentalism, etc. were the phrases used before the advent of 'terrorism'. It is the United States that invented such terminology for their convenience.

Moreover, it is evident that 'world enemies' change according to changes in the U.S. foreign policy. Soviet Russia was a threat to world peace until 1992. America used Afghan Mujahid against USSR. After the collapse of USSR, Muslim countries became the counterpole of U.S. Former friends Afghan Mujahid was the new threat in 2000. Once Ahmadi Najad's Iran was their enemy; today they have friendly ties with Iran and same is the case with Saddam Hussein.

It can be seen thus that someone's terrorists are freedom fighters for some others.

3. TERRORISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

News has the potential to reach a much wider group of an audience today than in the past due to media's popularity today. So the media should try to keep things in outlook and avoid frenzy. The occurrence of terror cannot succeed without publicity because otherwise, perpetrators won't have a platform to spread violence and through it expanding their reach. It is rightly said that "There is widespread consensus that the media's reporting on terrorism does this, and there is a clear alliance between the media's desire for a sensational story and terrorists' desire for publicity." Sadly, the media very often provide this publicity at no cost. It fanatically reports terrorist activities and greatly amplifies their danger because reports on terrorism run much better than news on any other insignificant matter. Media provides the publicity which terrorists hunt for. This eventually states that media can be held culpable in spreading violence and give an unintended encouragement to them.

Media can intensify the negative effects of terrorism and collective levels of public fear largely. This is primarily due to its role in spreading the story to more people than to the ones immediately affected by the attack.

Not always do the Journalists end up being neutral. Due to their participation in producing news and changing opinion, they can be a part of radicalisation process. For instance, they can reproduce inexact information or shape terrorist incidents in a way which portrays discrimination. Social contagion theory states that the reporting of terrorist violence stirs the spread of terrorist behaviour among people of the same mindset. This theory also points out that media reporting thus can be a tipping point for a person who has had an inclination towards such terrorist activities. The imitation theory implies that imitation of terrorist attacks might take place with the intention of achieving the same amount of media hype or recognition.

The media's role does not essentially state that it shares the values or goals of the terrorists about which it reports.

3.1. Creator Vs Endowment

While the role of media is discussed the main question that arises is the issue of creation. When there are abundant other influential factors which affect the aspect of terrorist violence, it would be difficult to establish the causal link of media reporting and the same. Highlighting the contributory aspect can aid in media analysing their role.

3.2. Solutions

Methods in which the relationship between the media and terrorism can be managed as advanced by experts.²

- Providing editorial prudence.
- A specialisation in organisation focussing on terrorism which can aid in moderating their own stories and news which would, in turn, prevent hysteria among the public.
- Hindering the misinformation given to media by the government
- Avoiding the sensationalisation of violence and attacks.
- Facilitating a mechanism to 'deny a platform' for terrorists seeking to take advantage of news.

Thus it can be pointed out that since the media cannot be censored in a liberal and democratic society, finding a solution can be challenging too.³

4. UNVEILING THE CAUSE

Terrorism is pricey to affected countries, and for the same reason, it is necessary to uncover the cause and derive ample solutions for the same. Even if immediate effect is marginal, but in the long run, it has the potential to influence a particular government's stability. It is rightly said that "Most of the time if you treat people right, you don't have to be afraid of them."

4.1. Economic woes

Some scholars put forward that terrorism is rooted in poverty and inequality. 'Relative deprivation', implies that aggression develops when there is an incongruity between what individuals think they deserve and what they actually get through the distributive process. Underprivileged economic conditions create annoyance, which in turn ends up as violence mostly. This connection from economic denial to terrorism should be important to the source countries of terrorism. For example, it becomes easier for the terrorist organisations to enlist frustrated followers and agitated people tend to go with the wave with the intent of rebellion.

4.2. Cultural Clash

Notably, Huntington (1996) states that "civilizational clash may also bring in violence. When groups showcase different identities (e.g., religions or ethnicities), this may direct to more conflict either between unlike groups within a country or among different countries groups organised along the civilizational lines (e.g., Islamic countries vs the West)." Terrorism is used by various groups to bring their voice to the world view as well as to alter the result in their favour. Identity mostly works as a bond for them.

4.3. Imaginary Democracy

Democracy, commonly said to be the governance by the people though exists in the manifesto of nations around the globe today, is practically non-existent. A major chunk of the population of the

² Jeffrey Ian Ross, 'Deconstructing the Terrorism-News Media Relationship', Crime, Media, Culture.

³ Matusitz, Terrorism and Communication.

so-called democratic countries experiences unfair and autocratic governance. Civil rights and especially the human rights of the oppressed communities are at stake, and very often it is these problems that manifest as terrorist activities. Violence among races, struggles among the rich and poor or between political outcasts and nobles have been named as terrorism. The 1987 rigging of Kashmir state elections is a good example of an illusory democracy.

4.4. Political Shakiness

Regardless of the exact regime type, government strength, structure, policies and ideology affiliation may also influence terrorists' calculi. But mostly autocratic governments, arbitrary and unjust rule and inequality play a major role in pushing the oppressed into terrorist groups. The roots of the Syrian civil war, for example, lie in the Jasmine revolution against the autocratic government.

5. COLONIALISM V/S THE WAR ON TERROR

“How can you have a war on terrorism when war itself is terrorism?”

-Howard Zinn

The empire where the sun never sets ruled the world for years. Colonialism dominated over nations across the world and exploited their natural resources. Today while nations stand independent and free from the shackles of colonial powers, the ‘war on terror’ has become the new form of colonialism.

America declared war on terror following the 9/11 attack. While the World tower attack claimed 3000 casualties, America's retaliation killed 10000 innocent civilians by persistent bombings in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Holding Saddam Hussein responsible for the 9/11 attack, America unleashed intensive wars in the Middle East, killing thousands of civilians and creating political instability. According to a new study⁴, many people in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan were killed due to the so-called war on terror launched by the United States in the wake of September 11, 2001 attack. The report, which was published on November 3, 2018, by the Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, states that “the death toll between 480,000 and 507,000. The toll includes civilians, armed fighters, local police and security forces, as well as U.S. and allied troops.” The American public, press and lawmakers often overlook the war on terror, and the augmented body count points that, far from deteriorating, this war continues to be extreme.

5.1. Oil and Natural Resources

The world witnesses an incessant struggle of the world powers like the United States and Israel to consolidate natural resources. Other nations like Russia and the United Kingdom, etc. support them. These states sponsor terrorism in their rivalry to dominate natural resources as aforementioned. The United States dominates over world resources arbitrarily. Be it oil from Arab countries, gold from African countries, or timber from Latin countries, and it is very similar to the old wine, i.e., colonialism.

⁴ Al Jazeera, *U.S.' war on terror' has killed over half a million people: study*, GCC NEWS | AL JAZEERA (2018), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/wars-terror-killed-million-people-study-181109080620011.html>.

6. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND IRAQI INVASION

The best estimates available claim that more than 250,000 people have died due to George W. Bush and Tony Blair's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. A newly released investigative report from the U.K. government indicates that intelligence officials were aware well in advance that the war would result in huge unsteadiness and societal fall down and would worsen the plight of terrorism. In August 2002, Dick Cheney⁵ declared, "Simply stated, there's no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." But as Corn⁶ notes, "no confirmed-intelligence at this point is establishing that Saddam had revived a major WMD operation."

7. SYRIA: COUNTER-TERRORISM LESSONS

It has been approximately seven years since turbulence in Syria started and spiralled into a civil war that has killed perhaps 500,000 people and expatriated millions more. The war and associated diplomacy offer much to chew on, but the counter-terrorism implications are particularly striking for Syria is both a counter-terrorism success and a failure. Syria has witnessed the involvement of state and non-state actors in its civil war: the Syrian government, the United States, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the rebels. Syrian war offers many lessons for counter-terrorism:

1. Civil wars and terrorism go together
2. Enemies are mostly highly separated
3. Terrorist still rely on state or are aided by them
4. Counter-terrorism brings people together, but often only strategically
5. Allies require synchronisation

Syrian government slams international interference and attacks on its sovereignty, while also accusing the U.S. of war crimes.

8. ARMS EXPORT

Terrorist require weapons to carry out their activities, and of course, they are not equipped with the means to manufacture arms on a large scale. 'Where do these groups get the weapons, they require?' is thus an important question to be investigated. In fact, the United States is the chief exporter of weapons. It sold weapons to at least 98 countries between 2013 and 2017 and accounted for 34 per cent of global major arms export. Its largest clients were: Saudi Arabia (18% of all sales), UAE (7.4% of all sales), and Australia (6.7% of all sales). On the one hand, the U.S. vows

⁵ Full text of Dick Cheney's speech, THE GUARDIAN (2002), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/aug/27/usa.iraq>.

⁶ David Corn et al., *Jeb Bush says his brother was misled into war by faulty intelligence. That's not what happened.* MOTHER JONES (2017), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/05/jeb-bush-marco-rubio-iraq-war-intelligence/>.

to combat terrorism, and on the other hand, it supplies arms to the so-called terrorist groups. Spleeters has discovered that the “ISIS may have captured the warheads from anti-government militias in the Syrian civil war that had been secretly armed by Saudi Arabia and the United States.”⁷

The United States is by far the world's largest dealer of arms, which often fall into the wrong hands. "Quite frankly," says Danny Sjursen, US Army strategist and historian, "the war- selling arms is one of the last American industries that are left. It's one of the last things the United States does well, that we're still number one at dealing arms in the world."⁸ According to the research by SIPRI exports by the U.S. accounted for 34% of the major arms exports from 2013 to 2017. The majority of the sales go to the “developing nations,” which is a very broad categorisation that includes all countries except the United States, Russia, European nations, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

According to the SIPRI report, “America supplied arms to 98 countries, with most of them (49%) going to the Middle East.”

With all the arms, it is outputting into the world, there have been some alarming instances where America's weapons happened to be in the immoral hands. As the “U.S. combated the spread of ISIS since 2014, it has increasingly found itself fighting against its own weapons, reported Task and Purpose.”⁹

A study in 2017 by the arms control group Conflict Armament Research (CAR)¹⁰ noted an obvious correlation between the weapons of international players and the power of ISIS. The report says: “International weapon supplies to factions in the Syrian conflict have significantly augmented the quantity and quality of weapons available to I.S. forces in numbers far beyond those that would have been available to the group through battlefield capture alone,” said the report. “These findings are a stark reminder of the contradictions inherent in supplying weapons into armed conflicts in which multiple competing and overlapping non-state armed groups operate.”

Weapon trade, the biggest business in the world, survives through war. It cannot exist in peace. Where there is war, there are weapons. Therefore, it is the vested interest of the world powers engaged in weapon trade that armed conflicts persist in the world. The Rafale Scam is a good example pertaining to the business of weapon trade.

9. GLOBAL SCENARIO

Worldwide, spectacular jihadi attacks could also be lesser, but attacks are on the rise. In 2019, a terrorist group within the Philippines, with relations to the I.S., killed many attending a church in

⁷ Brian Castner, *Exclusive: Tracing ISIS' Weapons Supply Chain-Back to the U.S.*, WIRED (2018), <https://www.wired.com/story/terror-industrial-complex-isis-munitions-supply-chain/>.

⁸ Charles Koch Foundation, *How America supplies the world with weapons*, BIG THINK (2018), <https://bigthink.com/charles-koch-foundation/how-america-supplies-the-world-with-weapons>.

⁹ Jared Keller, *The U.S. Funnelled Weapons Into The Fight Against ISIS. They Only Ended Up Making The Militants Stronger Task & Purpose* (2018), <https://taskandpurpose.com/isis-weapons-arms-control-report>.

¹⁰ *Weapons of the Islamic state*, CONFLICT ARMAMENT RESEARCH, <http://www.conflictarm.com/reports/weapons-of-the-islamic-state/>.

Sulu province. In the U.K., on New Year's Eve in 2019, three people were stabbed at a Manchester train depot by an I.S. supporter. Explosives were found at transport hubs in and around London and at the Glasgow University, resulting in a serious terror shock within the U.K. in 2019. European country witnessed a terror attack in Utrecht. Terrorists across the world are working on their skills and are getting ready to strike. There's a swap over of concepts among terror groups, and many of them are even collaborating resources, making things easier for them. The violence in Iraq and Syria has shaped a bunch of bloodthirsty fighters, who are strengthening their skills of unlike terror groups.

So, it's untimely to rejoice the decline of terrorism. The territory of I.S. Caliphate may have dwindled, but its end hasn't come. I.S. networks are still operating. Once the pressure relaxes, they would resume their activities. Some reports presume that I.S. has asked many of its recruits to go back to their origin and reinforce the I.S. groups there. Al-Qaeda is separately engaged in enlarging its global network. Within the Indian Subcontinent, it is alleged to be exploiting incidents of hostility against Muslims. Pakistan is additionally seemingly teaching to hold out underwater operations.

10. EXISTING ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

10.1. U.N. Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on September 8, 2006. The approach is a unique global instrument to develop national, regional and international efforts to counter-terrorism.

Through its adoption that all Member States have agreed the first time to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism, not only did they send a message stating how unacceptable terrorism is in its all forms and manifestation but also resolved to take practical steps individually and collectively to thwart and combat it.

The adoption of the strategy fulfilled the commitment made by world leaders at the 2005 September Summit and builds on many of the elements proposed by the Secretary-General in his May 2, 2006, report, entitled *Uniting against Terrorism: Recommendations for a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.

10.1.1: Reviewed every two years: the final Assembly reviews the Strategy every two years, making it a living document attuned to Member States' counter-terrorism priorities. The Fifth Review of the world organisation Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy befell on July 1 2016. The final Assembly examined the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/826) on the implementation of the U.N. Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy over the past decade. It also gave further consideration to the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to forestall Violent Extremism (A/70/674-A/70/675), which was presented by the Secretary-General to the Assembly in January 2016. The final Assembly adopted the resolution (A/RES/70/291) by consensus.

10.1.2: Four Pillars: the world Counter-Terrorism Strategy within the variety of a resolution and an annexed Plan of Action (A/RES/60/288) composed of 4 pillars:

1. Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.
2. Measures to forestall and combat terrorism.
3. Measures to make states' capacity to forestall and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the global organisation system therein regard.
4. Measures to confirm respect for human rights and steps to give due importance to the rule of law.

10.2. Other International counter-terrorism Conventions

Today, there are 15 international counter-terrorism conventions in force, which were developed under the auspices of the United Nations and its specialised agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):

1. Tokyo Convention: Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed On Board Aircraft (1963)
2. Hague Convention: Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970)
3. Sabotage Convention or Montreal Convention: Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971)
4. Diplomatic Agents Convention: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons (1973)
5. Hostages Convention: International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (1979)
6. Nuclear Materials Convention: Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (1980)
7. Airport Protocol: Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation (1988)
8. Maritime Convention: Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (1988)
9. Fixed Platform Protocol: Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (1988)
10. Plastic Explosives Convention: Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (1991)
11. Terrorist Bombing Convention: International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997)
12. Terrorist Financing Convention: International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999)

13. Nuclear Terrorism Convention: International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005)
14. Beijing Convention: Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation (2010)
15. Beijing Protocol: Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (2010)

10.3. Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act – TADA

The first anti-terrorism law¹¹ legislated by the government of India to define and counter-terrorist activities, the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, was in force between 1985 and 1995 under the background of the Punjab insurgency and was applied to the whole of India. TADA led to tens of thousands of politically motivated detentions, torture, and other human rights violations.¹² TADA's pathetic conviction rate of 1 per cent obscured its wide use as a preventive detention measure where more than 76,000 persons were detained for years on end destroying lives and ruining their kith and kin.¹³

10.4. Prevention of Terrorism Act – POTA

Passed by the Parliament in 2002, the objective of Prevention of Terrorism Act is the strengthening of anti-terrorism operations. It was repealed in 2004.

A lecturer at Delhi University was given a death sentence by a special POTA court for his alleged role in the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament. He was later acquitted on appeal by the Delhi H.C. on a legal technicality.¹⁴

11. BREAKING THE CONVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS

The problem of terrorism is tackled by governments and international bodies by resorting to aggressive anti-terrorism laws which have proved ineffective though it is appreciable that recently UAPA has been amended giving more powers to the police. Stringent provisions should be adopted which wouldn't allow a culprit to scot-free once brought to the purview of the law. Finding an apt solution to a problem lies in the elimination of the root causes of the problem is also important. In order to put an end to terrorism, the socio-political and economic reasons must be removed.

In order to eliminate terrorism completely from the world, novel solutions must be undertaken:

¹¹(*The Terrorist And Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987*, SOUTH ASIA TERRORISM PORTAL, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/actandordinances/TADA.HTM#7A> (last visited January 23, 2019))

¹² *Anti-Terrorism Legislation*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (2001), <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/asia/india-bck1121.htm>.

¹³ *India's Unforgivable Laws*, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY (2018), https://www.epw.in/engage/article/indias-unforgivable-laws?0=ip_login_no_cache=044b862f71453330844d7142273b9533.

¹⁴ *Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002*, WIKIPEDIA (2018), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevention_of_Terrorism_Act,_2002.

- Advanced vigilance apparatus (CCTV, metal detectors, phone tapping, virtual sim card) as internet-enabled terrorism will grow in the coming years.
- Ensure employment and a good standard of living by eradicating poverty and inequality transparently.
- Ensure proportional representation of all classes of citizens in political power.
- Media should be reasonably restrained to avoid loss of life of key rescue players.
- Curb governmental autocracy and arbitrariness, which otherwise becomes a reason to exploit the sentiments of the oppressed to join against the injustice.
- Promote value-based social order.
- Bring about transparent governance and a better law enforcement system.
- Complete digitalisation.
- Abolish monopoly of technology, and multiple intelligence machinery needs to be put forth.
- Identifying a terrorist group with their religious groups, ethnicities or linguistics should be avoided.

12. CONCLUSION

World peace is desired by all. Terrorism has stayed as asymmetric warfare for ages. With the passing time, there occurred a transmutation in the nature of terror. Terrorism continues to be an existential threat to world peace. In this era, it is difficult to figure out which disruptive technology turns out to be the most lethal one. Counter-terrorism experts across the globe need to give importance to multi-domain operations to fight back the uncertain future. State and non-state actors must collaborate to put an end to terrorism. The international community at large is duty-bound to cooperate in all anti-terrorism initiatives. The root cause of terrorism lies in socio-political and economic disadvantage, unfairness, injustice, and inequality so that people are not attracted to terrorism or resort to violence. Without addressing these issues, it is impossible to eliminate terrorism from the world. Media should be reasonably restrained as well. The war on terror and America's military interference in almost all wars of the Middle East has created political instability. The sovereignty of the nations must not be encroached upon.