



Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS)

Forum for National Security Studies (FNSS)

Title:	RISE OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, 9/11, AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR
Chairperson:	Gp Capt PA Patil, Senior Fellow, CAPS
Speaker:	Mr Aersh Danish, Research Associate, CAPS
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In recent international politics, the events of 9/11 assume great significance. The addition of a non-state actor into the threat perception of international security has generated an enormous discourse on the issue of terrorism. On September 18, 2015, Mr. Aersh Danish presented his paper on this relevant issue. Being an introductory paper in nature, the focus on defining terrorism as a concept was maintained throughout the presentation.

The evolution of the term 'terrorism' was traced to the 18th century French Revolution. In defining terrorism as a concept, historical definitions were also utilised. While terrorism was understood as relating to revolution from the 18th to mid-20th century, in modern times the word has evolved to a great extent. The present day variant of terrorism also includes its functioning in a transnational network setting. However, terrorism as a concept has retained the element of 'fear' and 'violence', to be used as political tools. Additionally, terrorism as a phenomenon could be viewed in relation to three principles, i.e. ideology, violence emerging from the action, and the threat that

emerges from the violence. If viewed broadly, terrorism has been surrounded by these three variables throughout history.

The modern day terrorism operates at a global level, wherein the smaller terrorist organisations bandwagon with more capable terrorist groups in order to increase their efficiency. This feature has been especially observed post the 9/11 incident, which witnessed several terrorist organisations attaching themselves to the goals of Al-Qaeda. 9/11 was the turning point in international terrorism as afterwards a series of groups mushroomed that did not officially belong to Al-Qaeda but acquired its brand name. It clearly exposed a new face of terrorism.

Additionally, 9/11 also brought forward a new international reaction against terrorism in the form of Global War on Terror (GWOT). Reacting to the 9/11, the US declared a global war on terror with an aim to eliminate Al-Qaeda. A national strategy was also formulated that was not only reflective of the American position on terrorism but also urged the international community to participate in preventing the perpetration of the global evil. In doing so the US also defined the act of terrorism as a “premeditated, politically motivated violence, perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents...”

While the US attempted to garner international support to combat terrorism, simultaneously it also declared that in order to effectively address the issue, it would use every instrument of national power such as diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, financial, informational, intelligence and military. This resonated a unilateral tone in the US approach to combating terrorism. The American definition on terrorism did not make any distinction between the terrorists and those that harbour them. It is noteworthy that this also justified their occupation in Afghanistan. The strategy to combat terrorism, in this context, would require attacks on the vast terrorist networks that have spread transnationally.

The US led GWOT also produced many UNSC resolutions that also expanded the scope of terrorism and justified the action taken in order to fight it under the UN mandate.

Interestingly, the UN so far has released 13 resolutions dealing with terrorism. This international terrorism is a new face of an old enemy.

In conclusion, the speaker highlighted the need to carefully examine the consequences of terrorism in order to effectively fight it.

