

Essay

Terrorism is a Threat to a Free and Stable Society

Introduction:

Nothing has hampered the socio-economic fiber of a society more than terrorism. Not only does it create an atmosphere of chaos and mayhem, but it also produces agony among people. Terrorism is one of the leading problems of today's society that hinders the autonomous movement of the subjects and citizens of society. It is a genuine threat to the free structure of society and can potentially lead to the gradual declination process of the democratic societal rule of law. It is observed that different militant organizations in various countries are involved in catastrophic incidents of terror, specifically the incident of the 9/11 twin tower attack, 7/7 London bombings, and many other such incidents all around the globe (William, 2018). Such terror incidents have left deleteriously drastic effects on the national and individual levels of society, affecting the everyday lives of people to a great extent. The significant reasons behind terrorism are social groups division, lack of education, unemployment, ideological issues, political chaos, and uneducated young generation- which can easily be trapped in the nets of terrorist activities. It poses severe impacts on society ranging from creating chaos, making people less secure, socio-economic consequences, promoting extremism and violence, and derailing the soft image of a country. If serious precautions are not taken, it will create chaotic results. A political leader with a strong sense of policies and implementation, investing more in tourism, giving more education to youth, and keeping an eye on activities of extremists group can help tackle the menace of terrorism. *This essay will thoroughly explore the multiple causes, trends, effects, and consequences of terrorism. Apart from that, it will shed some light on possible ways to counterbalance menace of terrorism.*

What is Terrorism:

First and foremost, for a meaningful and in-depth insight into terrorism, it is essential to understand its meaning and put forward a practical definition of terrorism. Terrorism does not have a single legally put definition. It has had a different meaning in various eras to various regions. However, many scholars and researchers have put forward some working definitions of terrorism. In the light of these definitions, terrorism is the massive, large-scale employment of savage brutality to meet the political, social, or ideological motives of an individual or a group of people by developing a climate of widespread terror in society. As defined by Schmid (2006), terrorism concerns "a criminal tactic of conflict waging, involving some of the same acts of violence which would qualify as war crimes if a state of war existed – deliberate attacks on civilians, non-combatants and third parties, willful murder, the taking of hostages and the killing of prisoners (kidnapped persons)" (p. 127). Another explanation that well-elucidates the phenomenon of terrorism is put forth by Hantal (2012) as "an outgrowth of the feeling of inherent structural strain felt by certain sections of society, precipitated by some immediate cause that results in unleashing revolutionary action through a social movement against the established social order, thereby unbalancing the social structure" (p. 110). Therefore, terrorism is an umbrella term for any activity that involves the perpetration of brutality, killing, or any action of violence that disrupts the social system and stability (Llorca-Vivero, 2008).

Today, in the world we live in, terrorism can be a great peril to the global societal construct. It has a corrosive effect on the free and stable system of society, as it involves inhumanity,

brutality, extreme inequity, exploitation, and power abuse – all of these contribute towards the severe damage and loss on both individual and societal levels. It would be apt to assert that terrorism extensively targets the stability of a democratic society. To meet specific ideological, regional, social, and political aims, the extremists go very far in breaking the laws, violating fundamental human rights, and targeting the lives of innocent people for the sake of their interests (William, 2018). By inculcation of fear through episodes of violent activities, terrorism aims at extinguishing the sense of safety and security of the citizens of a society. It causes collective trauma, resulting in severe mental, physical, emotional, and psychological after-effects not only for the victims alone but rather all of the subjects of society (Llorca-Vivero, 2008).

Who is Responsible for Terrorism?

Continuing the above discussion, the exercise of terrorism has been done by various organizations with radical ideas, by different religious groups for specific agendas, by nationalist parties to create a situation of mass unrest for meeting their demands, by various revolutionary groups, so on and so forth. However, each type results in a general disturbance of peace and freedom of society. Terrorism involves different kinds of activities according to the purposes to be met by the extremist groups (Llorca-Vivero, 2008). These activities include abduction, unlawful seizure or hijacking of a vehicle, ship, or plane, keeping hostages, mass shootings, largescale suicide bombs, and many other tools for developing mass fear among the citizens. Out of these activities, most destructive are the suicide bombings, which might appear to be random, but are rigorously worked upon and planned, including the selection of the people targeted and the place where the suicide bomb takes place, for instance, a church, a mosque, some hub of high-profile government institute, a school, market, hotel, so on and so forth. Sometimes, these activities aim to target and destroy monuments, buildings, or institutions of national importance to a country, for

instance, embassies, airports, etc. (Llorca-Vivero, 2008). All such activities aim to deliver the message that even the people in authority cannot stop these terrorists from their actions of violence and fear-induction. Another message that they deliver is that no one is safe anymore, even at their homes and even in their own country. Such activities destroy the peace of the society by inculcating fear in the people, thus resulting in destabilizing and disrupting the normal cycle of life (William, 2018).

Types of Terrorism:

Coming to the types of terrorism, the extremist activities can be roughly categorized into several types, according to the nature and severity of the incidents. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that terrorist activities range from many motives behind them and are operated by different groups, so they cannot be put together under a single umbrella term or category. In a rough categorization, terrorism can be divided into revolutionary activities carried out by radical groups; the aim here is to overthrow the complete political system of a country and introduce a new system of governance based on the doctrine, beliefs, and laws set by the radical group responsible for carrying out such operations. An example of such revolutionary activity is the terrorism in Afghanistan by the Taliban (William, 2018). The next type of terrorism is known as sub-revolutionary. It involves terrorist activities that aim to alter the existing socio-political system to some extent to meet some of the motives of the operative group. The last in discussion is establishment terrorism. In this type of terrorism, the government, mostly some institutions of government, are behind such activities. The identification of this type is very difficult and is mostly misunderstood to be carried out by some other agencies (Llorca-Vivero, 2008).

In order to explore the phenomenon of terrorism in the current argument in a systematic and structured way, it is organized around different vital aspects. These aspects include the major

root causes of occurrence that motivate different terrorist activities, the various impacts, effects, and consequences of terrorism that pose as a threat to the autonomy and freedom of the citizens of the society, and the proposed solution, course of action and recommendations which can be followed by different state institutions regarding different ways in which terrorism can be brought to an end, or at least under control (Mousseau, M. 2003).

Root Causes of Extremism

Terrorism is a phenomenon that can be traced back to centuries ago, and it is mainly viewed and discussed using a historical framework. However, the current argument deviates from such linear mapping. It rather focuses on the different root causes of terrorism, the factors involving its perpetuation, and its implications on the stability and freedom of society, as these are more important to the resolution of the problem in the discussion, that is, the destabilizing nature of terrorism and different measures which can help reduce the terrorist activities. Coming to the causation, there are multiple factors that play a vital role in contributing towards triggering militant mindset and terrorist activities (William, 2018). It can be caused by a particular incident or happening, some specific move or action of a political leader or person of national importance, law or decree, a particular problem in the society, or some personage, which are all discussed in the argument that follows (Crenshaw, 1981, p. 379).

Rising Discrimination between Social Groups:

One of the root causes of terrorism includes the events of discrimination between various politically, regionally, culturally, or religiously based social groups. This kind of discrimination leads to the perpetuation of a constant sense of inequality among the subjects of that specific group, which, as a consequence, can lead to disastrous effects, including terrorism as revenge by the short-

tempered or negatively motivated people of that particular group (Warner, 2019). This happens when some members of that group, unable to bring the unequal or discriminatory behavior towards their group to an end in a lawful way, try to take the system into their own hands, resulting in terrorism. As evident, if a citizen of society tries to take the law into his own hands, it will significantly affect the democratic nature of the community or society (Pilat, 2013, p. 171-173).

Ideological Implications Of A National Policy:

Another major cause of terrorism is the ideological implications of a national policy or political statement that might include some minority, religious or ideological group. In most of the European countries, there are migrant colonies in quite an abundance, also known as the diaspora. These diasporic people often feel foreign or left out of the majority European population and are prone to be more sensitive towards the articulation of any racial or cultural comments (William, 2018). Similarly, there are various discriminatory laws of citizenship in different countries that restrict the next generations of immigrants and refugee workers from having the right of citizenship, which is another reason that is responsible for triggering mass violence and terror. For instance, the legislation in Liberia has discriminatory laws which exclude people from a Negro background from the right of nationality. In Mongolia, an application for nationality is denied if the applicant has religion that is not in accordance with Mongolian customs. Similarly, sometimes the words of some national political leader might trigger mass anger leading to such controversies and resulting in terrorist riots. In such cases, the blame can be held on the leaders, too, for generating irresponsible statements and creating such an environment that destabilizes the structure of the society (Pilat, 2013, p. 171-177). According to the Newsweek report, in the large-scale killings in Texas in El Paso in 2019 which resulted in death of 23, the statement of the shooter echoed the speeches of Trump regarding migrants in USA (William, 2018).

It is also observable that in the subjects revealed as involved in terrorist activities, the proportion of unmarried young males is far more significant than that of married male subjects. This implicates that such illicit, criminal activities are primarily a product of immature minds of unmarried male subjects of the society, who terrorist organizations use to meet their own purposes of disruption and viciousness (Darden, 2019). It helps us draw an important conclusion that terrorist activities are a result of gender disparity in society (William, 2018). In some cases, if one country is fighting terrorism, its neighboring nations, states, or countries also get caught up in the expanding terrorist web too. An example of this is the spread of terrorism in Pakistan after the Taliban movement in Afghanistan (Vikram and Jamie Grierson, 2020). This is greatly affected by how the media coverage portrays that situation, whether it alleges a particular minority or group or takes a relatively neutral position. Such media stances can significantly affect the gravity of the situation. In other cases, terrorist activities might spring up to convey a specific political or ideological message. It might also be the case of targeting and marginalizing a particular racial, cultural, ethnic, or religious group, as ascertained by Crenshaw (1981).

Unemployment and Lack of Education:

In addition to the above-discussed issues, some other notable causes that initiate or trigger acts of violence, terror attacks, or other such activities are also worthy of discussion. In today's economic market, where inflation is on a constant rise, extreme poverty, unemployment, and impoverishment have become very common, causing frustration among the subjects of society and leading to events of violence (Badshah et al., 2012, p. 826-829). Similarly, the ongoing process of urbanization and globalization, as established by Pilat (2013), is another notable cause of violence leading to terror.

To sum up, there is a multitude of causes, including events, persons, and actions, which spring up and accelerate terrorism or exacerbate ongoing terrorism as a consequence of some racial, cultural, political, or religious incident or ideological upheaval. However, they all end up destabilizing the democratic system, disrupting the day-to-day structure of life, and crippling the freedom of society by the constant generation of fear in that particular community. This is a global issue and needs to be addressed to find a harmonious solution (Mathews, 2016).

Impacts of Terrorism on Society:

Terrorism is not confined to a specific city, state, or country rather it is affecting the stability of societies globally. It jeopardizes the peace, law and order, security of a region and its inhabitants, and impends the dignity of the people, thus affecting it in every possible way. Terrorist activities and violence have long-lasting and far-reaching traumatic, psychological, economic, and political consequences in a society that is targeted by terrorism. It tends to create a feeling of insecurity that the people are no longer safe, and the leaders appointed by the citizens are no longer capable of defending and protecting their people, thus destabilizing the system of government and society (William, 2018). This constant feeling of insecurity leaves the subjects of a society shocked and shaken. The trauma caused by events of violence and terrorism leads to some prospectively drastic effects on victims, and in general, on all the citizens of a society where terrorism occurs. For this reason, the impacts of terrorism on victims and all the subjects of society need to be focused on separately. These effects can be not only catastrophic in nature but also multiple in number. People suffer from these after-effects on different levels, including individual, cumulative and societal levels, respectively (Badshah et al. 2012, p. 826-832).

Loss of Lives:

The most significant impact of terrorism and episodes of mass violence is the loss and damage of something as precious as human life. The fatalities resulting from such incidents are countless and leave a devastating traumatic imprint on the people who suffer from such incidents. Coming to the discussion of the traumatic impacts of violence and terror attacks on victims, it also includes three different sub-levels, known as levels of personal victimization faced by victims and the people around them, including their families. The basic level is the victimization of the first order, also known as primary victims. These include people who have seen the incident, have directly experienced any loss or suffering, be it in the form of any injury, death of a loved one, or are harmed in any other way (Koh, 2007, p. 1290132). The next level is the victimization of second-order, also known as secondary victims. It encompasses people who are related directly to the first-order victims. They can be family members, close friends, blood relations, and relatives. The last level is the victimization of the third order, also known as tertiary victims. These include people who encounter the trauma of the terror incident through any form of social media platform, radio, television news of the incident (William, 2018).

Psychological and Mental Damage:

The impacts of a violent incident are different from that of an injury or an ailment. An injury or disease might affect the person physically or financially, while the trauma of terror shatters the very reality of being for the victims. According to different studies based on the victims, it is evident that the effects of terror incidents include physical damage and other far-reaching and long-lasting mental, social, emotional, and psychological impact, as it includes direct physical harm in a brutal way. The effect of a single episode of terrorist activity might differ from several episodes of ongoing episodes of violence at the very same place (Koh, 2007, p. 1290132).

However, both of them leave a drastic imprint of the trauma on the minds of the victims. The terror attacks leave the direct victims mentally and emotionally startled, and in some cases, they develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Warner, 2019).

Extremism and Violence:

Continuing the above discussion, the cultural effects of extremism and violence are permanent. It not only impacts the victims; instead, it leaves a mental imprint on the general citizens of a society too. A terror attack inculcates deep fear, panic, and anxiety on the people of a society, due to which, in some cases, they become unable to continue their daily life activities in a usual way. It completely alters the nature of reality for them. They unintentionally change the manner in which they think and react to a situation, in addition, to changes in their conduct, actions, and habits (Friedland and Merari, 1985). For instance, the probability of occurrence of a terrorist attack might be present throughout the day at the back of their unconscious mind. They might begin to imagine situations where they become victims of a blast, resulting in avoidance behaviour. In this way, terrorism impedes the progress and stability of the system of society to a great extent (Rădulescu, 2003).

Disruption in a Society:

According to Silke (2003), another noteworthy point of consideration is that the disruption caused by terrorist activities is of different levels for different communities. For the sake of understanding, considering the example of minorities in various regions, terrorism affects these communities to a far greater extent based on their status in society as second-class citizens. In addition to the terrorist threat that all the citizens equally face, these minorities, such as Muslims living in different Western countries, have to face double marginalization. The general citizens of

such societies, due to terror incidents such as the 9/11 attack of twin towers done by Muslim extremists, deem them to be part of such militant and terrorist groups too, and hence dehumanize them.

Political Consequences:

In addition to individual and collective effects and levels of victimization, terrorism has several political consequences too, which are worth mentioning. As substantiated by Schmid (2007), the struggle between terrorism and the system of democracy is constant and never-ending. However, it is observable that violence tends to affect the democratic system of society (Wilkinson, 2006). For instance, the legal system of democratic countries asks for solid proof, and after even several hearings regarding some terrorist activity, a terrorist might succeed in escaping the judicial system with the help of his lawyer's sound argument and lack of proof (Warner, 2019). In addition, the constant state of fear initiated by terrorism can lead to wrenching of public debates. Terrorism also results in large-scale migrations from the countries facing terrorism such as Syria and Afghanistan to European countries and states, thus disrupting the very structure of a harmonious society (William, 2018).

Economic Consequences:

Moving to the next point, terrorist violence has several economic effects too, which prove to be destructive for the stability of a society. Taking alone into consideration the direct economic impact of terrorism at the place of incident, it is evident that terrorist activities prove havoc for the businesses in that specific area. If it is a large-scale activity like a bomb blast, it might cause the demolition of all the nearby constructions such as hotels, stadiums, so on and so forth. Not only this, overall, it impacts almost all the major businesses (William, 2018). Taking as an instance the

restaurants and hotels, with the extremism and blasts, citizens become reluctant to go out or eat out for safety concerns, considering the probability of a violent episode occurring any time at any place. This results in a steep decrease in the profit made by such businesses, contributing to an economic crisis. Another noteworthy factor is the consumption rate of the subjects of a country, which is greatly affected by extremism and bomb blasts, thus proving devastating for the economy. All the day-to-day businesses have a significant impact; for example, a terrorist episode in a market will result in a decrease in the frequency of the people visiting the markets for consumer goods, again impacting the economy in a bad way (Caruso, 2014).

Tourism is the backbone of the economy of many countries in the world. In addition to the points discussed in the above paragraph regarding the economic consequences of terrorism, the tourism industry is another faction that faces heavy financial setbacks due to terrorism. The economy of many countries such as Turkey is greatly dependent on tourism, and due to extremism and violence, the tourist flow becomes significantly less to countries facing terrorism. Taking the study conducted by Yaya (2009) about the economic impact of terrorism on tourism in Turkey in which he construes the reduction of six million international tourists over multiple years as an example of the economic consequences faced by the tourism industry in the countries facing terrorism, it is asserted that tourism is devastatingly affected by episodes of terrorism in a region, thus disrupting the stability of society by massive economic loss. Another significant point is that the impact that terrorist attacks have on tourism does not stay only for a limited time; instead, it is long-lasting (Bac et al. 2015, p 5-9).

As substantiated by Llorca-Vivero (2008), the countries affected by violence and extremist activities experience a massive deviation from the tourist flow, which is considered as normal for that particular country, which is regarded as 'negative advertising,' which leaves a further impact

on the country's worldwide general image. When considering factors that impact tourism, it is observed that international tourism is affected by all types of terrorism. An example of such country is Turkey, where a negative effect of terrorism was recorded on the tourism industry of the country (Feridun, 2011). Whether it is a terrorist attack on a domestic citizen of that country or a foreigner or tourist who has become a victim of terrorist activity, both factors equally affect the decrease in international tourism, thus resulting in a negative effect on the economic stability of the country (Hasisi, 2009, p. 177).

Implications

Terrorist activities pose a significant threat to the stable structure of society by crippling the democratic system as is seen in mature democratic governments such as the United States of America, inculcating a constant state of fear in the people, and damaging the economy. In order to limit all the economic, political, and social impacts of terrorism, it is the need of the day to take serious measures at the state and government levels to put an end to the terrorist groups and activities. In this regard, different recommendations are given in the discussion that follows, which can prove invaluable for bringing an end to terrorist activities in society and bringing it back to its stable structure (Schlenger, 2002, p. 585).

Proper Check and Balance of Activities:

As discussed in detail in the previous section, the economy of a country is severely disturbed by terrorist episodes of violence. However, several measures can be taken to ensure economic stability in the regions facing terrorism. One of such measures is the proper monitoring of the staff by businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and other such businesses (William, 2018). Similarly, rigorous scrutiny of the new staff based on a specific criterion during the recruitment

process is another critical factor that can ensure better security for citizens. Proper security systems, CCTV camera monitoring, and security checking of the people coming to the premises is another crucial step that can ensure the safety of the people and promote activities like dining and hoteling, which can significantly benefit the economic stability (Galea S et al. 2002).

Promoting Tourism:

Another important measure that can ensure economic stability is enhancing the tourism industry to attract tourists. Due to terrorist activities in a region, the tourism market, including the hotels in tourist spots, the different vendors, the fashion industry, and businesses, in short, all businesses which benefit from tourism face excessive economic loss. It is suggested that different security measures need to be taken to assure the safety of tourists. In a similar manner, proper procedures of safety should be declared essential and strictly followed (William, 2018).

Putting an end to Extremism:

A very significant role can be played by different technological companies and organizations in bringing an end to extremist activities around the globe. The extremists and radicals, in their activities of violence and terror, primarily rely on the exploitation of internet resources, social media platforms, and various other similar resources for extraction of important information, acquiring of data about like-minded subjects susceptible to become part of their organizations through the recruiting process, virtual coaching of such individuals and controlling the terrorist activities and operations (William, 2018). All these factors make technological organizations very vital in the eradication of such organized radical groups. Government institutes such as intelligence agencies can take the help of these organizations for important inquiries regarding locating and taking down the terrorist groups by the use of information provided to them

through these internet-based technological institutions. Different search engines, for instance, Google, are already aiding in such anti-terrorist operations by providing data about web searches involving a specific group of keywords which in turn pinpoints the various shortcomings of such groups (Warner, 2019).

Enhancing Role of UNO:

Different actors can play an essential role in mitigating the catastrophic effects of terrorism. These include various international establishments such as United Nations and governmental institutions such as the army and civil community. It is essential that the US and all its confederates assure proper communication and intelligence reports and information exchange regarding any terrorist groups and their inter-nation travel, mass purchases of weapons, and their upcoming plans of mass violence. Such communication can help in penetrating well-established extremist organizations, getting important inside information regarding their subsequent potential movements and attacks, arresting the important members and comrades of such organizations, which in turn can lead to the gradual decline of such organizations and a considerable fall in the number of terrorist and militant activities across the globe (Mathews, 2016).

In addition to the measures mentioned above, another significant issue that gives rise to terrorist activities are the wars raging in different countries, including Niger, Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar, Iraq, Libya, Algeria, and various others. Such regions with constant war situations prove to be a breeding ground for the terrorists to thrive and form organized groups, which are then redirected through proper planning and implanted in different countries as an organized extremist group for recruitment of more like-minded people and to carry out terrorist activities and spread mass violence in those areas (William, 2018). In this regard, it is vital to make efforts on state-level to resolve the problems which have initiated different wars and provided moist ground

for terrorists to breed and carry out different operations of violence around the globe, for the sake of a peaceful future of the citizens of the society. In addition, it is also vital for those regions with ongoing wars to attack the terrorist groups before they have formed a more significant network. However, as Mousseau (2003) suggested, it is not humanely possible to eliminate all such radical groups; rather, changing the ideas and beliefs of groups and subjects prone to the process of radicalization can save societies in the future from such mass violence (Smith, 2017).

Continuing the above discussion, the subjects of regions with ongoing wars, for instance, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, are more prone to be affected by the radical ideas due to the war situation, as it gives a chance to the militants and terrorists to brainwash people using the civil war situation. For this reason, it is essential that the regions take some measures to bring an end to the wars, or at least make efforts to reduce its scope and impact. Although this is a challenging job as the wars in the various regions discussed above are deep-rooted and have continued, in some cases, for decades or more. However, by making some efforts, their impact can be reduced.

For disruption of the reciprocal circle of terrorism, promoting organization and systematization of immigrant communities is equally important for proper law enforcement. Similarly, the immigrant communities, specifically the children of their working community, should also be granted equal citizenship rights to avoid any disruption in the system. This will ensure the slowing down of the process of radicalization, if any, among that specific migrant community. Also, such measures will help significantly in protecting the immigrant citizens from an extremist mindset which, in such cases, is a product of rebel minds trying to seize the civil rights that are not granted to them based on immigration policies (William, 2018).

Strong Role of Political Leaders:

The role of the political leaders of a country in taking measures against terrorism is crucial. The statements they give have a profound impact on the subjects of society. Therefore, the political leaders need to give statements that do not inculcate fear in the citizens but rather do the opposite. In a similar way, sometimes the terrorist activities spring up as a revolt against some idea or law presented by some political leader. In such cases, again, it is the responsibility of that particular political party or leader to make amends for the peace and welfare of the citizens of the society (North, 2004).

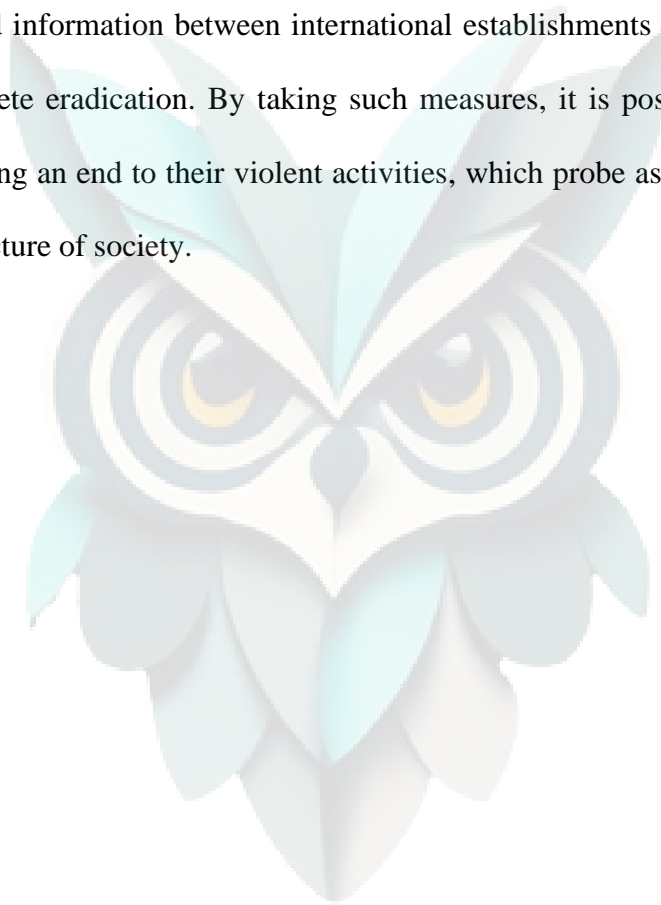
Critical Analysis:

Terrorism today poses a serious problem that endangers disrupting the everyday cycle of life. It is affecting the people not in a single country but rather in multiple countries and states around the globe. Thus, it is a global phenomenon that needs to be dealt with seriously to mitigate its catastrophic effects. It can be caused by various organizations or groups to meet their specific motives by inculcating fear among ordinary people and using it as a device to pressurize the concerned authorities to come to negotiate with them and make amends in the social and political system according to their will. This situation proves to be a threat for the people of the country or region, who are greatly affected physically, mentally, and psychologically by episodes of violence.

Conclusion:

Summing up the whole argument, based on the impacts discussed in detail in the previous section of the argument, it is concluded that terrorism equally affects every sphere of life. It has a drastically negative effect on the economy of a country. It not only poses a threat for the people of a country but the tourists too, thus giving a major crash to the economic stability of a country. In

a similar way, it has profound political implications. It poses a threat to the democratic system of society and cripples the freedom of the people, who feel insecure and unable to function in a usual way. However, there are various steps that can be taken at state and government levels to ensure a considerable reduction in terrorist activities. These include efforts to bring an end to the war zones in different countries anti-terrorist information sharing by technological institutions with government organizations. It also includes inter-country communication and exchange of intelligence reports and information between international establishments regarding the terrorist groups for their complete eradication. By taking such measures, it is possible to eliminate the terrorist groups and bring an end to their violent activities, which probe as a significant threat to the free and stable structure of society.



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