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The Economics of Terrorism: An Integrated Analysis of Causes, Consequences and Countermeasures

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Abstract

The study delves into the intricate nexus between economics and terrorism, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted dynamics that drive and sustain acts of terrorism. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this research investigates the economic roots of terrorism, its impact on national and global economies, and the efficacy of various counterterrorism measures.

The first segment of the study explores the socioeconomic factors contributing to the emergence of terrorism. Drawing on economic theories and empirical evidence, the research dissects the role of poverty, inequality, and unemployment as potential drivers, examining how these factors interact with political, cultural, and historical variables to create an environment conducive to radicalization and extremist ideologies.

The second focal point of the study revolves around the economic consequences of terrorism. By scrutinizing case studies and employing quantitative methodologies, the research assesses the direct and indirect costs of terrorist activities on affected economies. This includes disruptions to trade, tourism, and investment, as well as the long-term consequences on human capital, infrastructure, and public confidence.

In the final segment, the research critically evaluates the effectiveness of diverse counterterrorism strategies from an economic standpoint. It analyzes the allocation of resources towards intelligence, military interventions, and socio-economic development programs, scrutinizing their impact on mitigating terrorism and fostering sustainable peace. Special attention is given to the role of international cooperation and the potential for economic diplomacy in preventing and resolving conflicts.

Through this integrated analysis, the research aims to contribute valuable insights to policymakers, economists, and security experts grappling with the challenges posed by terrorism. By unraveling the complex interplay between economics and terrorism, this study strives to inform evidence-based strategies that not only address the immediate threats but also foster resilient societies capable of withstanding the economic shocks wrought by acts of terror.

Keywords: Terrorism, economics, radicalization, extremism, socioeconomic factors, poverty, inequality etc.

Introduction

What economists the world-over fear most today are not huge deficits or a great slump but terrorism. Among the most pressing concerns among leading U.S. economists are: soaring budget deficits that may be straining U.S. growth, lingering inflation, and the Federal Reserve's recent monetary-policy decisions. But terrorism remains the No.1 threat to the U.S. economy, according to an August survey conducted by the National Association for Business Economics (NABE). The NABE's August National Policy survey showed 40% of its 172 members regard terrorism as the biggest short-term problem facing the U.S. economy, vs. 19% in the March survey. The U.S. budget deficit was a distant second, at 23%-down from 25% in March. However, it is not only the developed economies but also the developing ones like India, Pakistan etc. that are facing the brunt of terrorist activities, more recurrently in the last two decades. Poverty, unemployment, inequality and other socioeconomic issues are intertwined with acts of violence and terrorism. The economic cost of terrorism is alarming and needs to be

avoided. We say that terrorism once a companion of history, is now an inevitable part of economics too both in theory and practice. Therefore, while making an attempt to understand the concept of terrorism, we also need to examine the economic implications of terrorism.

Terrorism-meaning, origin and growth Violence and terrorism have resulted from irrationality, miscalculation, xenophobia, fanaticism, and religious extremism. Historically mankind has remained in a state of conflict and resorted to violence to bring in changes in the society and in political systems. The words terrorism, insurgency, intimidation, extremism etc. are used interchangeably and often very loosely.

Meaning and definitions of terrorism are usually complex and controversial, and, because of the inherent ferocity and violence of terrorism, the term in its popular usage has developed an intense stigma. The term terrorism was first coined in the 1790s to refer to the terror used during the French Revolution by the revolutionaries against their opponents. The Jacobin party of Maximilien Robespierre

carried out a Reign of Terror involving mass executions by the guillotine. Terrorism in this case implies an act of violence by a state against its domestic enemies. However, not all violent methods used by the state are terrorism and all states are not terrorists. Some view terrorism of the type that is practised by the opponents of the state. The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences defines terrorism as the method or theory whereby an “organized group or party seeks to achieve its avowed aims chiefly through systematic use of violence”. Brian Jenkins, an acknowledged authority on terrorism, calls it “violence for effect”. Terrorism involves the use or threat of violence and seeks to create fear, not just within the direct victims but among a wide audience. In the United States the standard definition used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) describes terrorism as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”

The degree to which terrorism relies on fear distinguishes it from both conventional and guerrilla warfare. Although conventional military forces invariably engage in psychological warfare against the enemy, their principal means of victory is strength of arms. Similarly, guerrilla forces, which often rely on acts of terror and other forms of propaganda, aim at military victory and occasionally succeed (e.g., the Viet Cong in Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia). Terrorism proper is thus, the systematic use of violence to generate fear, and thereby to achieve political goals, when direct military victory is not possible. This has led some social scientists to refer to guerrilla warfare as the “weapon of the weak” and terrorism as the “weapon of the weakest.”

The main characteristics of terrorism therefore, are:

- i). Activities/actions against some community or organisation.
- ii). Political purpose.
- iii). Unlawful.
- iv). Aimed at creating fear and panic for the victims and for the people at large.
- v). Sans rational thinking on the part of terrorists.
6. Arbitrariness in violence.

Terrorism is Mainly of Three Types

- i). Revolutionary Terrorism-terrorism that seeks the complete abolition of a political system and its replacement with new structures.
- ii). Sub revolutionary Terrorism-terrorism that is used not to overthrow an existing regime but to modify the existing socio-political structure.
- iii). Establishment Terrorism-terrorism employed by governments-or more often by factions within governments-against that government's citizens, against factions within the government, or against foreign governments or groups.

After World War II, political terrorism re-emerged on the international scene. Besides India, it was used in Algeria, Kenya and other countries for political independence through activities including intimidation, sabotage, abduction and killing. During 1960s, terrorism entered the second phase with two significant qualitative changes: trans-national character, and self-sufficient strategy. A revolution in communication and modern urban civilisation made this possible. India lost 53,000 lives to terrorism over the last decade whereas it lost

8,023 lives in all wars since Independence. North to Northeast, East to West and now South terror attacks have bled the country increasingly. In the enormity of the battle we need also to look at its economics. Today's complex technology and global networks have made acts of terrorism more sophisticated, organised, with not only political but also economic perspectives. Terrorism has grown into an industry. It is a threat to several other industries and to global security. International capital is being diverted from productive channels of investment into unproductive channels. Thus, there are economic causes and effects of terrorism.

Economics of Terrorism

Although the motives of terrorists may differ, their actions follow a standard pattern with terrorist incidents assuming a variety of forms, airplane hijackings, kidnappings, assassinations, threats, bombings, and suicide attacks. All these have significant bearings on economic activities of the people all over the world.

Terrorist attacks are intended to apply sufficient pressures to a government so that it grants political concessions. If a besieged government views the anticipated costs of future terrorist actions as greater than the costs of conceding to terrorist demands, then the government will grant some accommodation. Thus, a rational terrorist organisation can, in principle, obtain some of its goal quicker if it is able to augment the consequences of its campaign. These consequences can assume many forms including casualties, destroyed buildings, a heightened anxiety level, and myriad economic costs. Clearly, the attacks on September 11, 2001 (henceforth, 9/11) had significant costs that have been estimated to be in the range of \$80 to \$90 billion when subsequent economic losses in lost wages, workman's compensation, and reduced commerce are included. The cumulative costs of 9/11 were a small percentage of US gross domestic product (GDP), which exceeded \$10 trillion. Business economics or otherwise we cannot ignore the costs of terrorism, both immediate and future. Terrorism can impose costs on a targeted country through a number of avenues. Terrorist incidents have economic consequences by diverting foreign direct investment (FDI), destroying infrastructure, redirecting public investment funds to security, or limiting trade. If a developing country loses enough FDI, which is an important source of savings, then it may also experience reduced economic growth. Just as capital may take flight from a country plagued by a civil war, a sufficiently intense terrorist campaign may greatly reduce capital inflows. Terrorism, like civil conflicts, may cause spillover costs among neighbouring countries as a terrorist campaign in a neighbour dissuades capital inflows, or a regional multiplier causes lost economic activity in the terrorism-ridden country to resonate throughout the region. In some instances, terrorism may impact specific industries as 9/11 did on airlines and tourism. In India for instance the potentially rich tourism industry of Kashmir is very badly hit by the terrorism industry. We must account for both value-added and value-lost components. One of the ideals of Indian tourism industry is surakshaa or security (Hans, 2010) ^[5]. Harassment and embarrassment due to security lapses need to be avoided.

Acts of violence and vandalism in Andhra Pradesh have seriously hindered economic development in that state. Sri Lanka would have been one of the one the top performers in the sphere of economic development, but for the 18-year old civil war, and shooting up of military expenditure. For the developing countries terrorism is a major obstacle to

economic development today. Now the sun rise industries and silicon cities are also becoming the targets of terrorists, insular no more.

The immediate costs of typical terrorist acts, such as kidnappings, assassinations, or bombings, are localized, not unlike ordinary crimes. Currently, crimes such as identity theft have far greater potential economic consequences than terrorism to developed countries. In most developed countries, terrorism generally causes a substitution from sectors vulnerable to terrorism into relatively safe areas and, thus, does not affect the entire macro economy. If airlines become risky, factors of production will shift from the airline sector to other relatively safer sectors. Of course, a terrorist act of the magnitude of 9/11 can shake confidence and influence sufficiently many sectors to have macro-economic repercussions. But developed countries are positioned to take actions to limit these impacts. Terrorism also raises the costs of doing business in terms of higher insurance premiums, expensive security precautions, and larger salaries to at-risk employees. Another cost is of the extensive and expensive security measures that must be instituted following large attacks-e.g., the massive homeland security outlays since 9/11. Counter terrorism, antiterrorism or any measure against terrorism also has economic implications. The size in terms of GDP and the diversity of an economy have much to do with the ability of a country to withstand terrorist attacks without showing significant economic effects.

There are numerous cost distinctions that could be drawn regarding terrorism losses. Direct costs, for example, involve the immediate losses associated with a terrorist attack or campaign and include damaged goods, the value of lives lost, the costs associated with injuries (including lost wages), destroyed structures, damaged infrastructure, and reduced short-term commerce. In contrast, indirect or secondary costs concern attack related subsequent losses, such as raised insurance premiums, increased security costs, greater compensation to those at high-risk locations, and costs tied to attack-induced long-run changes in commerce. Indirect costs may surface as reduced growth in GDP, lost FDI, changes in inflation, or increased unemployment. A judgment must be made as to how to distinguish between direct and indirect costs, in which any distinction would strike some researchers as arbitrary.

Thus, it is possible and necessary to characterise the economic impact of terrorism, which can be represented in terms of some well-defined macroeconomic (e.g., real per capita GDP growth) or microeconomic variable (e.g., reduced tourist receipts). These variables then represent the consequences of terrorism in terms of aggregate or sectoral activity. If lost output, casualties, and damaged infrastructure are sufficiently large, then they will affect the economy's productive capacity with macroeconomic or microeconomic repercussions. The identification of these impacts is of greater importance than the mere tally of losses if policy is to ameliorate the economic ramifications of terrorism. Thus, we need to concentrate on relating terrorism to macroeconomic and microeconomic variables that policy can be designed to bolster.

Terrorism in Recent Times

Globally, around 20,000 people died from terrorism in 2019. This meant it caused an estimated 1 in 2000 deaths that year. This is shown in the chart, which lays out what people died from. You can find terrorism in the bottom right-hand corner. Terrorism is not only a much rarer cause of death than non-communicable or infectious diseases; it is also a rare cause

of *violent* death: more than 4 times as many people die in armed conflicts, and more than ten times as many die from homicides.

While the number of terrorism deaths can change a lot from year to year-in 2014, almost 45,000 people died in terrorist attacks, while 2010, it was less than 8,000-the average over the last decade was close to the 2019 number, at around 24,000 per year.

While terrorism is a rare cause of death globally, it is more common in some countries and regions.

- We rely on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) to measure terrorism deaths.
- The GTD defines a terrorist attack as the threat or use of violence to achieve a political, economic, religious, or social goal through intimidation or coercion by a non-state actor. Learn more in our technical article on the GTD (Herre, n.d.).

We May also Refer to Global Terrorism Index (GTI)

The GTI report is produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) using data from Terrorism Tracker and other sources. Terrorism Tracker provides event records on terrorist attacks since 1 January 2007. The dataset contains almost 66,000 terrorist incidents for the period 2007 to 2022.

In 2022, deaths from terrorism fell by nine per cent to 6,701 deaths and is now 38 per cent lower than at its peak in 2015. The fall in deaths was mirrored by a reduction in the number of incidents, with attacks declining by almost 28 per cent from 5,463 in 2021 to 3,955 in 2022. However, if Afghanistan was removed from the index, terrorism deaths would have increased by four per cent.

Afghanistan remained the country most impacted by terrorism for the fourth consecutive year, despite attacks and deaths falling by 75 per cent and 58 per cent respectively. The GTI does not include acts of state repression and violence by state actors and, as such, acts committed by the Taliban are no longer included in the scope of the report since they took control of the government.

The deadliest terrorist groups in the world in 2022 were Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates, followed by al-Shabaab, Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM).

IS remained the deadliest terror group globally for the eighth consecutive year, recording the most attacks and deaths of any group in 2022. Despite this, terrorism deaths attributed to IS and its affiliate groups, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISK), Islamic State-Sinai Province (ISS) and Islamic State West Africa (ISWA), declined by 16 per cent. However, there has been a rapid increase in deaths attributed to unknown jihadists in the countries where ISWA operates, increasing by 17 times since 2017 to 1,766 terrorism deaths. Given the location, many of these are likely unclaimed attacks by ISWA. If most of the deaths caused by unknown jihadists were included as IS terrorism deaths, then the outcome would have been similar to 2021. Eighteen countries experienced a death from terrorism caused by IS in 2022, a slight decrease from 20 countries the year prior.

After the substantial falls in terrorism between 2015 and 2019, improvements have plateaued in the last three years. Highlighting the point, the number of countries experiencing deaths has remained almost constant for the last three years, ranging from 43 in 2020 to 42 in 2022. This is down from the peak of 56 countries in 2015. The number of countries experiencing increases and decreases in terrorism deaths remained roughly the same in 2022, with 25 countries

recording reductions, while another 24 countries recorded increases. Terrorism is dynamic and, although the overall change in the last three years has been minimal, there have been sharp rises and falls in terrorism in many countries during this period, notably Niger, Myanmar and Iraq.

Terrorist attacks became more deadly in 2022, killing on average 1.7 people per attack in 2022 compared to 1.3 deaths per attack in 2021. This is the first increase in lethality rate in five years.

Violent conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism, with over 88 per cent of attacks and 98 per cent of terrorism deaths in 2022 taking place in countries in conflict. All ten countries most impacted by terrorism in 2022 were also involved in an armed conflict. Attacks in countries involved in conflict are seven times deadlier than attacks in peaceful countries.

South Asia remains the region with the worst average GTI score in 2022. The region recorded 1,354 deaths from terrorism in 2022, a decrease of 30 per cent when compared to the previous year; however, if the improvement in Afghanistan was excluded, then terrorism deaths would have increased by 71 per cent. In Afghanistan, both the Khorasan chapter of IS and the emerging National Resistance Front (NRF) pose a serious threat. Afghanistan and Pakistan remain amongst the ten countries most affected by terrorism in 2022, with deaths in Pakistan rising significantly to 643, a 120 per cent increase from 292 deaths in 2021. The BLA were responsible for a third of these deaths in Pakistan, a nine fold increase from the prior year, making it the fastest growing terrorist group in the world.

Drones are rapidly evolving and changing the way conflicts are conducted. It is also an emerging trend in terrorist attacks, with groups such as IS, Boko Haram and Houthi rebels using the technology for attacks. Current estimates suggest that 65 non-state actors are now able to deploy drones, which can be easily accessible in public marketplaces. They can travel up to 1,500 kilometres, be deployed in swarms, be used in targeted assassinations, hold biological weapons, require little training, and are highly accessible. Additionally, advances in AI will provide the crafts with launch-and-forget capabilities. At the time of writing, counter-measures to the use of drones by terrorists have not been sufficiently considered and will be an emerging area of concern in the near future (Relief Web 2023) ^[13].

Counter Terrorism-Recent Debate

In India an executive order has established the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) to collect, analyse and disseminate data, intelligence and assessments on terrorists and their threats across India; and to plan and co-ordinate counter-terrorism operations. But a debate has cropped up about the central government's attempt to expand the jurisdiction of the Intelligence Bureau through the NCTC giving it policing power under the Unlawful Activities (prevention) Act, i.e. whether this violates the Constitution's division of powers between the centre and the states.

Some also see in it a bigger picture involving the risk of eroding the civil liberties as well as core democratic principles and rights. The central government on its part is attempting to assuage the fears of the states by declaring that the state police will be informed when the NCTC employs its police powers and that standard operating powers will be drafted for close and collaborative working of state police and NCTC (South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre, 2012).

Karmon (2012) ^[10] feels that in the light of the revolutionary events and the growing instability in several parts of the world and the growing threat of failing states losing control on their chemical, biological and nuclear assets, an international effort to monitor, control and foil terrorist attacks is vital for the security of the international community.

A number of thoughtful individuals have suggested that India might benefit by the post-9/11 US experience with fusion centres that bring together national intelligence and law enforcement officials with state and local counterparts (Nayak, 2011) ^[11].

Both for the sake of internal security and international security it is necessary to act swiftly, again both with national consensus and international consensus. Laws, polices and physical arrangements have to strengthened to avoid despair and tragedies beyond repair. Counterterrorism also should be neatly planned in terms of its economic and social costs. Diversion of scarce productive resources for warfare should not become counterproductive. It is related to the popular choice of "guns or butter?" in production economics. Adam Smith said that "defence is better than opulence". Defence, however, needs not only modernisation but also cooperation and moderation. A rational assessment is the need of the hour.

Key Findings

From being a footnote in History, terrorism has become a hydra-headed monster. To the different forms of terrorism of the present and of the future, civil society needs to come out with practical responses. From our study we make the following observations or findings.

- i). There is no agreed definition of terrorism internationally. But after 9/11, there is a consensus that this should not be allowed to come in the way of confronting terrorist groups on the basis of a working definition.
- ii). Terrorism has certain economic causes: factors such as extreme and large scale poverty, glaring inequality, unemployment, prolonged and gross forms of injustice, etc.
- iii). Terrorism is a multifaceted industry.
- iv). International economic changes such as globalisation have impacted terrorism.
- v). Terrorism has affected economic growth and development vehemently.
- vi). It has huge costs-immediate and future.
- vii). It has spread fairly much through the global economy. But clearly the biggest impact has been felt in the energy markets and tourism. The big rise in oil prices, the terrorism premium that we think is in oil.
- viii). There's a cost of security that's connected to terrorism.
- ix). There are costs of resource transfer, rehabilitation and reconstruction.
- x). There is the cost of fear (!): people just are postponing decisions to see what happens next.
- xi). We need a new internal and international security paradigm to avoid deaths, destruction and despair due to terrorism.
- xii). An alarmed and awakened civil society is essential as a watchdog for security.
- xiii). National consensus and international cooperation should be ensured for local/global fight against terror and its related activities.

Suggestions and Conclusion

Terrorism has to be fought at all fronts. No cause can justify the killing of an innocent. Terrorism is a criminal act. It is also a moral problem, with economic implications. Terrorism and counter-terrorism, both are socio-economic issues. Religion and ethics also enter here. As human beings are the means and end of economic development, we cannot diverse the roles of religion and ethics even in the trend of commodification. The gospel needed today is of world vision and unity, for all religions and ideologies post love as the ultimate moral law of human perfection and, a community of love with its harmony is the final goal of human and cosmic relationships. It is admitted that some kind of self-alienation makes perfection difficult and corruption of power and authority inevitable. Therefore, while keeping love as the essence of humaneness and the criterion and goal of all human endeavour, human society today has to eschew utopianism and organise itself as power structures based on a sense of moral law of structural justice. It can even utilise the coercive legal sanctions of the state to preserve social peace and economic justice in the society. This calls for rational inter-faith discourse at least as the basic framework given the plurality of religious and secular faiths, in various places, including schools/colleges and workplaces (Hans, 2011)^[6].

From an economic perspective, a just economic order is what can make even the guns silent. Democracy should be strengthened to make ballots stronger than bullets. Peace and prosperity should go together. Economic development should encompass social integration (including religious harmony). Religious preaching and practices must not overlook the economic context of a community and the country. An evangelical agenda that dovetails religion, democracy and development should be worked out. There must be good governance in our 'global village'. Good governance-much of which is lacking in most south Asian countries-can help cope with the "triple explosion of information, aspirations and identity", effectively. Education too has to play a proactive role in weeding out fear and violence. A best counter attack on terrorism can stem from a positive revolution in the minds of the people. We must be prepared to re-engineer the existing economic theories, models and plans to make people feel and act as competitors rather than as rivals, never as enemies. Even the concepts such as brain drain, diasporic communities have to be brought to the realm of discussions and dialogues on combating terrorism. While healthy dialogues are needed no doles should be given to those who shun from dialogues for constructive development. Localisation should not be given up for the sake of globalisation.

Economic exploitation, deprivation, and corruption should be our first goals to attack in our war against terrorism. Otherwise it will be warfare between welfare and terrorism. At the same time all peace-lovers and prosperity-promoters should pay more thought on the economic content and context of terrorism in terms of the triggering factors, instruments of sustenance, long-term consequences and remedies.

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