

"Innovative ways to deal with violent extremism"
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Terrorism: Causes of Dissemination and Methods of Combating

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Terrorism has become an International phenomenon that is no longer restricted to a particular region, yet there is no coordination between states to implement a system with which to combat terrorism on the global level. In the meantime, it has been observed that the causes fueling the growth of extremism are broadening and global acts of terrorism are increasing.

The destructive effects of terrorism are no longer hidden. In addition to the loss of life, infrastructure and other such tangibles, terrorism now threatens the economic, social and political status quo of nations. These effects are no longer restricted to the countries where such crimes are committed; their destructive effects now extend to other nations.

The definition of terrorism:

There have been many attempts to define terrorism and definitions have multiplied conspicuously, although they do all agree on certain elements. The problem centers round the fact that no agreed definition has been issued by any of the United Nations agencies binding all countries. This is due to the differences in opinion among countries regarding organizations that commit acts of violence. Some countries perceive organizations that resist occupation as terrorist groups, while other countries consider such organizations and their actions as legitimate. This study is inclined towards defining terrorism as "an act by an individual or a group directed against society for political purposes. Or more specifically, "the use of violence to exercise influence on individuals, groups or governments and create an

atmosphere of instability and insecurity to affect beliefs and dominant social, economic, cultural and political conditions which enjoy consensus in the state and represent the national interests of the country”.

By employing violent methods, terrorism usually threatens innocent lives in order to intimidate the bulk of the population and spread fear, albeit by resorting to religious, social or political pretenses.

Factors abetting the dissemination of terrorism:

Global factors:

In the 1960, the world witnessed an unprecedented movement in the history of national liberation. Empires, in their conventional forms, vanished and the tempo of life and the nature of socio-economic relations changed. Consequently, political struggle acquired new forms, rules and laws. The role of political terrorism ascended and it became the new method for political struggle.

In the Middle East, certain fanatical religious movements were able to seize power in a number of Arab and Islamic countries, resulting in a prevailing atmosphere that helped spread extremist ideology under the guise of religion. In addition, real disasters that afflicted Muslims in the world received little or no intervention from the world powers or international community in general, which was felt to be like exercising a form of double standards. This angered Muslims to the extent that certain individuals even volunteered to fight by the side of Islamic groups in certain parts of the world.

The escalation of terrorist operations in many countries in the world, created an international atmosphere that encouraged individuals to believe that terrorism and terrorist crimes were the only means available to achieve political objectives.

Recent wars, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Sudan and Iraq, attracted sympathizers to extremist ideology and opportunities to obtain military training and acquire arms and explosive materials.

In addition to this, a number of Arab and European countries continued to provide refuge to terrorist elements under cover of preserving human rights. More than 650 terrorists in Britain were granted political Asylum, which helped them to continue practicing their terrorist activities and encourage others to follow into their steps.

Moreover, the Internet has facilitated communication between commanders and their bases and made the quick, confidential issuance of orders an easy task. Add to this online information on the know-how of manufacturing bombs.

Local factors:

Economic causes:

In the last few years, the economic factor has become the focus of researchers and scholars when interpreting many aspects of human behavior, whether individuals or groups. Economic factors are believed to have an effect on individual's values, inclinations and personality, and affect also the formation of social classes and determine their characteristics. Evidence shows that good economic conditions help create normal, integrated, productive and religiously tolerant personalities. Hence, a large percentage of extremists were born into difficult economic conditions, and have found in religion a compensation for their lost chances in life. Many such adherents embrace the kind of fanatical ideas that drive them towards terrorist behavior in order to achieve their goals.

Social and religious causes:

A discussion about social causes of extremism must include discussion of the role of the family and the education system. The major responsibility for preventing extremism falls on the family, providing their children with a good example to emulate and detecting and acting on signs of extremism. Education system also shoulders significant responsibility in this respect. The school is the larger family and guides the path of its pupils. Those in charge of youth affairs and education believe that the current curricula of religion education and teaching methods actually assists youths to gravitate towards extremism in religious practices. Religious education needs to be overhauled and teachers properly qualified in order to instill sensitive, human and civilized values in students to help create balanced personalities imbued with correct Islamic values. On the other hand, one of the reasons behind religious extremism is an impoverished knowledge and vision of the role of religion and its teachings, and a failure to understand its true spirit. Experience has proven that intellectual dialogue helps to reform extremists by exposing the religious and cultural shallowness of the leaders of extremist groups.

Political causes:

Unstable political conditions in the state and a corrupt system of governance make citizens lose confidence in the regime and leave them in a constant state of doubt and anxiety. From this grows a sense of resentment that paves the way to turmoil, which leads to chaos and the emergence of various extremist ideas that permeate the state and enable extremists to seize power. Democratic system helps constrain the dissemination of terrorist ideas. Sustaining freedom of opinion and the peaceful exchange of power are factors that help preventing the promotion of terrorist beliefs.

Countering Terrorism:

Based on My experience in countering terrorist organizations, none was as dangerous as ISIL is today. Unlike other extremist groups, ISIL has gained a significant swath of territory (25% of Syria and 45% of Iraq), controls oil fields and crude is the group's biggest source of revenue, along with kidnaping ransoms and the jizya tax imposed on Christians. He warned that ISIL possesses dangerous weapons that could destroy countries, and some of it is aggressively pursuing the development of chemical weapons, creating a team dedicated to research and experiments using the internet.

Confronting violent extremism must be done on several levels:

- The religious confrontation: confronting the phony and erroneous interpretations of Islamic beliefs and practices used by extremist organizations to polarize youth. While Allam emphasized the need to update Islamic jurisprudence, he refused views about developing Islam suggested by some colleagues. He added that our societies need to update Islamic concepts, blaming the historic stalemate in this field on the religious authority.
- The legislative confrontation: Enacting terrorism-specific laws has become necessary in order to achieve a balance between society's need for security and stability and the rights and freedom of citizens.
- Confrontation via the media: Establishing an on-going media policy of confronting terrorism. There are various roles media can play to confront the problem of terrorism by disseminating well-founded opinions, raising basic issues related to terrorism and engaging citizens as an essential tool in confronting this phenomenon.
- The security level: Although it is now agreed that security measures alone are not enough to confront terrorism, it should also be noted that such security measures should be the last stage in the process in confronting

terrorism. Security agencies must be supported and empowered appropriately considering the scale of the challenge involved and they also must be availed of all assistance enabling them to perform their role with greater efficiency and competency. He noted that care must be taken to ensure that security measures adopted to confront this phenomenon do not lead to an escalation of the problem.

Finally, the international community should establish an international body that includes experts representing the countries that are most impacted by terrorism, charged with studying the underlying causes of violent extremism in order to implement a comprehensive strategy to counter this phenomenon.