

What Role Does The State Play in Encountering Terrorist Activities?

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War and counter-terrorism activities have been a topic of discussion among many policymakers and legislators over time. Different governments all over the world have taken different paths and strategies to counter terrorist activities and to respond to terror strikes, which include harsh policies like drone attacks and severe punishments to deter future acts, while some of them have focused their attention on the underlying causes behind such actions to reduce terrorism. (United Nations, 2006; United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate [UN CTED], n.d.)

However, the policymakers often ignore the most crucial characteristics that vary from one kind of terrorist group to another and the role of the legislating bodies, which then influence the effectiveness of a state's actions. The discussion ahead will highlight many war atrocities and will emphasize the oppression of many innocents at the cost of political motives of the legislating bodies

The history narrates the accounts of two major wars, i.e., WWI and WW2, along with the war of Iraq and Palestine, which are tragedies that remain written in blood in all of the historical books. All these wars were the outcome of various direct and indirect reasons. However, the same reasons may suggest whether war is inherent to humans. Why do states generate huge funds and raise armies just for the sake of killing innocents? Is it really in the name of peace? The following discussion will help provide insight into the question that arises as soon as the concept of war surfaces.

There are many reasons why such wars originated. For instance, one of the major direct reasons behind the Great War was the manslaughter of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914. The main players in the war were found to be Germany and Austria who sought revenge and power and many other indirect factors like the enmity between the authorities, the trend to build stronger military forces to ensure the defense of a state, the urge to fight for your nationality in the name of patriotism, issues, and conflicts before the unfortunate event of 1914 and local political dynamics, which state how humans may be inclined to fight on fronts in the name of above facts.

All the wars of the world have brought along huge costs. The associated costs include not only financial losses but also the loss of millions of innocent lives in the urge for power. History shows that billions of people were prey to warfare in the wars of Iran and Palestine. A generation of young men was removed while they fought pointless wars for their nation. After the war of WW1 ended, it was found out that the countries were left with one man for every 15 women. All the authors, musicians, professors, architects, and leaders had succumbed to the atrocities of war.

Other examples include the Charlie Hebdo incident, where a man killed 12 people and injured many at the office of a French newspaper in the name of religion. Similarly, the Nice attack incident in 2016

was led by a Muslim man driving a truck vehemently and killing 86 people deliberately for his jihadi propaganda. All of this happened because of the spread of violent thoughts that promote killing to survive which suggests that some part of human nature calls for a spark to be engaged (but only to achieve personal motives at the cost of millions of lives)

Similarly, the Islamic states have been victims of warfare and drone attacks by US drones for ages, and this is the underlying reason behind these people lashing out, causing further terrorist and war atrocities. As Cindy Sheehan criticized the faulty policies against terrorism by saying

“We’re not going to cure terrorism and spread peace and goodwill in the Middle East by killing innocent people, or I’m not even saying our bullets and bombs are killing them. The occupation is that they don’t have food. They don’t have clean water. They don’t have electricity. They don’t have medicine. They don’t have doctors.”

Unfortunately, fewer policymakers pay attention to the troubles of the people of terrorist-stricken states.

The first time the concept of drones arose was during World War 2 by the US Air Force Commander General Henry Arnold. He targeted peculiar German positions and sent explosives loaded on the unmanned aircraft to destroy those positions. Although it was a fairly new concept at that time, in 1945, Arnold predicted the usage of remotely piloted unmanned flying machines in future wars. After almost seven decades, his prediction has slowly turned into a reality, which calls for insight into why he would develop such a deadly weapon in the first place. Peace can never be achieved with a murderous agenda. So, even though many may deny it, some part of human nature calls for murderous plot to achieve their hideous agendas.

So far, the US is the only state that has created its domination in the usage of drones. For many years, drones have become a critical tool for killing terrorist groups and surveillance in the entire world. (International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 2025) They have the advantage of being silently present at a certain location and may stay there for hours without anyone noticing their presence. They may also attack the location whenever they are commanded. Owing to these advantages, the US succeeded in demolishing the leadership of militant groups in Afghanistan and other terrorist groups. Even President George W. Bush signed more than 50 drone strikes during his tenure owing to their reliability and precision. Even President Obama, during his tenure, has authorized the usage of drones for counter-terrorism and has performed around 400 drone strikes in

the areas of residence of militant groups. However, as per Mikhail Gorbachev, this was entirely a wrong strategy. He asserted

“Political leaders still think things can be done through force, but that cannot solve terrorism. Backwardness is the breeding ground of terror, and that is what we have to fight.”

The fact that misguided drones were initiated just to gain more power and to satiate the lust for more and more sovereignty and sought as a mode to attain peace by the governments is a pure example of how hunger for supremacy has controlled human actions where the very actions taken by the states to control terrorist agenda have given birth to more and more terrorists fighting for the loss of their innocent loved ones.

All these exercises using drones were found to be way more effective than using trivial methods of drones because the drones are unmanned vehicles that rely only on human instructions and are present far away from the actual area of the strike. This has resulted in a significant decrease in the loss of lives in the US Army. Moreover, drones also have fewer financial costs and lead to fewer risks for the US forces. The proponents of using drones to wage war against terrorism defended this heinous strategy vehemently. For instance, Richard Armitage was caught saying

“The war we are fighting today against terrorism is a multifaceted fight. We have to use every tool in our toolkit to wage this war – diplomacy, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and of course, military power – and we are developing new tools as we go along.”

The enhancement in US military operations through the usage of drones in warfare can be categorized into three types. For instance, drones are used to overpower the enemy's defense, counter the enemy's rebellion process, and locate and eliminate targets. For instance, in 2008 in Iran, drones were used to eliminate the terrorist group from the Sadr city and to make it more stabilized. The army troops of the US waited in the city of Baghdad from where they directly controlled and manipulated the direction of drones. The drones used would move to the position of militants; they would wait for the civilians to move out and then they would destroy the building along with its

inhabitants. The precision in striking abilities and unmatched surveillance through the drones resulted in the establishment of exemplary stabilization in the city with minimum casualties.

However, what the US government and every person fighting in the name of religion or their loved ones need to realize is that war will only kill innocents, the people who don't have a clue about what might have happened to them, let alone be responsible. All the wars of the world have been, in fact, a representation of insignificance and butchery of innocents in the name of peace. It is one of the reasons why Mel Gibson said

“I am politically incorrect, that’s true. Political correctness, to me, is just intellectual terrorism. I find that really scary, and I won’t be intimidated into changing my mind. Everyone isn’t going to love you all the time.”

Every war changes the theory of fighting and killing innocents to win over military conflicts with the disastrous results and outcomes it brought forward. If wars are continued, the cycle of terrorism and killing in the name of passion and violence will continue for generations, causing massive physical and psychological impairments. It may be a source to gain control and reach decisions but the people need to stop to understand if we are doing it to satisfy our innate desires or the endless dramatic atrocities and murder of innocents at the hands of powerful by the name of war need to end now so we can build a better future for our children. As per Alan Dershowitz

“Asymmetrical warfare is a euphemism for terrorism, just like the collateral damage is a euphemism for killing innocent civilians.”

In lieu of this, the 911 incident is a terrible reminder of terrorist attacks. It was an incident where millions lost their homes, lives, and families and watched their dreams die right in front of their eyes. However, an event so brutal gave birth to the better world that we live in today where everyone values life and peace before any lust for power but the fact that the lust to achieve more and more exists calls for a certain conclusion that each human indeed has an innate desire to fight battles to make his way into the world.

Many books have been written on the horrors of war and associated terrorism. They ascribe the genuineness of war tragedies where factors such as glory and honor in the name of serving one's country, along with an adventurous journey, are highlighted. However, some of the authors stress to

portray the real sequence of events in a war where the soldiers go through a traumatic series of war instead of the idealistic depiction of glory and heroism.

World War 1 was, in fact, a representation of the insignificance and butchery of innocents in the name of peace. The Great War changed the theory of fighting and killing innocents to win over military conflicts with the disastrous results and outcomes it brought forward. Remarque's novel also focuses on the dramatic features of World War I, which led to massive physical and psychological impairments. As the book reached its end, almost every main character died a tragic death all the while suffering and presenting an accurate picture of the young soldiers who were lured to fight such wars for their countries, which counts for a debate that some of us might actually not have an inherent desire to hurt others to gain our advantages at all.

Many war researchers placed strong criticism of the theories of nationalism and believed that the ideas were only put forth by power-hungry politicians who wanted to control the general public. However, the horrors of war quickly escalated the nationalist ideas as the war tragedies began. Many people who vouched for war to gain control came to learn how inappropriate the postmodern ideas about war were and how wars brought no advantage to anyone except the powerful. Many realized that they didn't want to fight the opposite militaries since they were not their real rivals; in fact, their real antagonists were the people who had access to this power.

While history shows the instances of soldiers fighting in the battle zone, it also features the destructive influence that war brings to the soldiers as well. The Warriors face a relentless risk of losing their lives or being amputated or only blustered into tiny shards at any time. This constant threat of losing their lives puts enormous stress on their nerves, often leading them to handle continual fear at every rousing minute. Furthermore, being forced to live in a filthy environment where they were compelled to deal with decaying corpses, rats, lice, and cold had profound psychological damage. Soldiers were forced to live without proper food and sleepless nights along with skimpy outfits and medical care. They had to witness the sudden deaths of their close friends in front of their eyes.

The survivors explain all the tragic scenarios as psychologically incapacitating and overwhelming. The only way for soldiers to save themselves is to either accept defeat and give up on their lives or kill innocents without any regard for humanity. Many war researchers see wars as a huge reason behind disparaging influences on a warrior's humanity along with leaving permanent scars on their physical and mental health. They lose everyone from their families and friends while risking their lives for a cause that doesn't even have the same meaning as promised.

Many fighters lost all sense of their identity and their families and now thought there'd be no future without war. Hence, it can be declared some of the humans might not have a desire to fight battles for the government's agenda which may lead to further pain and suffering, ending in terrorism. William Glum's statement

“Most terrorists are people deeply concerned by what they see as social, political, or religious injustice and hypocrisy, and the immediate grounds for their terrorism is often retaliation for an action of the United States.”

It is a true testimony of how the unfair strategic advances by states against terrorism might lead to more and more terrorists rising against these unjust killings.

The army troops of the US waited in the city of Baghdad from where they directly controlled and manipulated the direction of drones. The drones used would move to the position of militants; they would wait for the civilians to move out, and then they would destroy the building along with its inhabitants. The precision in striking abilities and unmatched surveillance through the drones resulted in the establishment of exemplary stabilization in the city with minimum casualties, but the state conveniently ignored the fact that this policy of drones was still causing deaths, adding to more and more terrorists in the terror groups striving to avenge their beloved dead ones. As per

“I think what’s going on in Guantanamo Bay and other places is a disgrace to the U.S.A. I wouldn’t say it’s the cause of terrorism, but it has given impetus and excuses to potential terrorists to lash out at our country and justify their despicable acts.”

Jodie Evans has also supported this assertion by saying

“What causes terrorism is disrespect, a lack of justice, and poverty.”

However, many critics are against the use of drones for warfare. (ICRC, 2025; United Nations, 2006) Their argument results from the absence of International laws and regulatory frameworks on the extent of usage of drones in warfare. So far, only the US has dominance and has created a monopoly in the usage of drones and follows set ethics on its usage. However, other countries like Russia, Germany, and Israel are not going to be lacking behind for a long time. It is largely believed by critics

that they may not follow the ethics set by the US if it comes to war. Serj Tankian believes

“We first fought... in the name of religion, then Communism, and now in the name of drugs and terrorism. Our excuses for global domination always change.”

Another point on which the critics argue is the absence of decision-making and judgment skills based on whom to target and the importance of innocent human lives. The critics believe that owing to these drone strikes, thousands of innocent civilians lose their lives and the lives of their dear ones every day. They result in creating hatred among the foreign public against the US for taking innocent lives. Moreover, the possibility of the presence of such a powerful product in the hands of irresponsible governments may create chaos, leading to a greater extent of terror strikes like 911.

Whether drone policies increase or suppress terrorism is a major debate among the analysts of various countries. Some argue that repeated drone attacks create an environment of destabilization and create in itself terror among the people residing there. People become unsure of their safety, and it gives rise to anti-government sentiments among the general population. Moreover, owing to repeated civilian victimization, feelings of hatred become prevalent among the general public. For instance, the continuous drone strikes by the US on the land of Pakistan, although done to eliminate terrorist groups and activities, are not done without a cost. These strikes have resulted in a distressed relationship between both countries, a decrease in cooperation, and, in some places, anti-American sentiment has also emerged. Owing to this, a special investigation unit has been formed in the UN's Human Rights Council Special Procedures to investigate these drone attacks and to ensure their practice is in direct correspondence with legal and humanitarian grounds. As Joichi Ito has aptly said

“If we destroy human rights and the rule of law in response to terrorism, they have won. (United Nations, 2006; UN CTED, n.d.)”

Where the use of drones in surveillance has been an important factor in identifying and hunter-killing the terrorist groups, however, its use can be abused in the form of privacy invasion. The drones are effective in performing live surveillance on the intelligence agencies for hours without even being noticed by them. It serves as a threat to the privacy rights of people, companies, and federal agencies. Thus, the use of drones for spying and privacy invasion must be prohibited. Laws should be established at an International level to prevent the infiltration into the secrecy of any organizations.

Lastly, the absence of military presence on the ground also results in the potential loss of information that could be extracted from the target terrorist groups. Identifying the target leaders of terrorist groups and arresting them could result in taking out important information leading to other militant groups, their purpose, and plans. However, drones are incapable of performing arrests and, thus, can only kill these people, which may result in a significant decrease in terror groups but may not provide any intelligence for further purposes. Moreover, the lack of multiple intelligence platforms may also result in incorrect indirect identification and verification of the terrorist leaders and, thus, can result in the loss of civilians. The use of local informants can also play a significant role in such killings as they may provide incorrect information, lead to the wrong person, and use drone strikes for their purposes.

In looking at both sides, i.e., the benefits and disadvantages of continuing to use the drone policy, the facts reveal that the US should not continue to use the drone policy for carrying out terrorist strikes. On ethical grounds, this policy is against the sovereignty of states such as Pakistan, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The unbearable loss of innocent loved ones gives rise to the permanent feeling of hatred towards the US among the local inhabitants.

The dampening effect of drone strikes on terrorism should also be considered while continuing or leaving drones for signature strikes. The response of civilians to violence should be kept in mind. For instance, the innocent Pashtuns living in the areas of militant residencies are found to have a strong despise for drones owing to continuous surveillance and strikes. The periodic destruction caused by this drone technology can lead to furious emotions like revenge and may give rise to joining terrorist groups.

Moreover, such power can be abused by irresponsible groups to carry out tasks for personal gain. For instance, the repeated use of drone technology in the areas of militant residence in Iraq and Afghanistan may lead to a new style of recruitment of militant agencies. The possibility of drone technology in the hands of militant groups is devastating.

Owing to the absence of set International rules for the use of drones, other countries may develop such technology and carry out signature strikes for their benefit. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the US collaborate to improve its drone strike policy and lay out a set of global rules for strike killing and surveillance issues. Nong Duc Manh said on the same lines

“What I want to make clear, though, is that we oppose terrorism in any form. However, any operation against terrorism should be under the framework of the United Nations and follow the

fundamental principles of international laws.”

South East Asia has been a victim of Jihadi terrorism and violence in the name of the region in the past. The number of these conflicts has improved over time, causing political violence and inter-religious encounters. Such meetings bring civil wars, mass killings, and other social nuisances along. These conflicts go far across regional boundaries and connect with other Jihadi terrorist groups raising more and more insurgency. The recent battle in Syria and ISIS militant forces is a testimony to it.

Many terrorist attacks in history, like bomb strikes in Jakarta and Philippine security forces on 14 January 2016 and 9 April 2016, respectively, have been terrorist retaliation. All of the attacks were claimed by ISIS, who took responsibility in the name of Islam. The terrorist groups didn't even stop at those attacks but went forward to kidnap locals in the southern Philippines posing a permanent peace-disrupting threat to Southeast Asia. The role of IS has improved in the terrorist attacks, and many local terrorist groups claim to share a similar ideology with the leading militant group.

However, Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singaporeans, and Filipinos are making tremendous efforts to put other armed groups to their end. The research shows that the groups remain only a small fraction of the region's population. However, they still pose a massive threat to the safety of the states.

Researchers and policymakers of the region have then made several attempts to overview various threats by militant groups. The First one is a direct threat by small and local militant groups claiming allegiance to IS. The Second threat is the improved rate of immigration from Syria and Iraq in the South East Asian countries which can easily influence the locals with their jihadi ideologies, convincing them to fight in the name of religion. Thirdly, there remains a significant danger of activists in prisons who are continually being released after serving their time for criminal offenses. Indonesia and the Philippines continue to have a weak prison system, hence enabling the criminal masterminds to keep strong ties with their Jihadi groups even when they remain in torturous jail cells.

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is a prominent Islamic force and is spread across Southeast Asian states like Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Singapore. This force not only played a significant role in increased rates of terrorist activities but may have played a dominant role in spreading the virulent agenda of IS recently. Such expansions and growth of the militant groups and their leaders testify that the threat model for Southeast Asia IS is devastating.

However, Southeast Asian Countries have gathered up certain strategies and policies and evolved them on the terrorist changing agendas. The national security operations are continually being improved in the Southeast Asian countries while the leaders of every state are turning every stone in their power to stand up against the notion.

In that regard, the states have designed five major subject matters in the antiterrorism drive. The first one amongst them is the role of Southeast Asian governments in dealing with the problems

connected to radicalism. They also scrutinized how the lobbying of Islam was molded in ways to cater to the needs of extremist activities. The hateful language and ferocity against minorities also emerged as a leading cause of terrorist activities.

Secondly, the need of the hour is to focus on how severe and widely spread the problem is and how the nations lack the ability to actually deal with terrorist concerns. The third challenge was the need for time to restructure and reform the military and security state in Southeast Asian States, such as the Philippines.

The Fourth issue was to address issues outside the border issues, like how the terrorist groups were gaining help and support from outside the militant border groups. The problem overall needs to be reconciled at an international level to strengthen the relations of all countries and to unite them in efforts against terrorist attacks. The governance and security segment also needs to show effective and efficient initiatives in dealing with the grave issue. Lastly, all governments must acknowledge the fact that religious rehabilitation, while promising, is not enough to put an end to terrorism.

Research also highlights the sour but realistic facts regarding terrorism in the South East Asian region. The critics believe that there would be a continued threat of terrorism for the nations even in 2018 if they didn't renew their policies for returning Jihadis from Iraq and Syria to their states. Many countries of the world are waging war with terrorists in Syria and Iraq.

The war is generating a pool of terrorist candidates returning to their home states in Southeast Asia, all the while aiming to promote their cause in their native land and killing more and more people in the wake of their terrorist agenda. The time trends showed how the southern Philippines was a "safe haven for Southeast Asian jihadists." Hence, it needed to improve its security trends as soon as possible. While JI and IS associates claim to be at an impasse at the moment, however, it would be imprudent to assume that they might not join hands together once again to enact a bigger threat to achieving their target terror-driven consequences.

As Giorgio Agamben has said

"The thought of security bears within it an essential risk. A state which has security as its sole task and source of legitimacy is a fragile organism; it can always be provoked by terrorism to become more terroristic."

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