

International Terrorism Post 9/11: Emerging Trends and Global Response

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About The Author



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Introduction

September 11, 2001 was a watershed in the manner in which the world acknowledged and responded to terrorism. The monstrosity of the multiple attacks which killed nearly 3,000 people in one planned strike brought universal condemnation for terror acts and the community of nations got together to formulate a collective response, in what came to be known as the 'Global War on Terrorism' (GWOT). However, the principle aim of the GWOT was to wipe out Al Qaeda from its sanctuaries in Afghanistan, from where the 9/11 attacks had emanated. The prevailing atmosphere of outrage prompted even traditional archrivals like the US and Russia to close ranks, and Moscow's support was instrumental in facilitating the initial wave of NATO air strikes in Afghanistan in October 2001 that dislodged the Taliban regime from power and forced the Al Qaeda into retreat. US President George W Bush saw the world divided into two camps - those who supported the war against terrorism and those who did not. The latter were considered enemies. Cooperation of countries like Pakistan who were reluctant to support the US led campaign was coerced by the then US Secretary of State, Colin Powell famously threatening to bomb the country into the stone ages in case it was not willing to permit use of its airspace and territory for Coalition forces to enter Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan and Pakistan, over 1,200 Al Qaeda terrorists had been killed between 2004 and 2011, thereby greatly eroding the outfit's capacity to launch attacks on the US mainland. Thus, for the US, the broad goals of the GWOT had been achieved, considerably. Some of the important Al Qaeda leaders killed since 2001 include its leader, Osama bin Laden (2011), Atiyah Abdur al-Rahman (2011), Badar Mansur (2012), Aslam Awam (2012), Abu Ayyub al-Masri (2010), Abu Yazid (2010), Sheikh Fateh al Masri (2010) and Abu Zeid (2013). The degradation of Al Qaeda's fighting core, freezing of bank accounts and pressure on different states to act against it

eventually led to its de-centralization. The surviving leadership realized that it had to morph into smaller entities and spread its tentacles to different parts of the world in order to survive the western onslaught. While its small core remained intact in the Af-Pak region, many of its operatives, financiers and other supporters moved into lawless zones in West Asia, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, and the Caucasus. With a franchise-type operation, it developed a wide network across the world. Al Qaeda's signature structure is small and exposure of autonomous cells has little effect on the organization as a whole. It has moved away from the Arab leadership and is constrained to rely increasingly on non-Arab commanders.

International terrorism, post 2001 has become more diffused and widespread. The arc of Islamist terrorism has engulfed several countries in Africa and the Middle East in addition to assuming monstrous proportions in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Iraq the security situation has become far worse in recent years with a wave of suicide bombings targeted at Shias. The struggle of Sunni radical outfits to oust the Syrian government which is primarily led by Ahlawites is attracting Muslim fighters from across the globe, transforming Syria into a new symbol of the Global Jihad. The failure of the so-called Arab Spring has also given a new fillip to radicalization and accentuated sectarian strife in the Muslim world. In the 45 months preceding 9/11, an average of 106 terrorist related incidents was recorded every month across the world. Post 9/11, an average of 186 incidents takes place every month and the number goes up to 284, if figures for Iraq are also included.

Terrorists inspired by Al Qaeda have expanded the theatre of attacks and are looking for opportunities to target westerners across the world. Bali Bombings of 2002 and London tube bombings in 2005 were carried out by terror groups loosely affiliated with Al Qaeda or individuals inspired by its ideology. The victims of 9/11 included people from more than 90 countries and 28 foreign nationals from 10 different countries were among the 166 people killed in the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai. The series of spectacular terrorist attacks all over the world since 9/11 point to the fact that despite the GWOT, uncertainty and unpredictability of terror attacks remain very high. The Boston marathon

bombings caught security officials off guard as the attack was initiated by naturalized US citizens who had no previous association with terror groups.

So, why did GWOT, which primarily remained focused on Afghanistan and Iraq could not arrest the momentum of international terrorism elsewhere? For one, the International community has failed to even arrive at a universally accepted definition of terrorism with some member states of the UN stalling the passing of the draft comprehensive convention against terrorism. Advancing arguments such as first recognizing the root causes of terrorism not only justifies violence perpetuated by terrorists but also stymies collective action against them. Selective action against some terror groups, while turning a blind eye towards the activities of others, ensures that terrorists retain their ability to strike anywhere in the world. Jihadi terrorism post 9/11 has become more integrated and complementary in nature as terror outfits across the globe have closely aligned under the broad Al Qaeda umbrella, willing to ideologically or logistically support each other for targeting their common enemies. For instance, the objectives of the Laskhar-e-Taiba (LeT), which carried out the attacks in Mumbai in 2008 were ideologically similar to that of Al Qaeda and was in consonance with the latter's aim of targeting westerners anywhere in the world. Documents recovered from bin Laden's Abbottabad hideout even indicate that the Al Qaeda Emir may have had some knowledge of the Mumbai plot. Additionally, the role played by members of the Pakistani state establishment in conceiving and facilitating the 26/11 attacks is well documented and underscores the deep linkages between Jihadists and the deep state in Pakistan. Similarly, the most recent attack on a shopping mall in Nairobi, which also targeted citizens of different nationalities, was executed by Al-Shabaab, which is an affiliate of the Al Qaeda in East Africa.

Secondly, the inability of the UN Counter Terrorism Committee or the world community at large to impose costs on state sponsors of terrorism to deter them from nurturing Jihadist outfits, has provided them physical space and access to resources to plot terror attacks worldwide. As a consequence, the terrorist groups have not only become stronger and more ambitious in their objectives, the sanctuary provided by the state has given them more immunity from state action. Maintaining proxies to carry out calibrated

attacks on rival countries, has become an extension of state policy for some countries. Proxies like the LeT in Pakistan have become institutions in themselves and have expanded to other domains to include education, charity and health. While the United States recognizes Iran, Cuba, Sudan and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism, and has imposed a host of economic and military sanctions against them, dictates of geopolitics has allowed Pakistan to escape being designated a rogue state. In fact, it was declared to be a frontline ally of the US in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) despite its continuance of overt support to anti-India terrorist groups and tacit backing of a few other groups active in Afghanistan. The diversion of financial aid meant for counter-terrorism to bolster its conventional military capabilities, discovery of Osama bin Laden in a compound adjacent to the Pakistan Military Academy in Abbottabad, and the involvement of terrorists of Pakistani origin or those who received some sort of training in that country in global terror plots even after 9/11, are only a few aspects which highlight the country's duplicitous role in the fight against global terrorism.

The countries which have borne the direct brunt of state sponsored terrorism include India where more than 50,000 people have lost their lives in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in violence directly perpetuated by Pakistan based terrorist groups since 1989. Acts of terrorism sponsored by Pakistan have claimed nearly 1,500 lives and injured more than 4,000 in the Indian hinterland since the serial blasts in Mumbai on March 12, 1993. This number will be much higher if one takes into account deaths attributed to Khalistani groups and some North-Eastern insurgent outfits which received financial, training and logistical assistance from the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) from the 1980s onwards. Groups nurtured on Pakistani soil have also wreaked havoc in Afghanistan killing thousands of innocent civilians since the 1980s.

Similarly, several states in strife-torn Africa have backed armed militias to gain control of resource rich regions or capture territory plunging the continent into a permanent state of civil war where lakhs of people have died in the past century. Sudan was designated as a state sponsor of terrorism by the US for its support of Hamas and Al Qaeda inspired terrorist groups. The sectarian clashes in the Middle East have claimed

thousands of lives often at the hands of outfits backed by both Shia and Sunni countries. For instance, Iran and Lebanon are well known for their support of the Hezbollah and Saudi Arabia for its financial backing of outfits like Hamas in Palestine. The regime in Syria has been backing the Hezbollah for several decades and there have been instances of mass killings and use of brute military force by the state against its citizens.

Prior to 9/11, global jihadists plotted major trans-national attacks from safe havens in Sudan (bombings outside US embassies in Nairobi and Dar-e-Salaam, bombing of USS Cole in Aden) and Afghanistan (9/11 attacks); today they have found new breeding grounds in Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and parts of North Africa and the Middle East. This in conjunction with widely dispersed cells in Europe, North America and South East Asia multiplies their capabilities to plan and launch more terror attacks. As the world approaches another watershed period in 2014 when international forces will commence their final phase of withdrawal from Afghanistan, the threat of international terrorism may become even more pronounced with the Jihadists re-gaining their traditional safe havens in the Af-Pak border region. The outward expansion of terror from this cradle of terrorism into Central and South Asia (with Jammu & Kashmir perhaps already in their cross-hairs) and increased radicalization in the Muslim world from the Middle East to Bangladesh in South Asia, casts an ominous shadow on prospects for peace after 2014.

With this background, the aim of this paper is to situate the main trends in the pattern of international terrorism post 9/11 and analyze the efficacy of measures adopted by the World community to measure up to the threat. The paper will attempt to recommend some collective measures that need to be undertaken to combat the imminent threat of international terrorism.

Part I

Emerging Trends in International Terrorism

New Trends in Terror Tactics

Spatial expanse:

Post 9/11, International Terrorism, both in respect of stimulant and response, has undergone tactical changes. It has spread far beyond the traditional theatres of Palestine-Israel, Chechnya, parts of Africa, Sri Lanka and India. In fact, after 2001, more than 2,400 macro attacks (where more than 15-20 people have died) have taken place across the world killing 37,000 people and injuring more than 60,000. Sixty per cent of the casualties occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan and the two countries account for nearly 35 % of total attacks recorded in the period 2001-11. Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Philippines are the top five countries laced with the maximum number of incidents during this period. The increase in number of terrorist incidents has seen a jump of nearly 460 % since 2002. Since 2002, the impact of terrorism has been greatly felt in Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia.¹ In the year 2012, 11,000 deaths were reported in 6,771 incidents, of which the highest number of incidents took place in Pakistan (1,404), Iraq (1,271), Afghanistan (1,023) and India (557). Over 55 % of all attacks and 62 % of all casualties occurred in just three countries – Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan.² According to START, the US National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, there were 5,100 terrorist attacks in the first six months of 2013, following the 8,400 attacks in 2012, which killed nearly 15,400 people.³

The geographical expansion of terrorism into new theatres of Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand in South East Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Gulf countries, Iraq and parts of Europe, North and East Africa, has also been accompanied by a shift in the pattern of attacks and tactics employed by terrorist groups. In terms of casualties, the five countries which have borne the maximum impact of terrorism from 2002 to 2011 are ⁴:-

| Countries | Fatalities |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Iraq | 22,000 |
| Pakistan | 9,000 |
| Afghanistan | 7,000 |
| India * | 5,000 |
| Russia | 2,000 |

The following terror outfits have been the major perpetrators of violence in this period responsible for inflicting maximum casualties:-

| Outfit | Country |
|--|------------------------|
| Taliban groups & Al Qaeda | Pakistan & Afghanistan |
| Islamic State of Iraq (Al Qaeda affiliate in Iraq ; previously known as AQI) | Iraq |
| Al Shabaab | Somalia & Kenya |
| Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) | Yemen |
| Boko Haram | Nigeria |
| Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) & Indian Mujahideen (IM) | India |
| Al Nusrat (Al Qaeda affiliate) | Syria |

Shift in Pattern of Attacks and Terror Targets:

Due to target hardening by states, attacks are being majorly directed against soft targets, thereby increasing civilian casualties. The targets are selected to maximise impact and publicity. In the decade since 9/11, bulk of terrorist attacks has been directed against civilians unlike previous years when security forces and symbols of the government were the primary targets. It has expanded the scope of targets for terrorists as it is much more difficult to penetrate the security apparatus in government

installations. There are numerous civilian targets and it is difficult to physically safeguard each and every infrastructure, modes of communications, public places etc. Terrorists carry out detailed reconnaissance of prospective targets to identify loopholes in security architecture before targeting them. Another shift in the pattern of attacks in areas afflicted by insurgency such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, India (J&K) is the increasing frequency of targeted killings of members of a particular community, grass root leaders, security force informers etc by a small group of terrorists. This is because of depleting numbers of terrorists and operating in smaller numbers makes detection difficult.

The shift in targeting pattern from government/military to civilian targets indicate that the terrorists are attempting to spread intimidation, create a permanent state of fear psychosis leading to disruption of economic activity and discouraging foreign investments in the target countries. The western way of life and democracy are anathema to the Jihadists, therefore non-Muslim civilians are seen as legitimate targets for them. They also believe that economically bleeding a country is one way of gradually achieving victory over their enemies. Another reason for targeting more civilians is that terrorist actions against security forces were receiving less attention and had become routine affairs occurring in far flung areas, away from the media glare. Sensational attacks in big cities receive much more media attention than isolated incidents in peripheral areas of the countryside. The suicide bombings in major cities of Pakistan and Afghanistan and larger number of attacks in the Indian hinterland with reduced incidents in peripheral states like J&K are indicative of this trend.

Adaptations in Tactics and Technological Upgradation:

Terrorist activities have transcended hijackings. Use of suicide bombers and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) has now become the favourite weapon for terrorists across the globe. Terrorists have refined their tactical skills and the attacks are well calibrated and involve a careful selection of targets and meticulous planning over a long period before actually executing the attack. IEDs are fabricated in a much more professional

manner and a host of innocuous looking daily use items such as pressure cookers, mobile phones, etc are used for preparing the IED. Less amount of explosive material are used in a device which is packed with more shrapnel to maximise the impact of an explosion and cause casualties. Terrorists have reduced their dependency on military grade plastic explosives like C4 and RDX due to stricter control and monitoring by security agencies and rely more on commercially available materials like ammonium nitrate to fabricate IEDs. Keeping pace with the advances in technology, there is an increased use of remote-controlled devices and mobile phones for detonating IEDs.

There are reports that due to enhanced counter measures and use of technology to detect explosives, female terrorists are being readied to conceal explosives in their body parts to avoid detection. Fewer amounts of explosives when detonated on an airline would be sufficient enough to cause an air crash. The terrorists arrested in the UK for plotting to blow trans-Atlantic flights mid-air, had experimented with liquid explosives concealed inside the bodies of their wives. The attempted assassination of Saudi Prince Mohammed Bin Nayef Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud on August 27, 2009 by Abdullah al-Asiri, and the failed attempt to blow up Northwest Airline flight 253 by a Nigerian national owing allegiance to the Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) on Christmas Day the same year were examples of ingenious attempts made by terrorists to attach explosive devices to their body parts. The explosive devices concealed inside printer cartridges recovered from two US bound flights originating from Yemen on October 29, 2010 were also innovative methods to circumvent scanners at airports. All these IEDs were believed to have been conceived by the Saudi born Ibrahim al-asiri, who was the chief bomb-maker of AQAP. Interestingly, Ibrahim al-asiri had himself detonated the IED concealed inside the rectum of his own brother Abdullah al-asiri using a mobile phone from his hideout inside Yemen. Ibrahim al-asiri was killed alongside his mentor and head of AQAP, Anwar al-awlaki – the US born imam from Falls Church, Virginia and principal motivator of lone wolf terrorists in a US drone strike in South Eastern Yemen on September 30, 2011. The failed assassination attempt by the Taliban on Asadullah Khalid, the head of Afghanistan's intelligence wing, the National Directorate of Security

in December 2012 was also carried out by a suicide bomber who had hid explosives inside his rectum.

Terrorists are now found equipped with state of the art navigation devices such as GPS and passive night vision devices for navigation during night. They have enhanced the use of cyberspace and satellite phones for communication, propaganda and online recruitment of prospective foot soldiers. Social networking sites like Facebook and on line messaging tools such as Google chat, Yahoo messenger, etc are used for coded communications. In addition, Blackberry messenger, Whatsapp, etc also provide a reliable platform for communication. The Al Qaeda, in particular, increasingly makes use of pornographic sites for embedding messages. The handlers of the 26/11 attacks based in Pakistan communicated with the attackers on ground using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) which were routed via servers located in a third country. A plethora of radical jihadist websites have become a platform for recruiting terrorists, motivating and instructing self-motivated jihadists for carrying out attacks. Almost all terror groups rely on the cyberspace for communication and propaganda purposes.

Fast Emulation of Successful Terrorist Practices by other Groups:

There is universality in the tactics adopted by various terrorist groups operating in different parts of the world although there may be no operational linkages between them. Terrorists easily replicate the tactics and modus operandi employed by a particular group in one theatre and it then becomes a worldwide trend. For instance, Human bombings were an art perfected by the LTTE in Sri Lanka. Among Jihadists, this trend inspired by the Al Qaeda became widespread in Pakistan in reprisal attacks that followed the storming of the Lal Masjid in Islamabad in June 2007. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has made widespread use of this method which was soon picked up the Haqqani groups in their strikes in Afghanistan. Human bombs have wreaked havoc in Pakistan and have been repeatedly used in sectarian incidents targeting places of worships as also to storm fortified installations of security forces.

The use of Vehicle-Borne IEDs (VBIEDs) was maximised by the Al Qaeda in Iraq and it has now become common in all theatres of conflict though Iraq still accounts for the maximum number of VBIED blasts. Since 2012, nearly 50 VBIED blasts have been reported from Iraq every month.⁵ Though car bombs have been used earlier in other areas but it was successfully used in Iraq, thereby raising its preferability among terror groups. Twenty three people including the Iranian Cultural Attaché' were killed and 160 injured in a deadly VBIED explosion outside the Iranian embassy in Beirut on November 19, 2013. The Abdullah Azam Brigade which has close links with the Al Qaeda, and is opposed to Hezbollah's presence in Lebanon claimed responsibility for incident. Use of vehicles for triggering explosions not only maximises possibilities for inflicting greater casualties but also has more publicity value and potential to generate perpetual fear in the minds of the people. Separatist Uighur Muslims belonging to the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) detonated a car bomb at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on October 28, 2013 attracting tremendous publicity. Similarly, the Indian Mujhaideen had combined fire assault and detonation of an explosive device packed inside a car outside Jama Masjid in Delhi on September 19, 2010. It is another matter that the explosive device failed to detonate due to a technical fault preventing major casualties.

The first prominent use of large vehicles like trucks for suicide bombings was also initiated by Al Qaeda in the twin near simultaneous explosions outside the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on August 7, 1998 which killed 223 people and wounded over 4,000. In Pakistan, a truck was used to ram through the entry gates of Hotel Marriot in Islamabad on September 20, 2008. 54 people were killed and 266 injured in the devastating bomb attack.

The use of Integrated Chips to detonate the IEDs used in the Surat and Bengaluru blasts of 2008 was copied from Al Qaeda manuals on bomb making available on the internet. Similar circuits were used by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) in the Bali bombings of 2002 although there are no operational linkages between the IM and JI. Prison breaks are emerging as a new tactic adopted by Jihadist terrorists to free prisoners and bolster their fighting strengths. This tactics originated in the Af-Pak region and was replicated

by the Al Qaeda affiliate in Iraq. Some of the major prison breaks include the raid in Kandahar on April 25, 2011 which freed 500 prisoners and on the Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan Prisons in North West Pakistan on April 15, 2012 and July 30, 2012 which led to the escape of more than 600 prisoners which included at least 40 hardcore terrorists. An outfit called the Ansar-al-Aseer has been especially formed to carry out prison breaks and consists of members from the TTP and foreign fighters of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The simultaneous raids on Abu Gharib and Taji prisons in Iraq on July 21, 2013 by the group Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) led to the escape of 500-1000 prisoners. Some of the freed terrorists were later found to be operating in Syria.

Another instance of replication of tactics by unconnected groups or individuals was the use of a pressure cooker to carry out the Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013. Pressure cookers have been commonly used by the Indian Mujahideen (IM) to execute blasts in India. The tactics of carrying out mass fire-assault and simultaneously engaging multiple targets by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Mumbai on November 26-29, 2008 has become widespread in the Pakistan- Afghanistan region and several terror outfits have endeavoured to replicate the same. The attack on Sri Lankan cricketers in Lahore in March 2009 was one example of this trend and similar attacks have been witnessed in the green zone of Kabul. In 2010, western intelligence agencies pointed towards the likelihood of a 26/11 type attack on multiple cities of Europe.⁶ In October 2012, the Indonesian Police arrested 11 individuals and claimed to have foiled a plot to carry out a series of attacks on the 10th anniversary of the Bali bombings. The multiple targets in Jakarta, Surabaya and Central Java province included the US embassy, a shopping mall and the office of a US-based firm. A similar plot to assassinate the Indonesian President and simultaneously attack foreigners in hotels was uncovered in the year 2010.⁷ The siege of the shopping mall in Kenya in September 2013 that killed over 60 people was eerily similar to the Mumbai carnage.

Terrorist groups are constantly evolving their tactics to keep one pace ahead of security and intelligence agencies and avoid detection by them. The phenomenon of the

emergence of individual Jihadists would lead to new and unforeseen threats from springing up. These individuals may not have sufficient access to resources and organizational support to mount a major attack but can generate scare by carrying out sensational attacks involving acts of sabotage or targeted killings of prominent citizens. Knife attacks are quite common in the restive Xinjiang province of China and the knife attack in Kunming railway station that left 29 people dead and more than 150 injured took the authorities by surprise. (the Kunming incident, however, appears to be a pre-meditated and organized attack and not perpetuated by unconnected individuals).

Proliferation of Self-Motivated and Propelled Cells:

Another universal trend in global terror tactics is the execution of attacks by small cells of self-motivated individuals who are based in the country where the attack is perpetuated. These individuals are often first-timers and easily evade scrutiny by intelligence and security agencies. Minimal interaction with their handlers and freedom of decision in selection of targets and scale of attack also minimises chances of interception of such plots. The terrorist groups who sponsor these attacks are content with small scale attacks as carrying out strikes on the scale of 9/11 requires greater resources, time and activation of larger cells which have become difficult in the wake of enhanced international counter-terrorist actions.

The phenomenon of free-lance terrorism is also on the rise. Individual terrorists are readily available to terrorist groups for carrying out reconnaissance and other logistical assistance for major plots. A classic example is that of Daood Gilani @ David Coleman Headley who first offered his services to the LeT for the Mumbai attacks and was later actively involved in the plot to target the office of a Danish newspaper in Copenhagen at the behest of Illyas Kashmiri who had been associated with the HuJI and Al Qaeda. Another illustration is that of Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a British national of Pakistani origin who gained worldwide attention for his role in the beheading of the *Wall Street Journal* reporter, Daniel Pearl in Karachi in 2002. The 9/11 Inquiry Commission also indicted Omar for transferring \$ 1,00,000 to Mohamed Atta, the leader of the group of

19 hijackers one month before the attacks. Previously, a student of London School of Economics, he had travelled to Bosnia to 'experience Jihad' and was arrested for the kidnapping of four western tourists in India in 1994. In his global assignments, Omar had served the interests of multiple terror outfits like Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Al Qaeda and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Additionally, it has become more difficult to distinguish between insurgents and terrorists as both complement each other in methods employed and terrorists have enmeshed themselves closely in ongoing insurgencies greatly influencing their ideologies and targets.

Lone Wolf Phenomenon

Several individual and isolated cells are believed to be present in Europe and North America. These cells may be modeled on the pattern of the Hamburg cell whose members carried out the 9/11 attacks. Most individuals involved in such cells have either been self-motivated by watching radical Islamist propaganda material on the internet or have got brainwashed in mosques. Anwar-al-awlaki, was a prominent figure who used to motivate self-made Jihadists through propaganda videos circulated on the internet. AQIM due to its presence in areas contiguous to southern Europe also acts as a facilitator for plotting attacks in Europe. Algerians linked with AQIM have been arrested for plotting attacks in France and London. The 2004 Madrid train and 2005 London bombings bore resemblance to the modus operandi adopted by Al Qaeda. The London attack was claimed by an organisation calling itself 'The Secret Organisation of Al Qaeda in Europe'. And prior to the London bombings, the 'Abu Hafs Al Misri Brigades' had posted a message on several Islamist websites stating: "We ask all waiting mujahideen, wherever they are, to carry out the planned attack".⁸ The group had made reference to Mohammed Atef, Al Qaeda's Chief Operations Commander who was killed in an US air raid on Kabul in November 2001. In the US, the phenomenon of self-motivated or individual "lone wolf" operatives (like the Boston Marathon bombers) is more pronounced where between 1997 and 2011, 171 individuals (including the 19 hijackers who carried out the attacks on 9/11) have been charged for committing or

plotting to commit terrorist attacks. Of these, nearly 47 % had received some form of training in camps in Afghanistan, Pakistan or Somalia. Thirty eight per cent of these arrested individuals were directly associated with Al Qaeda or AQAP, 9 % to the Laskhar-e-Taiba (LeT) and 5 % to Al Shabaab. Nearly 54 % of those arrested were US citizens, most of whom were religious converts to Islam. The most common place of residence for US born accused was New York followed by California and Virginia.

The impact of global terrorism has also led to incidents where individuals impacted by radical Islamist propaganda and global events such as the US led military interventions in the Muslim world have carried out attacks in their home countries even though they had no linkages with terrorist groups. For instance, a German national of Albanian descent had shot dead two US Air Force personnel and injured another two outside the Frankfurt airport on March 2, 2011. More recent examples are the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013 and the beheading of a British soldier who had served in Afghanistan by two African Muslims in London on May 22, 2013.

Trans-national linkages of individual Jihadists

At least 7,000 foreign fighters from 50 countries mainly from Europe and Middle East but also from countries as far as Indonesia and Australia are believed to have joined the conflict in Syria.⁹ This has not only strengthened the Al Nusra and Islamic State in Iraq & Sham (ISIS) involved in the sectarian conflict but also underscores the impact of radicalization on individual Jihadists to rally behind a common cause. Some of the battle hardened Jihadists could pose a grave terror threat to their home countries. The trans-national linkage to terrorism in Europe is borne out by the fact that in almost all of the major terror attacks that were averted, some of the potential attackers had travelled to Afghanistan or Pakistan to receive training and additional indoctrination. Some Muslim youth from UK have also travelled to Syria to join the fighting there. Similarly, the suspects in the Sauerland case in Germany which was busted in 2007 were linked to the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) and had trained with the group in Waziristan reaching Pakistan via Syria, Turkey and Iran.¹⁰ On December 10, 2012, an explosive device planted inside the Bonn train station failed to explode highlighting the potent terror

threat to Germany. The case of Frederic C Jean Salvi who detonated a package explosive outside the Indonesian embassy in Paris on March 21, 2012 is another indicator of the trans-national threat of terrorism. Salvi, a French national had rallied behind the cause of Islamist terrorists operating in Indonesia and was involved in a foiled terror plot in that country.

Terror Financing:

Due to global efforts at identifying and freezing channels of terrorist funding, terrorists are relying heavily on narcotics and counterfeit smuggling. This has led to the growing nexus between criminal and terror groups. In 2010, a US Congressional Service Report indicated that Al Qaeda has tapped into Dawood Ibrahim's smuggling and narcotics channels to fund its own activities. It is also a well known fact that the D-Company is one of the sources of finances for anti-India jihadist outfits. The Partho Burman kidnapping case is illustrative of the use of criminal networks to fund terror activities. Burman was kidnapped by a group led by Aftab Ansari, who was subsequently sentenced to death in the January 2002 attack on the American Center in Kolkata.

It is widely suspected that the money which Omar Saeed Sheikh had transferred to Mohammed Ata, the 9/11 hijacker included part of the ransom amount.

In addition, terror groups are increasingly relying on mobile and internet banking facilities and hawala channels to avoid detection by intelligence agencies. They have also launched a proactive online campaign to seek donations from Muslims all over the world. Al Qaeda's affiliates are advised to raise their own funds. The LeT in Pakistan collects a considerable amount of funds through donations especially during the month of Ramzan and by selling hide skin of goats. Funding by Islamic charities to terror groups is also a common source of terror financing and they are increasingly receiving funding through diaspora population residing in the Gulf and Europe to carry out terror attacks. Money is often transferred by sponsors via individuals residing in foreign countries to the bank accounts of their relatives in the destination country. Western Union money transfers are a common channel for making such transfers. Though global

intelligence agencies have succeeded in intercepting such money flows, the sheer magnitude of bank accounts makes it impossible to detect every transaction.

Freezing of bank accounts restricted funding from donors in Saudi Arabia and clamping down on Osama bin Laden's private businesses, forced Al Qaeda to dilute its ideology to legitimize funding from other sources. Bin Laden had to issue several fatwas to justify raising money via the drug trade in Afghanistan as it violates Islamic tenets. Similarly, several of Al Qaeda's affiliates in Africa generate funds through narcotics and smuggling of other goods, kidnappings for ransom, robberies, etc which are not in consonance with Al Qaeda's core ideology. The Taliban groups in Pakistan are also indulging in extortion and kidnappings for ransom for financial purposes. For instance, the Taliban is known to appropriate taxes and seek donations from Pashtuns residing in Karachi who dominate the city's transport business.

Intertwining of Political agenda of Radicals and Terrorists:

The multiple blasts on July 7, 2013 in Bodh Gaya in India, which is the most revered shrine for Buddhists in the world is illustrative of the global nature of terrorist threat being encountered today. Several Jihadist outfits including the Al Qaeda and TTP had vowed to avenge the killings of Rohingya Muslims by Buddhists in Myanmar. That the bombings were carried out by the Indian Mujahideen through its sleeper cells is indicative of the global agenda of the primarily India-centric terror outfit. It demonstrates the extent to which Pan-Islamic Jihadist groups are willing to adopt each other's goals and ideologies even though Indian Muslims were not directly affected by the violence in Myanmar.

Most Sunni terrorist groups by and large identify with the common aim of establishing the Islamic Ummat under a Caliph and transform Dar-ul-harb - house of war or house of the west (Dar-ul-garb) into Dar-ul-Islam (abode of Islam). They consider democracy to be un-Islamic. This commonality of interest is evident in the political sermons of Al Qaeda's, Ayman al-Zawahiri, TTP's late Hakimullah Mehsud or Lashkar-e-Taiba's (LeT) Hafeez Mohammed Saeed. The Al Qaeda, TTP and LeT were among several

Jihadist groups that had vowed to avenge the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar though none of these groups had any presence in that country. This is just one recent example of the global and pan-Islamic agenda of the Jihadists and their attempt to infuse their radical breed of Islam across the Muslim world. Indian intelligence agencies have evidence to suggest that the LeT which has already spread its tentacles in Maldives and Sri Lanka is now attempting to recruit Rohingyas from Myanmar into its fold.¹¹

A grouping of Islamist terror outfits which includes the LeT, Harkat-ul-Jihadi-al Islami (HuJI-B) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (which had carried out a series of coordinated bomb blasts across Bangladesh on August 17, 2005) have come together under the banner of Difa-e-Musalman Arakan in Myanmar to expand the arc of terror to that region. The enmeshing of global Jihadist elements has also been corroborated by intelligence reports of an Al Qaeda bomb making expert having gone to Bangladesh earlier this year to train Rohingya Muslims and that two members of a radical outfit calling itself Rohingya Solidarity Association (RSO) returned to the Arakan from London in January 2013 allegedly to conduct terrorist activities.¹² The exodus of people from Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad and Bangalore to their homes in Northeastern India in 2012 was caused due to propaganda e-mails, on-line and mobile phone messages generated mostly from internet servers based in Pakistan and the Gulf countries, thereby establishing the global origins of this subversive design. Therefore, trans-national terrorism has become more inter-linked and the boundaries between various groups have been blurred due to the sharing of common ideologies, motivations, tactics and the need for complementing each other's efforts in the face of the global onslaught against terrorism.

Impact of Radicalization and Arab Spring:

Jihadist radicalisation has increased in the decade following the West's counter-terrorism efforts, which after gaining initial support even from Muslim countries led to a backlash due their disproportionate use of drones, collateral damage increasing civilian casualty and racial profiling. Even though the extent of collateral damage caused due to

drone strikes may have been limited, the successful propaganda measures adopted by Jihadists fostered an anti-West environment among Muslims. It also had a ripple effect in instigating populations in the Arab World to demand the ouster of pro-West regimes though economic discrimination, lack of employment avenues, and their corrupt and autocratic practices were the primary driving factors behind the uprisings.

The flight of several first generation Saudi Al Qaeda commanders from Afghanistan post the US invasion aided the stoking of Jihadist radicalization in the Middle East. This was compatible with Al Qaeda's initial aims of overthrowing pro-Western governments termed "apostate regimes" in the Gulf. Al Qaeda first initiated sectarian clashes in Iraq while simultaneously establishing cells in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and in North Africa. The US withdrawal from Iraq was termed as a victory by Al Qaeda and it egged Muslims in other countries to overthrow their apostate regimes. Al Qaeda had very little role to play in instigating the so-called Arab Spring which erupted as a popular movement against the oppressive pro-West monarchical regimes and social causes such as unemployment but it embedded itself with the post-revolution dispensation that emerged in Libya and Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood leadership in Egypt was infiltrated by Al Qaeda sympathisers which led the Military to dismiss the government though it had presided over the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak due to the overwhelming public outcry against his regime at Tahrir Square. The strength that Jihadist elements acquired in Egypt is evident by the militarization of pro- Muslim Brotherhood supporters and large casualties that have occurred in clashes between radicals and the military. The aftermath of the Arab Spring has led to a debate as to whether democracy is compatible with political Islam or not. Seeking an answer to that question is beyond the scope of this paper but suffice to say that the post revolution political system that emerged in these countries created favourable conditions for hard line Salafist groups to get entrenched.

Egypt, which is the home country of Al Qaeda Emir Ayman al-Zawahiri and the fact that many top Al Qaeda commanders including Osama bin Laden were products of the Al Azhar University in Cairo, has immense symbolic value for International Jihadism represented by Al Qaeda. It is also a belief of the Salafists that the final battle of the

Jihad waged by them will take place in Sham or the Levant, thereby attracting foreign fighters to Syria¹³. The rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab World if left unchecked will have devastating impact on world peace. In addition to Egypt, the Salafists have gained ground in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and now in Syria. The proliferating network of Salafist and Wahabi mosques have become the nerve centres for radicalizing the traditional discourse of Islam prevalent in these countries for centuries. Flush with Saudi money, they are able to source recruits and followers especially in regions which have a large proportion of poor and unemployed Muslim population. In the past decade, a large number of Wahabi mosques and madrasas funded by Saudi Arabia have mushroomed all over the world especially in South Asia. Since then nearly 800 Ahl-e-Hadith madrasas have been established in the Kashmir valley alone.¹⁴ The extreme Wahabi ideology is popular among Al Qaeda inspired Islamist terrorist groups and has increased the killings of non-Wahabis including Shias and moderate Sunnis in parts of the Middle East and South Asia. All other Muslims who do not profess the Wahabi faith are considered non-Muslims and killing them is justified. In fact, one of the virulent diatribes of the Wahabis goes as such, “we will kill you so that you are re-born as a better person.”

A devastating consequence of extreme radicalization is the sharp escalation in suicide bombings. Post 9/11 the phenomenon of suicide attacks in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq has been on an upward trajectory. Suicide attacks were virtually absent in these countries before the US-led invasion and subsequent civilian deaths in air strikes and drone attacks provided an alibi to the fundamentalists to whip up passions of the people by portraying the Western occupation as a danger to Islam. Among other things, a suicide bomber requires a tremendous amount of motivation and indoctrination which can be easily enthused in him in a religiously surcharged atmosphere created by increased radicalization.

In India, the frequency of suicide attacks peaked in the period 1999-2002, particularly in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Bulk of the suicide attacks were carried out by Pakistani and Afghan cadres of the LeT when insurgency in J&K had received a fillip in the aftermath of the Kargil war. The number of ‘fidayeen’ attacks declined after 2002 and

between 2006 and 2013, there have been only three such attacks in J&K. The attacks came down due to the fatigue factor among terrorists and the LeT could no longer afford to lose a large number of cadres in fidayeen attacks. The Jihadist's preoccupation in Afghanistan and Pakistan and unpopularity of these methods due to increased civilian casualties could also be some factors for decline in the number of suicide attacks. But this situation could reverse once the Jihadists re-focus their energies on J&K and the Indian hinterland after the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in 2014. Radicalization among the population in J&K has increased in the past decade and its manifestation was seen in the civilian unrest from 2008-10. Therefore, increased radicalization of the youth of the state may become a repository for re-introducing suicide attacks, as has happened in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq. The IM, which closely mirrors the Al Qaeda in its ideology, has also been attempting to carry out suicide attacks. This was revealed in the interrogation of Yasin Bhatkal and his associate Asadullah Akhtar @ Haddi, the latter was being trained for carrying out a suicide attack. Earlier, there were also reports that Atif Ameen, an IM terrorist killed during the Batla House encounter in Delhi in September 2008, was also being trained in fidayeen tactics. This could be a dangerous trend as Indian Muslims (with one exception in J&K in 2000) till date have not participated in suicide attacks or bombings. The fact that terrorist handlers and ideologues are able to motivate even some IM members for this purpose is worrisome and shows the extent of indoctrination and radicalization these Muslim youth have undergone.

Rise in radicalism among the growing Muslim population in several European countries has increased the threat of terrorism in Europe especially in UK and Germany. Salafist funded mosques and extremist political organizations have become the primary pools for brainwashing the minds of even educated Muslim youth for taking to extremism. In recent past, there has also been a rise in the number of converts to Islam in the UK indicating the popularity of extremist ideology in some sections of society. The unraveling of several terror plots in the UK such as the one to bomb Trans-Atlantic Airlines between London and New York with bombs disguised as soft drinks in 2006 or the recent one in Birmingham to use eight rucksacks packed with explosives. Stuart

Osborne, Deputy Commissioner of Police in London said, "On an average, we've probably had about one potential attack planned with an intent to create something similar to July 7 every year".¹⁵ In Spain though considerably weakened, the domestic terrorist group Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) continues to recruit individuals and plot terror attacks. The influence of Al Qaida affiliates like AQIM is also growing in Spain.

Part II

Global Response to Terrorism After 9/11 and its Effectiveness

Till the attacks of September 11, 2001, the global response to terrorism was overcast by the leading world powers selectively defining International terrorism who viewed violence in countries that did not affect them as domestic terrorism, insurgencies or even 'freedom struggle', thereby providing legitimacy to terrorist groups indulging in such acts. One major shift that 9/11 brought about was characterising terrorism as an unacceptable 'tactics' to achieve political or ideological objectives that was to be opposed irrespective of the underlying causes. Post 9/11, the international community, led by the US largely gave up this discriminatory approach and promised co-operation to present a strong and united front against terrorism. The principled position notwithstanding, in practice much was left to be desired. Yet, the horror and magnitude of the 9/11 attacks had created a universal wave and abhorrence for terrorism and its brutal methods. This environment and anger against terrorism not only led to the cementing of an international opinion in favour of the US led operation in Afghanistan but also allowed some countries like Sri Lanka to brutally crackdown on terror groups such as the LTTE with the world turning a blind eye towards the methods adopted by the state in wiping out the outfit and the resultant collateral damage it caused.

Let us now examine some of the major collective counter-terrorism measures adopted after 9/11 by the international community.

Operation Enduring Freedom: The US led military operation in Afghanistan in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks ousted the Taliban government and decimated the Al Qaeda core. Several hundred Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters were killed in the immediate assault in 2001-02. This eroded its capability to plan and mount attacks globally and the US, in particular has so far remained unscathed by any major terror attack since 9/11. Afghanistan was symbolic of the fight against terrorism as the 9/11 attacks were planned on Afghan soil with the attackers themselves receiving some form of training in that country. However, the remnants of Al Qaeda including Osama

bin Laden found refuge across the Durand Line in Afghanistan where it subsumed itself into the TTP to mount a war against the Pakistani state. The Jihad in Pakistan, accentuated by the lackadaisical attitude and half-hearted measures adopted by the Pakistani state was to soon assume monstrous proportions, further enabling Al Qaeda to revitalize itself and bring more Islamist groups under its ideological sway. The US diversion to Iraq in 2003 allowed it to re-group on both sides of the Durand Line and once again plan attacks outside the region.

Though the 13 year long ISAF military mission in Afghanistan was successful in wiping out the Al Qaeda and eroding to a considerable extent the military capabilities of the Taliban, those very elements are today on the verge of making a comeback post-2014 when the ISAF mission winds up. This has been partially due to the faulty counter-insurgency strategies adopted by the Coalition forces and more importantly due to the state support enjoyed by the Taliban in Pakistan which ensured that they were never completely destroyed. The mounting war costs in the backdrop of a declining US economy and increasing troop casualties leading to a sharp fall in popular support for the war back home also led the US to focus more on preventing terrorism on its home soil. With little appetite left for the war, the US refocused its efforts from counter-insurgency to counter-terrorism targeting only Al Qaeda and its affiliates. Their recent policy of engaging the Taliban in dialogue to cut its losses and present a semblance of victory before exiting Afghanistan is further indicative of its selective approach whereby it is less worried about the negative impact of terrorism on other countries. It is hopeful of shielding itself from the blowback of terrorism which is on the verge of once again taking strong roots in the region by maintaining a limited counter-terrorism capability in Afghanistan-Pakistan (drones, special forces, etc), incentivizing Pakistan and extracting assurances from the Taliban that it would not allow Al Qaeda to train on Afghan soil. Therefore, while Operation Enduring Freedom coupled with US covert operations and drone strikes in Pakistan mounted severe operational losses on Al Qaeda, the long-drawn campaign failed to achieve a desirable end-state in Afghanistan where conditions are still ripe to keep the threat of Islamist terrorism alive.

Counter-Terror legislations: While terrorism in various hues and shades existed over the past half century or so and these were addressed by various UN conventions, it took the absolute mass barbarity of the 9/11 attack to spur the World community to usher in Resolution 1373 by the UN Security Council (as against the General Assembly) as a right to self-defence. UN Security Council Resolution 1373 adopted unanimously on September 28, 2001, calls upon member states to implement a slew of measures intended to enhance their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities. It obligates all states to criminalize assistance for terrorist activities, deny financial support and safe haven to terrorists and to share information about groups planning terrorist attacks unlike the counter-terrorism conventions and protocols which binds only those states which are party to them.

The Patriot Act (Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism on October 28, 2001), Homeland Security Act in the US and Anti-Terrorism Act in the UK were some of the robust counter-terrorism legislations which strengthened the resolve and ability of some countries to combat terrorism. These legislations have been useful in enabling security and intelligence agencies to monitor and resolutely act upon terror threats. The strict and time-bound judicial processes resulting in faster convictions in some Western countries also act as deterrent against terrorism.

New Global Counter-Terror Institutions: Post 9/11, other than INTERPOL, new global institutions such as the UN Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), CTC Executive Directorate, 1540 Committee, Al Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee, Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) formed to criminalize terror financing, freeze terror related bank accounts, improve information sharing between governments and assist in terror investigations between them have come up. The CTC directs stringent steps both at national and international levels. But except for monitoring sanctions, these UN bodies have no mandate to penalize member countries for not following UN resolutions, thereby greatly eroding their effectiveness. For instance, UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCT) adopted in 2006 to increase legitimacy of UN counter-terrorism actions and bodies, earned little attention from member countries.

Only eight UN member countries are signatories to all 16 treaties on counter-terrorism – and even ratification does not mean total compliance from them.

Nevertheless, these bodies have been instrumental in freezing the flow of terror finance through legitimate bank accounts by first proscribing terror outfits and providing a platform for member countries to detect and close down their bank accounts. The Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council under resolutions has proscribed 64 groups and 223 individuals associated with Al Qaeda. The sanctions makes it incumbent for member states to:- ¹⁶

- Freeze without delay the funds and other financial assets or economic resources, including funds derived from property owned or controlled directly or indirectly.
- Prevent the entry into or the transit through their territories.
- Prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale, or transfer of arms and related material, including military and paramilitary equipment, technical advice, assistance or training related to military activities, with regard to the individuals, groups, undertakings and entities placed on the Al-Qaeda Sanctions List.

Some of the other international bodies include the Financial Action Task Force and G 8's Counter Terrorist Action Group which was formed in 1989 to counter money-laundering. Multilateral organisations such as the European Union (EU), African Union and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have outlined shared commitments to counter-terrorism but all except EU lack funding and capacities to be effective.

Limitations of CTC

The CTC was created to monitor the implementation of resolution 1373. However, it suffered from some inherent flaws which made UN Resolution 1373 non-implementable in totality. The CTC recognized that all states have different capacities, and therefore, the CTC will work, separately with each state towards implementation of the resolution.

Thus, each state is at a different level of implementation of resolution and not being chased to implement any target date and is being assisted and therefore not coerced to implement resolution 1373. CTC, thus by not targeting individual states and not condemning them while focussing on their technical capacity building, garners support from all member states.

The other deficiency is that while UN Security Council Resolution created CTC, it did not provide guidance in its role in combating terrorism. More prohibitive is that 'terrorism act' continues not to be defined. Resolution 1373 does not define terrorism to avoid controversy. So, even though the Resolution entails heavy consequences upon states who do not review their domestic laws and practices to ensure terrorists cannot finance themselves or find safe havens, Resolution 1373 and CTC suffers at the implementation level for not being able to define terrorism. This is especially true in the Indian context, where Pakistan blatantly gives spin to the definition of terrorism, and feigns inability to combat terrorism due to various factors. On the other hand, most member states through amendment and enactment of new legislations in criminal law, criminal procedure and immigration law rapidly implemented the resolution. In the European Union, the anti-terrorist legislations and countermeasures were harmonized between states. As the measures against terrorism fall under the provision of the treaty on European Union relating to the common foreign and security policy, the resolution was enforced by EU regulations on June 13, 2002.

Milestone Declarations but Limitations: The World Summit 2005 and the Millennium Declaration 2005 are important developments in recognizing the need to identify terrorism as a global scourge and threats to international peace and security. However, as is evident in the statement by Ambassador Masood Khan in his address to the UN on October 7, 2013, in his capacity as a permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, the Pakistani propensity for double speak and putting spins on definition of 'terrorism', state's incapacity to fight terrorism, are all too evident. "The use of drone (by the US)...is detrimental to our efforts to eliminate extremism and terrorism...the

international community must address the root causes of terrorism including unresolved conflicts...denial of the right to self-determination”.

Enhanced International Counter-Terror Cooperation and Intelligence Sharing:

Major world powers increased cooperation and intelligence sharing at the tactical level to combat terrorism post 9/11. The US Central Investigation Agency (CIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in particular became greatly energised to expand their assets worldwide and co-operate with other intelligence agencies of the world. Joint Working Groups on intelligence sharing have been formed between several countries to collectively combat terrorism. Intelligence sharing has been very useful in nabbing terror suspects and preventing attacks. The enormous technical assets of the US intelligence agencies with eyes and ears in most corners of the world have increased the flow of intelligence to other countries leading to the neutralisation of terror cells in the recipient countries. The US, in turn, has also benefitted from the information provided by other countries in eliminating terror plots aimed at the US. Intelligence driven operations and covert actions to neutralise terror cells have achieved desired results which is borne by the killing of a large number of Al Qaeda and other terror group leaders worldwide. But despite increased cooperation, selective or partial sharing of information have had disastrous consequences. If specific information on David Headley's (who was an informant for the US DEA and FBI) activities in India had been timely shared with Indian intelligence agencies, the entire plot of 26/11 could have been foiled.

The US expanded its financial and technical assistance to weak nation states and governments in countries wreaked by terrorist violence. Financial aid coupled with investment in building up of democratic institutions in countries of Africa, Middle East, South East Asia and South America strengthened the capacities of these countries to neutralise the terror threat. US Special Forces have helped train and equip security forces and militias in several weak nation states to combat insurgents and terrorists. Similarly, it has provided military equipment, financed security agencies and invested in economic and human resource development programmes to provide alternate

employment avenues to the people and lift them out of poverty. This would in turn wear them away from terrorist propaganda. More vigorous international cooperation in the fields of counter-narcotics, money laundering, etc have also benefitted the fight against terrorism and vice versa as there are now common linkages between terrorists and criminal groups at the tactical level.

Technology as a Key Enabler: Enhanced technical surveillance by governments to monitor extremist behaviour among population and detect terrorist communications has also proved effective. The busting of Sauerland cell in Germany in 2007 due to electronic snooping is one such example. Employment of improved scientific methods and forensics for investigations and use of technology for bolstering physical security measures have been equally effective and made it more difficult for terrorists to plot attacks and smuggle explosives. Electromagnetic rays, full body X-ray scanners for detecting explosives, voice sampling and artificial intelligence methods have helped in enhancing physical security and identifying terror cells. By one estimate, at least 90 % of weapons and equipment are neutralized even before they are used. Use of robots for detecting and defusing explosive devices has reduced the risk to human life for conducting such operations. Similarly, a plethora of devices and methods aided by technology are employed by security agencies to physically strengthen the defences against use of heavy explosives and suicide bombers. Some of these enablers are door frame metal detectors, reinforced concrete materials, bullet-proof, blast resistant structures and vehicles to withstand the impact of explosives, electronic sensors, frequency jammers, close-circuit television cameras (CCTV) for early warning, radio frequency and satellite monitoring devices etc.

The use of force multipliers in the form of drones for surveillance as well as targeting, satellites, and other technical means to monitor telephonic communication and internet traffic have come to the aid of security agencies. In fact, electronic interception led to the uncovering of a large number of terror cells worldwide forcing terrorists to rely on human couriers to pass their messages across. Technological enablers have cast a vast surveillance web on terrorists keeping them constantly on the run and degrading

their capacities to strike. On the flip side, technology has greatly encroached on the privacy of citizens due to increased physical security measures and technical snooping by state agencies but it is a cost worth paying in the fight against terrorism.

Weak Nation States: The fight against terrorism has been marred due to weak systems of governance and continued civil war conditions prevailing in the African continent. Weak systems in some countries like Somalia, Nigeria and Mali allows terrorism to proliferate in these regions. Often governments in these strife torn countries sponsor and maintain armed militias to further their political and territorial interests. Al Qaeda and their affiliates have infiltrated these countries taking advantage of the political vacuum and feeding on existing ethnic strife to establish safe havens and weapons stockpiles. These areas then provide a platform or secure base for terrorists to plot attacks all over the world. UN and African Union Peacekeepers in the continent are playing their part to prevent civil wars from engulfing the region and provide breeding grounds for Al Qaeda. The US, UK, France and Italy are particularly impacted by developments in Africa and continuously provide military and financial assistance to weak nation states to stem the rising tide of internecine conflict and terrorism in the continent. The US, for instance, has several partnership arrangements in Africa to enhance the capacities of the local governments to counter terrorism and facilitate cooperation between these governments and US partners for countering extremism and marginalizing terror organisations. Two such groupings are the Trans-Sahara Counter Terror Partnership (TSCTP) in the Saharan-Sahel region - Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Burkina Faso and its counterpart for East Africa called The Partnership for East African Counter Terrorism (Preact).¹⁷ French intervention in Mali in 2012 was timely in preventing the country from being overrun by Islamists linked with the Al Qaeda. In recent decades, China, due to its economic clout has emerged as a major player in Africa but it needs to play a more positive role by actively combating terrorists and insurgents rather than investing economically and providing financial assistance to weak nation states that support militias and terror groups.

The Way Forward – Steps to Effectively Counter International Terrorism

A Common Definition of Terrorism: The menace of international terrorism cannot be dealt without first defining ‘terrorism’. A problem cannot be tackled without first recognizing it. The Draft ‘Comprehensive Convention against Terrorism’ in 2005 came close to stipulating a globally recognized definition of terrorism but disagreements on part of some member nations thwarted the efforts. Violence of any form which targets civilians to achieve political aims or independence should be squarely defined as acts of terrorism. The definition of terrorism cannot be diluted by first addressing the root causes of violence as is being desired by some member states of the UN. Political grievances, whether genuine or manufactured by outside forces, cannot justify violence or taking up of arms by a group of individuals or organizations to achieve their stated ideological goals. For instance, can acts of terrorism perpetuated by foreign terrorists in a geographical area which they purportedly are claiming to ‘liberate’ from the stranglehold of ‘occupation forces’, be passed off as a right to self determination or freedom struggle by that foreign terrorist organization or people inhabiting the region ? How can a foreign terrorist organization which is based in a different country champion the cause of those very people it is persecuting? These are some fundamental questions which countries that propagate the root causes of terrorism and espousing genuine grievances of the people who take to the gun need to answer.

Passage of the UN Resolution: The UN urgently needs to evolve consensus and pass the draft convention against terrorism which has been stalled for nearly nine years now. Once operational, the convention will become a common reference point for all UN member states to adhere to its charter and implement measures in their own countries for countering terrorism. The clauses in the treaty must be made binding on member states and leave no ambiguities for them to forestall actions against banned foreign terrorist organizations operating from their soil.

Effectiveness of CTC: The CTC should be made more powerful by vesting it with rights and powers to verify and monitor activities of groups which are designated as terrorist organizations by the CTC. Member states can share intelligence on activities of terror groups in a different country with the CTC which should have powers to make these countries accountable for actions taken by them against terror groups. For all this, suitable amendments in the charter of CTC will have to be made under the mandate of the UN Security Council.

Monitoring activities of Rogue States: In addition to accounting for measures undertaken by rogue states or states suspected of harbouring terror groups to strengthen anti-terror legislations and strengthening financial networks being manipulated by terrorist groups, the CTC or a suitable UN body must have powers to investigate whether state institutions in these countries are involved in providing material or ideological support to proscribed terror groups. Such a body must have the right to dispatch UN inspectors to locations in these countries where terrorists are suspected of receiving support from state institutions for fomenting terror. The same principles which are adopted for despatching UN weapons inspectors to Iran, North Korea, Iraq or more recently to Syria for investigating use of chemical weapons must be adopted with regard to state sponsors of terrorism or those countries that plead their inability to counter activities of terror groups due to lack of capacity.

List of Rogue States: The UN CTC or a new body as discussed in the preceding paragraph must also periodically review the list of nations declared as rogue or state sponsors of terrorism. In addition to implementing sanctions against existing rogue states, such a body should maintain a list of countries which are suspected of providing institutional support to terrorists or are complacent in taking action against them.

All member states of the UN must share regular evidence on that state's complicity in harbouring terror groups or turning a blind eye towards blatant activities of terror groups. On the basis of such inputs and verifiable evidence of a terror attack originating from its soil, that country, after being given adequate warning period to take corrective

measures must be declared a state sponsor of terrorism by the UN Security Council. Providing material, logistical, financial or infrastructural support to banned terror organizations and their over ground entities, involvement of state institutions or individuals in imparting weapons and training to terrorists, facilitating their movement within and outside the country, permitting their overt and visible activities for recruitment, propaganda and fund raising, etc, are few parameters which can be used for designating a nation as a rogue state.

Imposing Sanctions against State Sponsors of Terrorism: It should be the duty of the UN CTC to monitor the implementation of economic and military sanctions imposed on a state suspected of harbouring banned terror outfits. A case for imposition of sanctions must be made against states where there is direct and undeniable evidence of their role in sponsoring terror attacks on another nation state or glaring inaction in taking preventive actions against groups launching an attack from their soil despite overwhelming evidence or prior intelligence inputs shared with them. The CTC must monitor the volume of evidence accumulated against a country over a considerable period of time making them a fit case for imposing sanctions.

Military Action against proscribed Terror Groups: The UN Security Council should allow an affected nation state or permit a collective grouping of affected countries or states whose citizens have been killed in a terror attack even outside their territorial borders to undertake military action against terrorist hideouts or leaders based in a third country. The UN should provide legitimacy to such military action by states who are victims of a major terror attack or mobilize an international force under the UN to take action against terror groups based outside the target country (where the terrorist attack has been executed) on the basis of solid and verifiable evidence of a an individual terrorist's role or facility in that country being used for planning/executing the attack. The UN should also permit a country which has been subjected to terror attacks from a country over a sustained period of time and that country's inability to check the activities of terror groups on its soil to take requisite military action against sanctuaries of terror in that country. A country must have the right to undertake actions even beyond its

territorial borders if it is constantly being subjected to attacks launched from across its territorial borders to effectively safeguard its citizens against terror strikes. In case a country expresses its inability to check the activities of banned terrorist organizations on its territory or territory under its military control on political/ideological grounds or cites inadequate capacities to tackle their activities, a collective international force under the UN must be permitted to assist that country or take independent military actions against sources of terrorism in that country.

Economic and Military aid to Weak Nation States: More stringent measures should be adopted by the International community in providing aid to weak nation states. Robust safeguards and sufficient guarantees on part of recipient states that military or economic aid will not be diverted/leaked/siphoned off to terrorists must be made. The donor countries should be held accountable in case aid provided by them is indirectly or directly misused for launching a terror attack. Strict pre-conditions and verification mechanisms must be in place to ensure that aid is utilized only for countering terrorism and not diverted for conventional military use. Only those types of equipment which are employed in counter insurgency campaigns must be supplied. For example, main battle tanks, fighter aircrafts and radars have very little utility against terrorists holed up inside population centres. Donor countries should exercise due caution in providing military aid to weak nation states which lack the capacities to safeguard equipment and state institutions from terror attacks or countries that are vulnerable of being militarily overwhelmed by non-state actors. On the other hand, the international community under UN auspices must extend all possible financial, institutional and infrastructural assistance that aids in building up state capacities to combat terrorism and provides education, medical and economic benefits to the people affected by violence. There is also a case for strengthening systems and defensive security measures all over the World. Even a decade after 9/11, airport security is still a grey area in several small countries. Similarly, major vulnerabilities exist in the mechanisms of coastal defence and port security in several countries which could be exploited by terrorists to launch attacks on a different country.

Actions to Check Nuclear Proliferation: The nuclear non-proliferation regime led by the IAEA needs to be more proactive in monitoring proliferation of nuclear material by state as well as non-state actors. With increasing instability, the spectre of use of small nuclear devices in the form of 'dirty bombs' or even short range nuclear tipped warheads of a weak nation state by terrorists cannot be entirely ruled out. In addition to striving for more safeguards and guarantees against accidental launch of nuclear warning by states whose nuclear stockpiles are prone to fall into the hands of terrorists, these countries must be made aware of counter-actions that can be taken against them in the event of a nuclear launch from their soil by state or non-state actors. It is the larger responsibility of the world community to strive for the goal of nuclear disarmament and in the interim, discourage and disincentivize weak nuclear nation states where the security situation is particularly precarious, from expanding their nuclear arsenal.

Adequate leverages must be created to deter such nation states from accelerating production of nuclear material and also on those states that are actively transferring nuclear technology and material to such nations for military use. A case in point is China's nuclear assistance to Pakistan. China, which itself is at the receiving end of Islamist terrorists active in Xinjiang and who receive training in Pakistan, should realize the implications of such actions. It is a moral obligation of the world community to dissuade Pakistan from possible development of short -range Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs). A large stockpile of such nuclear-tipped tactical weapons compromises security in storage of such weapons alarmingly amplifying its propensity of falling into the hands of non-state actors. The UN must also initiate steps to draft a convention on use of CBRN weapons by terrorist organizations which are binding on all member states for implementing safeguards and contingencies against use of such weapons by non-state actors.

Perception Management and Limiting Collateral Damage: It needs to be realistically assessed whether use of disproportionate military force and heavy weapons in population centres in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq actually led to further complication of the insurgency problem. While the use of unmanned drones or precision aerial strikes

on suspected terrorist hideouts are justified, due care must be taken to avoid or limit civilian casualties in these strikes. Though these methods provide limited tactical gains in the short run, they prolong the problem in the long run by validating the propaganda of terrorists in helping them win over more recruits. In the information area, wars are not lost due to wrong intentions or illegitimate aims of those pursuing it but it is lost in the manner in which it is portrayed and perceived by the people. In today's networked environment, perceptions can be formed in seconds and messages beamed to a large audience across the world in no time.

Even though the military campaign in Afghanistan and Iraq were directed against terrorists and had genuine causes, a wide section of population in these countries and also those who were not directly affected by the campaign saw it as a military occupation by foreign forces. In some ways, military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan have perpetuated perceptions of a 'clash of civilizations' between the West and Muslim world as professed by Samuel Huntington. Military actions against terrorists have to be projected in the right manner by countries engaged in it so that the propaganda value is not hijacked by terrorists and non-state actors sympathetic to their cause. Questioning the basic aim and purpose of a military campaign can be demoralizing for the forces running it on ground and erode international prestige and standing of that country in the world thus forcing it to prematurely terminate the campaign without achieving its desired goals.

Effective Governance and Equal Access to Economic Opportunities: With the global downturn in economy and rising unemployment, lack of access to economic resources and gainful employment opportunities for the people will provide the biggest fodder to terrorist organizations. The state, by means of effective governance and safeguarding the fundamental right of every citizen to life, liberty and employment will limit opportunities for terror groups to indoctrinate people. Ensuring justice and equal livelihood opportunities for all citizens without practicing religious indiscriminate will create peaceful conditions that cannot be exploited by inimical groups. The state must also guard against doling out freebies or job opportunities on the basis of religious or

minority quotas as such measures only widens gaps in society leading to accentuation of social tensions between communities. Reforming the madrasa education system and making it more job-oriented and broad-based will go a long way in choking the recruitment base of terrorists. In the long run, Muslim students should be encouraged to seek education in multi-religious institutions where they could develop a more inclusive worldview. State institutions also need to invest more resources in countering radicalization in society and checking the spread of radical madrasas from abroad which aim to change the moderate system of Islam traditionally prevalent in a particular region. Harassment or defaming a particular community for aligning with terrorists, punishing entire communities for wrongs done by few individuals and wrongful arrests of terror suspects should be avoided to the core and must form the cornerstone of a successful counter-terrorism strategy.

Monitoring Activities of Radical Madrasas: In the past decade, thousands of Wahabi/Salafist madrasas and mosques have proliferated all over the world. According to a US intelligence report, in 2005, the House of Saud had in 2005 approved a \$35-billion (Rs.1,75,000 crore) plan to build mosques and madrasas in South Asia. Governments in respective countries need to monitor activities of those madrasas and mosques which are suspected of routing funds for terror activities, sheltering terror suspects and involved in indoctrinating people for recruitment into terror groups. In some countries sensitivities over disturbing religious practices of a community and other political inhibitions leads to overlooking of nefarious activities by such organizations. State institutions should take Maulvis or preachers into confidence and make them a stakeholder in checking illegal activities that may be channeled through their religious institutions.

Policing the Cyber Space: Terrorists are increasingly making use of the cyber space to communicate among themselves. The very open nature of the internet and inadequate legal protocols makes its susceptible to wrongful use by individuals who can mask their real identities. Today, while states have capabilities to monitor the communication of terror groups on cyber space, there is an urgent requirement for

introducing an international legislation which would enable states to legally detect and disrupt communication channels including through social media being used for terrorism purposes and book individuals who carry out these activities.

Countering False Propaganda of OGWs & NGOs: The environment of irregular warfare is constantly evolving with terrorists adopting new methods and tactics to further their activities. Over Ground sympathizers and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who are ideologically connected to terrorist networks are playing a greater role in carrying out propaganda activities, collection and distribution of funds to terrorists. They are also instrumental in requisitioning the services of sympathetic journalists to give a favourable slant to terrorism and gain sympathy and minimize condemnation for their acts. Monitoring and banning activities of such NGOs and members of the third estate who have global inter-connections has been a grey area in countering international terrorism and nation states must pay adequate attention to this aspect.

Conclusion

At the tactical level, terror groups have become more un-structured and autonomous than before due to constant pressure and reverses suffered by them. The non-centrally controlled attacks are more difficult to prevent and account for. Smaller and more diffused terrorist cells easily entrench themselves in population centres and can be activated when the need arises. Collateral damage in military operations and negative perception of drone strikes also help terrorist groups to garner ideological support and recruits to their fold. In fact, today Iraq has emerged as an international training ground for terrorists where battle hardened terrorists are spreading terror into neighbouring Syria and inspiring their compatriots in the Af-Pak region.

The shift in targeting pattern of terrorists due to target hardening of government and military installations puts additional vulnerability in countering international terrorism. In today's fourth generation warfare, the entire urban landscape has become a battle theatre and warfare has moved out of the trenches and military lines. To combat the hidden enemy which has unleashed asymmetric warfare, defeating the ideology that spawns terror groups has assumed vital importance. The indiscriminate targeting of civilians by terrorists is making them more unpopular and this factor should be exploited to galvanize public opinion against them.

What is however worrisome is that despite the global efforts against terrorism, it continues to be a preferred low-cost option for some countries to further their foreign policy objectives. The case of Pakistan and some states in the Middle East are illustrative of this aspect. Use of proxies or non-state actors also provides a layer of deniability and strategic advantage to these states. Greater calibration of attacks with controlled frequencies and inflicting lesser casualties in one strike fails to evoke a strong reaction and outrage by the international community. Sadly, the global community has failed to gather consensus and resolve to raise the prohibitive costs on these countries so that state-sponsored terrorism becomes counter-productive to their interests.

The Global Economic Meltdown has weakened the fight against terrorism and accelerated the pace of US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Prohibitive economic costs would make it difficult for governments to sustain the momentum of counter-terrorist operations overseas. The impact of increased lawlessness and security vacuum in Afghanistan post the thinning down of ISAF will be felt across the world. Regional players in the Middle East, Central and South Asia need to situate the threat of terrorism emanating from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan and pool their resources to meet this impending threat which will impact them more than anyone else. These players should also desist from furthering their own geo-political interests by backing their respective proxies and recognize the collective threat of International terrorism. Al Qaeda backed terror groups have already become resurgent operating out of strongholds in Northern Iraq (Mosul and Anbar), Syria, Pakistan (North Waziristan) and Eastern Afghanistan (Kunar and adjoining districts). Their further expansion from these strongholds and seeking new areas of influence or regaining old ones must be prevented at all costs.

The World has been witness to the counter-productive and destructive effects of the power games that were played out in the Afghanistan from 1979-1990 and major world powers would be ignoring security concerns at their own peril. It must have safeguards and contingencies in place to address security challenges that may re-emerge due to increased destabilization and lack of governed spaces in Afghanistan post 2014. It should strengthen regional powers and allow them to take actions to pursue their national security interests in the light of deteriorating regional security environment and deter states who may become more encouraged in the absence of an international military presence in Afghanistan, to intensify their disruptive activities in neighbouring countries by using terrorists as proxies.

Finally, it must be understood that conventional military operations can achieve limited success against terrorists and will blunt their capabilities only for a limited period. The war against international terrorism is a protracted struggle. Therefore, we must shore up our defences and strengthen our resolve to fight our own battles with an offensive

mindset to preemptively strike at the roots of terrorism. If the World is a global village for economic interdependence, then so it is to counter terrorism. After all, development and security are flip sides of the same coin. One without the other is difficult to envisage. Safety from terror is the watch word and the world can become safer only if we fight terror together and more importantly, define terror, together.

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Notes

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