



Military Engagement and its Role in Counter-terrorism

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Abstract:

The use of military force in combating terrorism has increased in the 21st century. This paper employs a qualitative analytical approach to classify military counter-terrorism engagements into six categories; assistance and protection, preemption, deterrence, retaliation, assassination & targeted killing and war. The research shows that assistance and protection measures are mainly effective in combating terrorism and in reducing the damage caused by terrorist activities. However, deploying a large military force on the streets could be counterproductive. Preemptive operations might eliminate desired targets, but it is difficult to measure their effectiveness in counter-terrorist efforts. Deterrence may send a strong message to terrorist groups about a country's military power, yet it has not been proven to prevent future attacks. Retaliation and assassination could create a martyrdom effect and, in some cases, increase cohesion among terrorist groups. Although wars against terrorist groups have severely weakened their operational capabilities, their complete elimination is yet to be achieved. Military confrontations have been effective in combating terrorism in certain cases and contexts, nevertheless, their effectiveness needs to be studied alongside other counter-terrorism measures, such as cybersecurity operations, international cooperation and counter-terrorism financing.

Keywords: Terrorism, counter-terrorism, deterrence, military operations, war, preemption

INTRODUCTION

The term "terrorism" is not new. Scholars argue that political groups have been using the term for nearly two centuries to achieve their objectives (Laqueur, 2001). However, despite the growing body of literature on terrorism and its increasing prevalence in the mass media, there is still no consensus on what exactly constitutes terrorism (Alexander 2002, 3). While non-uniformity has been noted among academics regarding the definitions of terrorism, various countries have different legal definitions of the term. For instance, Canada considers terrorism as an act committed "in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective, or cause," with the

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purpose of intimidating the public "...with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act" (Government of Canada, 1985).

This includes inflicting death or physical harm, endangering public health and security, causing considerable property damage, as well as attempting to hinder essential services, facilities and systems. The British Terrorism Act (2006), similar to the Canadian Criminal Code, refers to terrorism as actions "designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public...for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause" (Government of Canada, 1985).

When one looks at the United States, however, the situation becomes more complicated. Different institutions in the country define terrorism in different ways. The Department of Defense considers it a calculated use of violence to cause fear, intimidate or coerce governments or societies for political, religious or ideological motives, while the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also includes violence committed against persons or property (Schmid 2004, 377). These differences arise from the varying competencies of the organizations and the elements of "terrorism" that best fit their areas of operation. Governments have used various measures to combat terrorism over time. While there is no international criminal code or international police task force dedicated to fighting terrorism, countries have viewed military confrontation as a viable option to address this challenge. Adequate training and proper equipment allow military forces to be strong and tactful enough to respond swiftly to terrorist threats. This is legally backed by the countries' inherent right to self-defense following an armed attack, as stipulated in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter (United Nations Charter, n.d.).

It is interesting to note that military confrontations against terrorism have become more prevalent now than in the past. Researchers have noted that there were relatively few instances where governments used military force in the past (Serafino, 2002). One such study, conducted by Michele Malvesti, investigated American responses to terrorist activities between 1983 and 1998. She found that, for the United States, the majority of the counter-terrorism campaigns included judicial approaches. Law enforcement activities on the ground such as conducting arrests, police response, court trials etc. were more prevalent than military interventions (Malvesti 2001). Similarly, a survey conducted by the State Department's 'Patterns of Global Terrorism' report suggests that only three out of the 2,400 terrorist incidents during the above-mentioned period triggered a military response. This constitutes less than 0.1 percent of the total terrorist activities in the U.S (Duyvesteyn 2010, 67). However, the country quickly militarized its response to future terrorist threats following the September 11 attacks. This leads to the conclusion that the increasing use of military force in combating terrorism has only gained traction recently.

After the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that the United States had waged a "war" against terrorism. This statement has turned out to be a significant inconvenience, as many administrative leaders have struggled to interpret it correctly. If the "war against terrorism" were to be interpreted in same way as the "war against drugs," it would imply the use of maximum resources to counter something that could not be completely eliminated, thus only being manageable to the extent that it does not threaten social stability (Howard 2002, 8). Therefore, as combating terrorism is not a matter that can be measured

on a single scale, different scholars have tried using different ways to understand what exactly constitutes effective for countering terrorism.

One such approach that has proven effective in the available literature is to focus on what constitutes success in combating terrorism. Yonah Alexander has developed a measurable and comprehensive set of criteria to address this issue. These criteria include: a decrease in the number of terrorist events; a decrease in the number of casualties resulting from these incidents; a decrease in the financial cost borne by the state, a reduction in the size of the terrorist groups operating within a country; measuring the number of terrorists killed, imprisoned or tried by court; protection of domestic and national infrastructures (such as security installations, economic and social institutions etc.); and protection of state policies and ideals (such as democracy, human rights, rule of law etc.) (Alexander, 2002).

The analysis of military confrontation against terrorism in this paper mainly takes these criteria into account when evaluating the effectiveness of counter-terrorism operations. Countries around the world have used various counter-terrorism military strategies over the past decades. Rather than simply listing them in my paper, I will describe their relevance and categorize them into six approaches (based on the available literature) regarding how military interventions and instruments have been used to combat terrorism (Alexander 2002, 71). First, military action has been used to protect civilians and assist national bodies in restoring the country's law and order. Second, military force has been employed to prevent a predicted attacks (preemption). Third, military responses have been used as a deterrent to discourage potential terrorist attacks. Fourth, military responses have been used for retaliation following an attack. Fifth, the assassination of key leaders and targets has been carried out to dismantle terrorist organizations and their activities. Finally, military forces have been used in wars to fight terrorism. Each of these measures will be examined in detail, with practical examples of military counter-terrorism military confrontation. Additionally, each strategy will be assessed to understand whether it can be regarded as a "success" in countering terrorism and to what extent. Finally, a conclusion will be presented to understand the role and effectiveness of military confrontation in combating terrorism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of military engagement in counter-terrorism has been widely debated in academic literature, with scholars having different views on its effectiveness, limitations and strategic implications. Various approaches have been analyzed in an attempt to understand their effectiveness in countering terrorism. While some researchers argue that military action is an indispensable tool in counter-terrorism, others have also highlighted its potential drawbacks.

Yonah Alexander's work on counter-terrorism strategies provides one of the most comprehensive frameworks, in terms of its depth and the use of quantitative data. His analysis focuses on measurable outcomes, such as the reduction in terrorist incidents, casualties and financial costs, alongside the elimination of key terrorist leaders and the protection of national infrastructure (Alexander, 2002). His approach serves as a foundation for assessing the impact of military confrontations, particularly through his use of case studies and examples. Michele Malvesti notes that while military action was historically a secondary response, with law enforcement playing a

primary role. 9/11 shifted the dynamics and military engagement became a dominant counter-terrorism strategy (Malvesti, 2001).

Preemptive military operations, a controversial yet widely practiced approach, have been explored by scholars such as Karl Mueller. His work emphasizes the inherent difficulties in evaluating the success of preemptive strikes, arguing that their effectiveness is based on hypothetical outcomes (Mueller, 2006). Duyvesteyn's research on modern warfare indicates the complexity of military engagement in counter-terrorism, particularly in asymmetric conflicts, where he argues that conventional military responses may not always yield desired results (Duyvesteyn, 2010).

The impact of leadership decapitation as a counter-terrorism measure has also been studied. Shire's study on Al-Shabaab's suicide bombings before and after the assassination of its leader provides essential data on its effectiveness in countering terrorism (Shire, 2020). Furthermore, specific military operations have been analyzed in case studies, such as Javaid's research on Operation Zarb-e-Azb, which examines Pakistan's efforts to eliminate terrorist safe havens (Javaid, 2015). Roy et. al. (2002) provided insights into high-profile targeted operations, while Phinney's work on Operation Infinite Reach highlights the strategic implications of retaliatory strikes (Phinney, 2007). These studies contribute to the understanding of the deployment of military forces in various contexts and its effectiveness in neutralizing threats.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative analytical approach to examine the role of military engagement in counter-terrorism. Given the complexity of counter-terrorism strategies, this research categorizes military confrontation into six distinct forms: assistance and protection, preemption, deterrence, retaliation, assassination and war. Rather than merely listing these military responses, the study systematically analyzes them within historical and contemporary contexts to assess their effectiveness. The paper relies on historical case studies, government reports and academic literature to construct a comprehensive understanding of how military force has been utilized to combat terrorism.

The selection of case studies is based on their significance in shaping military counter-terrorism policies and their impact on the operational capabilities of terrorist organizations. A number of military engagement operations serve as key examples to evaluate the extent to which military action has played a role in countering terrorism. The study is not confined to a single geographic region but examines counter-terrorism efforts in different parts of the world, acknowledging that military engagement has been applied differently based on regional security concerns and political dynamics. Furthermore, a comparative analysis is incorporated to highlight the variations in counter-terrorism effectiveness across different national contexts.

Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Kenya and others have employed military interventions with differing degrees of success, shaped by factors such as intelligence accuracy, political stability and local support. The research acknowledges that military action alone is insufficient as a long-term solution to terrorism and emphasizes the importance of integrating military responses with intelligence operations, international cooperation and community-based counter-terrorism initiatives. By structuring the analysis around historical

examples and theoretical perspectives, this research provides a nuanced evaluation of military engagement in counter-terrorism.

THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN COMBATING TERRORISM

The role of military engagement in counter-terrorism is vital and recognized worldwide. Given the complexity of counter-terrorism strategies, this study categorizes military engagement into six distinct forms: assistance and protection, preemption, deterrence, retaliation, assassination, and war. This section systematically analyzes them within historical and contemporary contexts to assess their effectiveness.

Assistance and Protection

The first classification of military engagement strategies is assistance and protection. This involves providing protection and security to citizens, restoring law and order and reinstating national infrastructure and systems. In a more practical sense, military force assists civilian authorities in their combat against terrorist activities. One effective instance of military assistance and protection is the role of military and paramilitary forces in hostage rescue missions. These missions can be considered morally defensible, as they are backed by a solid legal and constitutional framework (Duyvesteyn 2010, 71).

Since the 1970's, a number of weak states from the global south began conducting or contributing to terrorist violence in the United States. In American public opinion, force has often been considered as one of the most effective ways to counter terrorism and to send a message that the United States cannot be intimidated or manipulated by such terrorist acts. In 1981, when the American Embassy in Tehran was seized by a group of students and took several Americans hostage, the U.S. attempted to use military force as one of its tactics to rescue the hostages and de-escalate the situation. A military task force with helicopters was sent, but the mission ended in failure when a helicopter and a troop transport aircraft collided after landing in the Iranian desert (Alexander 2002, 44). This incident marked a significant failure in the unit's intra-service coordination and highlighted a lack of proper training. As a result of this event, the U.S. Special Operations Command was established to oversee the special operations capabilities, coordination and training of the numerous American military branches and counter-terrorism forces.

Following the release of the hostages through lengthy, negotiations, the U.S.- under the Reagan administration changed its approach towards terrorism. The National Security Directive 138 came into effect, shifting the US policy on using force against terrorists from "defensive to offensive" (Duyvesteyn 2010, 71). This newer approach was demonstrated in 1986 when the U.S. Air Force bombed of key military facilities in Libya after intelligence suggested that terrorists based in Libya had bombed the West Berlin Discotheque, killing two American soldiers. Some counter-terrorism responses under assistance and protection could lead governments to deploy large numbers of uniformed troops on the streets. This could prove to be a blunder, as it may exaggerate the terrorist threat within a country. Terrorist organizations might use it to incite a sense of their increasing influence and potential success. Consequently, such a prominent military presence on the streets could incite fear and cause governments to become unpopular in the eyes of the public. In other words, terrorists usually want governments to overreact, as such responses may make the government appear "illegitimate and repressive," leading to a loss of domestic support (Duyvesteyn

2010, 71). Armed forces can also be utilized to protect potential targets, including crucial infrastructure, installations and individuals. One such instance is the fortification of US embassies and the increase in security for diplomats (Duyvesteyn 2010, 72). The United States began reevaluating its approach to embassy and diplomat protection after the simultaneous bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1998. In response, the U.S. increased its armed force presence at foreign embassies and strengthened cooperating with host countries to prevent future terrorist activities.

Preemption

Preemption is defined as striking in advance to prevent an attack from happening or inflicting damages. It differs from prevention, as the latter is a long-term measure aimed at ensuring protection, while preemption is carried out when there is clear evidence that an attack is imminent and about to occur. This strategy became a topic of discussion after President George W. Bush's public statements in June 2002, stressing that the U.S. should move towards preemptive measures to combat terrorist threats (Duyvesteyn 2010, 72). The National Security Strategy of the United States (2002) explicitly states that "the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively" to protect the country and its allies from terrorist threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction (Bunn 2003, 1). The U.S. has frequently invoked the threat of preemptive measures to avert any danger from its territory or interests. One such example can be found between 1989 and 1990, when the United States threatened to deploy military force to shut down the Rabta chemical plant in Libya, which was suspected of producing nerve gas (classified as Weapon of Mass Destruction). The threat was successful and the facility was subsequently shut down.

Another instance occurred during the Tirana raids in 1998 (Mueller 2006, 229). Albanian law enforcement, with assisted from the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), conducted a series of raids, arresting four individuals (one French and three Egyptians) in June. The suspects were found in possession of illegal arms and forged documentation. Further intelligence suggested that these individuals were linked to a network of terrorist organizations operating in Albania. During their trials, the French detainee admitted ties with the Kosovo Liberation Army and Al Qaeda. Subsequent investigations revealed that the Egyptians were wanted for terrorist activities in both the United States and Egypt. Hence, these raids acted preemptively to prevent a terrorist activity in Albania. The challenge with preemption is that it is difficult to measure the success of counter-terrorist measures. While it is based on counterfactuals, we cannot assess its effectiveness since it is impossible to prove what did not happen. For example, when a drone- operated by the CIA- dropped an AGM-114 Hellfire missile on a moving car in Yemen, six militants linked to terrorist organizations were killed (Mueller 2006, 241). One of them was identified as a prime suspect in the October 2000 bombing of the USS Cole. However, the rest of them were linked to the Aden-Abyan Army and Al Qaeda; with one even recruiting members for Al Qaeda in the U.S. In such a case, although the strike was able to eliminate the terrorists, it is impossible to measure the worth of the drone attack since we cannot determine the extent of damage that would have occurred if the terrorists had carried out an attack.

Although preemption has its shortcomings, some scholars argue that successes of preemptive measures are more recognizable when it involves the assassinations of key leaders of terrorist organizations (Duyvesteyn 2010, 73). Another issue with preemptive measures is their justifiability

and moral dimension. While it may be easier to carry out preemptive counter-terrorism operations based on intelligence linking to potential attacks, it is harder to justify them without violating a few international laws and conventions.

Deterrence

Deterrence involves maintaining a strong military posture to discourage and drive off terrorist groups and their activities. One prominent example of this strategy is Operation Neptune Spear, carried out by the United States in 2011, which led to the killing of Osama bin Laden, a major leader in the Al Qaeda network and the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks. The U.S. deployed Black Hawk helicopters and highly trained Navy SEALs to carry out this operation at a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan (Roy et. al. 2022, 39). Through this operation, the United States intended to send a clear message about the consequences of conducting and supporting terrorist activities against American interests. Nevertheless, Operation Neptune Spear weakened the Al-Qaeda's leadership and morale and demonstrated the United States's determination in pursuing terrorists.

A country with a strong military presence and a retaliation history against attacks can also act as a strong deterrent to potential terrorists. For example, in 1995, terrorists stormed the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru, holding several foreign diplomats and dignitaries hostages. Among the hostages were seven American citizens. A rumor spread that American Delta Force commandos had landed in Lima and were preparing to raid the residence, leading the terrorists to release the American hostages within a few days (Alexander 2002, 47). The rest were rescued by the Peruvian Special Forces. The rumor turned out to be false and it is considered that the terrorist released those hostages out of the fear of the U.S. intervention. The U.S. holds its deterrent character not only due to its history of counterattacks on terrorists but also due to its highly trained military forces equipped with modern equipment. Similarly, the British government has also been utilizing deterrence to combat terrorism on its soil. The UK has maintained a position of no negotiation with terrorists, consistently signaling that any terrorist or group holding hostages would not receive any compromise from the government, nor would the United Kingdom pay ransom. One such hostage crisis took place in 1984, when the Iranian embassy in London was raided by terrorists and a number of embassy staff and visitors were held hostage for six days (Alexander 2002, 192). The British government decided that safe passage would never be granted to the terrorists, regardless of the gravity of the situation. After the murder of a hostage, the British Special Air Service (SAS) intervened and carried out a successful operation to rescue the remaining hostages. The majority of the hostage-takers were killed and one was imprisoned. This event led to the strengthening of the UK's deterrence policy within the country and around the globe. However, some scholars argue that deterrence has its drawbacks (Duyvesteyn 2010, 74). One issue is the potential for a substitution effect, where a country's deterrent posture may force terrorists to change their course of action and shift their means or targets. For instance, terrorists might switch from suicide bombings to kidnappings, exploiting a loophole in the military's deterrent character by targeting places with weaker security measures. Another argument is that deterrence alone cannot eliminate terrorism in the long term. Despite countries' efforts to deter terrorist groups, other factions have continued to conduct attacks (Duyvesteyn 2010, 74). As Yonah notes, "Deterrence cannot eliminate terrorism, but it can minimize its occurrence by raising the terrorist's perception of the costs, be they political, financial, or human" (Alexander 2002, 191).

Retaliation

Military retaliation is a measure that has been used by governments in response to terrorist activities. Türkiye developed a comprehensive military program to counter the series of terrorist activities, most of which have been linked to the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party). In addition to creating a village guard militia- a program to arm and train volunteer villagers to protect their villages and fight against PKK- the Turkish government drastically increased its military capabilities and revised its retaliation strategies based on the continuing terror attacks conducted by PKK (Alexander 2002, 275).

In the Southeastern parts of Türkiye, helicopter gunships and American Bell AH-1 Cobras were used to attack the PKK bases- a strategy that turned out to be highly effective. A few years later, in 1997, when two army helicopters were targeted and blown up by the PKK using surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), the Turkish military invested in helicopter fleets with passive SAM defense systems for its retaliatory response plan. Additionally, the country began equipping its military personnel with second- and third- generation night vision devices and thermal imaging systems to conduct attacks during the night (Alexander 2002, 276). Therefore, while Türkiye employed modern and innovative equipment and strategies in its retaliatory offensives, the success also highly depended on the efficiency of its intelligence services and legal action against the terrorists.

As a result of the Al-Qaeda-orchestrated bombings of the American embassies of Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998, the American military forces devised a swift retaliation operation against the terrorist organization. They called it 'Operation Infinite Reach'. This retaliatory operation was planned within weeks following the embassy bombings. The U.S. government began devising a list of possible target locations that would weaken Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, sending a message across the globe that the U.S. and its institutions would not be undermined through terrorism. After a phase of thorough secretive planning, the U.S. government identified two targets; the Khost terrorist training camp in Afghanistan (100 miles south of Kabul) and the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan (Phinney 2007, 31). The American military forces and intelligence services believed that the Khost camp was deeply connected to Osama bin Laden's network of terrorist activities. In addition, the compound housed key Al-Qaeda leaders and it was an advantageous opportunity for the American government to eliminate those targets as well. Regarding the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant, it was believed that the plant was used for the production of chemical weapons (specifically the nerve agent VX). This observation was based on a small soil sample taken from the plant's vicinity. Thus, on August 20, the US Navy launched a number of cruise missiles, destroying the camp in Khost and the pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum.

The American government later recognized that the presumption of the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant being linked to the production of chemical weapons was not supported by sufficient evidence. Moreover, although Operation Infinite Reach may have weakened bin Laden's terrorist network in the short-term, it did not deter Al-Qaeda from conducting further attacks on American territory in the years to come (Phinney 2007, 37).

There have been examples of retaliation for combating terrorism even on the African continent. In mid-September and early October of 2011, a number of tourists and foreigners near the Kenyan-Somali border were killed and kidnapped by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. Kenya began feeling

the spillover of Al-Shabaab activities in its territories. After two Spanish women, working for 'Doctors without Borders' aid organization at Dadaab refugee camp, were kidnapped on October 13, the Kenyan government began a military retaliatory operation called "Operation Protect the Country" against the terrorist activities on October 16 (Tarrosy, 2011). The Kenyan troops moved in the Southern regions of Somalia with the aim of pushing back the Al-Shabaab terrorists and establishing a roughly 100 km buffer zone along the Kenyan-Somali border. Countless helicopter battles ensued and the military action was a combination of air and ground raids in the regions occupied with a high presence of Al-Shabaab terrorists.

The Kenyan example comes with its own intricacies, as Kenya was also able to take Uganda and Somalia into confidence to form a joint military campaign to combat Al-Shabaab. While scholars still argue whether retaliation can be used as a deterrent or leads to plain escalation of the conflict, it has been identified that the timing during which a retaliatory response is launched is of key essence. Furthermore, some researchers have observed that retaliation can be counterproductive and can lead to a stronger sense of cohesion and unity amongst terrorist entities (Kegley 1990, 190).

Assassination and Targeted Killing

Another militaristic strategy used by countries to weaken and eliminate terrorist groups is assassination of key terrorist leaders and personnel. Leadership represents the center of gravity of any terrorist organization. Thus, the elimination of key leadership may help weaken and even dismantle a terrorist group. There have been cases where assassination has borne some success in combating terrorism. One example in this case is Operation Neptune Spear, which led to the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011. It has been noted that his assassination led to weakening of Al-Qaeda in the short run due to internal conflicts and restructuring of the terrorist organization, as well as the disruption of planned attacks had the assassination not been carried out (Schaller 2015, 200). However, the same cannot be said for Al-Qaeda activities in the long term.

The efficacy of assassination and leadership decapitation to combat terrorism has always been a topic of hot debate amongst researchers. Many argue in favor of it, as was partially the case for Operation Neptune Spear. They view the elimination of key leadership in terrorist organizations limits the operational capabilities of the groups, making it harder and more expensive for terrorist groups to plan lethal attacks (Shire 2020, 685). On the contrary, decapitation can radicalize a particular group and create a martyrdom effect (Shire 2020, 686). This could make terrorists more resilient while increasing their motivation to retaliate and continue.

Following this narrative, we see the case of Ahmed Abdi Godane, leader and co-founder of Al-Shabaab (a terrorist group based in Somalia with links to Al-Qaeda). Godane was killed as a result of an American airstrike on September 4, 2014. Officials considered the strike a success, predicting that Godane's death would cause Al-Shabaab to dismantle. However, in a study measuring the number of suicide bombings before and after the killing of Ahmed Abdi Godane, it was noted that Godane's death led to a considerable increase in the number of suicide attacks carried out by Al-Shabaab (Shire, 2020, p.696). Not only were more attacks carried out, Al-Shabaab also resorted to even more daring operations both in Somalia and abroad. This shows that decapitation did not limit

Al-Shabaab's ability to carry out further deadly attacks, instead, the terrorist group began demonstrating its increased strength and resolve against the state and civilians.

In November 2013, a CIA drone strike operated by American forces killed Hakimullah Mehsud, a well-known leader of the Tehrik-e-Taiban-e-Pakistan (TTP). The American government celebrated the strike's success as it killed a major leader of a prominent terrorist organization. The Pakistani government, however, was more skeptical of his assassination, believing that his killing would undermine the Pakistani government's efforts to negotiate peace with the TTP and might be followed by retaliatory attacks from TTP's terrorists (Sharifi 2014, 7). Contrary to the desired purpose of weakening the TTP, Mehsud's killing led to him being associated as a martyr within the organization and thus, increased future attacks carried out by the TTP (Sharifi 2014, 18).

War

The past few decades have been marked with multiple wars and long military confrontations against terrorism. Peru's war against Sendero Luminoso (SL), a far-left terrorist group following Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, has been an important struggle in combating terrorism. SL's attack on the Huamanga prison (located in Ayacucho- the capital of Huamanga) in 1982 led to the escape of dozens of convicted guerillas and made a dent in Peru's security situation (Alexander, 2002, p.88). Ever since then, the terrorist group conducted numerous deadly attacks; murders, kidnappings and ambushes against the Peruvian military and law enforcement forces.

The country's combat against Sendero Luminoso was not a simple one. It involved strategic operations, counterinsurgency tactics, political & legal measures and economic reforms (Alexander, 2002). However, our main focus here will primarily rely on military operations and tactics. One of the earliest operations conducted by the Peruvian military forces was Operation Victoria in 1983. The military targeted SL's strongholds in Ayacucho to regain control of the city. A series of operations followed, one of the most important one being Operation Huascarán (1989). This strategic operation aimed to dismantle SL's funding sources by destroying the cocoa cultivation in the Upper Huallaga Valley. Sendero Luminoso terrorist group suffered a serious blow after the 1992 arrest of Abimael Guzman, the founder and leader of the organization. Guzman's arrest not only weakened the organization substantially but also led to its demise in the years to come (Alexander 2002, 110).

In addition to the multiple military operations, the Peruvian government reached out to the peasant society and indigenous groups through improved economic policies and the non-interference of the military in the daily life of the population (Alexander 2002, 107). This turned out to be a huge advantage for the government, as SL began exercising more control over the peasant population and became increasingly unpopular within the community. Hence, the government was able to counterinsurgency efforts through the growing local support for its counter-terrorism initiatives.

Military confrontations against terrorism— when carried out with poorly trained military forces and inadequate intelligence-gathering systems— can also become highly expensive and unpopular within a country. One such instance was Argentina's fight against the ERP (People's Revolutionary Army) and Montoneros. Both these organizations were left-wing guerilla groups that carried out assassinations, bank robberies, political kidnappings and guerilla warfare against the state in the 1970s. The country— stained by increasing political instability, weak rule of law and a crippling

economy— was fighting on multiple fronts. The military coup and dictatorship, led by General Jorge Rafael Videla, which overthrew Isabel Perón’s government, marked its fight against terrorism. The period between 1976 and 1983 was known as the “National Reorganization Process,” which featured the “Dirty War” against terrorism (Alexander 2002, 77).

Under an authoritarian regime, the leadership not only targeted the left-wing guerilla groups but also caused the disappearances and executions of its political opponents. The military leadership seriously lacked intelligence and proper training & planning against the terrorist groups. They operated with a rough idea of the identity of the guerilla groups’ leaders and “could not distinguish—or did not care to— between the fighters and mere civilian sympathizers when it came to killing them” (Alexander, 2002, 76). This approach not only led to human rights abuses but also the “disappearance” of others who were not even directly linked to either the ERP or the Montoneros. It is no secret that Argentina’s efforts between 1976 and 1983 eliminated the terrorist groups with near-finality, but they did so at extremely high economic costs and by employing undemocratic means (Cox, 1987).

Moving to Asia, Pakistani military forces conducted an extensive operation to eliminate terrorist safe havens within the country and improve the overall security of the region. Known as Operation Zarb-e-Azb, this was a joint military operation carried out against the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups in the North Waziristan region of Pakistan (Javaid 2015, 44). This full-scale military operation was launched in 2014 by Pakistani forces on the North Waziristan Agency and the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) near the Pak-Afghan border. Around 30,000 Pakistani soldiers were involved and the offensive was launched after the deadly terrorist attack on the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi.

Operation Zarb-e-Azb involved numerous coordinated airstrikes, ground offensives and cordon-&-search operations. It is important to note that Pakistani intelligence agencies played a major role in identifying the targets and preventing insurgencies by the terrorist groups. One of the initial actions was the Miranshah airstrikes, where the Pakistani Air Force targeted the terrorist hideouts in Miranshah, the capital of North Waziristan. Following the strikes, a ground battle ensued between the Pakistani army and the terrorist militants. In addition to the military offensives, cordon-and-search operations were conducted. This involved isolating target areas and capturing or eliminating insurgents and weapons in the area. Since the majority of fighting occurred close to the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier, efforts were made to secure the border and prevent the movement of the terrorists. By 2015, 2763 terrorists were killed and 837 terrorist safe havens were demolished (Javaid 2015, 46)

The military operation in Shawal Valley marked the last phase of Operation Zarb-e-Azb. The operation has been regarded as a success in substantially reducing the terrorist networks within Pakistan (Javaid 2015, 51). A large number of TTP’s leadership was captured or killed. While the operation can be regarded as an effective example of military confrontation in combating terrorism (especially in terms of demolishing terrorist sanctuaries, degrading the operational capabilities of militant groups, and improving the regional security), terrorist activities continue in the region and countering them remains a complex and ongoing matter.

Results

Over the years, we have seen a shift in how governments view the effectiveness of military force in combating terrorism. In the latter half of the 20th century, military force was not seen as an entirely crucial part of fighting terrorists. In the US, more importance was given to legal systems and internal law enforcement agencies in preventing terrorist motives within the country. However, the American government gradually began militarizing its approach towards the end of the 20th century after the Iran hostage crisis. At the same time, we see similar military approaches in Latin America. Peru and Argentina largely relied on military combat and strategic operations to weaken the guerilla terrorist groups in their countries. The September 11 attacks sent a strong wave around the world regarding the need to prepare for stronger counter-terrorism measures.

As evident from the examples of assistance and protection in the paper, the use of the military in hostage rescue missions and the further protection (and fortification) of embassies has been helpful in reducing the number of civilian deaths and preventing the effectiveness of future terrorist attacks. However, at the same time, a large military presence on the streets could increase fear among the civilians, creating a sense of distrust towards the government's counter-terrorism operations. Preemption has been a controversial topic. Although our examples show that various preemptive military operations led to the killing of a number of important terrorists, it is hard to prove whether those operations further prevented any deadly attacks. Furthermore, preemptive measures have sparked legal debates and, in some instances, violated international laws.

Deterrence sends a clear message of a country's military power and grit to terrorist groups worldwide. Various countries have used strong military responses to prevent future terrorist attacks on their territories. However, the result has yet to be achieved. Terrorist activities still continue in the long term despite a country's strong deterrent character. Military retaliation, when conducted with properly trained military units and effective planning, has destroyed important resources of the terrorist groups and killed a number of terrorists. Nevertheless, its effectiveness in the long term is still debated, as it is known to increase cohesion amongst terrorist groups.

Assassination and decapitation have led to the killing of key figures in the hierarchies of terrorist organizations. Although this causes short-term internal power vacuums and contributes to decreasing the overall morale of terrorist groups, assassination has usually led to a martyrdom effect and has even increased the number of future terrorist attacks in some cases. Wars have demolished terrorist sanctuaries, sources of funding and have even pushed out terrorist groups to near-finality. Despite the fact that complete elimination of terrorist activities has not been seen yet, wars have significantly decreased the operational capabilities of terrorist organizations.

CONCLUSION

The six ways of using military confrontation in combating terrorism have mainly borne results in the short term. However, in the long term, terrorist groups seem to rise again and continue their activities. While there have been cases where instances of retaliation and full-scale wars have brought better results than expected, more research is needed on the specific conditions and context where wars against terrorism are more successful than others. Similarly, various scholars have tried to come up with the optimal timeframe when retaliation proves to be the most effective.

Nonetheless, there is a need for more literature on how timeliness affects the efficacy of retaliatory military operations and why.

We also see that mere military confrontations— with a disorganized force, weak intelligence institutions and lack of community support— do not lead to successful military operations against terrorist groups. Only resorting to military operations for counter-terrorism will not take us much further in our fight against terrorism. There are additional factors that need to be taken into account and studied more for their effectiveness. In order to prevent terrorist organizations from continuing their activities in the long term, community engagement needs to be promoted and programs should be established to counter extremist ideas that lead to the formation of terrorist groups. Various countries have been using different strategies that could seriously damage terrorist organizations without causing infrastructural destruction in the region. Some of these strategies include the employment of cybersecurity measures (in an increasingly digital world) and the disruption of financial networks that support terrorism. Likewise, diplomatic efforts and international cooperation also play crucial part in countering global terrorism.

While we are a long way behind in figuring out the ideal strategies to counter terrorism, more research is needed to better understand and analyze the effectiveness of military confrontation along with other counter-terrorism measures in order to move a step forward.

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