

Constraints on the War against Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century

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Abstract

The present century is grappling with some existential threats to human civilization. Some of these threats are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the prostitution of nuclear know-how, human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, global warming and terrorism. Among these threats, terrorism appears to be the most challenging. Therefore, it is not out of order to argue that terrorism is holding mankind to ransom. Terrorism has become a very topical issue in the world; and its image is made more frightful by its amorphous physiology, its ability to mutate, to generate semantics and epistemological barbarization among authorities who attempt dissection of its being. The problem of achieving a consensus on the nature and being of terrorism is complicated by our dilemma over the most effectual ways to fight this incubus. In this paper, the author aspires to profile the difficulties involved in the war against terrorism in the 21st century.

A Definition of Terrorism

-Terrorism is the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to include fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological-the US Department of Defense.¹

Introduction

The September 11, 2001 synchronized terrorist attacks on the United States convinced the world of a certain reality: that terrorists have possibilities. Since the attacks, the world has been imbued with a paralysing anxiety over what terrorists can do with their possibilities of violence. There may be semantic and lexicological differences on the definitional identification and characterisation of terrorism, but there is a consensus on what its votaries can do. The 9/11 terrorist attacks taught the world that, in situations of desperation, terrorists will recognize no distinction between their core and peripheral targets; and that in our desperate global coalition against terrorism, vacuous illusions can morph into a false psychological feeling of ultimate triumph. Every new day, we are regaled with fresh reports of success against merchants of terror, of how terrorists are scooped and de-fanged. We, however, know that new incidents of terror attacks occur almost every day. The frequency at which terrorist attacks take place today indicates

that terrorists are ingenious and are clearly a few metres ahead of those who are seeking their debilitation and elimination.

For example, Osama ibn Laden, the man who organized the 9/11 attacks on US, has remained at large for eight years now, in utter mockery of all the efforts to kill or apprehend him. Al- Qaeda, his terror network, and the nimble terror confederates it spawns and inspires all over the world jolt us every day with fresh attacks, most of which are carried out with inconceivable ingenuity. Terrorist groups breach maximum security cordons in places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, where terrorism has been honed into a fine art. The unsatisfactory results of our efforts to curtail terrorism induce us to conclude, in spite of ourselves, that defeating terrorism will not be quick and easy; and so, it must be conceded that we have embarked on a long and tedious journey. George Bush probably alluded to this truth when he said immediately after 9/11, "Make no mistakes about it. We are in hot pursuit. We are going to be patient and diligent and determined to bring people to justice, and rout out terrorist activity around the world."²

It will not be charitable to say that the world is not succeeding against terrorism because of want of enough effort and will or to say that terrorism has not been weakened because the world has not recognised the seriousness of the threat it poses to man and his civilisation. The fact is that there is enough will and there is enough effort in the struggle to weaken and eliminate terrorism; but the problem is that (1) "terrorist violence has changed in recent years from sporadic incidents of the politically disenfranchised to a significant asymmetric form of conflict employed against adversaries and enemies with economic, military, social, and political aims;"³ (2) there are certain factors which collude with this change to frustrate the effort and will. Some of these factors are isolated and examined in this paper.

Constraints on the War against Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century

The fight against terrorism in this century is complicated because it is a war in which we know who we are but do not have a very clear picture of who our enemies are. This war against terrorism is made very difficult by certain factors. Among these constraints is our dialectical heterogeneity

over what terrorism really is. Terrorism is an amorphous phenomenon which effortlessly instigates a mass of semantic controversy. It generates a great deal of controversy because the word 'terrorism' is fluid, diffuse and ambiguous. Daniel Heradstveit has noted that "the term terrorism is highly ambiguous and general meanings can be attached to it...It must be pointed out, however, that the word itself tends to be used to propagate certain opinions about a conflict, often implying a moral judgment designed to put more blame on one party to the conflict compared with another."⁴

The ambivalence which is encountered in the efforts to define terrorism is engendered by politics, ideological inclinations, theological arbitrariness and even parochial personal convictions which sway intellectual approaches to all phenomena. The controversy over what terrorism is should not be surprising since "intellectuals love to disagree" and since "those who are clever with words can give them double meanings." In defining phenomena, intellectuals are wont to take unfettered liberties and allow their personal convictions and affiliations disproportionate influence. With regard to terrorism, semantic dissonance is induced mainly by this phenomenon's high propaganda value. Terrorism is a political football, having become a highly politicized issue. Like the six blind men from Hindustan, intellectuals loosely, leisurely and promiscuously define it; and their penchant not to demarcate between a terrorist and a freedom fighter or a revolutionary and a rebel only helps to accentuate the controversy over who a terrorist really is. The cultural/political/religious group to which one belongs, the geographical location from which one is talking, the media through which one is articulating his position and so many other factors colour our identification and characterisation of terrorism. Brian M. Jenkins believed that "the problem of defining terrorism is compounded by the fact that terrorism has recently become a fad word which is used promiscuously and is often applied to a variety of acts of violence which are not strictly terrorism by definition."⁵

Jenkin's viewpoint is in accord with the popular, albeit clichéd, saying that "one man's terrorist or rebel is another man's freedom fighter." We can highlight this problem of definitional heterogeneity

over terrorism by referring to a special UN ad hoc committee on international terrorism of the early 1970s that miserably failed to define terrorism. The failure was essentially because nations and groups proposed definitions which sharply contradicted one another. We can again illustrate the controversy here by mentioning that the State of Israel and the United States regard as terrorists Arab irredentists who are heroically fighting against Israel's occupation of their homeland. This characterisation has been arbitrarily used even though these Arab nationalists are using the very same method (terrorist violence) as was used in the 1770s by the Sons of Liberty during their struggle against British tyranny in the American colonies, and by some Jewish nationalist groups before and after their declaration of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. To some governments, a terrorist is any national, (s)he may be a social activist or a conscientious objector, who espouses an alternative viewpoint. It is common knowledge that dictators, desperate to safeguard their rickety thrones and rationalise their unmitigated atrocities against their own people, have called political dissidents terrorists. The argument being made here can be reinforced with Jenkins' observation that:

It [the word terrorism] is generally a pejorative. Some governments are prone to label as terrorism all violent acts committed by their political opponent, while antigovernment extremists frequently claim to be victims of government terror. What is terrorism thus seems to depend on point of view. Use of the term implies a moral judgment, and if one party can successfully attach the label 'terrorism' to its opponent, then it has indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint. Terrorism is what the bad guys do.⁶

Reinforcement can be made by calling up the following line: “views on what constitutes terrorism vary widely. For example, in countries torn apart by civil strife, acts of violence by one faction against another may be viewed either as legitimate acts of war or as terrorism, depending on which side is asked.”⁷

The fight against terrorism is also constrained by confusion over a menu of strategic options. We are confused over a list of options, confused as to the most effectual means of offensive against terror. And while we try to resolve this indecision, terrorists increase their steps ahead of us and upgrade their striking power. We are really confused which to choose amongst arms,

conscientization and dialogue. So far, to our chagrin, our quarry has survived the first, pooh-poohed the second and warily nibbled at the third.

As regards arms, we are handicapped by the problem of how and where to use them. Lacking the identity of regular soldiers, terrorists can only be fought with great difficulty. They stalk and do not fight on battlefields where high-precision arsenal may be directed at them. Certainly, in our complete sanity, we just cannot fire at an enemy who attacks and then easily dissolves into a multitude of innocent civilians. In Spain, for example, no Spanish armada will fire missiles into the Basque civilian population just because they want to sort out certain separatist terrorists of ETA. In situations where the war fronts are not clear as is the case in our struggle against terrorism, Ulysses Simpson Grant's thinking that "The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike him as hard as you can and as often as you can and keep moving on" will be a wrong-headed military lecture. Where is the terrorist enemy? And "how do deter an enemy whose address you don't know."⁸

With respect to the second choice which is conscientization, unfortunately, terrorists seem to have hardened their hearts like Pharaoh. Those who empathise with terrorists argue that terrorists are people propelled by conviction in the justness of their cause; and it is always very difficult to cause introspection in a man who is convinced of the righteousness of his cause. Certainly, it will take a cold day in hell to rein in a man who is dead set on reordering his society and recreating it in the own image of his ideals.

The third choice of dialogue, so far, is the most promising. This is because terrorists have, on occasion, signified a cautious willingness to negotiate, though on their own terms. This choice, however, is impaired by the policy of some states (especially the anti-terrorist vanguards) not to negotiate with terrorists.⁹ There is no doubt that refusal to talk with an enemy only helps to embolden his psychosis and make him a more deadly adversary. "Compromise", said Pope John Paul II to Abacha (Nigerian dictator, 1993-98), "is not always an indication of weakness." Nations and groups should appreciate the logic and utility of what I have called *closet diplomacy*: sometimes, we are obliged to talk candidly and quietly with our enemies, even with all the hate we

habour for them. Tom Clancy even said, “Even enemies can negotiate...Enemies [are] people to be dealt with, compromised with, to be civilized, and brought into the fold; co-opted.”¹⁰ Let us give talking with terrorists a try-out. It might be the open Sesame.

We have just articulated some of the hard options we can choose in our jihad against terrorism. Now, we shall discuss more dimensions of this threat. Yesterday terrorists were primarily interested in their core targets. Then it was very easy to predict what they wanted to destroy. They wanted the destruction of their enemies and the vitiation of their capacity for reprisal. Then, the surface of their nihilistic friction was small. But today, terrorist fury ranges far. Impelled by Herodian melancholia, terrorists want the destruction of all targets: core and peripheral. The core targets are the real targets marked out for destruction; the peripheral targets are the soft targets like stadia, the UN offices in Baghdad or in Kabul, school children in Beslan, train stations in London or in Madrid, tourists sunning in bikinis on beaches in Bali, and all that are guilty by association. Today, what the terrorists want is mass destruction, nothing more; nothing less. Brad Roberts, while anatomising this change, said that:

Terrorism has changed. Traditional terrorists wanted political concessions. But now, some groups say their main aim is mass casualties. Although many terrorists still target military installations and diplomatic missions, some have expanded their list to include attacks on so-called soft targets, such as mass transportation systems, sporting events, busy urban locations, hotels, and tourist sites.¹¹

There is no doubt that this locus shift is enhancing the efficiency of terror by blurring the borderline between its actual and collateral targets. Fareed Zakaria has called this shift *new terrorism*; and this modulation from one locus to another may be all that terrorists need to cause greater damage on mankind. Without doubt, this shift erects road blocks for our anti-terror efforts. It inaugurates situations in which we may not know how to effectively protect persons and symbols that are thought to be off terrorists' circuit. With this new, frightful development, “all that is holy is profaned,” and no effectual shield can be built against merchants of violence. Certainly, it is not any easy to confront an enemy who makes no distinction between an adversary and an aid worker, or between a soldier wearing camouflage and an unarmed civilian in caftan walking down the

street. No doubt, it will not be easy to fight this new form of violence that permits no neutrality; neither will it be to check this maniacal osmotic modulation from a region of hard targets to a region of soft targets.

Heretofore, terrorists did not want to die with the objects of their violence. Then, they wanted to live in order that they might gloat over their violence, and giggle at destroyed or cowed victims. Today, they have relegated this classic form of terror and become willing suicides. They now want to die themselves just to make doubly sure they do not give their targets even the dimmest opportunity of rebounding. This is the *kamikaze* terror introduced in our times by the Japanese during the Second World War, readily used by the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, and honed by some heaven-impelled 'terrorists'. In this new form already described by many as *asymmetric warfare*, terror may have been fitted for a long nautical voyage. Surely, fighting a suicide terrorist is the most dangerous and difficult combat any marksman will look forward to. Zakaria's is a germane, but an uneasy question: "How do you deter someone who is willing, indeed eager, to die?"¹² Osama bin Laden boasted after 9/11 that: "We love death. The U.S. loves life. That's the big difference between us."¹³

In the comforting illusion engendered by desperation, we are not barred from imagining that we are winning the jihad against terror. But we will be unable to wish away the more ominous possibilities of this species of violence which have heaved into view and merged into describable reality. We cannot in any way pretend to know how to handle our confrontation with these other forms of new terrorism: bio-terrorism, cyber/ e-terrorism, nautical terrorism, and shoe bombing. Bio-terrorism, which is "the deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, or other germs (agents), used to cause illnesses or deaths in people, animals, or plants"¹⁴ is a means through which terrorists can easily and quietly cause a large-scale holocaust. According to experts, this species of terrorism is unbelievably easy. They tell us that making and delivering a biological weapon is ludicrously easy, quick and cheap. According to the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, "bioterrorism is an attractive weapon because biological agents are relatively easy and inexpensive

to obtain or produce, can be easily disseminated, and can cause widespread fear and panic beyond the actual physical damage they can cause.”¹⁵

A magazine, *Scientific American*, said that “one can cultivate trillions of bacteria at relatively little risk to one's self with gear no more sophisticated than a beer fermentor and a protein-based culture, a gas mask and a plastic over garment.”¹⁶ Prepared bacteria can be moved with great ease. For example, anthrax can be effortlessly delivered by mail. If the experts are right (and what facts do we possess to think they are wrong?), terrorists, seeing they are losing out to sky marshals and eagle-eyed, hard-nosed counter-terror agents, may have deviated to this weapon of mass destruction. Indeed, the future looks hopeless as we consider the boundless capacity for violence terrorists flaunt, thanks to this and other WMD. No one can predict the magnitude of destruction terrorists will cause should they lay their destructive hands on WMD. Dick Cheney, former Vice-President of the United States of America, painted a ghastly image of what terrorists can do with WMD when he said: “Weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network...constitutes as grave a threat as can be imagined.”¹⁷

The anxious years of the Cold War culminated with a new anxiety over what destruction terrorists would unleash if they should acquire nuclear weapons. In the calculation of arms experts, terrorists have a very bright chance of acquiring nuclear weapons. These experts postulate that terrorists can either purchase stolen nuclear weapons on the black market or steal from nuclear warheads which are vulnerably siloed in many countries, especially in the former USSR. *Awake!* in a 2004 edition quoted this apocalyptic line from the *Time* magazine: “Stripping thousands of Russian nuclear weapons from well-guarded missiles, bombers and submarines and squirreling them away in less secure storage sites will make them tempting targets for ambitious terrorists.”¹⁸ It is a truth manifest and self-evident that if nations continue to violate their commitments to parsimony in transferring of nuclear know-how and unconscionably help their allies build nuclear weapons, terrorists can purchase nuclear weapons from bourgeois nuke merchants who will be

merely interested in the colours of the blood money offered by terrorists or they can acquire the know-how from some experts who will be willing to prostitute their expertise.

The image of twenty-first century terrorism becomes more frightening when we realize the immediate concern caused by 'the nuclear bomb's quiet but deadly cousin radioactive material.'

The horrifying fact about the dirty nuke is that:

It does not explode. There is no blast or heat damage. Instead, it emits radiation that destroys individual cells. Bone marrow cells are especially vulnerable. Their death sets off a cascade of effects, including hemorrhaging and the collapse of the immune system. Unlike chemical weapons, which degrade once they come in contact with oxygen and moisture, radioactive material can continue to inflict damage for years.¹⁹

It is gravely feared that the twenty-first century terrorist will not hesitate to use the nuclear weapon and the dirty bomb if and when he gains access to them. This is the bad news.

Cyber terrorism (and e- terrorism) is another form of new terrorism. It happens to be the easiest type of terror a trained hacker can perpetrate; yet, it is the hardest to check. One of the vulnerabilities of the contemporary world is our increasing dependency on electronic buttons.

Today, we almost depend on the computer for everything, having been almost totally weaned away from manual and clerical method of recording. The computer has come to be entrusted with the global economy and hair-trigger early warning defence systems. But it is feared that with an incredible ease, the cyber terrorist can sabotage computer systems by using the computer virus which gobbles up data and freezes up computer systems, or by using "logic bombs" that "fools computers into trying to do something they can't, thereby forcing them to malfunction." With this capacity for electronic mischief, terrorists can imperil humanity. By interfering with computer networks, he can jumble and delete sensitive data and statistics. This interference can throw national economies (and by extension the global economy) into disarray, and disrupt military communications systems. Fooled by a false alarm, an operator may press a button and a nuclear war-head is fired without a possibility of recall.

The cyber hacker can also decide to interfere with essential social services systems. *Awake!* reported that early in this century, “a hacker from Sweden invaded a computer system in Florida and put an emergency-service system out of commission for an hour, impeding the responses of police, fire and ambulance services.”²⁰ An e-terrorists can also panic nuclear-armed submarines into firing missiles equipped with nuclear heads; and he can use a cell phone to remote-control a bomb or to disconnect the computer system of a passenger plane, causing it to crash. The damage which the cyber terrorists can wreak has been acknowledged by no less an anti-terror authority than George Tenet, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA. According to him, “an adversary capable of implanting the right virus or accessing the right terminal can cause massive damage.”²¹ In the following words which encapsulate the virility of electronic terrorism, Gilles Kepel noted that “brick-and-mortar compounds and caches can be flattened by carpet-bombing, but websites and e-terrorism may prove far less difficult to delete.”²²

Having x-rayed the minatory relationship that can possibly occur between terrorists and weapons of mass destruction, we shall now highlight how sovereignties and globalisation are making the century so conducive for terrorists. It has been previously remarked that there exists a disagreement over the exact identity of the terrorist. Here, a new layer shall be added to this disagreement. It is tragic that the global anti-terror coalition is being emasculated by polemical babel. Nations have no consensus over who their common enemy is. Technicality, pride and prejudice have kept them apart. As a result, a man who is being denounced as a terrorist in Miami is simultaneously being feted as a heroic irredentist just ninety miles away in Havana; and a man who is being meanly gazetted a terrorist in Mombasa is at the same time being mercifully booked for psychoanalysis in Peshawar. We saw how Iranians gave Al-Meghrahi a heroic welcome at the time some people in the West were baying for his blood because of his role in the 1988 Lockerbie plane bombing. It is beyond debate that this dissonance will only help to make the loop wider for the enemy. Because of this schism, Paris may grant political asylum to a fugitive terrorist from Basque, if relations between France and Spain should become less cordial and fraternal.

Apart from this unfortunate disharmony over definition, nations enhance the prospects of terror by their occasional recourse to terror as a cost-effective instrument of national policy. International law is spangled with treaties and obligations forbidding war as an acceptable means of realising foreign policy objectives. In their lucid intervals, nations go through the motions of respecting these treaties. However, in spasms of infidelity, they use violence overtly or covertly. How some nations used naked violence against others during the Cold War confirms this conclusion.

Centuries back, weapons of war were few and less destructive, but war was many. Nowadays, guided by our amazing genius in science and technology, we have invented and mass-produced stupefyingly accurate and deadly instruments of war; but we have fought less frequently. Curiously, why? Because the complexity of modern warfare has made direct war less profitable and alluring, Kenneth N. Watz has noted that “at times, as during much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, war was tolerable, since it was circumscribed and of limited destructive effect. The cost of war now appears to be frighteningly high.”²³ Today, no region of the world can be said to lie beyond the reach of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) that can be equipped with nuclear war heads. These high-fidelity and far-range weapons have made no modern war cheap. And deterred by this acute reality, nations sensibly make sporadic recourse to proxy warfare which some of them fight conveniently and safely by supporting internal dissidents or hiring mercenary terrorists.

During the anxious decades of the Cold War, proxy warfare was found to possess high value; and both blocs — the East and the West — freely made recourse to it. Terrorism which is the most expressive form of proxy warfare was found to be far, far more cost-effective and less capital-intensive than any other forms. Terrorism spares the valuable lives of national soldiers; it makes it very easy for its users/sponsors to escape responsibility for unjustified aggression; terrorism does not totally destroy the possibilities of quick post-bellum rapprochement. These are some of the virtues of using terrorism in a proxy warfare. Osama bin Laden and the Mujahideen he

recruited and funded with cheques signed by the CIA, fronted for the United States against the Soviet Union in the craggy terrain of Afghanistan. In like manner, Middle Eastern 'terrorists' were fronting for the USSR against the West (especially the US) whose sympathies for Israel in her intractable conflict with the Arabs have never been camouflaged. Deterred by the ascertainable horrors of modern war, nations have become less squeamish about using terrorists to achieve the ends of their foreign policy.

According to a source, "some governments secretly support certain terrorist groups by providing weapons, training and money for attacks in other countries."²⁴ Jenkins once said that terrorists may even be government agents."²⁵ Pakistan and India have both used terrorism to cause agitation in each other's territory, since the possession of nukes by each of them imposes restraint upon both. Pakistan is strongly suspected of training, arming and sheltering groups who have carried out terror attacks in India. Its president, Ali Zardawi, confessed a few months ago that his country had "created and nurtured terrorist groups to achieve its short-term foreign policy goals."²⁷ India, also, sponsors extremist forces such as Taliban in Pakistan. State-sponsored terrorists are supervised by security agents commissioned by their home governments to cause or co-ordinate violence against enemies (nations or groups). For example, the US uses the CIA to coordinate terrorism against enemies. For decades now, in the volatile Middle East, Arab states fund terrorism against Israel. Funds and arms for Hizballahi flow from Iran and Syria and from other Muslim countries. State-sponsored terrorists may be freelance terrorists, conscienceless booty hunters whose services any nation or group can secure.

The policy of state and non-state actors to employ terrorists to pursue their selfish interests reinforces the pessimists' contention that, despite all efforts, the global coalition against terror cannot totally de-infest the world of terror. This is an unpleasant fact, indeed. The policy of using terrorism to advance state or non-state interests may eclipse traditional warfare in which belligerents are overtly involved.

Globalisation (and the advances that are being made in science and technology that drive it) is another constraint upon the global war against terror. The gospel of the moment is globalisation

which Philip Emeagwali sees as “the ability of many people, ideas and technology to move from country to country.”²⁶ Globalisation is a good idea; but it has contrived to make terror a very serious threat in our times. Even though the culpability of globalisation cannot be definitively established, globalisation is certainly aiding and abetting terrorism. Muqtadar Khan noted this unwitting contrivance when he wrote that,

It is ironic that global terrorism, the phenomenon of terrorists operating in and against several nations simultaneously, was facilitated by globalization and now it has become the biggest challenge to globalization. Global terrorism depends on the success of globalization. In fact, one may conceive of global terrorism as a facet of the global culture resulting from globalization.²⁸

Proponents of globalization believe that conflicts and misunderstandings can be reduced to tolerable levels if the desperate peoples of the world are drawn closer to one another in a shrunken world. Therefore, nations are being persuaded to dismantle national borders, to open their gates, to allow unhindered entry and exit to men and goods and ideas. However, this beautiful idea of building a global village in which geographical distance will become history has become massively bastardised by the unfettered access to all the recesses of the world it has unwittingly given terrorists. Today, terrorism has become one of the undesirable concomitants of globalisation. One of the findings submitted by the Future of Terrorism Task Force, commissioned by the Homeland Security Advisory Council (January 27, 2007) was that:

Globalization has changed the way we communicate, learn, and do business, but the benefits of globalization are not restricted to the benevolent. Globalization has also changed the ways our enemies can operate. Terrorism is a tool that can empower micro-actors to have a micro-impact, increasing the range of potential adversaries with the capability to do us harm.²⁹

It is reasonably believed that globalization is unwittingly enhancing the circulatory efficiency of terror. Disguising as tourists and genuine businessmen and enabled by a genius to feign innocence, terrorists can in these days of globalisation circumnavigate the globe. Frank J. Cillufo of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, USA, observed that, with globalisation, “[the world] have created a global village without a police department.”³⁰

Before now, it was difficult for nationals of one country to travel to, and commit acts of violence in, other countries. Now, this disability has been dismantled by globalisation; and just as legitimate goods are easily mobilised across national borders, so are terrorists. Globalisation is making it increasingly difficult for one to discover that he may be unknowingly hosting a terrorist in the sitting room of his apartment; and it is making it easy for hitherto feeble entities to wreak havoc. According to Zakaria, “the reality of globalized world is that small groups of people can now cause big trouble.”³¹ Thanks to globalisation, our besieged world is being hopelessly denied the genius to locate the demarcation between a terrorist and a tourist.

Globalisation, whose inadvertent culpability vis-a-vis terrorism has just been browsed is galvanised and facilitated by our astounding progress in science and technology. Nowadays, science and technology have made movement and communication less strenuous and cumbrous. This astounding progress has, however, facilitated the geographical mobility of terror. Supersonic airplanes can in a matter of hours freight terrorist operatives from, say, Kabul to Amsterdam. Jenkins noted that “jet air travel furnishes unprecedented mobility and with it the ability to strike anywhere in the world.”³² Modern communication (and the revolution in information technology that drives it) has contracted horizontal distances so much that with the pressing of a few buttons one is incorporeally moved from one geographical extreme to the other. This revelation should heighten our anxiety because, obviously, communication is among the most important sinews of international terrorism. It was with the aid of modern communication gadgets that al-Qaeda leaders, sitting snugly in the smug caves and tunnels thousands of kilometers away in Afghanistan, were able to co-ordinate the activities of their field operatives who carried out the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001. In a reference to how science and technology has empowered the terrorists in this age of globalisation, Joseph Nye jnr. wrote that:

The information revolution is creating virtual communities and networks that cut across national borders. Transnational corporations and non-governmental actors [terrorists included] will play larger roles. Many of these organizations will have soft power of their own as they attract citizens into coalitions that cut across national boundaries. Technology has been diffusing power away from governments and empowering individuals and groups to play role in world politics— including wreaking massive

destruction — which were once reserved to governments. Privatization has been increasing, and terrorism is the privatization of war.³³

Clearly, our case has been made hopelessly complex by this shrinkage of the global arena; and we seem to have been dragooned into a cage wrestling bout in which there is not enough room for manoeuvre. Whereupon, we have two ugly alternatives: live precariously with the merchants of terror or buck the progress of globalisation by slamming our national gates. This is an agonising reality of globalisation — quite a very agonising one. In our globalising world, we may learn to live with the *bete noire*, while hopelessly hoping that someday (pattern of terror changes with our human progress) we shall become able to sort out the bugbear.

Conclusion

It is not a figure of speech to suggest that the twenty-first century might be a hundred years in which fear and palpitation will rule the hearts of men. The fearsome metamorphosis which terrorism has undergone since the end of the twentieth century has made fear a part of the nature of men and an important aspect of everyday life today. Terrorist attacks have become so commonplace that it has even become unrewarding and it is difficult to keep up-to-date statistics on them. The placebo is to sigh for the victims and hope that your niche will always lie far away from terrorists' line of fire and fury. So far, terrorism of the twenty-first century has not shown much effusion of ideological pigmentation. What it has manifested, instead, is a destructive atavism propelled by religious and civilisational differences. Terrorism has become the main player in the just been civilisational conflict which Samuel P. Huntington said would be the major strand of conflict in this century. As he argued, conflicts between groups belonging to different cultural groups would occur wherever and whenever the 'fault lines' dividing them are breached.³⁴ Indeed, the inclination of groups to see themselves as being culturally incompatible with one another has severely obscured but emboldened the lineaments of terrorism.

The speed at which terror will mutate in this century will greatly depend upon the permutations of the power relationship among both the minor and major actors in international politics and also on changes that might occur in communications, warfare and perceptions of cultural groups.

Conflict is a sine-qua- non in human relationship, and terrorism has become a factor that will agitate inter-group relationship in the twenty-first century, ion gadgets The world has arrayed weapons against terror; but no one single weapon can eliminate or curtail it. War, dialogue or passive resignation (benign neglect) may not be able to fight down terrorism. For example, the United States and her NATO allies have not so far been able to eliminate Talibanism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, nor have they succeeded in capturing or killing or even wounding Osama ibn Laden. Cold War dominated the second half of the twentieth century; terrorism may dominate much of the twenty-first century. This is because “our adversary is proactive, innovative, well networked, flexible, patient, young, technologically savvy, and learns and adapts continuously based upon both successful and failed operations around the globe.”³⁵

Endnotes

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4. Daniel Heradstveit, “The role of international conflict in the Middle East conflict and its implications for conflict resolution,” in David Carlton and Carlo Schaerf (eds) *International Terrorism and World Society*. London: Croom Helm, 1975, p.93.
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6. *ibid*.
7. *Awake*, May 22, 2001, p.6.
8. Fareed Zakaria, “America’s New World Order Disorder,” *Newsweek*, September 15, 2003, p.13.
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14. <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioterrorism> (November 12, 2009)
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17. Dick Cheney, quoted in *Awake*, September 16, 2002, p. 28.

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19. *Awake*, May 22, 2001, p.10.
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