International Terrorism

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The term "terrorism" is derived from Latin word terrier which means 'to frighten' via the French word terrorism which is often associated with the regime da la tarreur, the Reign of terror of the revolutionary government in France that prevailed from 1793 to 1794. Most definitions of terrorism include only those acts which are intended to create "fear" or "terror" are perpetrated for an ideological goal and deliberately target or utterly disregards the safety of non combatants. Many definitions also include only acts of unlawful violence.

In order to make laws about terrorism one needs a legal definitions. Here is the one used by the united states government.

"The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."

The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country."

Terrorism Versus War

Both war and terrorism can create innocent victims. Some argue that the only difference between war and terrorism is that war kills a lot more people and wars are bought by governments. In the international legal system, wars are supposed to be fought according to certain rules. These laws are clearly not observed by terrorists. It can be argued that terrorist violence is not "Out of proportion" to its goals because the goals of terrorism are different from those of warfare. Both the terrorists and the military want to force their opponents to submit to certain demands. The military want to force their opponents to submit to certain demands. The military accomplishes this by destroying the opponent's ability to resist or by making it clear that the costs to the enemy of continuing to resist are worse than those of accepting the terms offered for surrender. The terrorist however does not have the means to destroy but only perhaps to destroy the people's willingness to back the government by creating a demoralizing fear.

Therefore, the difference between war and terrorism is not always one of effect, but of goals and purposes. The killing of civilians may be an

accidental outcome of war, but it is often viewed as necessary by the terrorist.

International Terrorism

International terrorism may be defined as acts of violence or campaigns of violence waged outside the accepted rules and procedures of international diplomacy and war. Breaking the rules may include attacking diplomats and other internationally protected persons, attacking international travel and commerce, exporting violence by various means to nations that normally would not under the traditional rules, be considered participants in the local conflict.

International terrorism represents a new kind of warfare. It is warfare without territory, waged without armies as we know them. It is warfare that is not limited territorially sporadic battles may take place worldwide. It is warfare without neutrals and with few or no civilian innocent bystanders.

New Targets and New Capabilities in International Terrorism

Terrorism is not new but a number of technical developments have made terrorism a more potent and to groups that lack other means of applying power an attractive means of struggle. Progress has provided terrorists with new targets and new capabilities. Yet air travel furnishes unprecedented mobility and with it the ability to strike anywhere in the world recent developments in new broadcasting radio, television, communication satellites are also a boon to publicity seeking terrorists.

The willingness and capability of news media to report and broadcast dramatic incidents of violence throughout the world enhances and even may encourage terrorism as an effective means of propaganda. Terrorists may now be assured that their actions will receive immediate worldwide coverage on radio, on television and in the press. The world is now their stage. The whole world is probably watching.

The vulnerabilities inherent in modern society, which is increasingly dependent on its technology, afford terrorist opportunities to create greater disrupt than in the past. Finally, new weapons, including powerful explosive and sophisticated timing and detonating devices, are increasing terrorists capacity for violence. The most ominous recent development is the discovery of soviet hand-held, heat seeking, ground-to-air missiles in the hands of terrorists near the Rome airport.

Effect on International Order

International terrorism has a destabilizing effect on international order. Campaigns of terrorism or specific incidents of terrorism directed against targets in the foreign diplomatic or business community have embarrassed several government, weakened some of them, and no doubt contributed to the downfall of a few. But where national governments did fall, other factors were also present such as grave economic problems, rampant inflation, widespread unemployment or deep rooted political struggles. No strong governments have fallen to domestic or foreign terrorists.

Terrorism has raised new questions about the feasible limits of protection a country many provide for its citizens once they are beyond its national borders. It has also raised questions about the national responsibility. When terrorists from one nation train in another nation, board a plane in a third nation to carry out an act of terrorism in a fourth nation, who is responsible? What basic responsibilities does every nation have in deterring the acts of terrorism against citizens of another nation?

Terrorism has exacerbated several local conflict, expanding them beyond the locality involved. Terrorism has prolonged conflicts, making settlements more difficult to reach. This is particularly true of the conflicts in the middle east and in Northern Ireland but both of these are deep-rooted conflicts that would have been difficult to solve anyway.

Beyond attracting attention and wringing some concessions from vulnerable governments, terrorism has not yet had a major impact on the international order. Measured against the limited investment in violence, the effects have been significant but measured against other disruptive forces in the world, the activities of terrorist rank for below such things as the recent Arab Oil embargo, Soaring energy costs, food shortages and conventional wars.

To summing up, we may say terrorism appears to have increased makbedly in the past few years political extremists in various parts of the world have attached passengers in airline terminals and railroad stations, planted bombs in government buildings, in the offices of multinational corporations, in pubs, in theaters, have hijacked airlines, ships and recently even a ferryboat in Singapore, have held hundereds of passengers hostage, have seized embassies, and have kidnapped government officials, diplomats and more recently then business executives.

The international response to international terrorism has been feeble thus far. There has been only limited international cooperation against terrorists. Since for reasons of ideology or politics, not all nations are threatened equally by acts of terrorism, the issue of terrorism remains political. Lacking international cooperation, nations have been compelled to deal with terrorism on their own. Some nations, such as the united states, have attempted to confront the challenge by beefing up security against attacks by terrorists here and abroad and by urging greater international cooperation against terrorism. The latter effort has achieved only limited success.

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